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News Release

26 February 2015

DEKALB SCHOOL DISTRICT ACCREDITATION STATUS UPGRADED BY AdvancED/SACS

SACS Notes ‘Significant Progress’ but District is at a “crossroads”

The DeKalb County School District’s accreditation status has been upgraded from “Accredited Warned” to “Accredited on Advisement,” one notch from unconditional accreditation.

“The Board of Education, principals, teachers, and staff working with parents and community leaders have made great strides in meeting the needs of our students,” said Michael Thurmond, superintendent of the DeKalb County School District. “SACS recognizes the progress we are making toward stabilizing the District in a manner that allows us to refocus our efforts on academic achievement.”

The decision to elevate the District’s accreditation status was based on a three-day visit in December 2014. The SACS report recognized the “concerted effort and focused work of the Board, Superintendent Thurmond, system staff and personnel at all levels to stabilize the system and create a culture of trust and transparency.”

SACS also acknowledged the District’s considerable fiscal progress, noting a budget surplus of \$31 million for Fiscal Year 2014 and for operating in a “financially responsible and transparent manner.” In addition, the District “has developed and systematically implemented a comprehensive technology plan,” according to the report. The launch of the Infinite Campus student information system was described as a success.

The report concluded with an observation that the District is at a “crossroads” and faces two “major transitions” -- the search for a new superintendent and transition to a seven member Board. The report challenges the Board to “leverage the progress” that has been made in the past two years to resolve these challenges.

SACS directed the District to address 14 required actions in order to approve its accreditation status. Eleven action items have been completed.

The most significant remaining action item requires the Board of Education to revise Policy BAB to “eliminate all references to Board members meeting with, and requesting information from Senior Staff” without prior notification and approval by the Superintendent. The report documents that the Board is undergoing a “culture shift”; however, there is no written policy that specifically prohibits Board members from “circumventing the Superintendent” in the daily operations of the District.

“The Board is committed to creating an environment that ensures trust and transparency between the District and its stakeholders,” said Melvin Johnson, chairman of the DeKalb Board of Education. “We will resolve these remaining issues in order to restore full and unconditional accreditation to our District.”

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