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Making Waves

DCSD Partners with Georgia Aquarium to Dive Deep into STEM Education

(STONE MOUNTAIN, GA)- The DeKalb County School District (*DCSD*) proudly announces the DeKalb County Board of Education's approval at its Regular Business meeting on June 10 of an innovative Memorandum of Understanding (*MOU*) with the [Georgia Aquarium](#).

Through this collaboration, DCSD students from grades K-12 will have the extraordinary opportunity to explore marine science careers and better understand socio-environmental issues affecting their communities. This partnership supports the District's mission to improve science education and raise awareness of career and post-secondary opportunities in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) fields.

"Our goal is that this collaboration with the Georgia Aquarium will not only inspire a passion for marine science but also provide our students with additional critical thinking skills and real-world experiences that bridge gaps in understanding and open doors to future career opportunities," said Dr. Yolanda Williamson, DCSD Chief of Community Empowerment and Innovative Partnerships.

"It's another example of DeKalb County Schools *Disrupting for Excellence* as we continue to grow opportunities to empower our students with the curiosity, knowledge, and skills they need to succeed."

The primary goals of this partnership include:

- Develop K-12 Career Exploration Opportunities: Increase minority representation in marine biology and ocean science.
- Accelerate Learning: Bridge gaps in knowledge and understanding through real-world enrichment opportunities in science and core content areas.
- Support Student Outcomes: Improve student performance on standards-based local, state, and national assessments.
- Enhance Teacher Knowledge: Provide professional development in marine, ocean, and environmental sciences to integrate core content effectively.

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- Expand Accessibility and Outreach: Increase program accessibility for parents and students in grades K-12.
- Raise Environmental Awareness: Enhance student knowledge of aquaculture and environmental sustainability efforts.
- Create a Cohesive Path: Develop a continuous educational path into STEM/marine science careers through sustained engagement.
- Instill Excitement for Marine Life: Promote interest and understanding of aquatic animals and their habitats, encouraging diverse populations to pursue marine careers.

DCSD students and staff will engage in scientific activities and learning practices, equipping them with the conceptual understanding and critical thinking skills necessary to apply scientific concepts to real-world situations. The Georgia Aquarium benefits from achieving its goals of being a strategic school and community partner while addressing future workforce development in ocean sciences and marine biology.

This MOU partnership runs from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. DCSD's investment in this initiative will not exceed \$487,900.

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