



Mrs. Cheryl Watson-Harris, Superintendent

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April 26, 2022

Mr. Richard Woods
State School Superintendent
Georgia Department of Education
Twin Towers East
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

RE: DeKalb County Schools' Facilities Plan

Superintendent Woods:

On behalf of the DeKalb County Board of Education, I am writing in response to your letter of April 25, 2022.

The DeKalb County Board of Education is committed to providing safe and supportive learning environments for students and staff throughout the District. To that end, our board authorized the development of a comprehensive master plan to establish strategic, district-wide goals as the basis for future construction expenditures and planned facilities improvements. Since receiving the comprehensive master plan earlier this year, we have been working as a board to address the District's facilities – although it is fair to acknowledge that communications between the Board and the Superintendent have broken down on this issue. Nevertheless, be assured this work will continue. The Superintendent is charged with the responsibility of the day-to-day operations to address immediate and critical function needs in accordance with the policy and budget.

We recognize there are conditions at some facilities through the District, including at Druid Hills High School, which require urgent attention. We applaud the efforts of students to increase awareness of such conditions, and we assure the students, their families, and our staff that we, as a board, are committed to promptly and properly addressing such conditions. We have allowed for emergency protocols that are built with policies as well as the annual budget.

We are concerned that your department has concluded that conditions at Druid Hills High School have been addressed in a “solely cosmetic” manner. Pursuant to our purchasing policy, the Superintendent is empowered to promptly address any situation that threatens to jeopardize the health, welfare, or safety of students, staff, the District, or the public by foregoing competitive selection rules for purchasing goods and services.

It is our expectation that such authority is appropriately exercised; it is our expectation that the Superintendent will welcome support and technical assistance from the Georgia Department of Education to address unacceptable conditions at Druid Hills High School as well as other District facilities; and it our expectation that the Superintendent will take all reasonable and necessary steps to comply with the department's plans for corrective action.

Please be assured that the issues will be addressed with the appropriate actions, and further will provide the Georgia Department of Education with the confidence to approve the District's Facility Plan.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "V. Turner", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Vickie B. Turner
Chair, DeKalb County Board of Education

cc: DeKalb County Board of Education
Mrs. Cheryl Watson-Harris, Superintendent