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News Release

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DEKALB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT OFF PROBATION

DEKALB COUNTY, GA (Jan. 21, 2014) – The AdvancED Accreditation Commission announced today that the DeKalb County School District’s (DCSD) accreditation status has been elevated from “Accredited Probation” to “Accredited Warned.”

The Commission based its decision on a report prepared by an AdvancED Monitoring Team that conducted a comprehensive review of the DCSD in December 2013. The report concluded: “The progress made by the DeKalb County School District since May 2013 is commendable. Many programs, policies and processes have been put into place to stabilize the school system and begin to restore confidence and trust among stakeholder groups.”

“The stain of probation has been eradicated from the DeKalb School District,” said Superintendent Michael Thurmond. “The decision to upgrade the District’s accreditation status provides a sense of pride and relief to our internal and external stakeholders.”

Dr. Melvin Johnson, chairman of the DeKalb County Board of Education added, “The Board is committed to continuing the important work that will serve as the foundation for the construction of a brighter future for all of our children.”

The District’s upgraded status will not negatively impact the eligibility of DCSD graduates who seek collegiate financial aid, grants or scholarships. AdvancED will continue to monitor the District to ensure sustainability of the progress documented in the December 2013 report. The District must also complete three new Required Actions designed to increase stability through implementation of a continuous improvement process. The next AdvancED monitoring review will be conducted no later than May 31, 2014.

The Monitoring Review Report identified several significant areas of progress and challenges ahead:

Progress

- **The Monitoring Review revealed strong evidence that the school system is continuing the transition from a culture centered on the Board’s behavior to a culture focused on the needs of students with day-to-day operations being led by the Superintendent. – pg. 3**
- **A review of board agendas, minutes, board policies and the school system’s website as well as interviews with various stakeholder groups indicated that the Board and Superintendent have made substantial efforts to ensure that the actions and decisions of the Board are reflective of the collective board and consistent with approved policies and procedures and all applicable laws, regulations and standards. – pg. 5**
- **Evidence substantiates that the school system has taken the necessary and appropriate actions to establish and implement policies and procedures that ensure segregation of duties between the governing board and the administration. - pg. 8**
- **The DeKalb County School District has taken significant steps to restore public confidence in the school system’s stewardship of the monies entrusted to its care. – pg. 9**
- **The Board has taken steps to develop policies and engage in professional development to strengthen the effectiveness of present and future governance for the school system. The development and implementation of a more transparent budgetary process is vital to restoring the trust of all stakeholders in the financial management of the school system. – pg. 9**
- **The school system continues to make progress in establishing and adhering to the chain of command for communications throughout the system. – pg. 11**
- **The progress made by the DeKalb County School District since May 2013 is commendable. Many programs, policies and processes have been put into place to stabilize the school system and begin to restore confidence and trust among stakeholder groups. – pg. 23**
- **The Monitoring Team determined that the DeKalb County School District has made substantial progress in creating a framework for addressing the Required Actions by developing comprehensive and systemic processes to guide its operation.” – pg. 25**

- **The Monitoring Team concluded that the school system used the accreditation process to skillfully develop the foundational elements of a more effective management process designed to guide the school system as a fully-functional educational enterprise.” – pg. 25**

Challenges

- **The school system is well positioned to succeed. However, much work lies ahead. – pg. 14**
 - **As indicated during interviews, one area of concern is the pending election of board members. Related to concerns regarding the stability of the Board’s professional and ethical demeanor, some stakeholders are apprehensive about the sustainability of practices, processes, procedures, and policies that have been developed and implemented. – pg. 3**
 - **In particular, two issues have significant implications for the school system: 1) the pending election of the Board and 2) the long-term commitment of the Superintendent. – pg. 26**
 - **...the Institution Progress Report did not include a written comprehensive plan to unify the board, a policy and training plan to address concerns over the sustainability of progress, and training for future boards focused on serving all children. –pg. 4**
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