



Institution Progress Report

**DeKalb County School District
Stone Mountain, GA**

Prepared for the AdvancED® Monitoring Review Team

Date Submitted: April 30, 2014

Date Accepted: April 30, 2014

OVERVIEW TO THE INSTITUTION PROGRESS REPORT

Purpose

The Institution Progress Report engages the institution in a detailed review and analysis of the steps it has taken to address the Required Actions outlined by the AdvancED Special Review Team. The institution uses the report to document progress and/or help prepare for the AdvancED Monitoring Team Review. The institution completes and submits the report within specified timelines for required progress updates and/or at least two weeks prior to a scheduled Monitoring Team Review. AdvancED reviews the completed report to ensure sufficient progress is being made toward the Required Actions of the Special Review Team. In addition, the report is used by the Monitoring Team, if applicable, for its on-site progress review.

Structure of the Report

The Institution Progress Report is organized around the Required Actions in the Special Review Team report. The institution should list each of the Required Actions from the Special Review team report, and for each, indicate a Performance Level score and provide a detailed response describing the steps it has taken and the results obtained. It is the responsibility of the institution to address each of the Required Actions made by the Special Review Team as required in the Special Review Team report. If a Monitoring Review has occurred, the Institution Progress Report should also address Directives that the Monitoring Team included within the Monitoring report that are designed to help in meeting the Required Actions.

Institution Progress Report

DeKalb County School District hosted a Monitoring Review team on December 8-10, 2013. Through interviews with institution stakeholders, observations, and reviews of institution documents, the team developed a Monitoring Review Team report detailing its findings from the review.

The Monitoring Review Team report contained specific Required Actions for the institution. The institution is responsible for addressing each of the Required Actions. Below, please provide a response regarding progress made toward meeting each Required Action from the Monitoring Review Team report along with a Performance Level score for each Indicator.

Introduction

On January 21, 2014, the AdvancED Accreditation Commission announced that the DeKalb County School District (DCSD) accreditation status had been elevated from “Accredited Probation” to “Accredited Warned”.

The Commission based its decision on a report prepared by an AdvancED Monitoring Team that conducted a comprehensive review of the DCSD in December 2013. The District was documented for completing 8 of the 11 required actions. Further the district was commended for putting programs, policies and processes in place to stabilize the school district to restore confidence and trust among stakeholder groups.

The Monitoring Team determined that the DeKalb County School District had made substantial progress in creating a framework for addressing the required actions by developing comprehensive and systemic processes to guide its operations. Further, the Monitoring Team identified several areas of continued focus to ensure sustainability of efforts.

Since January 2014, the District through the leadership of the DeKalb Board of Education and Superintendent Michael Thurmond has continued the work focused on improving school board governance and leadership, while supporting the efforts of the superintendent to identify and implement school improvement strategies and student achievement initiatives. The Institution Progress Report provides the District’s progress in addressing Required Actions 1, 3, 6, 12, 13, and 14.

Required Action 1: *Devise and implement a written, comprehensive plan for unifying the DeKalb County Board of Education so that the focus can become serving the needs of the children of the DeKalb County School District.*

Directives:

1. Devise and implement a written, comprehensive plan for unifying the DeKalb County Board of Education.
2. Devise a policy and training plan to address concerns over the sustainability of progress made by the school system since March 2013.
3. Devise and implement a plan to ensure that the policies and training of future boards will maintain a core focus on serving the needs of the children of the DeKalb County School District.

Performance Level score:

	Completed - All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The institution has documented evidence that supports fulfillment of the required action.
x	In Progress - The institution is currently engaged in actions and processes but has yet to fully implement steps necessary to address the required action.
	Has Not Addressed - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

Response and Evidence: Provide detail to support the Performance Level score noted above. The response should include: 1) the steps taken to address the Required Action; 2) the evidence supporting those steps; 3) the institution’s next steps with regard to the Required Action; 4) and any results of those steps.

Steps Taken to Address the Required Action/Directives:

The DeKalb County Board of Education took a number of preparatory steps in 2013 to properly position itself to devise a written, comprehensive board unifying plan. The steps included the following:

- April 2013 – Affirmed Board of Ethics Oath (Board Policy BH); Affirmed Board Member Conflict of Interest Oath (Board Policy BHA)
- May 2013 – Began to revise and amend existing, and approve new board policies; Adopted and embraced a set of Board norms
- June 2013 – Engaged the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) to complete state-mandated Board of Education training
- September 2013 – Approved the 2013-2014 Board Training Schedule: Received governance training and assistance from Governance Center of McKenna, Long, and Aldridge
- October 2013 – Participated in a GSBA Governance Team- Self-Assessment
- November 2013 – Board adopted Policy BAB: School Board Governance

The preceding steps were included in the November 2013 Institution Progress Report and were essential to establishing a baseline understanding of roles, responsibilities, limitation, and opportunities of board governance. This common understanding by the collective board members enabled the board to function properly and established parameters for the board to work, in accordance to Georgia law, and to diminish the public perception of a dysfunctional board. These steps prepared the board to begin the process of developing a sustainable plan to unify.

In February and April 2014, the Board conducted two retreats to begin the planning process. The content of the retreats is outlined below:

The **February 8, 2014** agenda included a range of short, medium, and long term items, and was facilitated by Ms. Zenda Bouie, a staff member of the Georgia School Board Association.

2014 Board & Superintendent Retreats

February 8, 2014: The discussion included the following items:

- Board Self-Assessment Review (Roles & Responsibilities, Goals & Objectives for 2014)
- AdvancED January 21, 2014 Report
- Board Office Staffing
- Guidelines for Internal and External Communication to and from Board of Education
- Academic Assessment
- Financial and Asset Management
- Accountability
- Long-term Leadership Capacity and Development (through post 2015) Organizational Performance and Process Improvement
- Organizational Culture and Resources for High Performance
- Policy Enhancement

April 4, 2014: The agenda included the following:

- SPLOST Oversight Committee Review by Mr. Paul Baisier
- Review Required Actions & Directive to Board from AdvancED by MLA Governance Team

Evidence to Support the Steps:

Board retreat agendas, minutes and video footage from each retreats

Board Policies: BH; BHA; and BAB

Board Norms

GSBA Self-Assessment

Next Steps for the Required Action:

The next steps are to develop the following proposal for the development of a Comprehensive Plan to Unify the Board:

Proposal:

Comprehensive Plan to Unify the Board

Board Baseline Assessment (Preliminary view):

The board is a collection of nine well prepared, capable, and professional individuals, but they need to improve focus as a body.

Governance Mission Statement

Mission: Develop and implement an effective and measurable board governance plan that unites board members' collective perspectives/visions, priorities, and approaches to improve student performance and fiscal management. Further, to synchronize the collective individual board members' knowledge and skills into an effective and efficient decision making apparatus.

Goals and Objectives (TBD)

Examples include:

- Define Board's Annual and 5 Years Priority System Performance *Quantified* Targets
- Develop Superintendent Succession Plan
- Consolidate the board members' collective priorities and approaches by which to assess student performance and fiscal management
- Develop and implement one initiative to synchronize and leverage the collective board knowledge and skills into an effective and efficient decision making body
- Establish a solid foundation for future boards
- Add value to the superintendent action plans

Key Governance Roles and Decision Criteria

- Academic Achievement
- Financial & Asset Management (e.g. Tax base, SPLOST, vacant facilities)
- Organization Performance and Process Improvement
- Long-term Leadership Capacity, Assessment, and Development
- Organizational Culture and Resources for High Performance
- Accountability on all the above measures

Administration of Key Decision Policies

- Board Norms
- Develop policies to institutionalize the plan (sustainability with future boards)

Support Resources

- Chief Administrator
- Policy Analyst - Policy enhancements tools to ensure sustainable improvements
- Online DCSD Performance Dashboard

Key Stakeholder teams

- DeKalb School Administration
- DeKalb School Councils
- DeKalb Parent and Teachers Associations

Board Performance Review

- Survey

- Decisions Quality - Impact/Outcome
- Develop monitoring and reporting regiments to measure effectiveness
-

Board Development

- Training
- Retreats

Results/Impact of the Steps Taken:

The results of the steps taken are to be determined by the development of the framework. Upon completion, the board will have a fully developed unifying document to guide decision making.

Long-Term Plans to Sustain the Results/Impact of the Required Action:

The sustainability of the plan is to be determined. The board must be diligent to annual review and adherence to the plan.

Required Action 3: *Establish and implement policies and procedures that ensure segregation of duties of the governing board and that of the administration including the elimination of board working committees, which result in board members assuming administrative functions that should be the responsibility of appropriate staff.*

Directives:

1. Eliminate the provisions noted that are in direct conflict with the roles and responsibilities of board members.
2. Develop and adhere to an annual professional learning plan to promote and sustain the Board’s capacity to govern the school system and create the parameters for the process to become a systemic procedure.

Performance Level score:

	Completed - All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The institution has documented evidence that supports fulfillment of the required action.
x	In Progress - The institution is currently engaged in actions and processes but has yet to fully implement steps necessary to address the required action.
	Has Not Addressed - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

Response and Evidence: Provide detail to support the Performance Level score noted above. The response should include: 1) the steps taken to address the Required Action; 2) the evidence supporting those steps; 3) the institution’s next steps with regard to the Required Action; 4) and any results of those steps.

Steps Taken to Address the Required Action/Directives:

In 2013, the board engaged governance experts to facilitate review and on-going monitoring of Board actions. The board began to address conflicts in Board of Education Policy prior to the 2013 IPR submitted to AdvancedED in December 2013. The outgrowth of that work included the passage of Board of Education Policy BAB: Governance Policy. This document was developed after the board partnered with McKenna, Long, and Aldridge (MLA) and the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA). These organizations assisted the board with addressing specific governance issues. The board completed state required whole board training in June 2013, which included courses such as roles and responsibilities and board eligibility. In October 2013, the board completed the GSBA Governance Self-Assessment. In November 2014 the board adopted Board Policy BAB: Governance Policy

On February 8, 2014 and April 4, 2014, the board held board and superintendent’s retreats. February agenda topics included Board Self-Assessment Review (roles and responsibilities). The April agenda included a presentation from MLA regarding the directives given to the board and district after the December, 2013 IPR monitoring review.

In order to address directives regarding policy review and revision, it was decided during the April board retreat that the board will establish a policy review process so that all policies are reviewed at least once every three years and necessary changes can be made as needed, including provisions seen as in conflict with other policies or with role of Board.

Evidence to Support the Steps:

Board Policy BAB

GSBA self-assessment

February 8, 2014 - Board and Superintendent Retreat agenda

April 4, 2014 - Board and Superintendent Retreat agenda

Next Steps for the Required Action:

The board will establish a policy review process so that all policies are reviewed at least once every three years and necessary changes can be made as needed, including provisions seen as in conflict with other policies or with the roles of board. The board will look to other systems for best and effective practices. The board will also incorporate board/senior management discussion component to evaluate “what is working” and what is not working.”

Board policy review will examine potential role conflicts with reference to best practices with reference to existing and emerging practices in general government, not-for-profit and for-profit spaces. The board will also institute policy training for new Board members and will include policy training/review as part of annual whole Board training.

The board will evaluate the value of a Board/School District scorecard with regard to governance and management issues.

Additionally, the board will evaluate the opportunities for metro Atlanta Boards/Superintendents to meet periodically to discuss governance issues under the auspices of a trusted third party.

Results/Impact of the Steps Taken:

The steps taken by the board during each of the retreats to review and evaluate the directives identified by AdvancED regarding board policies, specifically related to roles and responsibilities and board self-assessment demonstrate the commitment by the board to implement Policy BAB with fidelity. The commitment to institute a cycle of policy review will ensure that policies are monitored and existing or potential conflicts in board policy are addressed and resolve.

Long-Term Plans to Sustain the Results/Impact of the Required Action:

Development of the three year cycle of policy review and systematic review of the policies are needed to ensure that conflicts in policy are addressed and resolved. Policy monitoring, review and revision ensure that district initiatives, plans are within the parameters set by the board. Implementation of whole board training for new members and review for current members is critical for understanding of what is required of board members and to build knowledge base to ensure that board policies are within current laws.

The opportunity to meet periodically with other metro school boards and superintendents will provide opportunities for the board to expand its knowledge and skills related to effective board governance.

Required Action 6: *Ensure a robust diagnostic assessment program (universal screener, progress monitoring probes, and benchmarks included) that is a systematic and a regular component of the school system’s comprehensive assessment system, include a variety of formative assessment tasks and tools to monitor student progress, and provide school personnel access to the State Longitudinal Data System.*

Directive:

1. Ensure the continued operation of the protocol beyond the 2013-2014 school year. Efforts should include training for new employees in the use of the various protocols including the use of data to impact instructional decision making for groups of students as well as individual students.

Performance Level score:

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	In Progress - The institution is currently engaged in actions and processes but has yet to fully implement steps necessary to address the required action.
	Has Not Addressed - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

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Steps Taken to Address the Required Action/Directives:

The DeKalb County School District asserts the completion of Required Action 6 with on-going evidence that its continued focus, processes, and training will contribute to on-going and sustained improvements in student achievement outcomes. In addition to the implementation of the Universal Screener for reading and math in August 2013 and district benchmarks aligned to the curriculum content standards during SY12-13, DeKalb has implemented on-going training in the use of the universal screener and the use of data to improve growth and achievement for all students using the 6-Step Data Protocol.

The 2013-2014 school year included the implementation of Response to Intervention (RtI) Teams or Multiple Tiered Student Support (MTSS) Teams. These teams consist of the Principal, Assistant Principal, and Teacher Leaders. The team are responsible for attending district-level training and delivering the training content to the campus. Additionally, as an outcome of The Bridge Initiative, the development of the Growth and Achievement Model (GAM), which requires the use of the 6-Step Data Protocol, fortifies the expectation that all students receive grade-level content instruction. This occurs while providing students additional support to eliminate reading and math deficits as identified through the universal screening process. GAM requires on-going review and monitoring of the data to ensure student growth is occurring while also providing instructional resources to support student remediation. The Superintendent and senior team lead with the discussion of GAM, required actions, and analysis of outcomes during cabinet meetings and trainings. The major trainings for 2013-2014 include the following:

- RtI Team Training for all school teams in October, November, January, and February
- Academic Strategy Training in the Growth and Achievement Model (GAM) for the various groups in January, February, and March
 - Principals and Central Office Staff (Jan 25, Feb 20, & March 25)

- Assistant Principals (Feb 21)
- Teacher Leaders (HS Department Chairs on March 4)
- Faculty Presentations (All faculties by March 12)
- Teachers (1300+ on March 15)
- Parents (600+ on March 22 & 25)
- GAM Board of Education Presentation (May 5)

- Assessment Training by the Department of Research, Assessments, and Grants

Evidence to Support the Steps:

- Agendas, Handouts, and PowerPoint Presentations for Trainings
- Agendas and Handouts for Cabinet Meetings
- Emails to Principals/Staff
- Universal Screener Data & Growth Reports
- Report on Additional Support & Student Success Tutors
- Reports on Access to the State's Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)
- PD Planner Training Report for District and Campus Trainings

Next Steps for the Required Action:

The district's continued use of its robust diagnostic assessment program will be reflected in the following action steps:

- Post administration of the universal screener in May 2014 to ascertain student cumulative growth in reading and math from August to May.
- Focus on the Growth and Achievement Model, including the 6-Step Data Protocol, during the June 2014 Summer Leadership Conference.
- Continued training (May, June, and SY14-15) on the use of the universal screener data to inform instructional decisions and the RtI process.
- Implementation of the district's Strategic Plan with goals and initiatives to address improving student achievement.

Results/Impact of the Steps Taken:

The results or impact of the aforementioned steps include observed, noticeable, and significant improvements in student learning outcomes on standardized measures with a reduction in students performing below grade level and an increase in the number and percent of students meeting and/or exceeding grade-level standards. To measure impact, the district will continue monitoring results from the Universal Screener, utilize the 2014 state reports including CRCT scores and the EOCT scores, and the 2015 College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI). The specific impact of the steps taken is as follows:

- Monitoring progress to improve instruction and increased student achievement
- Awareness at all levels of data usage to drive decision making and monitor progress

- Specific and strategic planning supported at all levels in data and communication protocol
- Additional certification and trainings developed for areas of need – Math and Science K-5
- STAR summary data analysis completed to determine areas of need and identified next steps
- Online Assessment System (OAS) results and data analysis completed at the school and district level determining areas of need

Long-Term Plans to Sustain the Results/Impact of the Required Action:

The long-term plans to sustain the results and impact includes the cementing of the goals and priorities of the Strategic Plan and the continued use of the universal screener and benchmarks along with the 6-Step Data Protocol to inform instructional decisions and the provision of additional instructional support. Specific long-term plans to sustain the results of the Required Action are as follows:

- Use of funds for professional learning and supplemental instruction
- Use of funds for the continued use of the district’s universal screener
- Implementation of a new Student Information System which provides for access to data for all stakeholders
- Ensure regional support for decentralized model or Charter System model, local decision making and strategic planning based on student, school, and district data
- Ongoing use of the 6-Step Data and Communication Protocol to use data from a variety of assessments to inform instructional and operational decisions that result in improved and sustained academic achievement
- Ongoing training, support and monitoring by the Regional Superintendents, School Leadership and Operations (SLO), and Curriculum and Instruction (C&I)
- Ensure access and usage of Universal Screener and all available data at all levels from the classroom to the Board to support instructional and operational decisions

Required Action 12: *Develop systematic and systemic processes to ensure the continued implementation and sustainability of the continuous improvement efforts of the DeKalb County Board of Education in establishing and sustaining the Board as a highly effective governing body.*

Directives:

1. Eliminate the provisions in Policy BAB – School Board Governance that are in direct conflict with the roles and responsibilities of board members.
2. Develop and implement a Self-Assessment evaluation process to include Board Norms as well as to evaluate whether or not the Board’s decisions and actions are in accord with board policies and procedures and the Board’s defined roles and responsibilities.
3. Adopt and implement an annual professional learning plan to promote and sustain the Board’s capacity to govern the school system that includes full board training in accordance with state law.
4. Develop and implement a plan to collect feedback from stakeholders at specified intervals to determine the nature of the school system’s climate including the capacity to maintain trust between the system and its stakeholders. The Board and Superintendent must assess stakeholder survey results, the board’s self-assessment and staff perceptions to determine how much progress is sustained over a period of time. Further, the Board and Superintendent should analyze the results of crucial decisions (such as the cluster charter petition) to determine how lingering issues of mistrust and lack of transparency surrounding issues may be effectively addressed.

Performance Level score:

	Completed - All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The institution has documented evidence that supports fulfillment of the required action.
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Response and Evidence: Provide detail to support the Performance Level score noted above. The response should include: 1) the steps taken to address the Required Action; 2) the evidence supporting those steps; 3) the institution’s next steps with regard to the Required Action; 4) and any results of those steps.

Steps Taken to Address the Required Action/Directives:

Since taking office in March 2013, the DeKalb Board of Education has been mindful of previously held negative perceptions by stakeholders, one of which included board interference in day to day operations of the school district. To that end the board has been diligent in implementing newly written policies and establishing norms that significantly reduce the likelihood of recurring behaviors that would continue or perpetuate negative perceptions.

During June 2013, each DeKalb Board of Education member completed and satisfied all annual state required board member trainings. The Georgia School Boards Association provided the state approved courses and assisted the board to complete the hours. The training sessions included becoming a board member, roles and responsibilities and board eligibility. In September 2013 the Board approved the annual Board Member Professional Learning Plan. The DeKalb Board of Education is in fully compliance with state training requirements for new board members and will continue to comply with all state requirements moving forward.

Therefore, in June 2014 all Board of Education members have been registered and are expected to attend the 2014 Georgia School Boards Annual Conference to be held June 15-17 in Savannah, GA. The DeKalb Schools

superintendent will be a keynote speaker during the conference. Professional Learning hours earned during the conference will be used by the Board to meet state requirements for 2014-2015.

The board and superintendent will continue focus on improving student achievement by having a team attend the Harvard University Public Education Leadership Project (PELP) for the second consecutive year. The focus for the summer learning will be student academic growth and achievement. The problem of practice identified by DeKalb is listed below:

Harvard Public Education Leadership Project

Strategic Problem of Practice

Summer 2014

DeKalb County School District has under-performed on standardized assessments due to the District's failure to conduct a root cause analysis and develop a comprehensive strategy to address growth and achievement gaps. DeKalb's focus on growth and achievement should be redefined beyond racial subgroups with particular emphases on ensuring remediation and academic enhancement of all students.

In October 2013 each board member completed the GSBA Governance-Self Assessment. The results were discussed during a board retreat. It was determined that the results will be incorporated into an action plan for ongoing strategic planning goals, the superintendent's evaluation, financial planning, and board eligibility. An annual self-evaluation of the board's performance and procedures was included in Board of Education Policy BAB: Governance Policy that was adopted in November 2013. The action was taken to ensure that self-evaluation is sustained for current and future boards.

In early 2013, the Board engaged the services of McKenna, Long, and Aldridge (MLA) for governance training. On September 25, 2013, MLA provided governance training and made a presentation that led to the development and subsequent passage of Board of Education Policy BAB: Governance Policy in November.

Board Policy BAB was developed in order to address multiple governance issues that had been problematic for stakeholders as noted by MLA during stakeholder surveys and interviews. For example, since adopting the policy, the Board has continued to meet monthly as required and held retreats in February 2014 and in April 2014. The calendar for 2014 was adopted and is posted in eBoard. Additionally, the Board has been diligent in following procedures outlined in BAB regarding stakeholder (internal and external) communications. Most recently, the board ratified an ad hoc committee to collect information regarding the search for a new superintendent. The ad hoc committee will present findings and data to the full board for its consideration during June 2014.

The DeKalb County School District provides the public with multiple opportunities to give input to the board and superintendent. Board Policy BCBI: Public Participation in Board Meetings designates one hour prior to the beginning of each monthly business meeting to hear concerns from the community. Each speaker is allotted three minutes during the hour so that as many speakers as possible may be heard (for a maximum of 20 speakers.) That same policy requires that the public is provided with a minimum of three opportunities to address the board regarding any potential millage rate change. Stakeholders also have an opportunity to address the board regarding the annual budget. The district provides public notification of these meetings.

From February through May 1, the district asked stakeholders (parents, students, teachers, and administrators) to respond to surveys regarding the Career Technology (April-May) and the Gifted and High Achiever Programs (February-March). The surveys were a major component of the audit being conducted by the district. Survey results are being used in determining the current efficiency of the programs and to assess future needs.

Parents have on-going access to providing input and giving feedback to the district through media and the DeKalb website. The DeKalb Schools Mobile app was made available to parents and other stakeholders in early 2014. The mobile app provides parents with instant connection to the school district. It was used extensively during the recent winter storms to provide ongoing information regarding school closings and instructional updates.

The DeKalb County School District has been open to both start-up and conversion charter schools as demonstrated by the variety of both types of charters currently operating within the district. However, the Druid Hills Cluster Charter was denied by the Board on November 11, 2013, as “not being in the public interest”. The denial letter to the petitioners outlines DeKalb Board Policy IBB regarding public interest and further provides the reasons for the denial. The District concurs with the Petitioners that the status quo is unacceptable. The District acknowledges that several elements in the petition, such as increasing parental engagement and creating decentralized school-based leadership teams, can be valuable to student growth and achievement.

Therefore, we respectfully invited the Petitioners and their supporters to collaborate and partner with the District to implement two important initiatives that will transform and shape the future course and direction of the DeKalb County School District. The primary focus of the five-year Strategic Planning and School District Flexibility and Accountability Options processes is to foster and support collaboration and innovation. Their input and support is an asset in ensuring that all DeKalb students receive an excellent education. The charter petitioners, if they choose, can reapply during the next application period for charter clusters.

The State of Georgia has given all school districts until 2015 to apply for a flexibility option. One of the options is to become a charter system. In order to assist parents to become more knowledgeable about the various options, the district held a series of community meetings during the winter of 2014 explaining the options and giving parents an opportunity to provide input. It is expected that the board will receive a recommendation from the superintendent during May 2014 for the district to exercise its flexibility option to become a charter system.

In order to sharpen the focus, and to allow for the full range of flexibility, autonomy, and innovation across all of the district’s schools, the district will submit a charter petition to the Georgia Department of Education to seek Charter System status as required by O.C.G.A. 20-2-81.3. It is important to note that these needs described above are not just solely recognized and identified by the Superintendent. Instead, they have been found to be critical to the future success of the district as recognized and noted by the Flexibility Advisory Committee and the participants in the Community Engagement Sessions.

By choosing the Charter System option, the district and its schools do not limit themselves to only a few enumerated waivers as required by an Investing in Educational Excellence (IE²) contract, nor are they at the mercy and whim of the GA DOE and State legislature by remaining a Status Quo System and requesting no waivers. Additionally, by selecting the Charter System option, the district is not only allowing its performance metrics to be solely tied to the state’s accountability system. The decision may also allow for a measurement of growth by the GA DOE known as “Beating the Odds” to determine the overall success of the district. Increased flexibility and autonomy will be moved to the local school level to allow for innovation in exchange for increased student performance expectations.

It should be noted that a primary expectation found within DeKalb's charter will be that this autonomy and flexibility must be earned by schools. Local school leadership, both from administrators and school stakeholders, must be demonstrated. Where the capacity is present, a process will be established to give those schools the first opportunity to obtain that autonomy; however, if increased capacity is needed, the district will work with those schools to provide them the support necessary to be able to navigate through the autonomy. This capacity will come in the form of a local school governing council whose function, structure, and guidance will be defined by the charter petition.

All DCSD attendance lines will not be impacted by the decision to become a Charter System, and it is not a decision that supports inequity or exclusionary tactics.

Instead, in fact, it has been said that a Charter System petition is less about the flexibility and waivers from state law and GA DOE policies and regulations, and more about local school autonomy and governance.

Furthermore, the possibility exists for the district's charter to not only support flexibility, innovation, and autonomy at the local school level, but to also allow for the potential collaboration among schools within a Region as well as high school clusters.

The DeKalb County School district has been one of the state's leaders in supporting innovation through the establishment of both conversion and start-up charter schools. The Charter System option will allow all of the district's schools that same opportunity, and through the petition, bind the district to support local school autonomy and flexibility for all of our schools and children

The charter system option will provide individual DeKalb schools and parents of enrollees with an opportunity to have greater local control and decision-making within their buildings, which was a major concern for the Druid Hills Cluster Charter group.

Evidence to Support the Steps:

Board Policy BAB, BCBI

GSBA Summer 2014 Training

Harvard PELP Program

Harvard PELP Problem of Practice

Harvard Acceptance Letter

School Flexibility Presentation & Information - <http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/flexibility-options>

Board Retreat Agendas/Minutes – February 8, 2014 and April 4, 2014

MLA Governance Presentation 4.4.2014

DeKalb Mobile App:

For Apple devices: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/dekalb-county-school-district/id723921428?mt=8>

For Droid devices: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=net.parentlink.dekalb&hl=en>

Beanstalk Career Pathways Scope of Work - <http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/cta-program-parent-survey>

Career Pathways Audit Survey

Beanstalk Gifted Scope of Work
Gifted and High Achiever Audit Survey
The Bridge Initiative
Druid Hills Charter Cluster Denial Letter
Board Policy IBB

Next Steps for the Required Action:

The DeKalb County School District must continue to evaluate each policy in an on-going basis. The board will need to develop a specific plan such as a three year policy review cycle to ensure elimination of conflicts. The board must be diligent in completing an annual self-assessment and in utilizing the results. The Board must continue professional learning and develop a systematic plan to meet the needs of the board that is part of a comprehensive plan to unify the board. Finally, the Board must continue to provide parents with opportunities to be engaged with the district and utilize their feedback when making decisions.

Results/Impact of the Steps Taken:

The district has been more focused on student growth and achievement as a result of the initiatives begun in the Bridge Initiative. The Board is demonstrating transparency by following the parameters given in Policy BAB. Parents have been provided with instant access to the district from their mobile devices and their input is being used in decision-making.

Long-Term Plans to Sustain the Results/Impact of the Required Action:

In order to sustain the accomplishments made by the Board, there needs to be a continued focus on professional learning, continued self-assessment and evaluation, assurance of transparency by the Board to stakeholders and adherence to a three-year cycle of policy review and revision.

REQUIRED ACTION 13: *Develop and implement plans, policies and processes to monitor, evaluate and sustain the school systems' continuous improvement efforts.*

Directives:

1. Establish a plan to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the fiscal policies, procedures and operations of the school system, including a review of all the accounting and financial management systems and resources currently in use.
2. Routinely evaluate the policies adopted to ensure the proper adherence to the chain of command and the ongoing training implemented for the Board and staff to guarantee the sustainability of the changing culture resulting from rigorous adherence to said chain of command.
3. Adhere to plans for the implementation of a systemic change management process for system initiatives (vision, mission, strategic plan, curriculum, benchmark assessment, etc.) to facilitate continuous improvement and sustain effectiveness.
4. Incorporate in the Instructional Software Purchase (ISP) Process a systemic and systematic review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the ISPs at the school and school system levels to determine the impact of ISPs implemented in schools on student learning and achievement and ensure equitable learning opportunities for all students.
5. Develop and implement a plan for the migration to the new parent portal platform, include details and a timeline for implementation, training and communication.
6. Develop and implement the strategic plan with fidelity, maintain a systemic and systematic process of accountability based on the plan, and sustain governance and management structures designed to monitor, evaluate and communicate the school system's progress on the plan's implementation.

Performance Level score:

	Completed - All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The institution has documented evidence that supports fulfillment of the required action.
x	In Progress - The institution is currently engaged in actions and processes but has yet to fully implement steps necessary to address the required action.
	Has Not Addressed - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

Response and Evidence: Provide detail to support the Performance Level score noted above. The response should include: 1) the steps taken to address the Required Action; 2) the evidence supporting those steps; 3) the institution's next steps with regard to the Required Action; 4) and any results of those steps.

Steps Taken to Address the Required Action/Directives:

During the December 2013 AdvancED IPR Monitoring Visit, it was noted by the visiting committee and acknowledged by AdvancED in a letter to the DeKalb County School District (DCSD) that the district completed 8 of 11 identified Required Actions(RA), including RA 2, RA 4, RA 5, RA 7, RA 8, RA 9, RA 10, and RA 11. Additional directives were noted by AdvancED for most of the completed Required Actions and combined in RA 13. This directive required that the district provide plans for development, implementation and sustainability of the following Required Actions by the next IPR due in May, 2014: RA 4 (fiscal policies), RA 5 (chain of command), RA 7 (systemic change management process), RA 9 (instructional software purchase), RA 10 (parent portal) and (RA 11(strategic plan process)).

The district including the Board of Education, administration, SACS/AdvancED core team members, departments and schools have continued the work begun prior to and during the last IPR. The work required in RA 13 has been accomplished collaboratively among and between the board and district, according to Board of Education Policy: BAB. A common thread running through the majority of responses to the directives of RA 13 demonstrate how the workings of the district regarding initiative plans and processes are embedded in the strategic plan. They are based on Board of Education policies and were completed with approval by the Board of Education.

Although each of the directives required a variety of stakeholders to develop and implement the plans for addressing RA 13, the work was completed collaboratively involving a variety of stakeholders. The following information provides AdvancED with a progress check regarding work completed by DCSD since the December, 2013 IPR.

Fiscal Policies Management

The board held a retreat on February 8, 2014. During the retreat, the board discussed its role in the Budget Development Process. Upon post budget completion, the board will undertake structural and financial services and ask district administration to prepare a comprehensive plan based on best practices.

Currently, the board is monitoring the district's conversion to the state chart of accounts. The Board of Education is committed to making the necessary financial investments necessary to facilitate that process.

Current Standing of the FY2014 Budget:

As the district enters the final quarter of FY2014 the General Operating Budget indicates that the district will under expend the midyear budgeted amount of \$764 million by about \$10 million but will collect more than the anticipated revenues by \$15 million. If these trends hold, we should come out of FY2014 with a \$20+million end of year Fund Balance to have in place for the beginning of FY2015.

Forecast standing for the FY2015 Budget:

As the district begins to structure the FY2015 Budget, DeKalb County School District is anticipating an additional local revenue component of \$10+million. The state informed DeKalb to anticipate an additional \$15+million in QBE funding. The state has also indicated that there will be required additional retirement contributions, state minimum salary adjustments and additional allocations to our charter schools. Although the required additional state mandated expenses total approximately \$9 million, the district is structuring a General Operating Budget that targets no furlough days for teachers, maintains a growing fund balance, and allocates additional resources for public safety at schools. Presently the FY2015 Budget is near \$793 million, an approximate 3.8% increase over the FY2014 Budget.

Annual financial audit of accounting and financial systems:

The external financial audit conducted by the State Dept. of Audits and Accounts for FY2012 indicated that the district had overspent and actually was in a negative position (\$14 million) as of the end of FY2012. Unaudited amounts for the end of FY2013 indicated a positive \$10.8 million as shown on the DE046. This positive amount has since been verified during the course of the FY2013 State audit by auditors on site. When the FY2013 audit is completed the district should be able to stop the monthly submission of the Deficit Elimination plan to the State. The FY2013 audit will show, as it did in FY2012 problems in the areas of Internal Control, timely grant

administration/draw downs and adequate staffing to ensure sequestration of duties. The FY2013 audit will be completed much sooner in the fiscal cycle than FY2012. The FY2015 Budget is slated to add funding to begin the staff rebuilding process along with some software improvements to continue the Chart-of-Accounts conversion project.

Proper Adherence to the Chain of Command

The DeKalb County Board of Education has worked diligently to ensure that the superintendent is able to manage the day to day operations of the district without interference by the board. Newly adopted policies and decisions currently being made in light of those policies have demonstrated the board's commitment to fulfill roles and responsibilities necessary to function responsibly and govern effectively. The changes made to policies and procedures include the following:

- Engaged a governance expert (McKenna, Long, and Aldridge, MLA) to facilitate review and monitor on-going board actions.
- Approved the Board Norms document in May 2013,
- Adopted Board of Education Policy BAB: Board Governance November 2013.

In January 2014, the Board approved the Superintendent's request to conduct an audit of the Career Technology Program and also was informed of the district's intention to audit the Gifted and High Achiever Program. The board approved the district's partnership with Beanstalk Innovation to conduct the audit. The purposes for the audit included assurance that programs and services meet state and federal guidelines, follow state and local curriculum; promote opportunities for students to become college/career ready, meet fiscal priorities, follow Board of Education requirements for meeting academic needs and providing access/equity to all students in programs; and provide stakeholders (parents, students, teachers, and administrators) with an opportunity to provide input into current programs. The audit results will be provided to the Board of Education and community, once the Superintendent receives the data June 2014.

In January, 2014, at the request of the Superintendent, two senior cabinet members attended a conference with the Wallace Foundation to learn how to improve supervision of principals. The superintendent commissioned a committee to apply for a \$3,000,000 grant from the Wallace Foundation to fund a study to determine how the superintendent and regional superintendents could restructure the current supervision protocols of principals, in order to put more emphasis on principal leadership and local control to ultimately improve student achievement. The grant proposal was written by principals, regional supervisors, and district leaders in collaboration with the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI), the University of Georgia, and the University of West Georgia. It is also in-line with the Strategic Plan and serves a source for continuous improvement. The Wallace Foundation is expected to announce the grant awards June/July 2014.

In February 2014, the district began reviewing School Flexibility Options and provided stakeholders with multiple community engagement sessions to receive information regarding the Georgia Department of Education's (GADOE) 2015 deadline for selecting a flexibility option. It is expected that the Board will receive information from the Superintendent in May and will vote on the Superintendent's recommendation for the district. See Required Action 12 for detailed response on the district's intent to select the charter system option.

On April 2014, the board held a second retreat. During the retreat, the board utilized the services of McKenna, Long and Aldridge to assist in addressing and implementing "in progress" and "new" directives identified by AdvancED after the December 2013 IPR. Board members actively engaged in discussion regarding the AdvancED

required actions and took ownership for ensuring that board assume accountability for ongoing policy review development of an annual board training plan, and adherence to chain of command as a continued focus for current and future boards.

The board will establish a policy review process so that all policies are reviewed at least once every three years and make changes as necessary or needed. The board will review other systems to identify the use of best practices and will incorporate board/senior management discussion component to evaluate what is working and what is not working.

During the 2014 summer, the board and superintendent will continue focus on improving student achievement and send a team to attend the Harvard University Public Education Leadership Project (PELP). This will be the second consecutive year a cross functional team from DeKalb will participate in the Harvard Project. The focus for the summer learning will be student academic growth and achievement. The district identified the following as the problem of practice on which to work:

Harvard Public Education Leadership Project
Strategic Problem of Practice
Summer 2014

DeKalb County School District has under-performed on standardized assessments due to the District's failure to conduct a root cause analysis and develop a comprehensive strategy to address growth and achievement gaps. DeKalb's focus on growth and achievement should be redefined beyond racial subgroups with particular emphases on ensuring remediation and academic enhancement of all students.

Change Management Process

The Change Management for Continuous Improvement process is found in the District's Strategic Plan under Goal Area V: Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency. Within the Performance Objective titled "Develop an efficient organizational structure that supports a performance-based culture," the District identified an Accountability Initiative that addresses an ongoing, integrated process to manage performance, assess effectiveness, and provide support to ensure accountability across the District. A second initiative titled "Implement a Comprehensive Professional Learning Program" addresses decision making, change management, effective planning, budgeting, tracking student data, and personnel accountability – areas that are critical components in the implementation phase of the Change Management process.

Furthermore, the Performance Objective titled "Establish organizational processes that sustain a high-performance organization" includes an Organizational Effectiveness Initiative that addresses improved decision-making and change management through competence in three areas (a) making sense of information, (b) the role of collaboration in decision-making, and (c) successful execution and implementation of plans through the development of job-embedded training on the use of a decision-making model and a process of Change Management for Continuous Improvement.

In addition, several components of the Change Management process were utilized during 13 full days of training for 137 schools and centers with teams consisting of the principal, a parent, and two school members in the development of the Regional Improvement Process and the School Improvement Plans. The work began by identifying significant areas of need, aligning the needs to the District's Performance Objectives, and collecting data to substantiate the needs. The Plans contained specific improvement goals, performance measures aligned to the District's Performance Objectives, initiatives based on root cause analyses, actions (tasks and/or activities),

person(s) responsible for overseeing the initiatives (or changes) and collecting the data, and a schedule for completing the work.

Instructional Software Purchases

Following the December Monitoring Visit, the RA9 Committee was commended for their work on RA9, provided a copy of the January AdvancED Report to read, and informed that we have a new directive to address as part of a new Required Action (see above Directive 4 within RA13). As the district is focused on continuous improvement and the work of this new directive is inter-related to ongoing work already in progress within the district, the committee was informed that the work of Directive 4 within RA13 will be addressed as appropriate as we work on district priority items, including but not limited to, the strategic plan and the Growth and Achievement Model (GAM) Initiative.

Parent Portal Migration Plans

The DeKalb County School District (DCSD) launched the *Stay in the Know* campaign on September 23, 2013 to register parents/guardians and students for *Parent Portal* accounts. Parents/guardians and students have access to grades, assignment information, daily attendance, and direct messaging with teachers through the *Parent Portal*. As of April 21, 2014, there are 89,942 active student accounts.

During the *Stay in the Know* planning and implementation phases, the DeKalb County School District recognized the need to explore student information systems because eSIS had reached the end of sale and end of life due to company acquisition and subsequent termination of the product. In order to meet federal, state, and local requirements, DCSD publicly advertised for requests for proposals (RFPs) on June 5, 2013. The most responsive bidders conducted multiple presentations targeting specific user groups such as district-level staff, school-level staff, parents/guardians and students. Stakeholders evaluated the overall functionality, user friendliness and appearance of the teacher gradebook, parent portal, state reporting mechanism, secondary/elementary scheduling framework, and counselor tools. Based upon the feedback received from stakeholders, DCSD presented Infinite Campus to the Board of Education on October 7, 2013 for approval to purchase the student information system.

The Division of Information Technology officially assigned a project manager to oversee the transition from eSIS to Infinite Campus in October 2013. User group meetings with district and school staff began in October 2013 to discuss and define the following in Infinite Campus: transcripts, grading categories, grading weights, course program codes, report card and progress report formats, marking periods, diploma requirements, user permissions, attendance reports, and master schedule building process. During the user group meetings, Infinite Campus representatives provided hands-on demonstrations, addressed questions, and solicited feedback to personalize Infinite Campus specifically for DeKalb's users.

In January 2014, the District’s training plan commenced. The master timeline is as follows:

Infinite Campus Training Plan Overview	
Stakeholder Group	Training Month
Registrars and Data Clerks	January 2014
Middle School Assistant Principals	February 2014
Attendance and Discipline Clerks for Elementary, Middle and High Schools	March 2014
Nurses and Nurse Substitutes	
Middle and High School Counselors	
Middle and High School Assistant Principals	April 2014
Teacher Coaches for Elementary, Middle and High Schools	
Elementary School Assistant Principals, Counselors and Media Specialists	May 2014
Middle and High School Secretaries	
Principals and Central Office	June 2014
Principals, Central Office and Parents	July 2014
Teachers and New School-level Employees	August 2014
Teachers and New School-level Employees	September 2014

Grading Policy Committee Meeting Schedule

Meeting Date	Location	Time
March 3, 2014	C and I Conference Area	9:30 a.m.– 10:30 a.m. (*Face-to-Face/Virtual)
March 6, 2014	C and I Conference Area	1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
March 14, 2014	C and I Conference Area	1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. (*Virtual)
March 20, 2014	C and I Conference Area	9:00 a.m. – 10: 00 a.m. (Canceled due to GHSGT administration)
April 3, 2014	C and I Conference Area	9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

April 17, 2014	C and I Conference Area	9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. (*Virtual)
April 24, 2014	C and I Conference Area	9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
May 1, 2014	C and I Conference Area	9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
May 15, 2014	C and I Conference Area	9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
June 2, 2014	TBD	TBD

Develop and Implement the DeKalb County School District Strategic Plan

On August 5, 2013, the Board of Education of the DeKalb County School District voted to use a process developed by the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) and Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) to develop an updated strategic improvement plan for the school district. This comprehensive process engaged the community and all stakeholder groups to create universal ownership and support for district and school improvement.

On December 2, 2013, the Board of Education voted to approve Phase I of the district's strategic plan. Phase I included the vision, mission, beliefs, goal areas, and performance objectives. Beginning January, 2014, phase II began with the identification of action steps, measures to establish the balanced scorecard and accountability system, and budget alignment in the form of "Division" plans. In addition, Region Superintendents in collaboration with facilitators from GLISI and GSBA have engaged in a newly developed process to align school improvement plans with the district's strategic plan. To date, 137 school-based teams have engaged in two-full days of strategic planning to identify high leverage needs and align improvement efforts with the district's strategic plan.

On April 7, 2014, all 12-month employees participated in two hours of professional learning that was focused on developing an awareness of the Goal Areas, Performance Objectives, and Initiatives included the Strategic Plan.

Evidence to Support the Steps:

Fiscal Policies Management

February 8, 2014 - Board and Superintendent Retreat Agenda & Minutes

Proper Adherence to the Chain of Command

Board Policy BAB

Board Policy GAGD

The Bridge Initiative

The Wallace Foundation Proposal

January 6, 2014 Board of Education Business Meeting agenda

McKenna, Long, and Aldridge retreat presentation
Harvard PELP Letter & Problem of Practice
Beanstalk Innovation's plan for Career Technology audit
Beanstalk Innovation's plan for the Gifted and High Achiever audit

Change Management Process

- Strategic Plan – Goal Area V
- Data Collection Template
- Regional and School Improvement Plan template

Instructional Software Purchase

- <http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/instructional-software-programs>

Parent Portal Migration Plans

SACS Required Action 13(5) Sub-Committee can provide the following evidence to support the required action and directives:

- Meeting agendas
- Minutes/Notes
- Signature Logs
- FirstClass correspondences with Principals, district-level personnel, and school-level personnel
- Training Schedules
 - Master Timeline
 - Introduction to Campus Parent Portal Flyer
 - Campus Parent Portal Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
 - Professional Development Artifacts (beginning January 2014)
 - PDSTV24 Bulletins (eSIS Parent Portal – current system)
 - Web page banners and links (eSIS Parent Portal – current system)
 - DeKalb App, K-12 Alerts, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram announcements (eSIS Parent Portal – current system)
 - IHA-Regulation Drafts

District Strategic Plan

- Agenda
- School Improvement Plan
- Sign-in sheets

Next Steps for the Required Action:

Fiscal Policies Management

The next steps to ensure appropriate fiscal policies management include the following:

1. Engage a governance expert to facilitate review and on-going monitoring of Board actions.
2. Monitor the conversion to state Chart of Accounts.
3. Be prepared to make financial investments necessary to facilitate that process.
4. Institute policy training for new Board members and will periodic policy training/review as part of annual whole Board training.
5. During post-budget completion, the board will undertake structural and financial analysis of systems supporting financial services and ask administration to prepare a comprehensive plan based on best practices.
6. Post-budget completion, the board will undertake structural and financial analysis of systems supporting financial services and ask administration to prepare a comprehensive plan based on best practices.
7. Evaluate opportunities for metro Atlanta school boards and superintendents to meet periodically to discuss governance and financial oversight issues under the auspices of a trusted third party.

Proper Adherence to the Chain of Command

The DeKalb County School District must ensure that the actions put in place by the current board are sustained. To that end the board will continue to review policies on a regular basis, create a protocol for ensuring that annual board training continues, continue to follow Board Norms and continue to hold board members and stakeholders accountable to follow policies. The board must institute policy training for new board members and provide periodic policy training/review as part of annual whole board training. The board must also evaluate the value of a board/school district scorecard with regard to governance management issues.

Change Management process

Once the District's Strategic Plan, Regional Improvement Process and School Improvement Plans are completed and approved (where applicable) by the Board of Education, additional job-embedded professional learning will take place to ensure the effective utilization of the Change Management for Continuous Improvement process throughout the organization.

Instructional Software Purchase

As the district's strategic planning process continues to move forward at the division, region and building levels, we will continue to look for ways to address RA13 Directive 4 within this work, including but not limited to refining the Instructional Software Program (ISP) selection and removal process as well as ensuring a Return on Investment of ISPs is occurring. In addition, at the beginning of first semester of the 14-15 SY, principals and central office departments will be asked to: (1) update their existing ISP information so online graphic/information is current and (2) continue to train and inform stakeholders about the ISP online graphic/tool.

Parent Portal Migration Plans

The Division of Information Technology will continue to offer professional learning activities to promote awareness until May 2017. As a result of the technology needs assessment, various training delivery models will be utilized to address the learning styles and levels of understanding of the stakeholders such as: face-to-face, synchronous online, asynchronous online, blended learning, and personalized learning paths. These professional learning activities will focus on introducing Infinite Campus, developing technology skills, and learning educational technology concepts. As stakeholders transition from eSIS to Infinite Campus, the professional learning activities will promote a long-term understanding of the components of Infinite Campus.

DeKalb will fully implement Campus Parent Portal and re-launch the “Stay in the Know” campaign in August 2014. The communication tools to encourage and motivate parents/guardians and students to begin using Campus Parent Portal will include, but will not be limited to, the DeKalb App, PDS-TV24, K-12 alerts, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, posters to display in schools and public libraries, Web page banners, marquees, calling posts, Board meeting announcements, mass mailings, report card messages, PTA/PTO meetings, and parent/guardian workshops.

The Campus Parent Portal documents will be simplified and translated into multiple languages based upon feedback from stakeholders to meet the needs of the users. All correspondences will be translated in Amharic, Arabic, Burmese, Bengali, French, Chinese, Nepali, Vietnamese, Spanish and Somali to ensure communication between the District and home and the local school and home.

The Grading Policy Committee’s formal recommendation will be presented in June 2014 to Superintendent, Mr. Thurmond. The IHA-Regulation will be implemented in August 2014.

District Strategic Plan

The following steps are the required next steps the district must take in the implementation of the strategic plan:

- Completion of School Improvement Plans
- Board of Education approval of metrics developed for the Balanced Scorecard which is the basis for the accountability plan
- Community meeting to codify initiatives and performance measures or accountability metrics
- Development of accountability and monitoring structure around the work of a Strategic Plan Management Committee. The Strategic Plan Management Committee will use reports against the annual operational plans to review progress towards meeting the strategic aims and objectives. A process to ensure that each Division that is doing the work is keeping appropriate records so that progress can be assessed will be developed. The Strategic Plan Management Committee will
 - (1) ensure that activities are kept within the parameters of the agreed strategic aims and objectives;
 - (2) ensure that activities are consistent with the vision, mission and core beliefs;
 - (3) keep under review internal and external policies, systems or structures which may require changes; and
 - (4) provide regularly scheduled progress reports.

Results/Impact of the Steps Taken:

Fiscal Policies Management

The fund balance is increasing. Unaudited amounts for the end of FY2013 indicated a positive \$10.8 million as shown on the DE046. This positive amount has since been verified during the course of the FY2013 State Audit by auditors on site. When the FY2013 audit is completed the district should be able to stop the monthly submission of the Deficit Elimination plan to the State.

The FY2015 Budget is slated to add funding to begin the staff rebuilding process along with some software improvements to continue the Chart-of-Accounts conversion project.

Proper Adherence to the Chain of Command

The culture of micromanagement by the Board of Education has been diminished. Plans and policies have been put into practice which ensures compliance by the Board of Education and other stakeholders regarding nepotism,

chain of command and board training. As a result of improvements to board operations, more effective governance is becoming enculturated.

Change Management Process

With the Change Management for Continuous Improvement process now embedded in the District's Strategic Plan, this is the first step for ensuring that the process will be implemented consistently throughout the district. Evidence that this process is becoming a systemic approach for initiatives going forward, is indicated in the work that is being done at the Regional and School levels—development of a process at these levels and creation of the templates needed to get through the process using the District's Change Management process as the initial guide.

Instructional Software Purchase

By looking at Directive 4 of RA13 as part of our existing work, rather than as a separate “to do” item, we have been challenged to think about our continuous improvement holistically, rather than through silos. Additionally, this approach has forced connections to the strategic plan by bringing into alignment district “big ticket” improvement items, making it the most important vehicle for our district improvement efforts.

Parent Portal Migration Plan

Research shows that a strong, school-parent-community connection is essential in building and sustaining school improvement. Infinite Campus is one of the digital tools purchased by the District to promote parental engagement and the school-home connection. Campus Parent Portal will engage families in meaningful ways by keeping them informed of their children's academic progress as required by AdvancED Standard 3: Teaching and Assessing for Learning; Indicator 3.8.

District Strategic Plan

By undertaking a regularly scheduled system of monitoring, the Strategic Plan Management Committee members have the opportunity to adjust the operational plans to ensure that concerns are addressed quickly and initiatives remain on track for implementation of the strategic plan with fidelity.

This will be carried out through regular operational reports on the Division action steps developed to complete each initiative. For purposes of accountability, the Management Committee will ensure that reporting is regular and that discussions are properly recorded. Full implementation of the strategic plan with fidelity with an ongoing process of learning, an embedded process of continual improvement, and aligned school improvement plans will lead to sustainable growth and achievement for the DeKalb County School District.

Long-Term Plans to Sustain the Results/Impact of the Required Action:

Fiscal Policies Management

Long-term plans to sustain the results of the Required Action include the change to fully implementing the use of the state Chart of Accounts and ensuring that the board is prepared to make the investments necessary to fund that process. The board must include increasing the fund balance and developing plans to begin trial zero-based budgeting in FY 2016, and also look to begin trial zero-based budgeting for FY 2016.

Proper Adherence to the Chain of Command

Long-term plans to sustain the work accomplished by the Board of Education include development of a three-year policy review cycle, institute policy training and make it an item for periodic full board training, ensure on-going self-assessment by the Board of Education, and implement a comprehensive plan for unifying the Board of Education.

Change Management Process

As long as there is support from the Board of Education and the Change Management for Continuous Improvement process is embedded in the District's Strategic Plan, the Results/Impact of this Required Action will sustain itself. The development process at the region and school levels is already in progress. However, it is imperative that a system is in place to ensure accountability for the initiatives at the district level as well.

Once this is done, the district will truly have created the culture of Change Management, which will help in moving the district to becoming a high-performing organization, as research indicates.

Instructional Software Purchase

By tying the selection, purchase, renewal or removal process of ISPs to the strategic plan, we will ensure that purchases are aligned to specific goals, performance objectives, initiatives, and performance measures, making it possible to determine the actual impact of ISPs implemented in schools on student learning and achievement as well as ensure equitable learning opportunities is occurring for all students.

Parent Portal Migration Plans

Currently, students have the ability to monitor their academic progress and attendance using minimal steps through their current Parent Portal accounts. Infinite Campus will allow parents and students to access demographics, schedules, assignments, assessment scores, grades, completed standards and credits, attendance, behavior, transportation and nutrition information, unofficial transcripts, fees, district-level and school-level notifications, classroom news, direct messaging, surveys, course registration tools, and reports in multiple languages from a computer, IOS device, and/or Android device. In an effort to ensure long-term sustainability, the Student Information System (SIS) program will automatically create a unique, student-specific activation code needed to create a user name and password within 24 hours of a student enrolling in a school.

District Strategic Plan

Implementation of the strategic plan with fidelity, maintenance of a systemic and systematic process of accountability based on the plan, and sustainable governance and management structures designed to monitor, evaluate and communicate the school system's progress on the plan's implementation.

REQUIRED ACTION 14: *Continue to implement, evaluate and adapt the system’s technology plan to ensure an effective and equitable distribution of technology throughout the system and its long-term sustainability.*

Directives:

1. Adhere to the systemic process designed for conducting an annual technology audit to maintain a current perspective about the needs of the school system as a basis for developing the annual technology plan required by the Georgia Department of Education.
2. Create policies and procedures that facilitate the Board’s consideration of the data contained in the annual technology audit to inform the equitable allocation of technology throughout the district.
3. Develop a structure to implement the Technology Training Plan as a systemic process within the school system with provisions for using data to determine progress and guide decision-making.
4. Create and implement a “stakeholder engagement” plan to collect feedback on the system’s Technology Plan, including monitoring and reporting on the annual feedback received describing variables such as the nature and number of participants, timeframe, and description of the engagement.

Performance Level score:

	Completed - All necessary and appropriate actions have been taken and evaluated. The institution has documented evidence that supports fulfillment of the required action.
x	In Progress - The institution is currently engaged in actions and processes but has yet to fully implement steps necessary to address the required action.
	Has Not Addressed - The institution has not taken any action at this time.

Response and Evidence: Provide detail to support the Performance Level score noted above. The response should include: 1) the steps taken to address the Required Action; 2) the evidence supporting those steps; 3) the institution’s next steps with regard to the Required Action; 4) and any results of those steps.

Steps Taken to Address the Required Action/Directives:

As a result of the 2014 IPR review, the technology requirements for Required Action 8 were deemed completed by SACS/AdvancED. However, AdvancED added Required Action 14 to that same report with four specific directives for implementation of the DeKalb County School District (DCSD) Technology Plan. The directives are addressed in the information below.

2013 – 2014 Technology Audit

As outlined in the “Determine Needs” phase of the district’s Comprehensive Management Structure, the Information Technology Division has been in the process of completing the 2013 – 2014 State Technology Inventory as required by the Georgia Department of Education. Data collection for the 2013 – 2014 State Technology Inventory was completed on April 25.

SPLOST IV Projects

The Board of Education allocated \$9.3 million to increase the capacity and efficiency of the district’s local area network to effectively meet the needs of the district’s 21st Century Learning Environment. These enhancements affect the entire school district ensuring equity for all schools. In addition, the Information Technology Division is

currently monitoring the status of the Goals and Benchmarks section of the current DCSD Technology Plan to ensure that project currently being implemented are within the confines of the Goals and Benchmarks.

DCSD Technology Academy

As outlined in the “Develop 3-Year Training Plan” phase of the district’s Comprehensive Management Structure, the district is beginning the implementation stage for the Technology Academy. Currently, the Instructional Technology Department has designed and developed core courses mandated in the district’s Technology Training Plan. These core courses were identified by using data from the Technology Audit as well as stakeholder feedback. The Technology Academy will be the vehicle that moves the district’s technology training plan from the development stage to full implementation. Classes are scheduled to begin during the 2014 Summer Semester.

In order to prepare for the Evaluation phase of the Comprehensive Management Structure, the Instructional Technology Department met with the Curriculum and Instruction Division to begin mapping out a technology integration continuum model that describes instructional practices for effective technology integration at designated milestones. This continuum will be aligned with the district’s Technology Training Plan and will provide teachers and administrators with a guide for evaluation and professional learning goal development.

Further supporting implementation of the district’s Technology Training Plan, the Instructional Technology Department is currently providing face-to-face training per school to support the district’s Interactive Whiteboard (21st Century Classroom) Project. This project is deploying interactive boards to 2200 instructional units (inside building school buildings and portable units), allowing every classroom to have equitable access to this technology tool. The goal of the training is to ensure teachers are prepared to integrate interactive whiteboard technology within the 21st Century Learning Environment.

Strategic Planning Process

The district added a Digital Learning Initiative for the district in Goal Area 2: Stakeholder Engagement of the district’s Strategic Plan. The purpose of this initiative is to create educational opportunities that increase awareness of the district’s shared vision for technology and learning for all stakeholders. This shared vision created a direct connection with the first phase of the Comprehensive Management Structure, which is to “Develop and Communicate the 21CLE Model”.

The district also increased opportunities for stakeholder engagement by strengthening its communications infrastructure. Improvements included introducing an official District App that provides stakeholders with district information on mobile devices. In addition, social media channels inform stakeholders of events and allow for comments and feedback. The Information Technology Division and Communications Department consistently monitor these new communications channels.

Parental Involvement Workshops and Conferences

The Information Technology Division provided several Cyber safety workshops for various segments of the DCSD community on from December 2013 through April 2014. These interactive and informational sessions educated students and parents on how to use the Internet responsibly and safely. In February 2014, the Information Technology Division hosted a Vendor Fair within the district’s annual Technology Fair. The Vendor Fair supports the Digital Learning Initiative outlined in Goal Area 2: Stakeholder Engagement of the district’s strategic plan. It

provided an opportunity for parents to gain an awareness of the technology tools that the district procures and utilizes to support teaching and learning.

Surveys for Parental Feedback

Information Technology and Curriculum and Instruction Divisions have developed surveys for parents to provide feedback on district-level instructional software purchases. These surveys will be shared with parents and students in May 2014. The purpose is to collect qualitative data from stakeholders evaluating instructional software and will be used in the “Determine Needs Phase” of the Comprehensive Management Structure.

Evidence to Support the Steps:

- Technology Audit Memos
- Technology Audit Data Collection Tool (Survey Monkey Form)
- Board Agenda Items (Approved):
 - <https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/ViewMeetingOrder.aspx?S=4054&MID=36249>
 - <https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/ViewMeetingOrder.aspx?S=4054&MID=36249>
 - <https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/ViewMeetingOrder.aspx?S=4054&MID=36249>
 - <https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/ViewMeetingOrder.aspx?S=4054&MID=31846>
 - <https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/ViewMeetingOrder.aspx?S=4054&MID=36250>
 - <https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/ViewMeetingOrder.aspx?S=4054&MID=36250>
- Training Plan URL:
 - <http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/www/documents/advanced-sacs-accreditation-review/dcsd-technology-training-plan-proposal.pdf>
- Technology Academy Information (*Summer 2014 Course Outlines*)
- Cyber safety Workshop Information
- District App News Story (Fox 5 News):
 - <http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/www/news/?p=98>
- District App Announcement for Stakeholders:
 - <http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/www/documents/news-and-info/app-launch.pdf>
- Technology Fair Article
- State Technology Fair Winners:
 - https://eboard.eboardsolutions.com/meetings/TempFolder/Meetings/2014%20Technology%20Winners%20Brochure_523526f5fvlpjastv5h1bgvbo5n55.pdf

Next Steps for the Required Action:

The district will use the State Technology Inventory data to complete the 2013 –2014 Technology Audit Executive Summary. These documents will be completed and submitted to the district’s Chief Information Officer by May 20, 2014. In accordance to Board Policy BAB protocol for sharing information with the Board of Education, the district’s Chief Information Officer will present the district’s State Technology Inventory data as well as the Technology Audit Executive Summary to the Superintendent. Upon approval by the Superintendent, the Technology Audit Executive Summary will be presented to the Board of Education. The Board of Education will review and vote to approve the Technology Audit Executive Summary.

DCSD Technology Academy

The district will implement the Technology Academy during the 2014 Summer Semester. Data variables from the Technology Academy such as participation, mastery and stakeholder feedback will be evaluated to determine the necessary adjustments needed for future courses. In addition, a focus group will convene to develop the technology integration continuum model.

Technology Advisory Committee Kick-off Meeting

During the development of the 2012 – 2015 Technology Plan, the Information Technology Division commissioned an advisory committee consisting of district and school level staff, parents, students, and community members. During the 2014 Fall Semester, this advisory committee will begin working on the 2016 – 2019 district-wide technology plan. This process will include a series of meetings and focus groups engaging all stakeholders.

Results/Impact of the Steps Taken:

The Technology Audit process is providing data for continuous analysis of the district's technology infrastructure. This data analysis is directly impacting the decisions being made to ensure technology procurement is providing equitable access to all students. This process directly supports the Operational Effectiveness goal area of the district's strategic plan.

Furthermore, the Technology Academy is ready for full implementation and will more fully prepare stakeholders to support the integration of technology into instruction. It is important to note that Technology Academy courses are aligned with needs identified by the Technology Audit as well as stakeholder feedback. This provides on-going congruent alignment with the district's Comprehensive Management Process. The Technology Academy directly supports the Staff Efficacy and Excellence goal area of the district's strategic plan.

Lastly, stakeholder engagement is being supported through activities and mediums designed to provide awareness of the district's technology infrastructure and how it supports teaching and learning. This process directly supports the Stakeholder Engagement and Internal and External Communications goal areas of the district's strategic plan.

Long-Term Plans to Sustain the Results/Impact of the Required Action

The district will continue to adhere to the Comprehensive Management Structure to manage the district's technology infrastructure effectively. The district will also continue the implementation of the Technology Training Plan through the Technology Academy. Stakeholder engagement will be facilitated by ensuring all stakeholder groups are active participants in the decisions that impact the district's technology infrastructure and instructional technology training plan.

Conclusion

In January, 2014 DeKalb County School District received the results of the IPR Monitoring Visit that was conducted in December, 2013. In the report, AdvancED, noted that DeKalb was making significant progress and had completed eight of eleven Required Actions and Directives assigned in January, 2013. However, AdvancED noted that three of the Required Actions (RA 1, 3, and 6) were still “In Progress” and identified three new Required Actions (RA 12, 13, and 14.) to complete. Therefore, the following statements provide a summary of the work accomplished to address the Required Actions and move the district forward through the continuous improvement process.

- The Board of Education began the process to develop a plan to unify the board during 2013. Policies were reviewed, revised and adopted. A set of Board Norms was written and adopted. The board engaged the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) to facilitate state-mandated board training. The board also partnered with McKenna, Long, and Aldridge (MLA) to provide governance and leadership training. Knowledge and skills gained from the training was utilized by the board to develop, adopt and implement Board of Education Policy BAB: Governance Policy. Policy BAB, Board Norms, other policies and trainings provided a framework for unifying the board. The framework was used as the basis for the development of a comprehensive plan. On April 4, 2014, the board held a retreat. At that time, MLA shared a presentation outlining AdvancED required actions and directives, facilitated a discussion about each one and provided insight into the development of a comprehensive plan. The board used the information gained over the past year to develop an outline of a comprehensive plan that will be fully developed and implemented.
- The board utilized a retreat on April 4, 2014 to decide how to approach the required action to eliminate conflicts in roles and responsibilities in Board Policy BAB. It was decided that the board will establish a policy review process that ensures that policies are reviewed on a three-year cycle. The board will examine potential role conflicts with reference to best practices. The board will institute policy training for new board members and will include policy training/review to ensure that it becomes part of the annual whole board training plan. The board will evaluate the value of a Board/School District scorecard with regard to governance and management issues. The steps taken by the board to commit to policy review, whole board policy training, and self-assessment will ensure that policies are monitored and existing or potential conflicts are addressed and resolved.
- The district has developed and is utilizing a robust diagnostic assessment program. The board approved the purchase of a universal screener and the district implemented its use. Trainings were held and schools currently use the data from the screener to improve growth and achievement of all students by using the 6-Step Data Protocol. During 2014, the district implemented the Bridge Initiative, developed the Growth and Achievement Model (GAM), and implemented Response to Intervention (RtI) support teams in all schools, who provide training to faculty and staff members in individual schools. In May, 2014, the Universal Screener will be used to ascertain student cumulative growth and achievement in reading and math from August to May. During the June 2014 Summer Leadership Conference focus will be placed on GAM and using the 6-Step Data Protocol. Training on using the Universal Screener and RtI will continue through the summer and throughout SY 2014-2015. Implementation of the district’s Strategic Plan with goals and initiatives will ensure that the diagnostic assessment plan of the district will continue. The impact of the focus on diagnosing and improving student performance has made a significant difference in how

instruction and student progress are monitored, which will ultimately yield an increase in student achievement.

- In order to ensure implementation and sustainability of continuous improvement efforts, the board has diligently utilized governance and leadership professional learning from Georgia School Boards Association and McKenna, Long and Aldridge to increase knowledge and skills. Governance and leadership training assisted the board to develop Board Policy BAB: Governance Policy. The superintendent and a team of cross functional district leaders attended Harvard Public Education Leadership Project during the summer of 2013 and are scheduled to attend in the summer of 2014. Attendees identify a district problem and work to develop a system-wide solution. The board provides multiple opportunities for stakeholders to share input including a designated citizen comments time slot during monthly Board of Education meetings, public budget and millage hearings, community meetings, and local school councils. The DCSD website is used to gather survey data from parents. In January, 2014 the district added a mobile device application making the district immediately accessible to stakeholders. In order to provide more local control to parents over school finances and decision making, the district is exploring flexibility options, one of which includes becoming a charter system.
- The board and district have continued to monitor budget and finances and implement district-wide initiatives. Financially, the district is making progress to rebuild the fund balance. The 2012 deficit has been eliminated and verified by auditors. The FY budget process is in progress and plans are being made to eliminate furlough days. Utilization of strategic planning is becoming a part of the culture of the district and software purchases are being aligned to the goals and objectives of the strategic plan. The change management process is embedded in the strategic plan. The focus on the strategic plan will force the board and district to structure funds and initiatives on student achievement rather than silos of individual interests. A plan to migrate the parent portal to the new student information system is being implemented and will provide parents with greater access to student information.
- Equity in assignment of technology was included in the strategic plan. A management structure was developed and is being used to determine how technology is distributed equitably throughout the district. A Technology Academy, open to all schools, becomes operational in June. It will provide the vehicle the IT Department will use to ensure that technology is used to assist teachers to provide instruction and students to learn in 21st century classrooms.

The district is moving forward in continuous improvement. The board and superintendent are working collaboratively to remove obstacles that have created a negative impact on the district. The continuous improvement work is being successful. The letter below from the superintendent is a concise view of the good work being done on behalf of students in DeKalb.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Michael L. Thurmond, Superintendent

Budget/Fiscal Management

The district addressed budget, fiscal, and legal issues that directly impact the financial resources and fund balance:

- a. ***Implemented Specific Budget Process Improvements*** include the following:
 - Eliminated the FY2012 General Fund deficit of \$13.9 million (audited) with an indicated (unaudited) fund surplus of \$10.8 million as of the end of FY2013
 - Maintained strict expense control during FY2013 resulting in revenues collected exceeding total expenses by \$25+ million
 - Reduced FY2012 deficit by \$10.8 million
 - Adopted a FY2014 balanced budget targeting specific cuts (\$18.5 million) and educational enhancements (\$27.3 million).
 - Hired experienced CFO and additional Finance Division staff
 - Instituted quarterly Budget Review meetings with Division Heads and other senior staff to examine actual and projected expenses relative to budgets
 - Added Variance Analysis Report to monthly Financial Report submitted to BOE Members
 - Instituted Project of conversion to recommended State Chart-of-Accounts (Estimated completion 7/2014)

- b. ***Addressed the FY2012 Audit*** including material weaknesses relative to the recently released State FY2012 Audit (covering 7/1/2011 through 6/30/2012) which includes the following:
 - Reporting and accounting improvements
 - Purchasing of new school-based accounting software has been purchased and is being installed
 - Rewriting of accounting standard operating procedures
 - Examining procedures, policies and processes to improve internal controls

- c. ***Heery Lawsuit Settlement Agreement*** – The DeKalb County Board of Education reached a settlement with Heery International in a six-year litigation concerning school construction programs. Heery will contribute \$7.5 million to the DeKalb County School District to support the education needs of the county’s school children. Both parties dropped their claims against the other and neither party will admit liability in the case.

District Accreditation

- a. The District was removed from accredited-probation February 2014 after the following:
 - Hosted the AdvancED mid-term review on May 15-17, 2013 and received commendations of significant and noteworthy improvements.
 - Hosted the AdvancED Monitoring Review Team on December 8-10, 2013 and presented evidence and artifacts of completion of the 11 Required Actions and Directives.
 - Completed intense work to address the required actions, which the board and district have done on behalf of the students of the DeKalb County School District.

Growth and Achievement

The district directed resources and refocused and implemented strategic conversations and professional learning related to academic growth and achievement for all students.

- a. ***The Bridge Initiative*** – Designed and implemented The Bridge Initiative, launched in September 2013, as a vision of the Superintendent to ensure a comprehensive, cross-functional, integrated approach to identifying and addressing the needs of high-achieving, marginal, and under-performing students who are also categorized as economically disadvantaged, is founded upon thorough review and analysis of the data. The goals of the Bridge Initiative were the direct result of the analysis of data and address 1) student achievement, 2) teacher and leader quality, and 3) parent engagement.
- b. ***Growth and Achievement Model***–Strategically refocused and prioritized conversations about academic achievement to ensure every student demonstrates academic growth and achievement. The strategy included professional learning for principals, assistant principals, teachers, and central office staff. The professional learning included strategies for identifying and addressing individual student needs using the district universal screener in reading and math.
- c. ***Budget Enhancements Around Academic Achievement*** – Enhanced the FY2014 Budget to include \$27.2 million in enhancements that directly support academic achievement. The improvements include \$5.3 million in new textbooks and the rebind/replenish of existing textbooks; \$1.1 million for a student diagnostic needs assessment software system; \$350K in student wraparound services; \$1 million for the career pathways initiative; \$500K for language interpreters; \$300k for band uniforms and instrument repair; \$1 million for meritorious attendance program; other enhancements included \$12.6 million to restore the fund balance, \$3 million for one furlough day, \$150K in central office centralization, \$250K for bus mechanics, \$100K for a principal supplement, and \$1.5 million for technology enhancement to improve the financial system. Additionally, \$18.5 million in FY2014 cuts included: \$6 million cuts in legal fees, \$5.3 million in central office vacancies cuts, and \$7.2 million in central office budget cuts.

Improved School Support and Services

The district has addressed organizational effectiveness and efficiency by addressing services that directly impact our students.

- a. ***Improved Transportation Services***
 - Improved operations and efficiency of bus transportation including change in management
 - Deployed 10-brand-new diesel buses in March 2013
 - Deployed, first-ever, 2- compressed natural gas (CNG) buses in October 2013 County-District natural gas-fuel partnership. More CNG buses in the future. (Note: 1 bus damaged in November field-trip accident. Driver not at fault. Driver and teacher protected students)
 - Approved and install the GPS vehicle tracking system. This system provides real-time location of all school buses and service vehicles with field testing of new GPS system in spring 2014
- b. ***Implemented the DeKalb App***

The DeKalb App improves communication with parents, families, and stakeholders

- c. ***Enhanced Wireless Access Infrastructure Project***

The Information Technology Division completed the Wireless Access Infrastructure Project in all 137 schools, centers, and departments. The project started in February, 2013, and was completed in November, 2013.

d. Created More Citizen Oversight for SPLOST and Implemented Major Construction Projects

- Miller Grove addition completed October 2013
- MLK, Jr. HS addition and renovation completes January 2014
- New Chamblee Charter HS completes January 2014
- New Fernbank construction underway for August 2015 opening
(Old Fernbank demolition begins January 2014)
- New Peachcrest construction underway for August 2015 opening
(Old Peachcrest demolition begins January 2014)

Re-Ignited Major Planning and Organizational Work

The district re-ignited major conversations that are important to the strategic direction of the school district

- a. Implemented the Strategic Planning Phase I*** – The DeKalb Board of Education approved Phase I of the Strategic Planning Process. Phases 2, 3, 4 will proceed with a final completion date slated for June 30, 2014. Track our progress on the district's website.
- b. Initiated Conversations Related to School Flexibility Options*** – The Superintendent has appointed a School Flexibility Options Committee to begin the work to meet the state mandate of selecting flexibility options by June 30, 2015. The school flexibility options provide the ability for the district to request increased flexibility in exchange for increased accountability. The options include Investing in Educational Excellence (IE²) School System, Charter System, Status Quo School System, plus other options of System of Charter Clusters, System of Charter Schools, and Strategic School System. The committee is comprised of parents, community, board members, and employees. The first meeting was held on December 13, 2013 and they will continue to meet throughout 2014. The Superintendent will make a recommendation to the Board in April 2014.
- c. Sought Grant Opportunity for College and Career Academy*** – The Board of Education voted to approve the district to seek a State Grant to support the establishment of a DeKalb School District College and Career Academy. The District has partnered with Georgia Piedmont Technical College and DeKalb business leaders to propose the implementation of a DeKalb College & Career Academy. This College and Career Academy will be the first in Georgia to be established in a large urban district with a high concentration of economically disadvantaged students. The College and Career Academy is part of the District's Bridge Initiative to improve student achievement.

About AdvancED®

Background

Dedicated to advancing excellence in education worldwide, AdvancED provides accreditation, research, and professional services to 30,000 institutions in more than 70 countries. AdvancED provides accreditation under the seals of the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI).

The Accreditation Process

To earn and maintain accreditation, an institution must:

1. Meet the AdvancED Standards and accreditation policies.

Institutions demonstrate adherence to the AdvancED Standards/Indicators and accreditation policies, which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for educational institutions to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.

2. Engage in continuous improvement.

Institutions implement a process of continuous improvement focused on improving student performance and organizational effectiveness.

3. Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external review.

Institutions engage in a planned process of ongoing internal review and self-assessment. In addition, institutions host an External Review team at least once every five years. The team evaluates the institution's adherence to the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and policies, assesses the efficacy of the institution's improvement process and methods for quality assurance, and identifies Powerful Practices and provides Required Actions to help the institution improve. The institution acts on the team's Required Actions and submits an Accreditation Progress Report at prescribed intervals following the External Review. Monitoring Reviews may be conducted during this time to ensure that the institution is making progress toward the Required Actions.

Special Reviews

At any point, a Special Review may be conducted in response to complaints or information about the institution and/or its system (district, board, or corporation) to determine adherence to the AdvancED Accreditation Standards and policies. The institution and/or its system must respond to the Required Actions of the Special Review Team. Monitoring Teams may be sent to the institution and/or its system at regular intervals to ensure that progress is being made toward the Special Review Team's Required Actions. Both Special Review Teams and Monitoring Teams are empowered to make accreditation recommendations based upon evidence obtained during said review.

A Process of Continuous Improvement

The AdvancED accreditation process engages institutions in a continuous process of self-evaluation and improvement. The overall aim is to help institutions be the best they can be on behalf of the students they serve.