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DCSD Expands IGNITE DeKalb Teacher Residency Program to Include Paraprofessionals In Addressing Educator Shortages

18 Paraprofessionals Begin Two-Year Program

(STONE MOUNTAIN, GA)- The DeKalb County School District (*DCSD*) is proud to announce a strategic partnership with Point Park University and BloomBoard, which has launched an expanded IGNITE DeKalb Teacher Residency Program. This initiative, which began this week, offers district paraprofessionals a pathway to earn a fully accredited Elementary Education and Special Education degree, integrating online learning with practical classroom experience.

This pioneering program in Georgia aims to develop local talent and alleviate teacher shortages. An inaugural cohort of eighteen DCSD paraprofessionals are now enrolled in Point Park University's Residency Program and have begun their journey to pursue their bachelor's degrees, committing to a blend of coursework and hands-on teaching over the next 2-3 years.

The [IGNITE DeKalb Teacher Residency Program](#) is an innovative pathway that addresses the shortage of qualified educators by providing an alternate and effective route to teacher certification. Dr. Horton emphasized the significance of this latest program expansion.

"With the IGNITE DeKalb Teacher Residency Program, we continue our bold investments in our community's future. In addition to elevating the quality of education in our district, this latest expansion provides another sustainable solution to the teacher shortage by empowering our dedicated and talented paraprofessionals with the skills and certification needed to excel as educators," Dr. Horton said. "The unique part of this initiative is that this group of motivated paraprofessionals can maintain their regular roles while participating in this certification program."

BloomBoard, a national talent development provider for K-12 school systems, facilitates the program's marketing, implementation, and mentoring, utilizing its online platform to deliver the curriculum. The program, funded by federal COVID-19 relief funding, requires participants to serve within DCSD for five years after completion, ensuring long-term benefits for the community.

For more information on this expansion with BloomBoard and Point Park University for current DCSD paraprofessionals, see <https://bloomboard.com/program/ignite-dekalb/>. For general information on the IGNITE DeKalb Teacher Residency Program, see <https://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/ignite/>.

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