# Central Office Organizational Assessment

## DeKalb School Board Updates

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# Agenda

- **Overview of the Report**
  Purpose and Scope | Methodology
- **Framing**
  DCSD Context | Anticipated Uses
- **Findings and Considerations from the Report**
  Comparison Analysis | Considerations and Options
- **Discussion**

# Overview of the Report

## Purpose

- Grounded in the primary purpose: Ensuring that students learn and schools have the resources and assistance they need

## Focus:

- Structuring for efficiency and effectiveness
- Aligning support to priorities and needs of schools
- Unearthing redundancies, gaps, or unclear responsibilities

# Why Conduct a Central Office Organizational Assessment?

- Understand how DCSD central office is structured and staffed compared to comparison districts
- Surface areas where roles, responsibilities, or routines may lack clarity or need improvement
- Establish an evidence base to inform future strategic decision-making

***This work matters: Central Offices have an important role to play in enabling schools, educators and, therefore students, to thrive.***

# Overview of the Report

## Methodology

- Two main sources of data:

**Comparison Districts**

- 10 peer districts benchmarked against DCSD (Georgia + national)
- Compared: central office staffing footprint, cabinet/division structure, and functional distribution of roles
- Sources: position files, org charts, district data

**Interviews and Focus Groups**

- Executive interviews, central office focus groups, principal focus groups and open-ended questionnaire for central office
- Explored how the organization works in practice – roles, coordination, decision-making, systems, and school support
- Sources: firsthand stakeholder perspectives, analyzed for recurring patterns – organizational themes, not individual performance

# Framing

## DCSD Context

- Dedicated staff working on behalf of students
- Change has been the constant in the last several years
- Districts are facing significant budget pressures

## Anticipated Uses

- To inform priorities and planning, especially as related to upcoming 27-28 budget planning
- To provide data and considerations that can drive long-term decisions about structure, processes, and leadership priorities for the central office

*This report should be one of many data sources to guide decision-making about priorities and does not report on quality or effectiveness of individual staff, full district history, variations in outsourced services, or informal leadership and influence.*

# Comparative Analysis Findings

## Key Findings: How DCSD Compares to Peers

The report benchmarks DCSD’s central office against 10 peer districts in Georgia and nationally, controlling for size (FTE per 1,000 students). The following slides synopsize the findings across six lenses:

- Overall central office staffing size
- Functional-area staffing relative to district size
- Cabinet composition and comparison
- How peer districts structure their cabinets
- Division structure
- Departmental analysis

***Limitations***

***No two districts report personnel data the same way.*** *Where gaps existed, the study team applied a consistent coding framework grounded in publicly available sources and documented every assumption made along the way.*

*Personnel files and organizational charts can describe how a central office is structured but* ***cannot fully explain why****. Service delivery models, historical decisions, and local context sit behind every number in this analysis.*

# Comparative Analysis Findings

## Comparison Districts and Enrollment and Number Schools

| District | State | Enrollment | # of School Sites |
|---|---|---|---|
| **DCSD** | **GA** | **91,638** | 138 |
| Baltimore | MD | 76,807 | 159 |
| Charlotte-Mecklenburg | NC | 141,480 | 185 |
| Cobb | GA | 105,213 | 112 |
| Denver | CO | 139,776 | 228 |
| Dallas | TX | 85,315 | 198 |
| Fulton | GA | 86,839 | 102 |
| Griffin-Spalding | GA | 9,175 | 18 |
| Gwinnett | GA | 182,688 | 142 |
| Muscogee | GA | 29,073 | 56 |
| Wake | NC | 161,027 | 203 |

# Comparative Analysis Findings

## Overall Central Office Staffing Size

### What we found

- Budgeted staffing of 29.9 FTE per 1,000 students – 3rd highest of 10 peers
- On a filled-positions basis, 26.2 FTE per 1,000 – still above most comparable districts
- A higher ratio is not proof of overstaffing, but the footprint warrants examining how staff are distributed

| District | FTE / 1,000 |
|---|---|
| Denver | 31.6 |
| Dallas | 30.0 |
| **DCSD** | **29.9** |
| Muscogee | 26.4 |
| Fulton | 22.4 |
| Gwinnett | 20.0 |
| Charlotte-Mecklenburg | 18.4 |
| Wake | 16.9 |
| Griffin-Spalding | 15.8 |
| Baltimore | 13.7 |

*Figure 6. Budgeted FTE per 1,000 students.*

# Comparative Analysis Findings

## Functional-Area Staffing Relative to District Size

### Defining Functional Areas

Because districts name and structure their departments and divisions differently, the RTI team established fourteen Functional areas. These categories allowed the team to organize all central office positions into comparable groupings across districts—such as Human Resources, Information Technology, or Operations and Auxiliary Services—allowing staffing levels to be measured consistently.

### What we found

- Operations is the largest area in every district; DCSD is highest at 14.33 FTE per 1,000, which may be driven in part by smaller schools and in-sourced transportation.
- School Leadership & Principal Supervision is where DCSD sits farthest above peers with 1.93 FTE per 1,000. The closest peers are Baltimore (1.48), Dallas (1.22), and CMS (1.14).
- Access, equity & opportunity functional area (0.97) is 2nd-highest however, in DCSD, this area includes functions not typically included (e.g. athletics, charters)
- 57% of non-operations central office capacity is directed toward school- and student-facing functions, fourth among comparison districts.

*Figure 8. School- and student-facing vs. internal-facing FTE per 1,000.*

# Comparative Analysis Findings

## Cabinet Composition and Comparison

### What we found

- DCSD's 15-member cabinet is the largest in the sample;
- Comparable-enrollment peers run smaller cabinets – Fulton 6, Denver 8
- Organizational mass is uneven: the COO division alone holds 1,313 of 2,742 total FTE
- 8 of the 14 non-operations divisions carry fewer than 130 FTE each

| District | Cabinet Size |
|---|---|
| **DCSD** | **15** |
| Charlotte-Mecklenburg | 12 |
| Baltimore | 10 |
| Dallas | 10 |
| Gwinnett | 10 |
| Muscogee | 9 |
| Denver | 8 |
| Cobb | 7 |
| Griffin-Spalding | 7 |
| Wake | 7 |
| Fulton | 6 |

*Figure 9. Cabinet size comparison.*

# Comparative Analysis Findings

## Division Structure: Where DCSD Differs

- Specialized services, wraparound support, and Access & Opportunity split student support across three cabinet verticals (443 FTE)
  - No integrating role sits between those functions and the superintendent
  - Six of nine peers consolidate specialized student services and wraparound support under one leader
- Access & Opportunity combines charter oversight, student assignment, athletics, and mentorship – a mix no peer mirrors
- Communications sits beneath a broader engagement and partnerships division

# Comparative Analysis Findings

## Departmental Analysis: Selected Highlights

### Principal Supervision

- 7 area offices carry 108 FTE of embedded coordinators (ELA, math, ELL, special ed, mental health, culture & climate)
- This mirrors expertise that also exists centrally – a parallel structure unique in the sample
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Dallas, and Wake each carry meaningful school support FTE but organized primarily as instructional specialists or coordinating teachers rather than coordinators.

### Other departments

- Professional development and leadership development live in the area structure and separate from other talent development programs such as IGNITE and from teaching and learning;
- Early Learning carries just 6 FTE despite one of Georgia's largest pre-K programs
- Special Education (139 FTE) reflects service-model choices to distribute more roles to school sites.
- DCSD's Information Technology division carries 208 FTE, placing it third in the sample on a per-student basis; The IT Support Services Department is the largest within IT.

# Considerations

- The report identifies **9 considerations** informed by the evidence collected

- Report seeks to balance providing leadership options to consider with the understanding and humility that the district leadership will drive decisions within a larger context and continued conversations

*Decisions are not simple; there are advantages and risks when proposing change; Actions taken informed by this report will be best accomplished with deliberation, empathy toward staff, and a steadfast focus on what is best for students.*

# Considerations

Consideration 1

## **Cabinet Structure and the Coordination of Related Functions** (Structure)

### Options for Action

- Create an integrating executive, e.g., deputy superintendent
- Consolidate into fewer, broader cabinet portfolios
- Formalize cross-cabinet coordination

# Considerations

Consideration 2

## Division and Department Alignment
(Structure)

### Options for Action

- Consolidate student support function (students services and wrap around) under a single leader
- Redistribute access and opportunity portfolio
- Focus on the communication function in the Community Engagement and Innovative Partnerships portfolio
- Consider consolidating potentially similar roles

# Considerations

Consideration 3

**Coordination Between Area Offices and Central Departments in Schools and Leadership** (Structure + Process)

**Options for Action**

- Shift reporting lines for embedded coordinators from area offices to central departments
- Refine districtwide coordination structures
- Standardize area office structures and expectations

# Considerations

Consideration 4

**Professional Learning and Talent Development as a Coherent District Strategy** (Structure)

## Options for Action

- Establish a unified talent-development strategy
- Consolidate the professional learning continuum under a single cabinet area

# Considerations

Consideration 5

## Clarity in Cross-Divisional Roles, Ownership, and Accountability (Process)

### Options for Action

- Map ownership and decision rights for recurring cross-divisional work
- Develop a central office navigation resource for schools
- Define ownership at the outset of cross-divisional initiatives

# Considerations

Consideration 6

**Durable Structures for Cross-Divisional Collaboration**
(Culture + Process)

## Options for Action

- Create standing cross-divisional structures for recurring work
- Adopt early-involvement protocols for shared decisions
- Refine the district's coordinated communication model for schools

# Considerations

**Consideration 7**

## Streamlined Decision-Making and Reduced Unnecessary Approval Layers (Process + Culture)

### Options for Action

- Clarify decision tiers and delegation of authority
- Reduce approval steps for routine transactions
- Enable more direct communication across levels and divisions
- Assign a single accountable owner for implementation

# Considerations

Consideration 8

## Operational Systems and Workflows

(Process)

### Options for Action

- Map and streamline high-burden workflows
- Modernize tools and reduce duplicate data entry across systems
- Establish consistent standard operating procedures
- Align approval requirements to risk and value

# Considerations

Consideration 9

**School Support Model and Access to Expertise** (Process + Culture)

## Options for Action

- Clarify communication protocols within the support model
- Preserve direct access to specialized expertise
- Define shared roles between functional divisions and Schools & Leadership
- Establish a feedback loop with principals on responsiveness