

## Dunwoody Cluster Townhall Remaining Questions

1. I do not believe that Doraville United is in the Dunwoody Cluster. If so, when did it move to the Dunwoody Cluster?

**In 2019/2020 a portion of the Hightower ES attendance area was redistricted to the newly open Doraville United ES, however the Dunwoody HS attendance area was not changed. Because of this, a small portion of Doraville United students are in the Dunwoody Cluster (defined as the Dunwoody HS attendance area).**

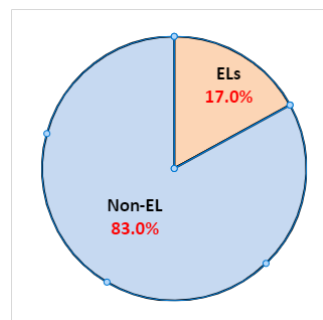
2. You spoke about filling the teacher gap, which is great. What about the lack of counselors at the high school level? How will these vacancies be filled?

**The district was overstaffed for Counselors for FY24. The only Counselor vacancy for High Schools is a position that is above allocation (GRASP- Stone Mtn-HS). Therefore, there are currently no general counselor vacancies for high school.**

3. Dunwoody HS has between 700-800 Spanish-speaking (as a 1<sup>st</sup> language) students. A translator is needed full-time to help communicate with our parents. I had 11 parents come in today that needed translation and we did not have a translator in the building to assist these parents. It is frustrating for the parents when this happens.

**The English Learners Department has always endeavored to provide DCSD's schools with the appropriate interpretation and translation services to support our multilingual families. Services are provided to support Dunwoody HS (DHS) families and students. Current DHS data show the following:**

- **DHS has 336 active English learners (ELs). This represents 17% of the total student population.**



- **Of the 336 active ELs, 307 speak Spanish as their primary language. The English Learners Department continues to work with DHS administrators to provide the most appropriate translation and interpretation services. Currently, a Spanish-speaking interpreter is assigned three days a week to support DHS. Additionally, DHS has access to the ELSA land line that provides immediate over the phone interpretation services. These resources are adequately supportive.**

4. How is Dunwoody High going to honor the death of Rose Lubin as a war hero? How is the county going to handle it? It's not because she is Jewish, if she were black, Muslim, gay, etc. She died in war and should be recognized.

[Family Letter Regarding Middle East – DeKalb County School District \(dekalbschoolsga.org\)](https://www.dekalbschoolsga.org)

5. For 18 years Dunwoody has been overcrowded with multiple promises to address the issue. The data used has not been realistic based on the growth. Office buildings have been replaced with apartment complexes with massive growth. How will you address this and be proactive, and reactive with a sense of urgency?

**Dunwoody HS enrollment has been over the facility's capacity since Fall 2014, and the school has had portable classrooms since Fall 2015. In 2016 a project to build a 26-classroom addition to Dunwoody HS was approved, with an expectation to begin design in 2019 and construction in 2020. In February 2020, in response to concerns about E-SPLOST funding and increasing projected costs, the Board approved that all middle and high school additions would be "deferred" until the next major round of capital project funding, including the Dunwoody HS addition. Coming out of major public engagement in 2021, the recommendation approved by the Board in April 2022 was to construct a new high school (and middle school) on the current Sequoyah MS site, as well as add-on to Cross Keys HS. The expectation was, and remains, that this new high school capacity along with concurrent redistricting will help provide significant relief to overcrowded high schools in the northern part of the District. Additionally, since 2019, and particularly since the pandemic, enrollment projections for Dunwoody HS have consistently shown a trend of decreasing enrollment eventually leading to the school being at or close to capacity by Fall 2029. This trend has so far been revealed in the decrease of Dunwoody HS enrollment by over 150 since Fall 2020, and over 250 since Fall 2019. Enrollment is expected to decrease by a further 150 in the next two years and by 400 in the next six. These forecasts are for the current Dunwoody HS attendance area and account for the hundreds of new housing units being constructed in the Perimeter Center area as well as all other new housing expected or currently being developed in the Dunwoody Cluster. With the additional high school capacity of the new High School on the current Sequoyah MS Campus expected to open in Fall 2026 coupled with Dunwoody HS enrollment forecasted to decrease by up to 300 students from current enrollment together suggests the long-term capacity needs of Dunwoody HS will be met.**

6. What do you make of the current climate on college campuses? How do we combat ignorance at the high school level?

**The DeKalb County School District has strong partnerships with metropolitan colleges and universities in an effort to support the interests and needs of our students in various areas. College campuses serve as an opportunity for students to find connections with other students, staff, and community stakeholders along with offering a strong sense of community. The climate will vary amongst college campuses and colleges will typically have a Student Affairs Office that assesses the climate to ensure the quality and extent of the interaction between those various groups and individuals are healthy, positive, and meaningful. You may contact the individual college of concern at <https://www.usg.edu/institutions> if there is an immediate concern regarding climate.**

7. What are you doing about the state of the bathrooms-no soap- no toilet paper?

**Each school has restroom supplies on hand, school based custodial staff should be ensuring that soap and toilet paper is stocked and available in all restrooms. District Custodial Support Team will continue to follow up with the school based custodial staff to ensure product is made available.**

8. What are we doing in our schools to combat antisemitism?

**DeKalb County School District (DCSD) believes safety is the priority for all students. It is important that students are able to attend school absent of discrimination in any form. There are several opportunities utilized in DCSD to address these matters. The Bullying Stops Here! Campaign is a three-pronged awareness program that includes bullying, harassment, and hazing with specific focus on federally protected groups including religion. The focus is on being kind, caring, and respectful of our similarities and differences. Additionally, there are several schools who plan to participate in No Place for Hate through the Antidefamation League. All students are also participating in Social Emotional Learning (SEL) that provides five competencies including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.**

9. Test scores are the lowest in metro Atlanta. What BIG BOLD steps are you taking to help with students? Example: Summer school, extending school year, one on one, tutoring?

**During the Day Tutoring**

**Academic Skills Center  
AmeriCorps**

**Summer School Programs**

**Scholars Academy Grades 3-8 (Site-based per Area)  
Summer Transition Program PreK  
FLEX Summer Academy & Credit Recovery Program  
Reading Challenge  
Title III EL Enrichment Program  
Extended School Year Programs  
Title I Literacy Camp Grades K-2  
Serendipity Enrichment Camp (Gifted)  
Advanced Placement Bridge Camp  
Dual Language Immersion Camp**

10. You mention attraction, but what plan is there for teacher retention? DES lost 7 teachers, the entire kitchen staff, nurse, bookkeeper, etc. since May 2023!

**The district is striving hard to retain staff. We have increased salaries for FY24 by 6-10% for all eligible positions. The district provided several new hires and a \$2,000 retention incentive on October 6, 2023, for returning employees. We are promoting great staff attendance by**

**providing an incentive in December and May. These financial incentives are great, but we are also addressing staff morale and engagement through the Gallup Q-12 engagement survey. Building and site leaders use this data to create actionable activities to address engagement and retention at their respective locations. We are striving hard to listen to and learn from our employees.**

11. What is being done to decrease class size?

**As it relates to teacher student ratio: Here are our current guidelines:**

**K class = 1 teacher for every 24 students, or with a para., 1 teacher for every 26 students**

**1-3 grade classes = 1 teacher for every 27 students**

**4-5 grade classes= 1 teacher for every 28 students**

**6-8 grade classes = 1 teacher for every 28 students**

**9-12 grade classes- 1 teacher for every 32 students**

**We are reviewing our Resource Allocation Method/Plan. The new proposal will provide more flexibility to principals and building leaders in how they use allotments. We are also focusing on our FTE reporting for EIP. We hope to use the “innovative” model to deliver EIP instruction and increase our QBE revenue significantly. Since RAMP and Allocations are directly linked to FTE and QBE, earned positions will hopefully increase.**

12. Dunwoody Police just ended a safety test for pedestrians crossing in front of Dunwoody ES. What they noticed is that there are reckless drivers driving on the wrong side of the street to drive around traffic going into the school. What is needed for traffic assistance? How will the district provide this desperately needed help?

**First, an attempt will need to be made with Dunwoody PD to discuss with them their findings from the traffic study. Then see if a collaborative effort (between Dunwoody PD and DCSD Public Safety) can be made to address the specific violations of “driving on the wrong side of the street” to enter the school. Of course, there are already established safety measures such as crossing guards and signage. Also, a discussion with the DCSD Sergeant over sector 1 to monitor the flow of traffic during those school hours. It is important for the district to discuss with Dunwoody PD and conduct observations first so the appropriate action can be taken, ensuring a safer environment for all stakeholders.**

13. DCSD receives tax money for K-12 education. Why is DCSD using K-12 funding to add 3-year-old education?

**The Early Learning Center is designed to build a bridge between the PK3 learning experience and kindergarten. The focus is to provide a learning environment that nurtures healthy emotional, social, cognitive, and physical growth and development.**

14. Austin is getting a 3-year-old program in January 2023, according to the DCSD website. When is registration? Have the teachers been hired?

**Students currently enrolled at the ELC main campus will be given priority to transfer to an ELC expansion class initially. DCSD will begin openly advertising the available seats after**

**December 8<sup>th</sup>. Local school principals are actively interviewing candidates to fill the positions. In the meantime, teachers from the ELC main campus will provide support.**

15. What happened to ESPLOST funds (\$100 million) that were supposed to be used on additions?  
**Please refer to Question 5 response.**

16. Will you speak more on retention efforts for teachers? What about the \$30K stipend for new teachers?

**The district is striving hard to retain staff. We have increased salaries for FY24 by 6-10% for all eligible positions. The district provided several new hires and a \$2,000 retention incentive on October 6, 2023, for returning employees. We are promoting great staff attendance by providing an incentive in December and May. These financial incentives are great, but we are also addressing staff morale and engagement through the Gallup Q-12 engagement survey. Building and site leaders use this data to create actionable activities to address engagement and retention at their respective locations. We are striving hard to listen to and learn from our employees. The \$30,000 stipend is for individuals who are selected and participate in the Teacher Residency Program.**

17. You reported data that includes Doraville United in the Dunwoody Cluster. When were they added as a feeder school to this cluster?

**Please refer to Question 1 response.**

18. Why consider adding 3-year-old preschool at Austin before redistricting students and filling K-5 in our newest schools?

**Under Superintendent Dr. Horton's leadership, a School Assignment Committee will convene over an 18-month period to address topics such as, but not limited to, school choice options, instructional programs, magnet programs, redistricting, and consolidation.**

19. Teacher turnover- How many are voluntary, involuntary and retirement?

**On an annual basis Voluntary teacher turnover account for roughly 74% of all turnovers. Involuntary equates to 6% and Retirements accounts for 19.5% of all teacher turnover. Note that numbers are fluid and subject to change throughout the year.**

20. What can be done to enhance or update the school bathrooms, trailers with leaks and other repairs across the district in every school.

**The district is actively working to either remove "trailers" or replace "trailers" with modular classrooms in support of our efforts to reduce portable classrooms.**

21. What is being done to make sure the Peachtree & DHS middle school students are prepared for high school classes & course rigor.

**All teachers are expected to teach the curriculum and provide targeted support when required to ensure that students are learning the content and applying what they have learned. Students take formative assessments so that teachers may check for understanding and adjust accordingly.**

22. Can you share a timeframe for public outreach and input on the new Sequoyah high school. When will construction start?

**We anticipate conducting community outreach sessions in January 2024 Horton/Hofstetter**

23. Is there a new school coming to the Doraville area?

**The only school currently in planning or construction is the Sequoyah MS replacement and a new high school both located on the current Sequoyah MS Campus. Our Operational planning team continually researches, assesses, and evaluates potential additional classroom needs across the district.**

24. Dr. Hall addressed how the district will be providing additional interpreters to support the English language learners. Is ELL working to support these students in the classroom and are teachers taken from the classroom for this reason?

**Dunwoody HS has an assigned face-to-face Spanish Interpreter 3 days per week. In addition, DHS has access to the ELSA landline, which provides over-the-phone service that connects the user to a live interpreter who can provide immediate interpretation services. Teachers can also use for daily communication with students the following resources:**

**ClassDojo (app\*): ClassDojo - includes a translation option**

**Talking Points (app\*): Talking Points - Free for Teachers**

**Google Translate (website and app\*): appropriate for translating basic classroom teacher information**

**Microsoft Translator (app\*) - iPhone APP available for Android**

25. Are teachers taken from the classrooms to take new coordinator positions in the district? If not, where did they come from and do they have teaching experience?

**As of November 15, 2023, only 1 classroom teacher moved to a content coordinator position. The district is committed to ensuring the classroom vacancy has been filled before any teacher is released to start in the new content coordinator position.**

26. As we learn more about the very real impact of mental health in our communities and specifically our students, how are we developing and implementing programs for the whole student as individuals and create environments that encourage our students and identify

students that have difficulties. There need to be services that support students in their academics, how is EMPATHY being interpreted or put into effect across the board when we must navigate the rigidities of policy & limitations?

**DeKalb County School District (DCSD) has six core values with an emphasis on empathy as a part of H-PRIDE. Empathy is understanding and sharing the feelings, perspectives, and experiences of others. It involves recognizing and acknowledging the emotions and concerns of others, as well as responding in a compassionate and supportive manner. Throughout DCSD, there are several wrap around services provided in schools including the following:**

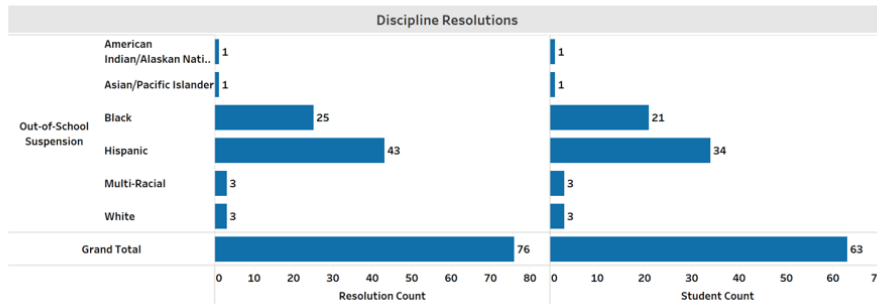
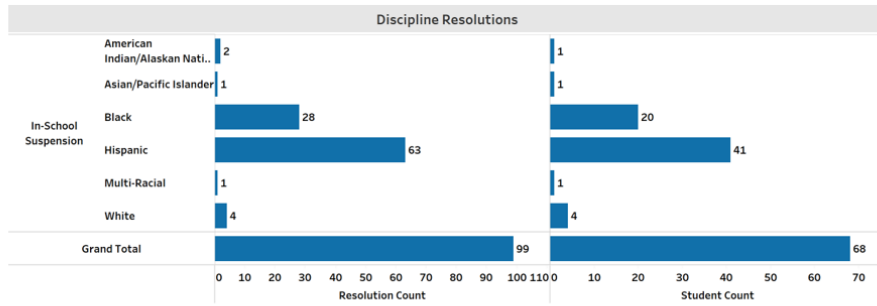
- **School Based Mental Health: Four providers provide therapists to 43 schools.**
- **SAFE (Student and Family Engagement) Centers are all equipped with a Zen Den and a therapist from Pathways to assist students in managing their emotions in a healthy manner. The centers are located at Cross Keys High School, Dr. Martin L. King Jr. High School, Robert E. McNair High School, Redan High School, and Stone Mountain High School.**
- **School psychologists are utilizing the Why Try resiliency training to provide small group counseling for targeted students for 6 weeks.**
- **A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) was posted on the district website to increase partnership opportunities and expand mental health services to students.**
- **Mental Health Specialist are being hired in the Horizon Schools.**
- **Current Student Support staffing includes 286 counselors, 47 psychologists, and 57 social workers.**

**Please visit <https://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/dese> for additional information.**

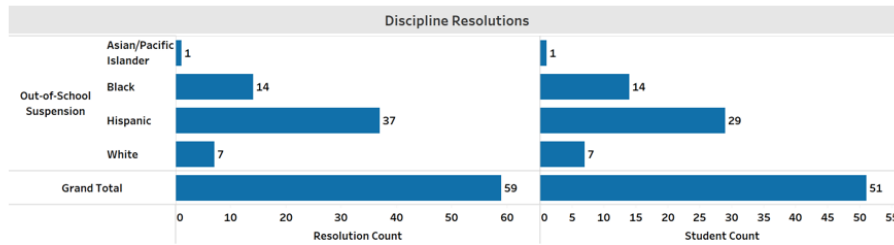
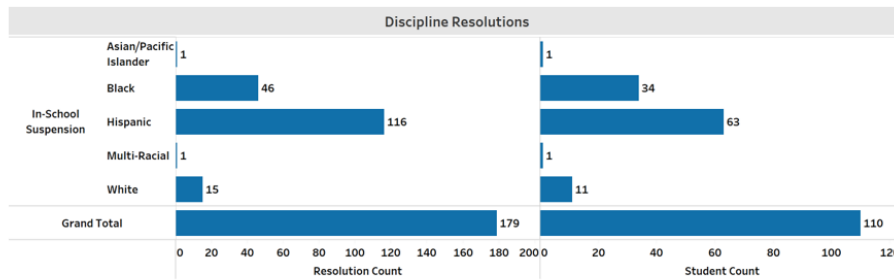
27. Would you be able to provide a breakdown of the discipline data that was presented based on race/ethnicity?

**District 1 Townhall Discipline Addendum**  
Demographic breakdown for ISS and OSS Resolutions

**Peachtree Middle School**

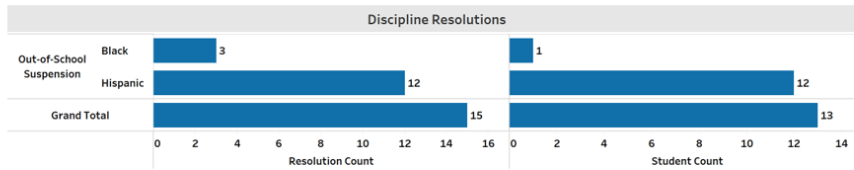


**Dunwoody High School**





**Hightower Elementary School**



All other schools in the cluster have less than ten (10) total students with ISS and OSS discipline resolutions. Therefore, there are too few students to disaggregate the data by demographic subgroups.

28. When school enrollment is down, and employees are shifted to other school locations. Changing locations can have a drastic impact on commute time and gas cost. Has there been any analysis done on the cost of attrition vs keeping the resources in place as the following year the numbers can go back up?

**Thank you for this question. It is never easy to balance staff after the start of the school year. While this option seems like a practical solution, the challenge is children who are left without a teacher in another school within the district. It is always our position to be as accommodating as possible to the employee; however, we must put children first.**

29. What are the teacher shortages/student teacher class ratios?

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30. Please elaborate on FTE and how its earned. Do principals have a certain number of points to spend on staff or new teachers, would a new teacher cost fewer points than a teacher with advanced degrees, who earn more?

**FTE stands for "Full Time Equivalent." Student counts are taken in October and March and are reported by program. The FTE counts by program at schools drive staffing at those schools.**