

## School Improvement 2019-2020

Dr. Stephanie Johnson, Deputy Superintendent

During this unprecedented and challenging time, I applaud your commitment to equity and your intentional focus on meeting the needs of students, particularly our most vulnerable students. As SY 2020 comes to an end, we have much to celebrate. In 2017, we stated our purpose was to provide value add to schools and districts in a manner that would increase collective leadership capacity, understand what effective schools and districts know and do, and support the leaders to own their improvement work on organizational systems. We made positive student outcomes the focus of our theory of action. Therefore, we identified four 'Big Bets' on which GaDOE's efforts in supporting schools and districts across the state would be based:

- Leadership: Building the capacity of school leaders to drive school improvement through school improvement planning.
- Local Teams Advancing Plans: Increasing the effectiveness of school leadership teams so that supports and local planning (e.g., CLIP, DIP, SIP plans) are aligned to meet student needs.
- Collaborative Instructional Planning: Improving collaborative planning processes to increase instructional coherence.
- Standard of Quality and Focus on Equity: Ensuring that SDE/OSI staff and the state's member RESAs are normed and skilled in implementing school improvement strategies, focusing on equity across regions.

Effective implementation of our new support system meant collaborating and building partnerships with other departments serving GaDOE as well as intermediaries such as Georgia RESA and the Governor's Office of

Student Achievement to broaden our reach across the state. Enhanced support in collaboration with partnerships provided to school districts this year included, but were not limited to:

- Growing Readers (K-2 Early Literacy)
- Graduates Ready to Attain Success in Postsecondary (GRASP) Counselors
- Regional wraparound specialists: GaDOE Created a regional wraparound initiative for Georgia that funds school-based and community-based wraparound centers in schools and regional specialists to provide comprehensive support to address non-academic factors for children in every region in Georgia [Press release June 14, 2018](#)
- Regional ELA specialists
- Multiple Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Partnership with SDE
- Governor's School Leadership Academy (GSLA)

In addition to distributing annual federal funds to districts, we created opportunities to provide additional grant funding to schools and districts to help close achievement gaps. A few included:

- Digital Learning Grant: over 21.5 million dollars for digital learning grants provided during Covid-19 to help districts continue educating students at home with technology. [Press release April 28, 2020](#)
- Rural Resource Grants: a 3.6 Million Dollar grant was provided for school improvement in rural districts [Press release November 19, 2019](#)
- Georgia Systems of Continuous Improvement Competitive Grant: 14 Million Dollars to School Districts [Board item June 13, 2019](#)
- Proving Ground Institute: Harvard University's Department of Education and Policy Research provided training to ten Georgia superintendents and their teams on effective intervention selection. [Press release September 3, 2019](#)

## School Improvement

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A few notable improvements made at the Georgia Department of Education from 2017 to present representing our collaborative work across the agency, intermediaries, schools, and districts include:

- The states' federally identified schools CCRPI accountability "floor" for schools is rising. Since implementing ESEA in 2018, the average CCRPI scores for schools on identified lists increased from 59.8 to 64.6 (TSI), 49.2 to 53.4 (CSI), and 57.7 to 60.6 (Promise).
- The average CCRPI increased for the average CCRPI increase for schools on the 2019 Exit List is 16.4% (CSI exit schools) and 6.1% (TSI exit schools 2019 Exit List is 16.4% (CSI exit schools) and 6.1% (TSI exit schools)
- In 2019, 47 schools from 23 GA school districts exited the TSI and CSI lists: 21 out of 22 schools (95.4%) exited the TSI list; 26 out of 103 schools (25.2%) exited the CSI list; 32 out of 81 Schools (39.5%) exited the Promise list
- Georgia's graduation rate increased again, rising from 80.6% in 2017 to 82% in 2019, which is an all-time high since the state began using the adjusted cohort calculation now required by federal law. The state's federally identified school's overall graduation rate for all CSI schools increased by approximate 6%.

[Press release September 18, 2019](#)



**DORIUNTAS  
BARNES**

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AWARD  
HONOR GRADUATE



School of Liberal Studies 2020 Valedictorian,  
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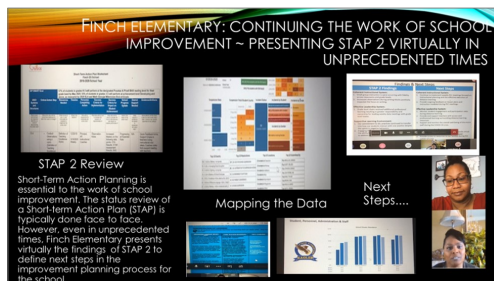
- Georgia's public school students are now beating the national average on the SAT with a composite score of 1048 (533 ERW and 515 Math). Georgia's SAT participation rose to 67 percent of public school graduates in 2019, up from 66 percent in 2018 and 59 in 2017.  
[Press release September 24, 2019](#)
- Georgia's students surpassed the national average composite score on the ACT in 2019 with a composite score of 21.4. The national average for 2019 was 20.7. Georgia also outperformed the nation in English, reading, science, and mathematics. Scores in each subject held steady or increased slightly with English remaining at 20.9 from 2018 to 2019, mathematics remaining at 20.7, reading rising from 22.1 to 22.2, and science remaining at 21.2.  
[Press release October 30, 2019](#)
- Georgia students recorded the strongest ever overall gains on Georgia Milestones Assessments in 2019. Scores increased or sustained in 25 of 26 assessments – the strongest overall gains recorded since the test was implemented. The percentage of students reading on grade level or above increased in every tested grade and both English Language Arts high school courses. The largest increases were recorded in 9th grade literature (9-point increase), sixth grade ELA (7-point increase), 3rd grade math (6-point increase), and 3rd grade ELA (5-point increase).  
[July 26, 2019 GADOE Press Release](#)
- Georgia currently ranks 13th in the nation for K-12 achievement, according to Education Week's 2019 Quality Counts report. Georgia's K-12 Achievement score of 74.4 was also higher than the national average of 73.0. [Press Release September 4, 2019](#)

Every student, parent, and educator in Georgia, should be commended for these positive results! We will continue our partnerships with Georgia RESA, GSLA, Growing Readers, and others for the upcoming school year. We are excited to add The Sandra Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and Literacy (Deal Center) as a partner for the upcoming school year.

## School Improvement

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This partnership will provide the “Quality Improvement for Early Language and Literacy Project” (QUIELL), directed by Dr. Emily Rubin’s work with SEE-KS as an option for schools and districts focusing on improving literacy. Social Emotional Engagement – Knowledge and Skills (SEE-KS) is a professional learning approach designed to enhance a positive learning climate in the classroom, at home, and in community settings.



Direct supports that will continue for federally identified districts and schools by the GaDOE district effectiveness specialists (DES) include:

- Technical assistance with developing a district plan of support, which addresses the variability across schools within the district
- Technical assistance with developing a district plan of support for alternative schools
- Assessment of structures and technical assistance with implementation of Georgia School Assessment of Performance on Systems (GSAPS), required for all CSI schools
- DES and GSAPS support are available to all tiers upon request and availability of resources.

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“During this unprecedented and challenging time, I applaud your commitment to equity and your intentional focus on meeting the needs of students, particularly our most vulnerable students .”

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For Federally identified schools, direct support provided to CSI schools by the Continuous Improvement Team (SES, SIS, and DES) will continue (available to schools in all tiers upon request and availability of resources):

- Support building effective leadership teams
- Support collaborative planning processes and instructional delivery
- Reduce variability among classrooms
- Assist in developing monitoring protocols and feedback procedures
- Assist with professional learning based upon data and feedback
- Assist with developing a comprehensive needs assessment and school improvement planning
- Assist the school with the development and monitoring of short-term action plans (STAP)

Thank you very much for your dedication, leadership, and compassion with supporting students, staff, and communities throughout the year, specifically throughout COVID-19. Alongside our school improvement team, working in collaboration with school districts across all tiers, I know we will continue to see positive results in every school district in Georgia. I hope the information and resources provided in this newsletter will be helpful to your work during this time.

**Visit the following webpage for prior editions of the School Improvement Newsletter.**



[Office of School Improvement](#)

## Keeping the Focus on the Whole Child in a Pandemic

**SIG 1003(g), Cohort 5**

**Dr. Patricia Rooks, Program Manager**

Public-school systems have had to pivot their service delivery models to address the needs of students and stakeholders virtually in the wake of COVID-19. Taliaferro County Schools (TCS) responded in true Jaguar fashion, pushed forward, and dynamically rose to the occasion. TCS leaders formulated the TCS Remote Learning Plan, which clearly outlines expectations for all components of Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement (Coherent Instruction System, Effective Leadership, Professional Capacity, Family and Community Engagement, and Supportive Learning Environment) to ensure all facets are addressed in the new normal presented by the pandemic. Topics addressed in the Remote Learning Plan include remote learning options for students and families, special education support, intervention administration, virtual classroom observation/feedback cycles, nutrition, student wellbeing, and wellness best practices. With sensitivity to the needs of all stakeholders at the forefront, TCS leadership mindfully organized efforts to ensure services and initiatives continue uninterrupted. Furthermore, the TCS Remote Learning Plan outlined plans for virtual professional learning, which will continue throughout the summer. Coaching sessions and virtual professional learning provided timely guidance and resources to teachers as they adapted lessons to an online format in an engaging manner. To minimize gaps in learning, TCS will provide students with academic experiences aligned to their needs and interests during their virtual Summer Increased Learning Time (ILT) program. Kudos to the leadership, faculty, and staff of TCS for their proactive approach to addressing the needs of the whole child in this pandemic. TCS's effective leadership, focused collaboration, and laser-focused actions led to this achievement. Kudos!

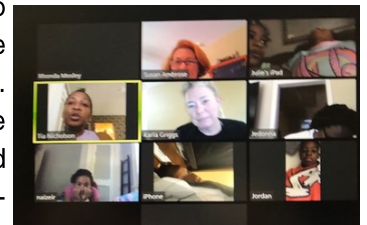
Visit [www.gadoe.org/SIG](http://www.gadoe.org/SIG) for more information.

## Virtual Learning-Southern Style

**South Area News**

**Janie Fields, Program Manager**

Imagine a classroom of kindergarten students engaged in virtual learning in a Google Hangout! Well, it happened in the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS). Exciting learning opportunities occurred during this quarantine. Principals, teachers, school effectiveness specialists (Georgia Department of Education), school improvement specialists (Regional Educational Service Agencies), and district leaders met virtually in weekly collaborative planning sessions, data talks, professional learning, leadership team meetings, and Continuous Improvement Team (CIT) meetings. Principals provided a virtual learning schedule for teachers to follow daily. Teachers worked tirelessly to plan virtual learning sessions using Google Hangout, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams. Elementary students viewed Eureka Math videos, practiced reading fluency with RAZ, took virtual field trips, completed Reading Logs, and submitted daily assignments. Middle School teachers used pair deck, CommonLit, and other tools to engage students in remote learning. Seniors received guidance and advisement as principals, teachers, and counselors met weekly with students to ensure that students were on track to graduate. Elementary and middle school principals held virtual awards ceremonies, while each high school principal hosted their school's virtual graduation.



Virtual Collaboration

The School of Liberal Studies at Savannah High honored the Class of 2020 with a live virtual graduation that featured the name and photo of each graduating senior. The principal, Dr. Gequetta Jenkins, the Superintendent, Dr. Ann Levett, as well as Dr. Joseph Buck and Board of Education members delivered special messages to the graduates. The valedictorian and salutatorian also celebrated their classmates with individual speeches. The Savannah-Chatham team are truly courageous leaders!

## Leading Virtually at Gaines Elementary School

### North Area News

Martha Jo Johnson, Program Manager

Spring break was underway in Clarke County when the governor's order closed schools across Georgia. Nevertheless, educators at Gaines Elementary School in Athens, Georgia, pivoted quickly to embrace digital instruction and extend a helping hand to families. A dynamic Student Review Team at the school ensured that all students had access to digital devices and to the meals served by the district if needed. The school collaborated with a local internet provider and distributed hot spot devices to make sure internet access was possible for all families. In the end, 100% of enrolled students at Gaines Elementary School had personal contact with school personnel during the closure of schools. Daily instructional sessions, weekly grade-level meetings, and bi-weekly leadership team meetings continued. Moving past the significant operational challenges of the past few weeks, the principal, Dr. Luther McDaniel, kept the leadership team focused on school improvement work. Activities included a data review, school improvement plan development, and the self-assessment by the leadership team using the GaDOE High Impact Practices Rubric: Leadership Teams.



Dr. Luther McDaniel leads the Gaines Elementary School Leadership Team in a virtual self-assessment of their leadership team practices using the GaDOE High Impact Practices Rubric: Leadership Teams.

## A Tale of Compassion and the Dedication to the Children, Staff, and Communities of Metro Georgia

### Metro Area News

Susan Patrick, Program Manager

Our Georgia Metro schools are full of stories of the heroic efforts of our school systems, schools, and communities and how they came together to meet needs during a global pandemic. With an attitude of compassion over compliance, we saw a radical shift from brick and mortar to digital learning, which became a part of our new normal.

### DeKalb County Public Schools

- Principal Derrica Boochee-Davis and her administrative team at Columbia High put signs for each senior on the school's front lawn.
- Stone Mountain High School principal Wislene John paid home visits to the students receiving top honors and presented a shirt that identified his/her spot in the line-up.
- Ms. Katie Ku, mathematics department chairperson at Cross Keys High School, recorded lessons using Screencastify, and students were able to review the lesson in Google Classroom. Ms. Ku also used the screen to show students how to solve math problems.

### Atlanta Public Schools

- Young Middle continued to work extensively during the COVID-19 pandemic to establish partnerships to create "The Den," which provided wraparound services to students and families.
- The administration at Price Middle is involved in strategic planning virtually that will lay the foundation for an exciting and successful school year for all students.
- Finch Elementary continued meaningful school improvement by presenting the findings of Short-Term Action Plan (STAP) 2 virtually to define the next steps for meeting student learning.

## COVID-19 Strategies for SW Georgia Chief Turnaround Office Schools

### Chief Turnaround Office

Dr. Dwight E. Rhodes, Chief Transformation Specialist

The Chief Turnaround Office (CTO) Schools and Districts are utilizing Design Thinking strategies to problem-solve COVID-19 challenges. To better understand current needs, CTO schools have maintained weekly collaborative meetings with school and district leaders, state partners, and local partners like Communities in Schools. The focus is on effective standards-based instruction, professional learning, student engagement, and wellness. Schools are analyzing formative data to prioritize how the Digital Learning Grant and the CARES Act Funds will be used to provide equitable access to resources and improve student learning. Internet connectivity in rural Southwest Georgia is not widely accessible; therefore, these funds will greatly increase the opportunity for students and teachers to engage using a virtual platform.

Support during the COVID-19 season and beyond is rooted in the idea that preparedness and innovation are essential to success. For example:

- Clay and Randolph Counties have solidified professional learning and virtual instructional strategies. Learning will continue regardless of how the “new normal” of teaching and learning evolves.
- Dooly County has focused on remediation plans to ensure the achievement gap does not widen for students.
- Dougherty County has focused on sustaining positive results through continued virtual summer learning, collaborative planning, and professional learning. The Deal Center CTO partner schools are focusing on sustainability in phonological awareness, word study, fluency, guided reading, and assessments for K-3 students.

These strategies are a comprehensive, coordinated, and coherent approach to improve student and adult learning during and after one of the most unprecedented and challenging times for schools and communities.

## \$21 Million Awarded for Digital Learning

### Atlanta Office News

Amy Alderman, Program Manager

GaDOE awarded digital learning grants to Comprehensive Support & Improvement (CSI) and Targeted Support & Improvement (TSI) schools to meet newly identified needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The grants totaling \$21,578,236 will support equity and access to the necessary tools and resources for digital learning and provide opportunities for school staff to stay connected with students.

Districts' plans for the funds included purchasing digital devices (laptops, Chromebooks, or tablets) for students and teachers, providing training for teachers on distance learning, purchasing distance learning software, and providing hotspot hardware to establish internet connections for students. A summary of each awarded district's plans for the funds can be viewed [here](#).

### Digital Learning Grant Recipients

Atlanta Public Schools	Hall County
Baconton Community Charter*	Houston County
Baker County	Lamar County
Baldwin County	Lowndes County
Bibb County	McIntosh County
Brooks County	Murray County
Calhoun City	Muscogee County
Calhoun County	Newton County
Cirrus Academy Charter*	Pickens County
Clay County	Pike County
Clayton County	Randolph County
Coffee County	Richmond County
Coastal Plains Charter*	SAIL Charter*
Colquitt County	Savannah-Chatham
Dalton City	Southwest Georgia STEM*
Decatur County	Tatnall County
DeKalb County	Terrell County
Dooly County	Thomas County
Dougherty County	Thomasville City
Dublin City	Treutlen County
Foothills Charter*	Troup County
Franklin County	Turner County
Fulton County	Valdosta City
Georgia Connections Academy*	Vidalia City
Glynn County	Ware County
Grady County	Worth County
Greene County	
Gwinnett County	*State Charter School

## Alternative/Non-Traditional Education News

Dr. Samuel Taylor, Program Manager

The Alternative Education team is collaborating with Bagwell College of Education at Kennesaw State University and the Georgia Association for Alternative Education to plan a two-and-a-half-day summit for alternative and non-traditional educators. All three organizations recognized that there are limited professional learning opportunities that address the unique challenges and issues facing administrators and teachers working with students in an alternative or non-traditional setting. A steering committee was created with representation from each organization for the purpose to plan and organize a unique professional learning opportunity for faculty and staff working in an alternative/non-traditional setting. The Steering Committee had tentatively scheduled a two-and-a-half-day summit for June of 2020 but canceled it due to the current crisis. However, the Steering Committee scheduled the two-and-a-half-day summit for next June, to be held on the campus of Kennesaw State University. Key features of the Summit are the two-and-a-half-day format, teams of school/program teachers, the opportunity for networking through scheduled job-alikes, simulation learning labs, exposure to the ITEC innovation classroom (Department of Instructional Technology in Bagwell College of Education), and the UDL (Universal Design for Learning) Center.

The Steering Committee will continue to meet monthly to plan and organize activities in preparation for the June 2021 Alternative/Non-traditional Summit located on the campus at Kennesaw State University.

.....Stay tuned!

Visit [www.gadoe.org/alternative](http://www.gadoe.org/alternative) for more information.



## Assessment Specialist News

### Georgia School Assessment of Performance on Systems (GSAPS)

The Area Program Assessment Specialist (APAS) team has been working on compiling, analyzing, and gathering feedback from the GSAPS and mini-GSAPS conducted during the 2019-2020 school year. The team is always striving to improve the process to make it efficient and the most effective to support schools and districts with their improvement efforts. Feedback on the review processes is critical to ensure that the tools used during the process provide useful data to identify strengths and areas of focus for improvement. We appreciate your feedback!

We look forward to returning to face-to-face support in our schools and districts. In the meantime, do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or need support.

Visit [www.gadoe.org/SDEreview](http://www.gadoe.org/SDEreview) for more information.

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## 2021 Winter Instructional Leadership Conference (ILC)

**February 2-3, 2021**

The Division of School and District Effectiveness will host the Winter ILC pending State Board of Education approval.

Visit [www.gadoe.org/sdevents](http://www.gadoe.org/sdevents) for more information.

## Virtual Professional Learning

### Teacher Clarity

GaDOE School Improvement's Teacher Clarity series will equip teachers and leaders with a deeper understanding of learning intentions and success criteria.

#### Teacher Clarity: Transparency for Learning, Part 1

[Teacher Clarity, Part 1 Webinar Recording, May 20, 2020](#) | [Teacher Clarity, Part 1 PPT, May 20, 2020.pdf](#)

#### Teacher Clarity: Transparency for Learning, Part 2

[Teacher Clarity, Part 2 Webinar Recording, May 27, 2020](#) | [Teacher Clarity, Part 2 PPT May 27, 2020.pdf](#)

#### Monitoring Teacher Clarity Implementation

[Monitoring Teacher Clarity Webinar Recording, June 3, 2020](#) | [Monitoring Teacher Clarity, Part 3 PPT June 2020.pdf](#)

Visit [www.gadoe.org/sdeevents](http://www.gadoe.org/sdeevents) for resource handouts.

## Formative Instructional Practices (FIP) Professional Learning Series for Federally Identified Schools

**Session 1:** [How Federally Designated Schools Can Improve](#)

**Session 2:** [Using GA FIP Web Page Resources to Support Improvement Planning](#)

### Coming soon!

**Session 3:** Using FIP Courses to Design Better Classroom-based Formative Assessments

**Session 4:** Creating Optimal Opportunities to Lead FIP Professional Learning

**Session 5:** Leading Teachers to Help Students Revise their Thinking Using Formative Assessment

**Session 6:** Organizing to Help Teachers Facilitate Student Ownership of Learning

Visit [www.gadoe.org/sdeevents](http://www.gadoe.org/sdeevents) for more information.

Visit [Georgia FIP webpage](#) for additional resources.

## Support School Improvement Utilizing Georgia's Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) and the School Improvement (SI) Dashboard

The School Improvement (SI) Dashboard feature in SLDS provides an insight of different data variables reflected at a school, district and state level.

- [SI Dashboard Webinar Recording, May 26, 2020](#)
- [SI Dashboard Users Manual](#)
- [Support School Improvement Utilizing SI Dashboard Presentation.pdf](#)
- [SI Dashboard District Data Mining Activity.docx](#)
- [SI Dashboard Subgroup Data Mining Activity.docx](#)

Visit the following webpages for more information on school improvement programs and events.

[School and District Effectiveness \(SDE\)](#)

[SDE Professional Learning](#)

“Professional Learning is the means by which teachers, administrators, and other staff acquire, enhance, and refine the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions necessary to create and support high levels of learning for all students.”



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