



## News Release

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### **DEKALB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT IS MAKING ‘MATERIAL PROGRESS,’ SACS SAYS IN NEW REPORT**

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DEKALB COUNTY, GA (July 18, 2014) --The DeKalb County School District continues to make “material progress” in confronting recent challenges and in completing “required actions” mandated by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, according to a recent report by AdvancEd, the parent of SACS.

“Overall, the school system is making great strides in creating steps that focus on serving the needs of the children in the DeKalb County School District,” AdvancEd wrote in the report following a three-day visit in May.

“We are encouraged that AdvancEd has taken note of the progress we’ve made in stabilizing the system and re-directing our focus on the growth and achievement of our 100,000 students,” said Michael Thurmond, superintendent of the DeKalb County School District. “We will continue to build on our momentum, because there is much more work that needs to be done.”

According to SACS, “Board meetings are once again focused on the needs and issues impacting the growth and academic success of the students of DeKalb County. The meetings are professional and collegial. Even when board members are not in agreement with each other or have difficult questions for the staff, there is a new atmosphere of respect. This is enabling the Board to govern more effectively and keep its focus on the important issues facing the school system.”

AdvancEd also acknowledged the fiscal progress the school system has made, noting that “as a result of sounder financial management, realistic budget forecasting and more rigid cost controls,” a \$14-million deficit in fiscal year 2012 turned into a surplus of \$10.8 million just one year later. For fiscal year 2015, the district projects a fund balance of more than \$20 million.

In October 2012, AdvancEd challenged the district to address 11 “required actions” in order to improve its accreditation status, and subsequent directives raised the number to 14. Of those, nine have been completed, with AdvancEd reporting that steady progress is being made on the remaining five.

“While the school system has made tremendous progress in fiscal management, governance, systemic change management, technology, and the implementation of the strategic plan, the dominant factor will be sustainability as leadership changes occur in the coming year,” the report said.

Board Chairman Melvin Johnson expressed confidence that the “atmosphere of respect” noted by AdvancEd will remain. “We will have stringent training protocols in place for new board members to ensure our meetings remain professional and collegial,” Dr. Johnson said. “And when we embark on a national search for a new superintendent, we will ensure that the process is open, transparent and focused on finding the best CEO to build on the legacy of Mr. Thurmond and the current Board.”

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