



April 28, 2022

As Mayors, our greatest hope is that our children arrive home from school safely and smarter. We're concerned that the DeKalb Board of Education's recent decision to remove Superintendent Watson-Harris could jeopardize the future outcomes for DeKalb students. This decision may have a long-term impact by making it difficult to attract and retain a new superintendent as well as other leaders.

We stand with DeKalb CEO Michael Thurmond on his call for the School Board not to take DeKalb backwards. The board's actions over the last few days indicate a need for new policies and procedures to address governance of the DeKalb School District. We are ready to work with the DeKalb legislative delegation to craft legislation which will protect DCSD students and educators. Serious changes are needed to prevent the chaos that seems to occur every few years in the DCSD.

The current situation is a symptom of a larger ongoing problem with DeKalb Schools. In the past, the focus has been on the acute issues while ignoring the chronic challenges both in governance and management. It is time to address both, and the DeKalb Municipal Association stands ready to assist.

Cities make up 60% of the County population, and it is our duty to be engaged in ensuring successful outcomes for students in DeKalb. To that end, on April 21, 2022, the DeKalb Municipal Association formally established an Education Committee made up of mayors and council members. The purpose of this committee is simple – improve outcomes for DeKalb students. Education is a lifeline for our communities' children. A good education, in a safe facility, should be the norm across DeKalb.

A strong school system will lead to a better economic future, reduction in crime and a healthier population for DeKalb and its cities. As leaders, we know that governing can be difficult. The first step is acknowledging that there is a problem. We implore the DeKalb School Board to take the steps necessary to right this ship.

Mayor Jonathan Elmore, Avondale Estates
Mayor John Ernst, Brookhaven
Mayor Brian Mock, Chamblee
Mayor Beverly Burks, Clarkston
Mayor Patti Garrett, Decatur
Mayor Joseph Geierman, Doraville

Mayor Lynn Deutsch, Dunwoody
Mayor Shameka Reynolds, Lithonia
Mayor Melanie Hammet, Pine Lake
Mayor Beverly Jones, Stone Mountain
Mayor Pro-Tem George Turner, Stonecrest
Mayor Frank Auman, Tucker