



Vision

We will build the foundation for all children to be their best, achieve their dreams,
and make the world a better place.

January 13, 2023

Greetings Valued Members of the DHS and CSD Community

Thank you for your patience as we continue to navigate and respond to harm caused when a teacher used a racial slur in front of his class. As I shared earlier this month, CSD has secured a 3rd party contractor, Mr. Courtlandt Butts of Life Guardian, to support our work in evaluating what happened, assessing the level of harm caused to various stakeholder groups, and supporting CSD in repairing that harm.

The first step of our evaluation will include small group and individual meetings between Mr. Butts and various stakeholder groups and teams from the high school. These meetings will include the DHS Equity Team, DHS Administrative Team, DHS Black Affinity Group, Black Student Union, Mr. Chesnutt, Ms. Lofstrand, and other individuals and groups.

In conjunction with Mr. Butts's evaluations and assessments, the District has launched a formal investigation of the incident and our response to the incident on the school and district levels. As part of that process, I am reviewing a detailed timeline of events. I will also interview those involved in our response to determine what could have been done differently and ensure that future responses build trust through transparency. As superintendent, I take full responsibility for this investigation, and I will ensure that appropriate accountability measures are taken for any misconduct that has occurred. Once the evaluation and investigation are completed, I will share a summary report.

I know there is a request for details regarding when this process will be completed. To ensure that we achieve a responsive and thorough evaluation, we will not produce a timeline until the conclusion of Mr. Butts' initial meetings. At that time, the District will be more prepared to propose a specific timeline for this process.

This investigation aims to help us find opportunities for improvement, craft a clear plan to address similar incidents, and ensure that we implement any needed improvements with fidelity. I have already drafted a Bias Incident Response Protocol and shared the draft with principals, district leaders, the DHS Black Affinity Group, and Mr. Butts for review. After we gather feedback, we will finalize the protocol and ensure all CSD staff are trained on the protocol. This protocol includes ensuring that the process of reporting biased events is straightforward and encouraged.

While there must be consequences for poor choices, I also firmly believe that as a community, CSD must stand firm in our use of restorative practices to repair harm and reintegrate those who caused harm back into our community when appropriate. We will, as a result, build a stronger community through this process. Ours is not a cancel culture but instead a culture of collaboration and education. In that, we will all continue to work together to make things better for the CSD community.

Respectfully,
Dr. Maggie Fehrman
Superintendent
City Schools of Decatur

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Vice Chair

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Board Member

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