

## DSA SPLOST V

### Talking Points for Community Meetings

- 1) DeKalb School of the Arts is a jewel of DeKalb County Schools. It has a 100% graduation rate, some of the highest test scores in Georgia, and a diverse student population that hails from every corner of the county. Currently, DSA is ranked number 4 in the state and among the top 100 high schools in the nation (according to U.S. News and World Report). Our program is a spectacular success that could easily be expanded to include more talented students. However, the facility is hampering progress.
- 2) DeKalb School of the Arts moved to its current location at Avondale High School in 2009. Since that time, the program has outgrown its practice and performance spaces. Each year, DSA has accepted more students, but the program cannot continue to grow without adequate arts spaces.
- 3) Without soliciting input from the DSA and DESA communities, DCSD developed a SPLOST IV plan to consolidate both programs at Avondale Middle School. After hearing from stakeholders at both schools, DCSD agreed that the programs should not be combined and should not be moved to that location. No SPLOST IV funds have been used to make improvements at DSA.
- 4) Due to its ranking as one of the best schools in Georgia, DSA was told in 2014 that it would be targeted for growth and would be placed at the top of the SPLOST V priority list. DCSD leaders envisioned a state-of-the-art high school that would compete with nationally recognized arts schools from across the country. The DSA School Council began researching other performing arts high schools.
- 5) Because Georgia has become a film-making venue, DSA is uniquely positioned to train students to support this industry. Currently, producers are bringing crews from Los Angeles to do the work that DSA students are capable of doing. With a state-of-the-art facility, DSA could partner with movie studios to give students real-world experience.
- 6) If DSA had sufficient space, it could become a resource for the entire DeKalb community. Other schools could mount productions at DSA. Our school could rent our facility to other arts organizations. Clayton County's fine arts high school was built next to the Clayton County Performing Arts Center. That partnership allows students to work with arts professionals, and it allows professional artists to utilize students in their work. Their entire county benefits from the arrangement.
- 7) Not only does DSA need space to support its current arts programs, it also needs space (and money) to rebuild programs it has had to cut. With adequate space and resources, DSA could reinstitute its 3-D graphics/technology program, as well as its piano/keyboard program.

- 8) Last month, MGT conducted its DSA facilities use assessment, which included parent and student interviews, as well as a walk-through of the facility. Among the items noted and shared with assessor were the following:
- a. Practice spaces are inadequate
    - i. Orchestra room too small for students, needs sound insulation, needs locked storage for instruments
    - ii. Chorus room too small for students, no place to rehearse choreography
    - iii. Dance rooms too small, third dance classroom needs, not enough space to have all students rehearsing
    - iv. Media department needs space for film shoots, soundproof booths for editing footage, sound stage
    - v. Drama needs larger space for rehearsals when stage is in use, needs another black box room
  - b. Performance spaces are inadequate
    - i. Kyle Theater has insufficient audience seating; students must often perform at a nearby church in order to accommodate the audience for music department shows
    - ii. Kyle Theater stage has insufficient wing space to allow performers, scenery and props to remain unseen when offstage
    - iii. Kyle Theater has limited overhead space which doesn't allow certain theatrical effects or "fly" work
    - iv. Signage need to be refurbished
    - v. Community has asked for a recital hall for vocal and instrumental music shows
  - c. General facilities need improvement
    - i. Insufficient storage or arts equipment, sets, etc.
    - ii. Ceiling tile leaks in several academic hallways
    - iii. Parking lot does not have sufficient capacity when events or football games are held in the Avondale Stadium behind DSA—this leads to safety issues
    - iv. Heating and air conditioning are not adequate in classrooms
    - v. There is no fencing behind the school where students walk between buildings
    - vi. Areas not in use should be removed or repurposed (tennis courts, senior courtyard, etc.)