

DeKalb County School System

Cross Curricular Focus Leads to Higher Scores

The DeKalb County School System is a metropolitan Atlanta public school system located in the third largest county in Georgia. DeKalb, one of the most culturally diverse counties in the nation, has a student enrollment of more than 98,500 students in 142 schools and centers. Along with its rich diversity, the DeKalb community prides itself in absorbing over 1,800 unexpected Katrina evacuee students.

Snapshot of District



District Type	Large Suburban
Enrollment	98,500
Total Schools	83 Elementary Schools 20 Middle Schools 22 High Schools 17 Centers
Students eligible for free and reduced lunch	69%



"I strongly believe that Discovery Education gives children the ability to experience the world in new ways or through multimedia when direct experiences are not always possible."

Kelli Harris-Wright

Director, Department for Elementary Teaching and Learning
DeKalb County School System

The Challenge

DeKalb County School System is committed to bringing the best educational content they can to their students and teachers. After achieving a high level of success in partnering with Discovery Education, DeKalb County School System sought to make instructional time more effective through cross curricular alignment.

DeKalb County School System Implemented the Following Discovery Education Services

- » Discovery Education STREAMING
- » Discovery Education SCIENCE
- » Professional Development
- » Curriculum Alignment (cross curricular)

In the Beginning

Over the past six years DeKalb County School System and Discovery Education have partnered together to improve student achievement, to advance educators professional development, and to evolve their curriculum to 21st century standards in a cost-effective way.

In 2004, through a statewide partnership with Georgia Public Broadcasting and Discovery Education, DeKalb County School System began receiving Discovery Education STREAMING. "I strongly believe that Discovery Education gives children the ability to experience the world in new ways or through multimedia when direct experiences are not always possible. It gives teachers access to accurate and engaging tools that allow them to teach units in realistic contexts," said Kelli Harris-Wright, Ed.S, Director, Department for Elementary Teaching and Learning.

Building Success Through Professional Development

In order to maximize the impact of Discovery Education STREAMING, Harris-Wright implemented a professional development program with Discovery Education. Over the next year educators were taught how to incorporate digital media into their everyday teaching. "They learned how to create lesson plans, use web 2.0 tools, and that digital media in lesson planning and delivery is more than just videos," said Harris-Wright. As part of DeKalb County School System's professional development Hall Davidson, Discovery Education's Director of Global Learning, spent a day with principals in June of 2010. "This generated excitement and support at the school leadership level. The professional development has been awesome and the electronic surveys about the quality of training by participants have been excellent," she said.

In September 2009, DeKalb County School System's Dunwoody Elementary hosted an interactive assembly with Philippe Cousteau, Discovery Education's Chief Spokesperson for Environmental Education, to kick-off the excitement and further bring the power of Discovery Education to the students. "It has literally brought the world into the classroom especially for students whose experiences need to be broadened," said Harris-Wright.

Ms. Harris-Wright continues to get educators excited about the Discovery Educator Network (DEN) and the free Professional Development resources that come as part of her subscription to Discovery Education. "Networking with Discovery Education has led to amazing relationships. "



"They learned how to create lesson plans, use web 2.0 tools, and that digital media in lesson planning and delivery is more than just videos."

Kelli Harris-Wright

Director, Department for Elementary Teaching and Learning
DeKalb County Public Schools

Expanding the Program to Science

In the 2008-2009 school year, DeKalb County School System's 83 elementary schools received a subscription to Discovery Education SCIENCE for Elementary. In the first year, as a result of engaging content and a sound professional development strategy, Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) scores went up in grades 3, 4, and 5 between 2008 and 2009.

Ms. Harris-Wright was so impressed with the resources that Discovery Education could offer teachers and students that in October 2009 she was able to obtain approval by the DeKalb County School System Board of Education to invest in a two-year license for Discovery Education SCIENCE as well as Discovery Education HEALTH for two additional years for their 83 elementary schools.



PERCENT OF GRADE 5 STUDENTS MEETING & EXCEEDING IN SCIENCE ON CRCT

2010	65%
2009	62%
2008	60%

PERCENT OF GRADE 4 STUDENTS MEETING & EXCEEDING IN SCIENCE ON CRCT

2010	67%
2009	67%
2008	62%

PERCENT OF GRADE 4 STUDENTS MEETING & EXCEEDING IN SCIENCE ON CRCT

2010	70%
2009	70%
2008	64%

Source: Georgia Dept. of Education release June 2010

Cross Curriculum Alignment

In 2010, the DeKalb County School System became the first school district in Georgia to partner with Discovery Education on cross-curricular alignment. This process involved mapping the DeKalb County ELA curriculum guide to content found in Discovery Education STREAMING and Discovery Education SCIENCE. Linking these resources now allows DeKalb County School System to reinforce science and literacy skills during standard ELA instruction time.

To implement the program, DeKalb County School System worked with Discovery Education curriculum specialist and former Associate Professor at Harvard, Dr. Jocelyn Chadwick. Dr. Chadwick digitally enhanced DeKalb County School System's curriculum guides in English-Language Arts for the 2010-2011 school year. Discovery Education content is now embedded directly into the curriculum guides so teachers can click and launch directly to digital assets that are aligned to Georgia's standards as well as Common Core standards for classroom lessons.

DeKalb County School System launched the multimedia infused curriculum in August 2010 and is excited about 2010-2011.