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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DCSD Awarded \$2.9 Million Federal Grant
Expected to Improve Student Mental Health and Wellness**

(STONE MOUNTAIN, GA)- The USDOE Office of Elementary and Secondary Education recently announced that the DeKalb County School District (DCSD) was awarded a \$2.9 million *Safe & Supportive Schools: School-Based Mental Health Services* grant for 2023-2028.

The five-year grant will fund the District's Recruit-Train-Retain project, which focuses on providing mental health services for students.

The three primary objectives of this grant include:

- Recruiting school psychologists from diverse backgrounds or those who live within the communities served by DCSD;
- Preparing school psychologists to provide mental health services to a diverse student population within regions across the school district; and
- Retaining current district school psychologists and reducing the ratio of school psychologists to students, particularly those from diverse backgrounds or living in communities served by DCSD.

"We are thrilled to receive this grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Mental wellness and education go hand-and-hand," said DCSD Interim Superintendent Dr. Vasanne S. Tinsley. "It is important that our students are equipped mentally to be successful as they navigate through their educational careers. This grant will help us continue to address the mental health needs of our students."

In addition to extensive recruitment and retention initiatives targeting certified personnel, over the 5-year term of the grant, project staff and program faculty will recruit and train 23 diverse school psychology students to provide mental health services to a school-based population with demonstrated high need. Psychologists will continue to conduct small groups and some individual counseling to support students for the duration of the grant.

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“This grant represents an important milestone in the delivery and support of mental wellness initiatives for students in DeKalb County School District,” said Kimberly Franklin, Coordinator for the Psychological Services Department.

“Our delivery model will now be able to better align with nationally recognized best practices and professional development. These enhancements will also help retain and recruit exceptional school psychologists.”

DCSD’s Division of Equity and Student Empowerment partnered with Georgia State University’s Department of Counseling and Psychological Services to apply for the grant. In addition to extensive recruitment and retention initiatives targeting certified personnel, over the 5-year term of the grant, project staff and program faculty will recruit and train 23 diverse school psychology students to provide mental health services to a school-based population with demonstrated high need.

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