School Profile

Created Wednesday, October 23, 2013

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School Information

School Information	District Name:	Fulton County
School Information	School or Center Name:	Woodland Middle School

Level of School

Middle (6-8)

Principal

Principal | Name:	Rick Fowler
Principal | Position:	Principal
Principal | Phone:	404-305-2182
Principal | Email:	fowlerr1@fultonschools.org

School contact information

(the persons with rights to work on the application)

School contact information | Name:	Cherisse Campbell
School contact information | Position:	Assistant Principal
School contact information | Phone:	404-305-2182
School contact information | Email:	campbellcm@fultonschools.org

Grades represented in the building

example pre-k to 6

6 to 8

Number of Teachers in School

82

FTE Enrollment

1090

Fiscal Agent Memo of Understanding

The application is the project <u>implementation plan</u>, not simply a proposal. This project is expected to be implemented with fidelity upon SBOE approval. When completing the application, please remember that sub-grantees will not be permitted to change the project's scope that is originally outlined in the application, scored by reviewers during the application review process, and approved by SBOE. This policy is designed to provide basic fairness to applicants for discretionary sub-grants.

Fiscal Agent/Applicant Required Signatures:

I hereby certify that I am the an authorized signatory of the fiscal agent for which grant application is made and that the information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, complete and accurate. I further certify, to the best of my knowledge, that any ensuing program and activity will be conducted in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, application guidelines and instructions, assurances, and certifications. I also certify that the requested budget amounts are necessary for the implementation of the program described in the attached application.

Please sign in blue ink.

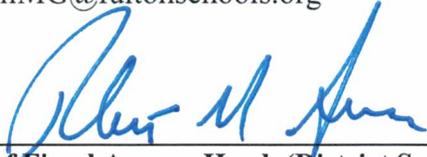Name of **Fiscal Agent's** Contact Person: Montreal Bell

Position/Title of Fiscal Agent's Contact Person: Coordinator - Early Childhood & Remedial Programs

Address: 786 Cleveland Ave., SW

City: Atlanta, GA   Zip: 30315

Telephone: 404-763-4574 Fax: 404-763-4577

E-mail: BellMG@fultonschools.org

_____

Signature of Fiscal Agency Head (District Superintendent or Executive Director)

Dr. Robert Avossa - Superintendent

_____

Typed Name of Fiscal Agency Head (District Superintendent or Executive Director)

12 / 11 / 2013
_____

Date (required)

Preliminary Application Requirements

Created Wednesday, October 23, 2013

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Click on the General Application Information link below to assist you in the grant development process.

SRCL General Information Packet-Cohort 3

Did you download and read the General Information document to assist you with writing the grant?

- Yes

Click on the SRCL Rubric link below to assist you in the grant development process.

SRCL Scoring Rubric-Cohort 3

Did you download and read the SRCL Rubric to assist you with writing the grant?

- Yes

Click on the Assessment Chart link below to assist you in the grant development process.

SRCL Required Assessments Chart

Did you download and read the Assessment Chart to assist you in writing the grant?

- Yes

Assessments

I understand that implementing the assessments mentioned on page 6 in the General Information Packet is a necessary part of receiving SRCL funding.

- I Agree

Unallowable Expenditures

Preparation of the Proposal: *Costs to develop, prepare, and/or write the SRCL proposal cannot be charged to the grant directly or indirectly by either the agency or contractor.*

Pre-Award Costs: *Pre-award costs may not be charged against the grant. Funds can be used only for activities conducted and costs incurred after the start date of the grant.*

Entertainment, Refreshments, Snacks: *A field trip without the **approved** academic support will be considered entertainment. End-of-year celebrations or food associated with parties or socials are unallowable expenditures. Game systems and game cartridges are unallowable.*

Unapproved out of state or overnight field trips, including retreats, lock-ins, etc.

Incentives *(e.g., plaques, trophies, stickers, t-shirts, give-a-ways)*

Advertisements, Promotional or Marketing Items

Decorative Items

Purchase of Facilities or vehicles *(e.g., Buses, Vans, or Cars)*

Land acquisition

Capital Improvements, Permanent Renovations

Direct charges for items/services that the indirect cost rate covers;

Dues to organizations, federations or societies for personal benefits

Any costs not allowed for Federal projects per EDGAR, which may be accessed at
http://www.ed.gov/policy/fund/reg/edgarReg/edgar.html.
NOTE: This is NOT an all-inclusive list of unallowable expenses. If you have questions about unallowable expenses please e-mail your questions to jmorrill@doe.k12.ga.us

Upon approval by the State Board of Education, sub-grantees will be required to submit electronic budgets through GaDOE Consolidated Application Portal. All budget requests must be made in accordance with the use of funds for the SRCL project and must meet the requirements in EDGAR and OMB circulars.

- I Agree

Grant Assurances

Created Tuesday, October 29, 2013
Updated Thursday, December 12, 2013

Page 1

The sub-grantee assures that it has the necessary legal authority to apply for and receive a SRCL Grant.

- Yes

Sub-grantee certifies that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.

- Yes

The SRCL projects will target students who attend Title I schools or schools eligible for Title I schoolwide programs and their families.

- Yes

The SRCL project will be administered in accordance with all applicable statutes, regulations, program plans, and applications.

- Yes

The Grantee will participate in all technical assistance/information-sharing opportunities and professional development activities provided through the STRIVING READER COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY GRANT Project Grant Program.

- Yes

All activities must be correlated with the development of STRIVING READER COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY GRANT goals for children birth through grade 12.

- Yes

The second year of funding is dependent upon successful program implementation and progress aligned with the components of the request for application submitted.

- Yes

Prior to any material change affecting the purpose, administration, organization, budget, or operation of the SRCL project, the Sub-grantee agrees to submit an appropriately amended application to GaDOE for approval.

- Yes

The Sub-grantee agrees to notify the GaDOE, in writing, of any change in the contact information provided in its application.

- Yes

The activities and services described in the application shall be administered by or under the supervision and control of the Sub-grantee. The Sub-grantee shall not assign or subcontract, in whole or in part, its rights or obligations without prior written consent of GaDOE. Any attempted assignment without said consent shall be void and of no effect.

- Yes

The Sub-grantee will use fiscal control and sound accounting procedures that will ensure proper disbursement of and account for Federal and state funds paid to the program to perform its duties.

- Yes

Funds shall be used only for financial obligations incurred during the grant period.

- Yes

The Sub-grantee will, if applicable, have the required financial and compliance audits conducted in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1966 and OMB Circular A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations."

- Yes

The fiscal agent will adopt and use proper methods of administering each program, including: (A) the enforcement of any obligations imposed on agencies, institutions, organizations, and other recipients responsible for carrying out each program; and (B) the timely correction of deficiencies in program operations that are identified through audits, monitoring, evaluation and/or technical assistance.

- Yes

The Sub-grantee will cooperate in carrying out any evaluation of each such program conducted by or for the Georgia Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Education, or other state or Federal officials.

- Yes

The Sub-grantee will submit reports to GaDOE as may reasonably be required. The Sub-grantee will maintain such fiscal and programmatic records and provide access to those records, as necessary, for those departments to perform their duties.

- Yes

The Sub-grantee will submit an annual summative evaluation report no later than June 30.

- Yes

The Sub-grantee agrees that GaDOE, or any of its duly authorized representatives, at any time during the term of this agreement, shall have access to, and the right to audit or examine any pertinent books, documents, papers, and records of the Sub-grantee related to the Sub-grantee's charges and performance under the SRCL sub-grant.

- Yes

The property (e.g., computers, equipment, classroom desks, tables, and pilferable items) purchased with the SRCL grant funds must be managed in accordance with EDGAR section 74.34 through 74.37 (for non-profit organizations) and with EDGAR section 80.32 and 80.33 (for school districts).

- Yes

The Sub-grantee certifies that it will abide by GaDOE's Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Policy. Applicants with a conflict of interest must submit a disclosure notice.

- Yes

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The Sub-grantee will comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (34 C.F.R. 99).

- Yes

Sub-grantee will comply with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. These include but are not limited to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicaps; and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which prohibits discrimination on a basis of disability.

- Yes

In accordance with the Federal Drug-Free Workplace and Community Act Amendments of 1989 and the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the Sub-grantee understands that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance, marijuana, or dangerous drug is prohibited at geographic locations at which individuals are directly engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the 21st CCLC grant.

- Yes

All technology purchases (software and hardware) will be approved by the LEA Technology Director for compatibility with current operating systems and building infrastructure. The Technology Director must ensure that any purchases for the building will be able to be implemented and sustained beyond the grant period.

- Yes

Georgia Department of Education
Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Policy

Georgia's conflict of interest and disclosure policy is applicable to entities conducting business on behalf of and /or doing business with the Department and entities receiving a grant to implement a program and/or project approved by the State Board of Education. This policy is applicable for entities receiving state and/or Federal funds.

Questions regarding the Department's conflict of interest and disclosure policy should be directed to the program manager responsible for the contract, purchase order and/or grant.

I. **Conflicts of Interest**

It is the policy of the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) to avoid doing business with Applicants, subcontractors of Applicants who have a conflict of interest or an appearance of a conflict of interest. The purpose of this policy is to maintain the highest level of integrity within its workforce, and to ensure that the award of grant Agreements is based upon fairness and merit.

a. **Organizational Conflicts of Interest**.

All grant applicants ("Applicants") shall provide a statement in their proposal which describes in a concise manner all past, present or planned organizational, financial, contractual or other interest(s) with an organization regulated by the GaDOE, including but not limited to Local Education Agencies (LEAs), or with an organization whose interests may be substantially affected by GaDOE activities, and which is related to the work under this grant solicitation. The interest(s) in which conflict may occur shall include those of the Applicant, its affiliates, proposed consultants, proposed subcontractors and key personnel of any of the above. Past interest shall be limited to within one year of the date of the Applicant's grant proposal. Key personnel shall include:

- any person owning more than 20% interest in the Applicant
- the Applicant's corporate officers
- board members
- senior managers
- any employee who is responsible for making a decision or taking an action on this grant application or any resulting Agreement where the decision or action can have an economic or other impact on the interests of a regulated or affected organization.

i. The Applicant shall describe in detail why it believes, in light of the interest(s) identified in (a) above, that performance of the proposed Agreement can be accomplished in an impartial and objective manner.

ii. In the absence of any relevant interest identified in (a) above, the Applicant shall submit in its grant application a statement certifying that to the best of its knowledge and belief no affiliation exists relevant to possible conflicts of interest. The Applicant must obtain the same information from potential subcontractors prior to award of a subcontract.

iii. GaDOE will review the statement submitted and may require additional relevant information from the Applicant. All such information, and any other relevant information known to GaDOE, will be used to determine whether an award to the Applicant may create a conflict of interest. If any such conflict of interest is found to exist, GaDOE may:

1. Disqualify the Applicant, or
2. Determine that it is otherwise in the best interest of GaDOE to make an award to the Applicant and include appropriate provisions to mitigate or avoid such conflict in the grant awarded.

iv. The refusal to provide the disclosure or representation, or any additional information required, may result in disqualification of the Applicant for an award. If nondisclosure or misrepresentation is discovered after award, the resulting grant Agreement may be terminated. If after award the Applicant discovers a conflict of interest with respect to the grant awarded as a result of this solicitation, which could not reasonably have been known prior to award, an immediate and full disclosure shall be made in writing to GaDOE. The disclosure shall include a full description of the conflict, a description of the action the Applicant has taken, or proposes to take, to avoid or mitigate such conflict. GaDOE may, however, terminate the Agreement for convenience if GaDOE deems that termination is in the best interest of the GaDOE.

b. **Employee Relationships**

i. The Applicant must provide the following information with its application and must provide an information update within 30 days of the award of a contract, any subcontract, or any consultant agreement, or within 30 days of the retention of a Subject Individual or former GaDOE employee subject to this clause:

1. The names of all Subject Individuals who:
   a. Participated in preparation of proposals for award; or
   b. Are planned to be used during performance; or
   c. Are used during performance; and

ii. The names of all former GaDOE employees, retained by the Applicant who were employed by GaDOE during the two year period immediately prior to the date of:

1. The award; or
2. Their retention by the Applicant; and
3. The date on which the initial expression of interest in a future financial arrangement was discussed with the Applicant by any former GaDOE employee whose name is required to be provided by the contractor pursuant to subparagraph (ii); and
4. The location where any Subject Individual or former GaDOE employee whose name is required to be provided by the Applicant pursuant to subparagraphs (i) and (ii), are expected to be assigned.

iii. "Subject Individual" means a current GaDOE employee or a current GaDOE employee's father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother, half sister, spouse of an in-law, or a member of his/her household.

      iv. The Applicant must incorporate this clause into all subcontracts or consultant agreements awarded under this Agreement and must further require that each such subcontractor or consultant incorporate this clause into all subcontracts or consultant agreements at any tier awarded under this Agreement unless GaDOE determines otherwise.

      v. The information as it is submitted must be certified as being true and correct. If there is no such information, the certification must so state.

c. <u>Remedies for Nondisclosure</u>
The following are possible remedies available to the GaDOE should an Applicant misrepresent or refuse to disclose or misrepresent any information required by this clause:

1. Termination of the Agreement.
2. Exclusion from subsequent GaDOE grant opportunities.
3. Other remedial action as may be permitted or provided by law or regulation or policy or by the terms of the grant agreement.

d. <u>Annual Certification</u>. The Applicant must provide annually, based on the anniversary date of Agreement award, the following certification in writing to GaDOE. The annual certification must be submitted with the grantees annual end of year program report.

ANNUAL CERTIFICATION OF DISCLOSURE OF CERTAIN EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS

The Applicant represents and certifies that to the best of its knowledge and belief that during the prior 12 month period:

[ ] A former GaDOE employee(s), current GaDOE employee, or Subject Individual(s) has been retained to work under the Agreement or subcontract or consultant agreement and complete disclosure has been made.

[X] No former GaDOE employee(s), current GaDOE employee, or Subject Individual(s) has been retained to work under the Agreement or subcontract or consultant agreement, and disclosure is not required.

II. <u>Disclosure of Conflict of Interest after Agreement Execution</u>

If after Agreement execution, Applicant discovers a conflict of interest which could not reasonably have been known prior to Agreement execution; an immediate and full disclosure shall be made in writing to GaDOE. The disclosure shall include a full description of the conflict, a description of the action the Applicant has taken, or proposes to take, to avoid or mitigate such conflict. GaDOE may, however, terminate this Agreement for convenience if GaDOE deems that termination is in the best interest of GaDOE.

III.   Incorporation of Clauses

The Applicant must incorporate the clauses in paragraphs A, B, and C of this section into all subcontracts or consultant agreements awarded under this Agreement and must further require that each such subcontractor or consultant incorporate this clause into all subcontracts or consultant agreements at any tier awarded under this Agreement unless GaDOE determines otherwise.
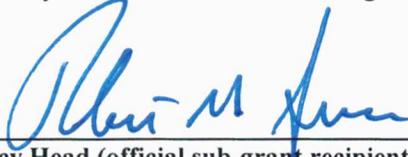
_____
Signature of Fiscal Agency Head (official sub-grant recipient)

Dr. Robert Avossa - Superintendent
_____
Typed Name of Fiscal Agency Head and Position Title

12/11/2013
_____
Date

_____
Signature of Applicant's Authorized Agency Head (required)

Dr. Robert Avossa - Superintendent
_____
Typed Name of Applicant's Authorized Agency Head and Position Title

12/11/2013
_____
Date

_____
Signature of Co-applicant's Authorized Agency Head (if applicable)

_____
Typed Name of Co-applicant's Authorized Agency Head and Position Title (if applicable)

_____
Date (if applicable)

District Narrative

Brief History and Demographics: Fulton County Schools (FCS) is a large district both in terms of enrollment, more than 95,000 students, and in terms of geographic size, 78 miles from north to south. During the 2013-2014 school year, FCS students are attending classes in 96 traditional schools and 6 start-up charter schools. FCS is a diverse district both in terms of demographic and socio-economic enrollment. Its racial composition is 43% Black, 31% White, 14% Hispanic, 10% Asian, and 2% Multi-Racial. More than 46% of FCS students receive free and/or reduced-priced meals. Ten percent of FCS students are classified in special education, and seven percent are classified as having limited English proficiency. FCS is proud to be a recipient of the Striving Reader Comprehensive Literacy Grant award for Cohorts I and II. Our Pre-K Program, 12 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and 3 high schools are benefiting from Striving Reader funding as they implement their literacy plans.

Current Priorities and Strategic Planning: Strategic Plan 2017: *Building Our Future* is the roadmap for how FCS aims to improve student achievement over the next five years. Three goals serve as the district's measure for long-term student success, i.e., students will graduate on time and be ready for college or the workforce: 1) Graduation Rate: 90% of Fulton students will graduate on time; 2) College Readiness: 85% of Fulton's seniors will be eligible for admission to a University System of Georgia college or university; and 3) Career Readiness: 100% of Fulton's graduates will be work-ready certified as measured by the ACT WorkKeys assessment.

Current Management Structure: FCS has restructured its operations to become Georgia's largest charter system. Through this innovative shared-governance framework, FCS is introducing new levels of flexibility to waive major aspects of state education law to implement district-wide and local school improvement strategies to meet the diverse needs of a growing

district. Recognizing the need to place more emphasis on supporting schools, our

superintendent, Dr. Robert Avossa, moved staff positions out of the central office and placed

them in four learning communities: South, Central, Northwest and Northeast. The learning

communities allow a decentralized approach to school management and provide schools the

opportunity to work more closely together and align resources. Each is managed by an area

superintendent and supported by an executive director and staff. Striving Reader schools will

take advantage of the flexibility provided to the district through its charter system status to

implement their innovative literacy plans.

Past Instructional Initiatives: FCS teachers have access to model lesson plans written by

district master teachers and the English/Language Arts (ELA) Department staff. The model units

demonstrate a balanced approach to the teaching of standards. Instructional plans outline the

standards addressed in each of the four nine-week units. Additionally, resources, strategies, and

balanced assessments accompany each unit of study. A comprehensive scope and sequence

outline the standards and elements for each semester of the school year.

Literacy Curriculum: The ELA curriculum is based on the Common Core Georgia Performance

Standards (CCGPS) which are implemented through the Continuous Achievement Model. The

goal of Continuous Achievement is to have all students challenged at their highest level. In this

model, the K-1 curriculum is written such that teachers can scaffold, compact, or expand the

curriculum depending upon student needs. In second semester 1st through 5th grade, students

are placed on-level, advanced or accelerated (a full year ahead). Depending upon the placement

level, the pacing depth and instructional level of the curriculum are varied in order to provide

students the necessary challenge or support. The middle school curriculum focuses on the

integration of vocabulary, literature, reading strategies, composition, oral language skills,

research and grammar. While refining writing process skills and grammar knowledge, students produce various kinds of papers and multimedia presentations. To prepare students to be college and career ready, high school students in ELA experience wide and deep reading of literature and literary nonfiction of steadily increasing sophistication in order to expand their literary and cultural knowledge. Students learn to evaluate intricate arguments and surmount the challenges posed by complex written materials independently and confidently. They also write and participate in a variety of conversations in which they assert and defend claims and show what they know about a subject using appropriate examples and evidence.

Literacy Assessments: In the fall of 2013, FCS began deploying a new literacy assessment, STAR Reading. This nationally normed, computer adaptive assessment is based on item response theory and is aligned to CCGPS. Data from these assessments will be used by teachers to make decisions about instruction and flexible grouping to ensure students receive the right instruction at the right level. Students will be screened at least three times per year; however, teachers can screen students more frequently for progress monitoring. Our Striving Reader Cohort I and II schools use DIBELS Next and Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) literacy assessments. Further, FCS uses benchmark assessments called Checkpoints which assess student mastery of CCGPS in a pre-test/post-test format per semester. Teachers and principals have easy access to Checkpoints data for formative instructional planning, as well as placement of students within the on-level, advanced or accelerated curriculum. FCS schools administer a writing assessment every nine weeks that focuses on the studied genre. A balanced assessment approach continues to be the assessment model for the district.

Need for a Striving Reader Project: For Cohort III, FCS strategically selected our Pre-K program, 8 elementary schools, 1 middle school, and 1 high school to help complete feeder

patterns from Cohorts I and II in the Central and South Learning Communities. With Cohort III

funding, Striving Reader schools can vertically align their literacy plans to improve student

achievement across the curriculum.

Georgia created a new accountability system called the College and Career Ready

Performance Index (CCRPI), which shows how schools are performing. FCS' baseline CCRPI

in 2012 was 85.7 (based on 100 points) versus the state's score of 83.4. The results vary

considerably among our targeted Cohort III schools and in most cases are dramatically below the

district and state averages.

	CCRPI	% students scoring at Meets or Exceeds on the English Language Arts CRCT	% students scoring at Meets or Exceeds on the Reading CRCT	% students scoring at Meets or Exceeds on the Grade Five Writing Assessment	% students in grade 3 achieving a Lexile measure equal to or greater than 650[*]	% students in grade 5 achieving a Lexile measure equal to or greater than 850[*]
State of GA	83.4	91.6	93.3	81.1	70.4	73
FCS District	85.7	93.4	94.7	87.9	79.6	82
Conley Hills ES	68.2	79.3	80.7	84.1	44.6	45.2
Feldwood ES	80.3	91.5	90.4	82.4	59.6	59
Gullatt ES	65.5	88.8	88.2	96.7	45.6	52.4
Hapeville ES	70.6	85.8	87.6	84.6	41.2	46.8
Harriet Tubman ES	64.4	84.9	86	82.4	55.2	69.5
Liberty Point ES	64.3	89.4	89.8	76.9	69	56.4
Parklane ES	64	81.1	84	79.7	38.5	60.4
Seaborn Lee ES	74.3	90	89.5	87.8	39.1	71.4
Woodland MS	72.8	92.4	93.8	84.1**	79.1**	

* Adjusted Performance Indicator
**For Woodland MS, the CCRPI measures the 8th grade Writing Assessment and a Lexile measure of 1050.

	CCRPI	% students scoring at Meets or Exceeds on the Ninth Grade Literature EOCT	% students scoring at Meets or Exceeds on the American Literature EOCT
Banneker HS	47	66.7	74.3

Source: Georgia Department of Education 2012 College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI)

A Striving Reader grant award will help Cohort III schools address their literacy challenges and improve their CCRPI scores.

District Management Plan and Key Personnel

The FCS management team has extensive experience implementing large, complex grant programs and will implement Striving Reader Cohort III performance plans on time and within budget.

Grant Implementation: Upon grant award, FCS will require Cohort III principals to attend a technical assistance session to provide guidance on creating performance plans and budgets aligned with their literacy plans. Assessment training, budget processes, and grant monitoring will be discussed. Lessons learned and best practices from Cohort I and II principals will be shared. Each summer, Striving Reader schools will be required to participate in professional development workshops provided by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE).

Grant Operations: The following individuals are accountable for the Striving Reader grant portfolio:

Dr. Robert Avossa – Superintendent (0.025 FTE) – will be ultimately responsible for grant implementation, will keep the Fulton County Board of Education briefed on grant results, and will allocate the necessary resources to ensure fidelity of implementation.

Dr. Scott Muri – Deputy Superintendent Academics (0.05 FTE) will provide strategic oversight for grant implementation. Dr. Muri reports directly to the Superintendent.

Amy Barger – Assistant Superintendent (0.10 FTE) will be accountable for the Striving Reader grant and will supervise the Striving Reader Project Manager to integrate proposed strategies and supports with other system processes to ensure alignment to the district's strategic plan.

Dr. Donald Fennoy and Karen Cox – Area Superintendents (0.10 FTE) will ensure vertical alignment of curriculum and professional learning across Striving Reader schools. As members of the FCS Executive Leadership team, they will communicate best practices to schools across the district to support sustainability of Striving Reader strategies. The Learning Communities have program specialists in each content and specialty area who provide additional support to schools.

Montreal Bell – Striving Reader Project Manager (.50 FTE) will coordinate the Striving Reader program and will manage the grant budget. Ms. Bell will serve as a bridge among the schools and the functional areas involved. Ms. Bell also coordinates the district's Pre-K Program. She has extensive experience managing complex grants, involving multiple partners and government agencies, with significant reporting requirements.

To Be Determined – Striving Reader Program Specialist (1.0 FTE) will report to Ms. Bell and will work with all Striving Reader schools to develop and implement literacy and performance plans, create budgets to support grant goals, monitor school inventories to insure state and federal compliance, provide professional learning resources, monitor grant implementation, and facilitate the assessment process.

District Commitment: As a recipient of Striving Reader Cohorts I and II, FCS understands the importance of a strong governance structure for grant management. Currently, we are managing a Striving Reader portfolio of 18 schools and the Pre-K program. The district held multiple meetings to assist Cohort III schools with grant development. On September 19, 2013, Ms. Bell convened interested principals to discuss the Striving Reader grant and how to create school literacy plans. She invited principals from Cohorts I and II to share lessons learned and best practices. On September 26, Cohort III schools met with Julie Morrill, the GaDOE program lead, to discuss the grant requirements in greater detail. Further, Ms. Bell facilitated the grant development process by providing central office resources to targeted schools to consult on their literacy plans. FCS has the capacity to effectively manage Cohort III grantees.

Experience of the Applicant

Fulton County Schools (FCS) has a strong track record effectively implementing large, competitive grants at the federal, state, and private foundation level and sustaining results over time. The table below summarizes large grants awarded over the last few years.

Grant	Funder	Award Year	Funded Amount
School Improvement Grant	Georgia Department of Education	2013	$3.4M
ABC Framework for Dropout Prevention	Wilbur and Hilda Glenn Family Foundation	2013	$500K
Striving Reader Comprehensive Literacy Cohort II	Georgia Department of Education	2013	$3.2M
Striving Reader Comprehensive Literacy Cohort I	Georgia Department of Education	2012	$4.5M
Innovation Fund	Governor's Office of Student Achievement	2012	$640K
Readiness & Emergency Management for Schools	U.S. Department of Education	2009	$608K
Strategic Data Project	The Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University	2009	$500K
Smaller Learning Communities	U.S. Department of Education	2008	$5.2M
Teaching American History	U.S. Department of Education	2008	$990K

Capacity: FCS has rigorous internal controls that ensure funds are properly used to achieve intended results. We have not received any audit findings on grant-funded programs. FCS has extensive experience working across departments and schools as well as with external partners to achieve grant goals. We are committed to Striving Reader and value the opportunity to provide high-quality literacy supports to targeted schools. Dr. Robert Avossa, the superintendent, has made this initiative a district priority. The district has assigned a Striving Reader grant manager, Ms. Montreal Bell, and a Program Specialist to coordinate with all 18 Cohort I and II schools and the Pre-K program. By staffing an additional resource at the district level, FCS will have the capacity to implement Cohort III Striving Reader school performance plans with fidelity.

Sustainability: On July 1, 2012, Fulton County Schools became the largest charter system in the state of Georgia. School Governance Councils are being created at each school whose

responsibilities include developing comprehensive strategic plans and proposing resource allocation and instructional innovations to address student needs. The ultimate value of the School Governance Council system lies in the vision of its members and the innovation such Councils will bring to our schools. The Councils will help Striving Reader schools sustain innovations beyond the grant period by providing a transparent governance structure coupled with a fiscal management process to reallocate resources locally based on data.

Internally-funded Initiatives: FCS has developed and implemented numerous education programs aligned to our strategic plan designed to increase student achievement using general operating funds without the support of outside funding. These programs attend to the delivery of student-focused instruction and continuous improvement. Two examples are cited below: 1) As part of our charter system, the district leveraged general operating funds to create the Charter System School Governance Department and staffed six positions to provide strong school support of our governance and flexibility programs. 2) In August 2013, FCS launched FultonConnect, an integrated instructional management technology tool for all 7,000 Fulton teachers providing them access to online lesson planning, curriculum, assessments, Response to Intervention monitoring, Individualized Education Program management, and student data dashboards.

FCS staff and faculty have the capacity and expertise to successfully implement large, complex grant-funded programs like Striving Reader and sustain them after the grant period.

School Narrative

History

Woodland Middle School, which opened in the fall of 1988, serves 1,094 sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. It is located in East Point, Georgia just south of Atlanta and is a part of Fulton County's Central Learning Community. Its mission is to educate and empower scholars to become future global leaders through creative thinking, problem solving, and making connections in all areas. Woodland is a high needs, urban middle school representing a minority population of 99%, (87% Black, 11% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 1% White). 14% of the population is comprised of students with disabilities (SWD) and 4% of students are English language learners (ELL). 90% of all students are eligible for free and/or reduced priced meals, and the school's mobility rate of 65% is among the highest in Fulton County.

In the past, Woodland struggled with many of the challenges faced by urban schools with large numbers of transient, underserved students. For years it was deemed a "Needs Improvement School" because it did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), the formula previously used to determine if schools were meeting expectations under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. This dismal trend finally ended in 2005 when the school made AYP. Woodland continued to make AYP for the next seven years and was first recognized as a Title I Distinguished School in 2007. Even though the school was able to successfully shift its paradigm, it still has room for marked improvement as evidenced by its 2012 College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI, the new measure of school effectiveness) score of 72.8 out of 100.

Administrative and Teacher Leadership Team

The school's administrative team, while relatively new, is poised to lead Woodland from good to great. The principal, Mr. Richard Fowler, is in the 2nd year of his tenure at the school. One assistant principal, Mr. John Madden is in his 6th year; another, Ms. Jody Rice is in her 5th year; and the third, Mrs. Cherisse Campbell, joined the administration in January of 2013 when her predecessor retired. The school's leadership team encompasses every instructional area in the school and meets weekly to review school initiatives and make recommendations for improvement.

Woodland Middle School Leadership Team	
Staff Member	Title
Richard Fowler	Principal
Cherisse Campbell	Assistant Principal
John Madden	Assistant Principal
Jody Rice	Assistant Principal
Phillip English	Administrative Assistant
Ashley Garden	Administrative Assistant
Denise Taylor-Roberts	Administrative Assistant
Lynda Coley	Math Contact
Kalessia Cooperwood	Reading Contact
Melanie Eley	ELA Contact
Taccara Reid	Social Studies Contact
Ki'Amber Waller	Science Contact

Past Instructional Initiatives

For the past six years, Woodland has offered Extended Learning classes to all Level 1 students. It has also scheduled students for Connections classes related to their CRCT identified area of deficiency in an attempt to reach those students who cannot remain after school for additional help. Writing workshops have also been provided for 8th grade students. There has also been Saturday School sessions to offer support to students requiring remediation as well as those seeking acceleration opportunities.

Current Instructional Initiatives

Woodland plans to continue to offer Extended Learning. Students are still routinely scheduled for Connections classes for extra help. These classes are taught by content certified teachers. This year a special support team of teachers has been assembled to work with small groups within the confines of the regular content classroom. Plans have been made to continue with Saturday School in the hope of expanding the program to include more students. Woodland has also instituted a blended learning initiative using iPads to foster more technology integration.

Professional Learning Needs

Currently, all teachers meet every other week for 90 minutes to focus on our instructional North Stars: differentiation, rigor, student engagement, balanced assessment, and classroom management. A focus on our North Stars is what unites us a professional learning community and defines what is universally important in our classrooms. We have come to the realization that literacy instruction is of equal importance to our current instructional North Stars and must be given similar prominence within our professional learning community.

Need for a Striving Readers Project

90% of Woodland's students are classified as economically disadvantaged. The state standards and curricular materials that have been established for middle grade students do not take into account some of the unique literacy challenges that students in high poverty schools face. Our students' struggles with reading comprehension are not limited to their reading courses, but also bleed over into other content areas that are highly dependent upon interpretation of complex texts. Many research-based reading interventions require personalizing the learning environment through the use of technology. Both teachers and students have limited access to quality computers and many classrooms are yet to be equipped with an LCD projector. The technology that has been introduced is often underutilized due to training deficits for both our students and teachers. Being a part of the Striving Readers Project would afford Woodland the opportunity to close this digital divide and drive improvement.

It is assumed in most teacher education programs that by middle school, adolescents have formed a foundation of basic reading skills; therefore, most secondary teachers arrive unequipped with the tools necessary to provide students with the support that they need to access complex texts across all content areas. Woodland's participation in the Striving Readers Project would also allow the school to offer some much needed professional development in the teaching of complex texts.

Building Block 1. Engaged Leadership

A. Action: Demonstrate commitment to learn about and support evidence-based literacy instruction in his/her school

At Woodland Middle School our leadership team has demonstrated a commitment to learn about and support evidence-based literacy instruction. Based upon the results of our School Quality Review (SQR), it was determined that certain instructional North Stars would guide and define what is universally important in our classrooms. The Woodland North Stars are differentiation, rigor, student engagement, balanced assessment, and classroom management.   As a result of recently implementing STAR testing and a root cause analysis of our instructional gaps, we have come to the realization that literacy instruction is of equal importance to our current instructional North Stars and must be given similar prominence within our professional learning community. The literature has demonstrated that evidence-based intensive reading instruction can result in significant gains, and therefore we anticipate that effective execution of a literacy plan at Woodland Middle School will result in similar positive outcomes (Graves, Brandon, & Duesberry, 2011). In September, all students experienced student advisory sessions in an extended homeroom on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Initially, the advisory days were dedicated to character education, but the leadership team decided that one of the days would solely be dedicated to student-leveled independent reading and discussion. Administration strongly believes in professional learning for all teachers and has created dedicated professional learning time onsite every other week as well as special budgeting for offsite professional development and professional conferences.

B. Action: Organize a Literacy Leadership Team

A literacy team has been established that will meet on a bi-monthly basis. This literacy team consists of the individuals listed on the table below:

Member Name	Title
Cherisse Campbell	Assistant Principal
Sharon Powell	Graduation Coach/Counselor
Charmaine Hankerson	ESOL Specialist
Kalessia Cooperwood	Reading Department Chair
Melanie Eley	ELA Department Chair
Marina Berry	Special Education Department Chair
Mable Hurtault	Science Teacher
Taccara Reid	Social Studies Department Chair
Ellen Holland	TAG Coordinator/Math Teacher
Elaida Pitts	Reading Teacher
Paul Gainer	ELA Teacher
Felicia Sizemore	ELA Teacher / Parent
Roberta Barber	Media and Educational Technology Instructor
Richard Fowler	Principal

This team will assist in establishing and monitoring success metrics that can be made a part of the school improvement goal. It is also a responsibility of this group to create a school-wide, cross-curricular literacy plan, and to be initiators and evaluators of literacy instructional strategies and best practices. The literacy team will also be tasked with creating outreach guidelines to identify other stakeholders in order to form a community literacy council. The charge of the community literacy council will be to develop programs to develop the relationship between home, school and community in support of our literacy goals.   The team will produce meeting minutes that focus on decisions and works in progress and share with the school community in the weekly newsletter, *The Woodland Voice*, Woodland Middle School's website, Twitter feeds, and the Title I Newsletter.

C. Action: Maximize the use of time and personnel through scheduling and collaborative planning

Leadership at Woodland has also been consistent in providing a sacred time and space for weekly collaborative content planning and team meetings. They steer a portion of the meeting discussions toward literacy by the requirement to note content and academic vocabulary on the

meeting documentation templates.   As it relates to scheduling, there is a 55 minute instructional period for all academic content classes (ELA/RDG/SCI/SS/MATH/World Languages) at all grade levels. Students taking a World Language receive 55 minutes of embedded literacy instruction daily; students not enrolled in a World Language take a separate Reading class and receive 110 minutes of embedded literacy instruction daily. With the introduction of literacy as the focus of one of the student advisory days, all students will then receive an additional 25 minutes one day a week.

D. Action: Create a school culture in which teachers across the curriculum are responsible for literacy instruction as articulated in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards

With the adoption of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards all teachers across the curriculum are responsible for literacy instruction; however, at this time ELA and Reading are still the only two content areas in which professional learning in disciplinary literacy has begun.   Embracing the beliefs and the research presented in "The Why" document, it is also our goal that literacy instruction for adolescents should extend beyond a single language arts period and be integrated in subject area coursework. This extended time for literacy**,** anywhere from two to four hours, should occur in English Language Arts and content-area classes (Biancorosa & Snow, 2006, p. 20). While content teachers teach specific content vocabulary, our teachers do not possess an extensive toolkit of vocabulary acquisition strategies, nor do they consistently incorporate academic vocabulary, narrative, informational, and argumentative writing.   It is critical that content areas outside of Reading and ELA also include literacy instruction for all students and professional development in implementing researched based pedagogical skills for reading and writing.   Collaboration within Professional Learning Communities is deeply integrated into our school culture and will readily embrace a structured literacy program when presented with the time and resources for implementation. This process will be facilitated by formalizing discussions around literacy within grade level content meetings, integrating the appropriate professional development programs to support literacy initiatives, and providing the necessary monitoring and feedback to improve practice.

E. Action: Optimize literacy instruction across all content areas

Optimizing literacy instruction comes from the testing, evaluating, and redesigning the plan for incorporating literacy. Through student tests and walk-throughs, the literacy team reviews the success

or failure and works on best practices. This requires regular collaboration across content areas.

One area that needs immediate attention is providing classroom libraries in all classes. At this time, Reading, ELA and World Language teachers maintain a classroom library for students to use during class and when work is completed. Ideally, this would be extended to all classes in the school, providing not only content-appropriate books but general reading books. It is important to provide classrooms with selections (Georgia Dept. of Education, pg. 59).

F. Action: Enlist the community at large to support schools and teachers in the development of college-and-career-ready students as articulated in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards.

Outside of vendors, there is currently a limited number of learning supports in the community. While we currently partner with Junior Achievement (JA) and the Reef House (Reading and Math tutoring), we plan to expand to local colleges and universities, various neighborhood associations (Oak Forest and Cherry Blossom), and the local news outlets. Last year we began electronic newsletters for parents, students, and the community at large, and we are now socially connected via Twitter. We plan to work with the Fulton County Public Library System and begin a community-wide "Literacy Night."

Building Block 2: Continuity of Instruction

A. Action: Ensure a consistent literacy focus across the curriculum through the use of collaborative teams (See Leadership Sections I. D., E. in the What document)

While it is a goal that there is a consistent literacy focus across the curriculum, cross-disciplinary teams meet once a week for 45 minutes, which does not lend for thorough examination of student work or in depth discussions pertaining to literacy goals. This time is routinely used in addressing behavior issues, team matters, and organization of team calendars for parent conferences. Little to no time is formally spent on cross content collaboration. Individual Reading and ELA teachers informally seek out input from Science/Social Studies teachers from time to time, but no real consistent collaboration is managed.   Content collaboration by grade level has been mastered by most content groups at Woodland. Teachers are comfortable sharing resources and student data with members in their grade and content, but have not made this transition to others outside of their content area. It is our plan to have leadership members attend and assist the team cross-disciplinary meetings to facilitate discussions that would lead to integration of literacy across the content areas and the

creation of interdisciplinary units. Administration will also articulate the roles and set the protocols for team meetings. Administration could further promote this continuity by implementing Literacy Walks and using the *Georgia Literacy Instruction Observation Checklist* to formally note features of effective and ineffective literacy instruction. Mastery will also be tracked by the literacy standards now present in all content areas at all grade levels.

B. Action: Support teachers in providing literacy instruction across the curriculum

In order to reach the levels of mastery as described above, teachers must be given adequate support in providing literacy instruction across the curriculum. Based on the feedback of our faculty and staff, a systematic literacy program is needed that would give basic guidelines to aid teachers in effective instructional strategies for vocabulary, comprehension, writing, selecting text complexity, text structures, and use of graphic organizers. Our plan includes creating a school-wide, writing rubric that is CCGPS aligned and bringing in Metro RESA to train all teachers to embed the Common Core Literacy Standards into all content areas using tools created by the Literacy Design Collaborative. This training will assist with the creation of school-wide curricular maps and calendars as well as literacy embedded instructional units. PD 360 also provides training in literacy and using technology in the classroom. Using the technology in the classroom, to review e-books for example, may engage the students in a completely different way. PD 360 also provides a searchable database that allows teachers to find the unexpected in searching for a course. This freedom of movement encourages teachers to try additional things in their classroom. The school is also reviewing to see if non-reading teachers would like the opportunity to receive their reading endorsement. This should be arranged as classes in the school for ease of use.

Non-fiction books make up the bulk of the Media Center's offerings. Specifically, we now have a large collection of math books that can be used for reading, entertainment, and learning mathematics. One 7th grade math teacher is modeling the behavior of requiring book reports on math books. The offerings include graphic novels, picture books and other assortment of books that teach or explain math concepts.

Woodland Middle School has added a number of non-fiction e-books to its sources. The largest component is science books. One 8th grade science teacher has volunteered to work with her students using one of the online science books to teach her next unit. The initial response was positive

and she will assess quiz results to see how the students are adapting to the technology.

C. Action: Collaborate with supporting out-of-school agencies and organizations within the community

Additionally, ELA and Reading teachers, having recently adopted new writing and reading textbooks and online resources, will add informational literacy training and Writing Coach/EssayScorer workshops with Pearson. Currently administration has met with Pearson representatives regarding literacy training across all content areas and is in receipt of a proposal that has been custom tailored for the needs at Woodland. It has been determined that components of this proposal align with our literacy goals pending the ability to fund the training. It is also planned that administration will create opportunities for Peer Literacy Walks as well as ensure access to adequate and appropriate instructional technology.

The Media Committee meets quarterly in the school to advise on practices and purchases for the Media Center. This group is a mixture of faculty, parents and even students.
Other community projects that the school is investigating include a Family Reading Bowl, where families compete against each other for prizes while all reading the same set of books and possibly doing a One School, One Book program where all faculty, staff, students, and their families read the same book and do activities based on that book.

Involving the community is more than just focusing on books, but bringing the entire community into the school. The National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers and Kingston College Old Boys Association (GA) Inc. sponsor the Super Science Saturday, where the elementary and middle school students and their parents are invited to experiment with science in hands-on activities and demonstrations. In something so simple as providing written instructions, the students become engaged in decoding the instructions and completing the activity. While the focus is not literacy, the practical application is, in fact, literacy across the curriculum.

Building Block 3. Ongoing formative and summative assessments

A. Action: Establish an infrastructure for ongoing formative and summative assessments to determine the need for and the intensity of interventions and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction

Woodland is a data driven school that has an infrastructure for ongoing formative and summative assessments, as well as a strong system of disaggregation of student data at the administration, teacher and student levels. Teachers utilize diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments with common mid-course and final assessments. These assessments are structured in a variety of formats, e.g., multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay.   All teachers have received professional development on the importance of balanced assessment unit planning to plan calendars with the dates for diagnostic and common assessments through the end of the year as well as formative and summative assessments. In previous years, all teachers were required to present an individual interim data review of all common assessments and Fulton County Checkpoint assessments to the leadership team to speak to the progress of their students towards standards mastery and preparedness for the CRCT. Given the data, teachers produced and elaborated how they planned to differentiate instruction to remediate, maintain and enrich to maximize the learning for all students. Our new technology infrastructure, Fulton Connect, is adequate to support and store our assessments and the results of our students.

B. Action: Use universal screening and progress monitoring for formative assessment

The Star Reading diagnostic test was administered as a universal screener for all students at Woodland, and the DRA2 will be administered to those students that have been identified by STAR as reading below grade level, with a goal to understand the students' fluency rate and benchmark level. STAR will also be administered in 60 day intervals for progress monitoring. The assessments are used to determine the need for intervention, the type of intervention, and to judge the effectiveness of instruction. Assessment is also used to identify the need for acceleration for our high achievers.

C. Action: Use diagnostic assessment to analyze problems found in literacy screening

Staff members have access to data and follow the established protocol for making decisions to identify the instructional needs of students as it relates to a flexible 4-tier system for Response to Intervention (RTI).   During pre-planning all teachers regularly attend a session with the leadership team that addresses the state of the school based upon the previous year's assessment outcomes. Teacher feedback and input is valued as decisions are made on changes that could improve the instructional program.

Students identified by the universal screener as requiring intervention will be administered the DRA to determine the reading deficit areas and appropriate next steps.   Professional development and instructional planning will be utilized to provide appropriate intervention at each tier.

D. Action: Use summative data to make programming decisions as well as to monitor individual student progress

Teachers use summative data in order to make adjustments to instruction and to identify the need for programmatic adjustments. Based on CRCT data, summative assessments, and mock writing results, early morning, after school, and Saturday remediation programs are formed along with the 8th grade Writing Camp. We administer the mock writing test to all 6th and 7th grade students in order to provide trend data over their three years in the building. This year a full team of content teachers has been designated to provide push-in and pull-out support to all classroom teachers with large numbers of students requiring tier 2 and tier 3 interventions and to ensure the progress of subgroups. They too operate based upon their analysis of summative assessment results.

Action 3.E.: Develop a clearly articulated strategy for using data to improve teaching and learning (See V. A.)

Currently, and as noted in our Needs Assessment, the driving force behind our data and instruction stems from the CRCT (Criterion Referenced Competency Test) which is not relatively accurate to our student's reading level and ability. Each assessment focuses on the aspects mentioned earlier: screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic. Every student will be administered all assessments at the onset of the school year because again, they all provide different levels of data. In the middle of the year, STAR will be administered to determine the progress of each student's reading level since the administering of the first assessments. To continue monitoring the progress of each student, DRA2 will be administered to those students that have been identified by STAR as reading below grade level, with a goal to understand the students' fluency rate and benchmark level. With this in mind, Achieve 3000 will be employed by every student along with CBM and Scholastic Reading inventory. These particular assessments will monitor the students' progress in their overall achievement in success for reading and writing. In the event that the students will be screened, diagnosed and monitored for progression, the assessment tools will give the teachers the adequate information for proper planning and implementation of the standards.

Building Block 4. Best Practices in Literacy Instruction

A. Action: Provide direct, explicit literacy instruction for all students

The Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) and the Georgia Department of Education have provided a sound core program that is in use at Woodland Middle School. The core program provides continuity based on a scope and sequence of skills that is integrated into a rich curriculum of literacy and informational texts; however, the faculty is not yet fully trained in all aspects of its use. English language arts and Reading teachers participate in many aspects of explicit literacy instruction such as direct instruction to build vocabulary, comprehension, and writing skills. These teachers use data to drive instruction, to make appropriate text selection, and to model literacy strategies, and scaffold students. As reported by Dole, Duffy, Roehler, and Pearson (1991), reading comprehension instruction can be highly effective when teachers focus on seven main strategies for readers; however, it is important to note that these strategies should not be taught as isolated units. Instead, strategies need to be taught as orchestrated strategies and the most important outcome of reading comprehension instruction should be a reader's ability to self-monitor for understanding, thus motivating a reader to use the strategies flexibly and with purpose (Duke & Pearson, 2002). These strategies are visualizing, questioning, making connections, predicting, inferring, determining importance, and synthesizing. We embrace these strategies and with the implementation of our literacy plan we will ensure that they will be used flexibly in a variety of reading situations by our students.

B. Action: Ensure that students receive effective writing instruction across the curriculum

Like the reading capacity, there is also a need for a clear overarching writing program that coordinates writing across all content areas. Per the National Commission on Writing (2004), with the fast pace of today's electronic communications, one might think that the value of fundamental writing skills has diminished in the workplace. Actually, the need to communicate clearly and quickly has never been more important than in today's highly competitive, technology-driven global economy. With that in mind our writing program must be designed vertically and horizontally, align with CCGPS and should include explicit instruction, guided practice, and independent practice. Currently, the 8th grade teachers are tasked with helping students to prepare for the Middle Grades Writing Assessment. We recognize that this instruction needs to begin much earlier and we have plans to develop the writing program across all levels and contents in the building. Based on the scope and

sequence of the CCGPS, it is the practice in English Language Arts and Reading classes that opportunities are provided at least once a week for students to either develop arguments citing relevant and reliable textual evidence, write coherent informational or explanatory texts, or write narratives to explore content area topics. It is our goal to expand this practice to all content areas at Woodland.

C. Action: Teachers work to develop and maintain interest and engagement as students progress through school.

Administration conducts classroom observations using the Teacher Keys Assessment tool to gauge current practice in literacy instruction. Our teachers and administration participate in professional development on using data to inform instructional decisions and explicit teaching, selecting appropriate text and strategies for instruction, telling students specific strategies to be learned and why, modeling of how strategy is used, providing guidance and independent practice with feedback, discussing when and where strategies are to be applied, and differentiating instruction. Woodland has the unique characteristic of having a Department Chairperson for both Reading and Language Arts. While both provide resources, guidance and instructional support to their respective content area teachers, they agree and collaborate on the following:

1. There is a reading/writing connection and neither capacity should be taught in isolation of the other.
2. Many of our students are sophisticated "word callers", who are not reading actively and therefore they do not comprehend the various texts presented to them.
3. Students' reading comprehension is improved by having them increase how often they produce their own texts (Graham & Hebert, 2010, p. 5).

As stated previously, due to departmentalization in middle school and schedule constraints there is a 55 minute instructional period for all academic content classes (ELA/RDG/SCI/SS/MATH/World Languages) at all grade levels. Students taking a World Language receive 55 minutes of embedded literacy instruction daily; students not enrolled in a World Language take a separate Reading class and receive 110 minutes of embedded literacy instruction daily. Once literacy instruction is embedded in the additional content area classes our students will easily receive the recommended two to four hours of instructional time in literacy.

Reliable research supports the integration of technology in reading, English Language Arts, mathematics, social studies, science, fine arts, CTAE, health, and physical education. Research from 21st Century Schools includes the integration of information, media and technology skills. Specifically, people in the 21st century live in a technology rich and media-driven environment marked by access to an abundance of information, rapid changes in technology tools, and the ability to collaborate and make individual contributions on an unprecedented scale (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009). The integration of technology has proven to be a great method for motivating and maintaining interest and engagement for our students. Teachers have received professional development in the use of I-pad apps, document cameras, Smart boards, student response systems, Wiki Spaces, and Moviemaker. We encourage our students to interact with us via Twitter and Edmodo, and we frequently have Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT) days. Outside of media and technology, students are given the opportunity to self-select reading material and topics for research, and they are given more time for collaboration with peers throughout the learning process. Most importantly, teachers take steps to ensure that students discover the relevance of their academic literacy assignments to their lives.

Building Block 5. System of Tiered Intervention (RTI) for All Students

A. Action: Use information developed from the school-based data teams to inform RTI process (see Section 3. E.)

A team of teachers and administrators will oversee the various assessments for the students. While individual reading or English Language Arts teachers will administer many of the tests, it will not be done in isolation. This same team will also review the data on an aggregate basis to understand the needs of the school, grade, group, as a whole, while individual teachers can focus on individual students.

General RTI Action Items

1. Reestablish vertical school data team.
2. Create RTI team to evaluate current practices and identify evidence based interventions.
3. Create a system to monitor fidelity of process.

4. Create protocols to identify and determine the percentage of students currently being served in each tier at each grade level.

5. For Tier 1 - Monitor progress every 4-6 weeks.

6. For Tier 2 – monitor progress every 2-3 weeks

7. Provide smaller group instruction based on focused deficits.

8. Interventionists participate in additional professional learning on supplemental intervention materials, diagnosing reading difficulties, and differentiating instruction.

9. Tier 3 interventions are delivered 1:1 – 1:3 during a protected time daily by a trained interventionist.

10. Progress monitoring is once a week, need based, and interventions occur daily.

B. Action: Provide Tier 1 Instruction based upon the CCGPS in all grades to all students in all classrooms (See Sections 4. A & B)

Most of the Tier 1 interventions will be centered on our instructional North Stars with an increased focus on literacy standards across the content areas. Universal screening through the STAR assessment has been utilized for identifying students requiring further intervention or extension. Progress monitoring in Tier I will occur every 4-6 weeks.

Teachers will need additional professional learning in instructional strategies that build students' word identification, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing skills. Teachers participate in professional learning to ensure school-wide understanding of assessment data and anticipated levels of student mastery during the school year. In addition, we encourage the use of technology to support achievements of content objectives and for proactive communication between students, teachers, and parents. Reliable research supports the integration of technology in reading, English language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, fine arts, CTAE, health, and physical education. Universities, the Partnership for 21st Century Schools, the National Council of Teachers of English, as well as content-area organizations, support the importance of technology in instruction. Research from 21st Century Schools includes the integration of information, media, and technology skills. To be effective in the 21st century, citizens and workers must be able to exhibit a wide range of functional and critical thinking skills, such as information literacy; media literacy; and information, communications, and technology literacy.

C. Action: Implement Tier 2 needs-based interventions for targeted students

In Tier 2 we will monitor effectiveness of standard intervention protocols in place for students based on Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), progress monitoring and Benchmark data. We will establish protocols to ensure consistent progress monitoring, data collection, and reporting. We also will ensure adequate time for planning and implementing interventions. Progress monitoring will take place every 2-3 week in small group instruction based on focused deficits. Effectiveness of interventions is ensured by providing sufficient blocks of time in the daily schedule for intervention. Interventionists participate in additional professional learning on supplemental intervention materials, diagnosing reading difficulties, and differentiating instruction.

Woodland plans to provide professional learning for Tier 2 interventionists on:

- Appropriate use of supplemental and intervention materials
- Diagnosis of reading difficulties
- Charting and graphing data
- Direct, explicit instructional strategies to address difficulties
- Differentiating instruction

D. Action: In Tier 3, ensure that Student Support Team (SST) and Data Team monitor progress jointly

In addition to everything that occurs at Tier 1 and Tier 2, data teams (expanded to include the school psychologist, ESOL teacher, etc.) will meet to discuss students in Tier 3 who failed to respond to intervention. Vertical data teams will meet regularly to discuss student progress based on daily interventions that include a minimum of four data points. Interventions will be delivered 1:1-1:3 during a protected time daily by trained interventionists. Data points will be documented to monitor student response to daily intervention.

Teachers will receive professional learning on vertical data team processes and procedures. Tier 3 data teams will establish protocols to determine if there is a lack of progress.

Woodland also will ensure that interventionists have maintained fidelity to intervention protocol prior to referral to Tier 4.

E. Action: Implement Tier 4 specially-designed learning through specialized programs, methodologies or instructional based upon students' inability to access the CCGPS any other way

At Woodland, the Tier 4 process in place ensures that specially designed learning programs and methodologies are individualized and based on student needs. Students have more intensive instruction in smaller group environments to include specialized teaching strategies and instructional resources. Students in Tier 4 for receive direct, explicit instruction with increased opportunities for practice, feedback, and progress monitoring. Progress monitoring occurs on a weekly basis to facilitate students' rate and level of learning. The following needs have been identified for optimal Tier 4 intervention: Assessments for progress monitoring (Brigance), Instruction (Phonics for Reading/ I-Ready), STARS/STAMS) Social Skills Training Curriculum, Professional Development on Behavior Management, Effective Reading/Math Instruction, and Instructional Technology.

Building Block 6. Improved Instruction through Professional Learning

A. Action: Ensure that preservice education prepares new teachers for all the challenges of the classroom.

Administration is keenly aware that there is a need for preservice teachers to receive coursework in disciplinary literacy in the content area and that teacher preparation should be revised to reflect the needs that districts report with new teachers. Insofar as in-service personnel is concerned, currently only ELA and Reading instructors participate in professional learning on the use of aspects of the core program.

B. Action: Provide professional learning for in-service personnel

The overall goal that we strive towards includes the following:

1. The school calendar includes protected time for teachers to collaboratively analyze data, share expertise, study the standards, plan lessons, examine student work, and reflect on practice.
2. Teachers participate in professional learning in the CCGPS based on the needs revealed by

student data as well as by surveys, interest inventories and teacher observations.

3. Teachers participate in ongoing professional learning on the use of the core program.

4. Teachers' instruction is monitored through classroom observations or walkthroughs using a variety of assessment tools tied to professional learning.

5. An instructional coach provides site-based support for administrators, faculty and staff, where possible.

6. Intervention providers receive program-specific training before the beginning of the year to prepare teachers and staff for implementation.

7. Administrators, faculty, and staff have received training in administering, analyzing and interpreting results of assessments in terms of literacy.

8. Some or all of the following personnel participate in all professional learning opportunities:

   a. Paraprofessionals

   b. Support staff

   c. Interventionists

   d. Substitute teachers

   e. Pre-service teachers working at the school

   f. Administrators

   g. All faculty

Activity	Time-line	Person(s) Coordinating Activity	Person(s) Involved in Activity	Milestones	Benchmarks
Yearly evaluation of grant process	2014 – ongoing	Administration; Literacy Committee	Administration; Literacy Team	Reports Completed	Reports Filed
Literacy Instructional Strategies					
Creation of a school-wide writing rubric.	Summer 2014	Literacy Committee	Teachers	Published Rubric	Assigned to student work
Plan a calendar for common academic and interdisciplinary team planning meetings	Fall 2014 – Ongoing	Literacy Committee Lead Facilitators; Curriculum Assistant Principal	Grade Level Content teams	Calendar created	Adherence to calendar by teacher teams; meeting minutes from team meetings
Assessment of students using Scholastic Reading Inventory	Early Fall 2014	Teachers	Teachers	Initial assessments of all students	Placement of students in reading programs based on assessment
Professional Development in Teaching Reading					
Professional learning in Close Reading, Text Annotation, Cornell Notes	Fall 2014 – Fall 2015	Metro RESA Consultants	Teachers and administration.	Profesional learning completed	Professional learning implemented with developed lessons or units as evidence
Professional learning in Literature Circles and Writer's Workshop	Fall 2014 – Spring 2016	Metro RESA Consultants	Teachers and administration	Professional learning completed	Professional learning implemented with developed lessons or units as evidence

Activity	Time-line	Person(s) Coordinating Activity	Person(s) Involved in Activity	Milestones	Benchmarks
Professional Development in Teaching Reading					
Professional learning in phonemic awareness, decoding, and reading comprehension	Summer 2014 – Fall 2015	Outside Source	Reading, ELA teachers	Professional learning completed	Professional learning implemented with developed lessons or units as evidence
Professional learning on Online Writing Coach and Essay Scorer	Spring 2015	Pearson	ELA teachers	Professional learning completed	Professonial learning implemented
Literacy Design Collaborative Training	(Post-Planning) 2014 with three scheduled follow-up sessions	Metro RESA	All staff including administrative team.	Professional learning completed	Instructional Units completed with student work samples evaluated by course facilitator.
Professional learning on teaching reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition skills	Fall 2014 – on-going	Humanities Reading Program Specialist	Teachers	Professional learning completed	Professional learning implemented; teacher lesson plans; student work samples and assessment results
Professional learning on use of existing data to identify student performance gaps and methods of monitoring current performance of at-risk students in terms of literacy skills	Fall 2014 – Ongoing	Data Support Specialist and Literacy Committee Lead Facilitators	Teachers	Professional learning completed	Professional learning implemented; sign-in sheets from training sessions
Yearly assessment of professional learning needs	2014– ongoing	Principal; Literacy Committee	Input from teachers	Teacher Survey and Self-reflection	Survey results

Activity	Time-line	Person(s) Coordinating Activity	Person(s) Involved in Activity	Milestones	Benchmarks
RTI - Tiered Instruction					
Differentiate online instruction for reading & writing using Achieve 3000	Fall 2014- ongoing	Literacy Committee	Teachers	Assessment for all students	Improvement in mock writing tests
Analyze student data	Fall 2014 – Ongoing	Teachers	Teachers	Content team meeting agendas	Monitoring Academic Progress (MAP) completed by each teacher
Use assessment data to make instructional decisions	Fall 2014– Ongoing	Teachers	Teachers	Teachers making adjustments to lesson plans based on assessment data	Adjustments to lesson plans; reassessment data
Use Achieve 3000 & Easy CBM programs to supplement the identification of struggling readers and to identify and provide appropriate interventions	Fall 2014 – Ongoing	Literacy Team	Reading and ELA Teachers	Purchase and implementation of web-based program	Analysis of data provided by reports generated by program at least monthly
Professional learning in RTI	Pre-planning (Fall 2014) – on-going	SST Chairperson	Teachers	Professional learning completed	Professional learning completed
Use RTI to plan interventions with struggling readers	Spring 2015 - ongoing	Administration, SST Chairperson	Inter-discipli-nary teams	Plans made	Plans fully implemented and ready for students next year
Classroom Observations	Fall 2014 – ongoing	Administration; Teachers	Administration; Teachers	Notes from observations	Conferences with teachers

Activity	Time-line	Person(s) Coordinating Activity	Person(s) Involved in Activity	Milestones	Benchmarks
RTI - Tiered Instruction					
Plan a calendar for activities to be completed during afterschool planning time	Fall 2014 – Ongoing	Literacy Committee Lead Facilitators; Curriculum Assistant Principal	Grade Level Content teams	Minutes from planning sessions	Time Sheets; Artifacts from afterschool planning sessions (unit lesson plans, assessments, performance tasks)
Technology (Hardware, Software, and Training)					
Purchase of technology for one-to-one use in the school	Summer 2014 – Ongoing	Principal	Input from Literacy Team and Teachers; Media Center staff	Technology order placed; technology acquired	Implementation of technology in classrooms as documented via observations and lesson plans; use of technology by students in the home as documented by checkout records
Technology training in hardware purchased	Summer 2014- ongoing	Administration	Teachers	Completion of training program	Incorporation of technology into the classroom
Professional learning with integrated approach to higher-order thinking skills, student engagement and motivation, real-world tasks and problem solving, and use of technology	Spring 2015 – Spring 2016	Literacy Committee	Teachers	Prof-essional learning completed	Professional learning implemented with developed lessons or units as evidence

Activity	Time-line	Person(s) Coordinating Activity	Person(s) Involved in Activity	Milestones	Benchmarks
Additional Dedicated Learning Time					
Schedule students in targeted tutoring classes to support their progress	Fall 2014	Administration; Content team teachers	Content team teachers	Identification of student weaknesses; established schedule for students to attend tutoring sessions	Record of student attendance in targeted skills sessions; student assessment results
Professional learning for the entire staff to build capacity to work interdependently within high-performing collaborative teams	Early Fall 2014 with on-going follow-up	Literacy Committee	All staff including administrative team and support staff	Professional learning completed	Professional learning implemented; Collaborative team rubric evaluation results
Family & Community Involvement					
Engaging family literacy workshops	Fall 2014– ongoing	Literacy Committee	Parents, students and teachers	Program from workshops	Program evaluations; Attendence
Increased communications with Family through email, phone, tweets, blogs and the website	Fall 2014– ongoing	Administration, Parent Liason, METI	All staff, parents, and students	Visible communications and updates	Increase in parent participation & knowledge of events
Seek additional ways to increase parent involvement	Fall 2014– ongoing	Leadership Committee, Administration	Leadership Team	Logs of meetings/contacts with parents	Increase in number of parent contacts and attendance for events
Increased club and afterschool activities	Fall 2014– ongoing	Staff & Teachers	Staff & Teachers	List of clubs & activities	Increase in student participation& competency assessed testing

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Needs Assessment, Root Causes and Concerns

Needs Assessment

A variety of sources were used to develop an overview of our school's literacy needs. An intense focus was placed on the six Building Blocks of the Georgia Literacy Plan Needs Assessment. The Woodland Middle School faculty was asked to rate our school on each of the components of the building blocks. In addition, data to inform the process was gathered from 2012-2013 CRCT data, the fall 2013 STAR Reading Assessment, student surveys, and parent surveys.

Student 2013 CRCT Data

Woodland Middle School has a history of strong performance (relative to geographically and demographically similar schools) on the CRCT, but specifically strong performance in the area of reading. Across all grade levels, over 90% of students meet or exceed the standard in reading. However, this data is not consistent with the low level of proficiency observed in classes or on other assessments (see STAR reading test data below). Therefore, our team concluded that merely meeting the standard on the CRCT does not indicate on grade level performance. Across grade levels, only 20% of students exceeded the standard, which appears to more closely correlate with literacy skills expected of middle grades students.

Our students struggle with reading comprehension and it's not limited to their reading courses. There is evidence of this struggle in other content areas that are highly dependent upon interpretation of complex texts. For example, nearly 40% of 8th grade students did not meet the standard in science while over 30% failed to meet the standard in social studies. Concerns are magnified when examining the gaps facing our students with disabilities. Although the majority of special education students are able to pass the Reading CRCT, over 80% of special education students are unable to demonstrate minimum proficiency in the complex and vocabulary rich areas of science and social studies.
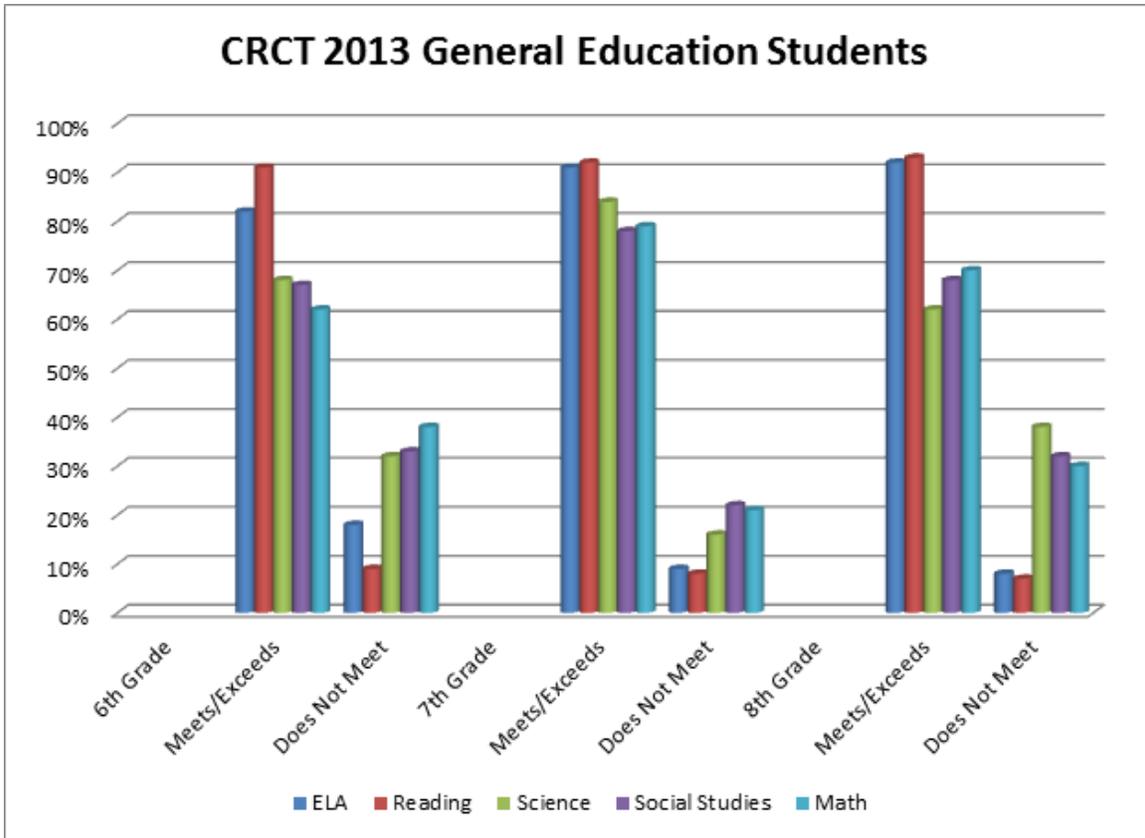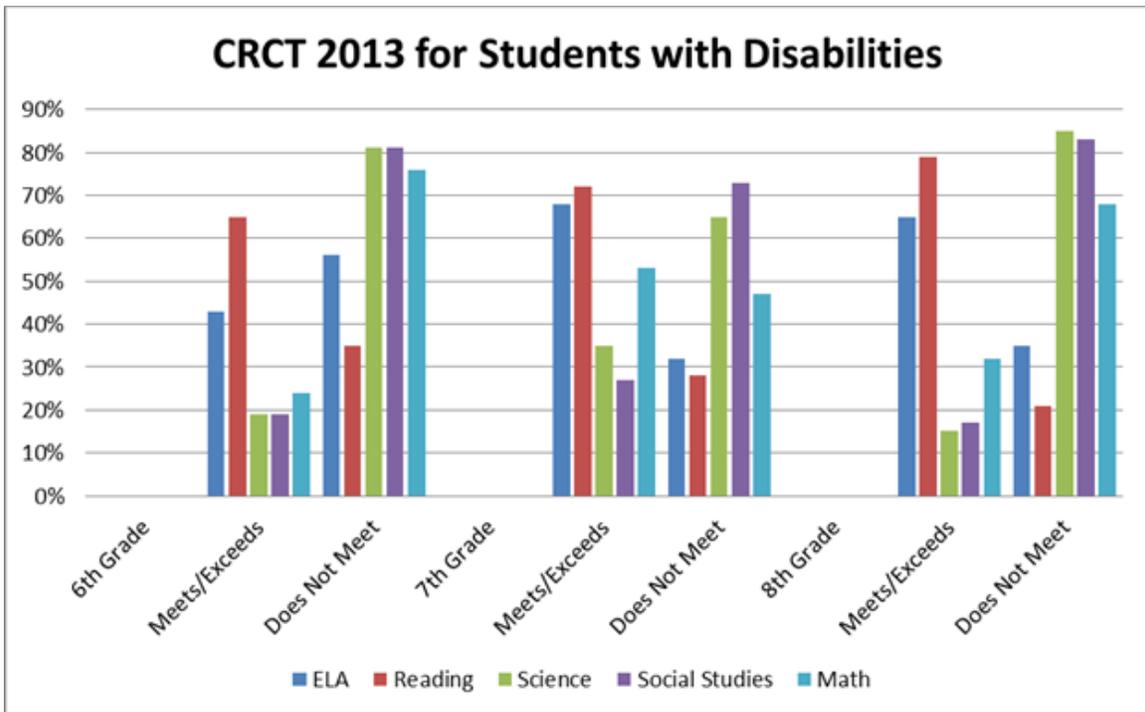
Figure 1: 2013 CRCT Scores

Figure 2: 2013 CRCT Scores (Students with Disabilities)

STAR Reading Assessment

Grade Level	% At/Above Proficient
6th	35%
7th	29%
8th	30%
AVERAGE	31.3%

Table 1: STAR Reading Assessment

Students in all grade levels were administered the STAR reading assessment, a benchmarking test of reading proficiency. Results indicated that less than a third of our students are able to read at their grade level. These numbers show a marked difference from the CRCT data, but more accurately reflects classroom experience and other assessment data.

Parent and Student Surveys

Parents were surveyed to give their impressions of their child's reading frequency, type, and locations. 88.6% of the parents believe their children read a lot or occasionally. This finding is not consistent with the student's in-school reading habits or current research on how economically disadvantaged students spend their leisure time. However, only 28% of parents perceive their child reading "a lot" at home. The student literacy survey indicated that the most popular book across grade levels was *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, which according to the publisher is written for third grade students that read on the 5th grade level.

Parents' Perception of How Much Students Read

- Read "a lot": 41%
- Read "a lot" at home: 28%
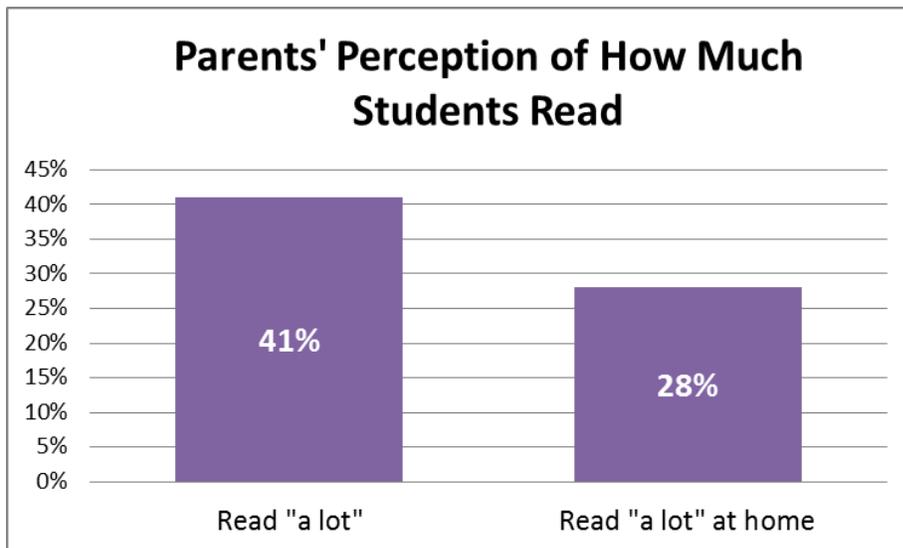
Teacher Survey

Faculty, staff and paraprofessionals reviewed the Georgia Literacy Plan Needs Assessment Rubric and rated our school in each of the domains.   Through the survey we found that our staff believes the highest areas of opportunity lie in effective management of planning time, partnering with out of school agencies for literacy development, more effective use of the RTI process, and extended time for literacy instruction. This extended time for literacy**,** anywhere from two to four hours, should occur in language arts and content-area classes. (Biancorosa & Snow, 2006, p. 20.)   The detailed results of our survey are shown below. The elements that were identified as areas of concern are starred.

Georgia Literacy Plan Needs Assessment for Literacy Kindergarten to Grade 12

4-Fully Operational	3-Operational	2-Emergent	1-Not Addressed

Building Block 1. Engaged Leadership

A. Administrator demonstrates commitment to learn about and support evidence-based literacy instruction in his/her school.
   Avg. 3.412,   Median 4

B. A school literacy leadership team organized by the administrator is active.
   Avg. 2.882,   Median 3

C.2 The effective use of time and personnel is leveraged through scheduling and collaborative planning (6-12).
   Avg. 2.647,   Median 3

D. A school culture exists in which teachers across the content areas accept responsibility for literacy instruction as articulated in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards(CCGPS).
   Avg. 3.088,   Median 4

E. Literacy instruction is optimized in all content areas.
   Avg. 2.970,   Median 4

F. The community at large supports schools and teachers in the development of students who are college-and-career-ready as articulated in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS).
   Avg. 2.676,   Median 3

Georgia Literacy Plan Needs Assessment for Literacy Kindergarten to Grade 12

4-Fully Operational	3-Operational	2-Emergent	1-Not Addressed

Building Block 2. Continuity of Instruction

A. Active collaborative school teams ensure a consistent literacy focus across the curriculum (See Engaged Leadership, 1. D, E).
    Avg. 3.176,   Median 4

B. Teachers provide literacy instruction across the curriculum (See Engaged Leadership, 1. D, E).
    Avg. 2.971,   Median 3.5

C. Out-of-school agencies and organizations collaborate to support literacy within the community.
    Avg. 2.559,   Median 2.5

Building Block 3. Ongoing Formative and Summative Assessments

A. An infrastructure for ongoing formative and summative assessments is in place to determine the need for and the intensity of interventions and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.
    Avg. 3.265,   Median 4

B. A system of ongoing formative and summative assessment (universal screening and progress monitoring) is used to determine the need for and the intensity of interventions and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.
    Avg. 3.324,   Median 4

C. Problems found in literacy screenings are further analyzed with diagnostic assessment.
    Avg. 2.971,   Median 3

D. Summative data is used to make programming decisions as well as to monitor individual student progress.
    Avg. 3.235,   Median 4

E. A clearly articulated strategy for using data to improve teaching and learning is followed.
    Avg. 3.294,   Median 4

Georgia Literacy Plan Needs Assessment for Literacy Kindergarten to Grade 12

4-Fully Operational	3-Operational	2-Emergent	1-Not Addressed

Building Block 4. Best Practices in Literacy Instruction

A. 1. All students receive direct, explicit instruction in reading (K-8).
    Avg. 2.794,   Median 3

A. 2. All students receive direct, explicit instruction in reading.
    Avg. 3.059,   Median 3

A. 3. All students receive direct, explicit instruction in reading.
    Avg. 3.088,   Median 3.5

A.4. Extended time is provided for literacy instruction.
    Avg. 2.353,   Median 2

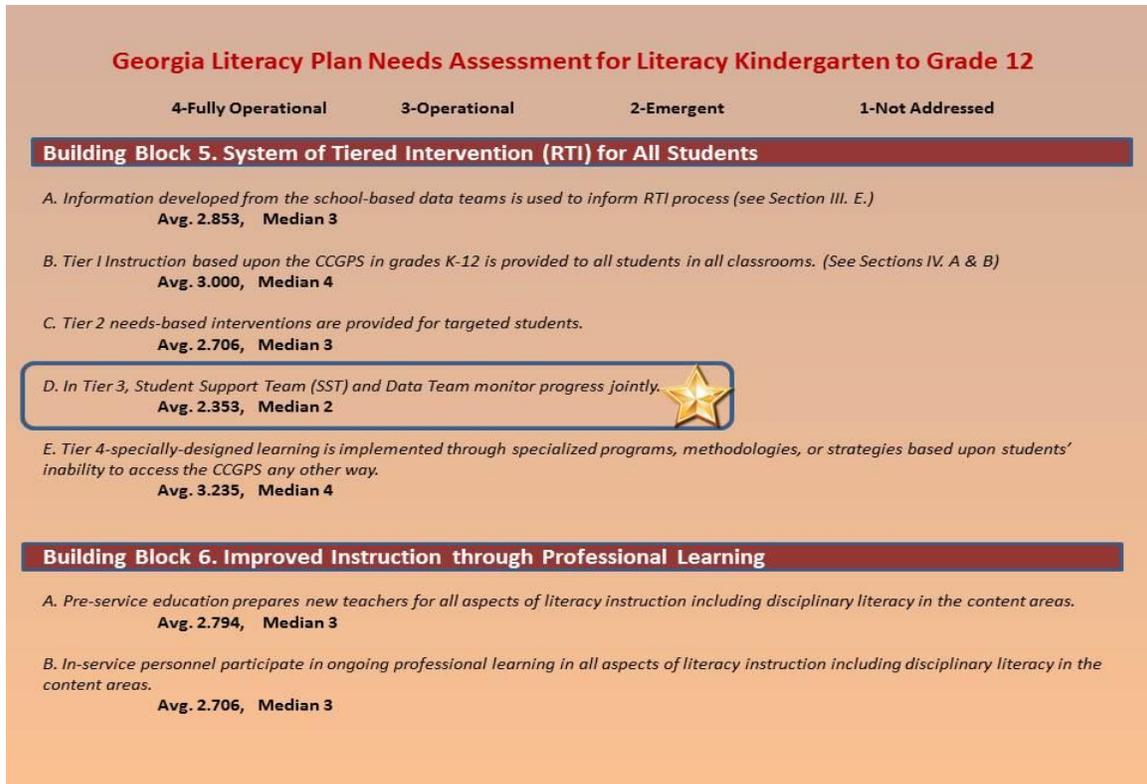B.1. All students receive effective writing instruction across the curriculum.
    Avg. 2.735,   Median 3

B.2. All students receive effective writing instruction across the curriculum.
    Avg. 2.912,   Median 3

C. Teachers are intentional in efforts to develop and maintain interest and engagement as students progress through school.
    Avg. 3.353,   Median 4

Root Causes and Concerns

Our team felt that the culture of poverty and the associated academic challenges lie at the root of our reading concerns. The data brings to light some major concerns around the lack of reading proficiency. The state standards and curricular materials that have been established for middle grade students do not take into account some of the unique literacy challenges that students in high poverty schools face. Therefore, our team had to probe for any weaknesses in our school structures that could possibly stand in the way of meeting the formidable challenges associated with meeting the learning needs of so many students arriving to middle school with significant learning deficits.

Reading Instructional Strategies

Woodland Middle School currently lacks a cohesive approach to reading instruction. The literature has demonstrated that evidence-based intensive reading instruction can result in significant gains, and therefore we anticipate that effective execution of a literacy plan at Woodland Middle School will result in similar positive outcomes (Graves, Brandon, & Duesberry, 2011).

Professional Development in Teaching Reading

It is assumed in most teacher education programs that by middle school, adolescents have formed a foundation of basic reading skills. Therefore most secondary teachers arrive unequipped with the tools necessary to provide students with the support that they need to access complex texts across all content areas.

RTI - Tiered Instruction

Only recently has our school adopted the STAR assessment for RTI. The introduction of this assessment is a great improvement; however we still lack the structures to support students in each of the tiers identified by the program and provide the necessary interventions. In addition to instructional supports for general education students, our current system is ineffective in narrowing the achievement gap between our students with disabilities and our general education students.

Technology (Hardware, Software, and Training)

Many research-based reading interventions require personalizing the learning environment through the use of technology. Both teachers and students have limited access to quality computers and many classrooms are yet to be equipped with an LCD projector. The technology that has been introduced is often underutilized due to training deficits for both our students and teachers.

Additional Dedicated Learning Time

Our team uncovered some concerns in our discussion of Block 4, Best Practices in Literacy Instruction. Specifically, the time and effort applied to focused literacy instruction is insufficient. Focused instruction in literacy is primarily limited to a single 55 minute reading class each day. This class is only taken by students that did not do well on the CRCT. However, our data indicates that the level of rigor associated with the CRCT is not consistent with grade level reading expectations. Therefore, many students are not enrolled in our reading courses, but need the instruction nonetheless.

Family and Community Involvement

Based on the results of our parent survey, there appears to be some disconnect between parental perceptions of the time and effort that their student dedicates to reading and the realities of how often and what our students read. The misconception of reading ability can interfere with our efforts to reach out to families and the community. If a parent feels that their child is proficient in reading (as evidenced by the CRCT) and they feel as if at some point in the day their child is conquering complicated texts, there is little incentive for parents to attend school functions in support of enhancing literacy skills. This is consistent with low attendance rates currently recorded at PTSA and information based Title I parent meetings.

**Analysis and Identification of Student and Teacher Data**

Introduction

Woodland Middle School currently serves 1,094 students. With the school's high mobility rate of 65% it is difficult to fill in the gaps and keep students on target scholastically, especially with regard to certain school groups. An analysis of CRCT data by school groups highlights the enormity of this task. Data for ELL students was not reported for the 2013 administration of the test because the total number of students tested per grade level was less than 10. It is projected that for the 2014 administration there will be an 8th grade ELL subgroup as well as a 6th grade monitored ELL subgroup.
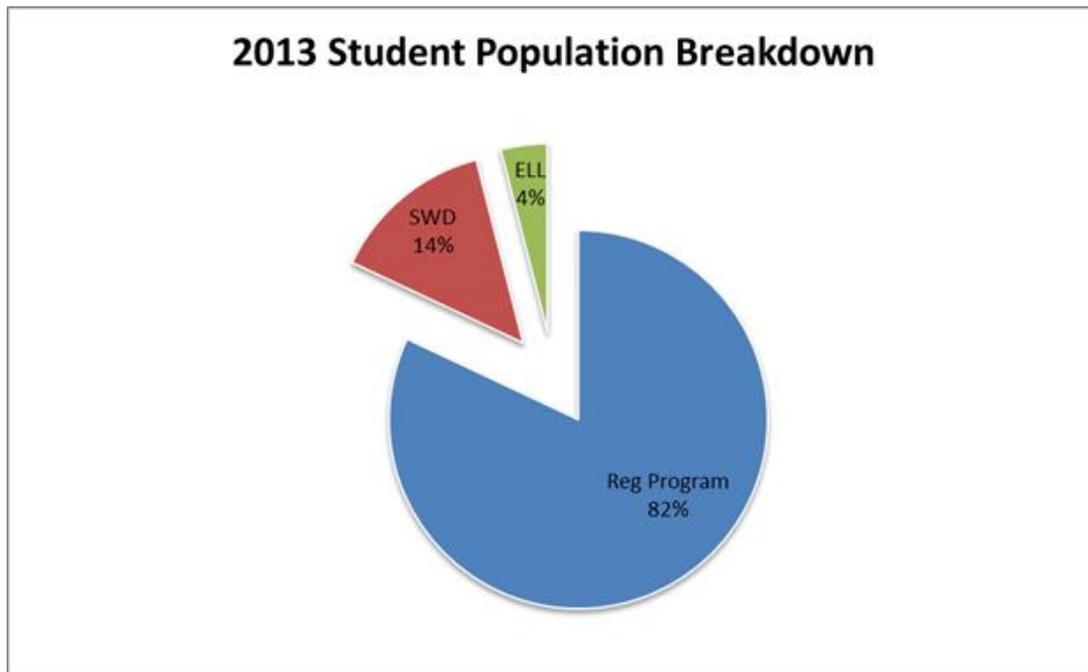
Students with Disabilities

Although the majority of special education students are able to pass the Reading CRCT, over 80% of them are unable to demonstrate minimum proficiency in the areas of science and social studies. While this mirrors the general population's performance, the discrepancy is more profound since students with disabilities represent only 14% of the school population.
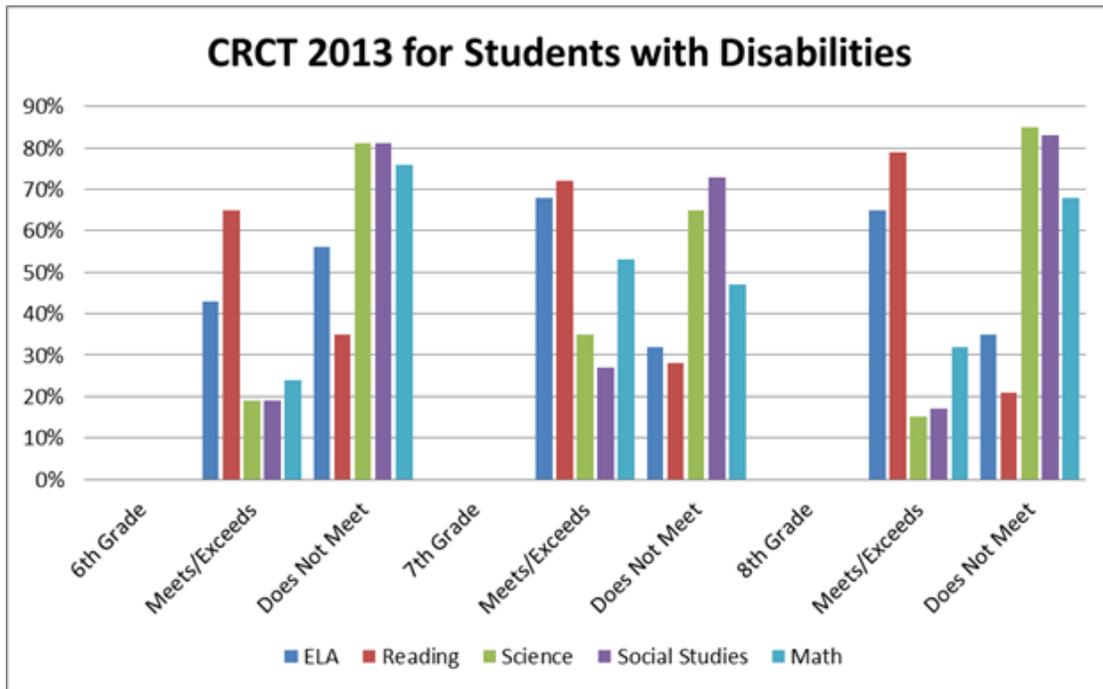

Gender

In the gender breakdown, females across grade levels and across all five subject levels score higher in the meets/exceeds categories than the males.   The difference may be as high as 12 percentage points in 7th grade social studies and as low as 2 percentage points in 6th grade science. Even in math, the girls outscore the boys by 6 points in the 8th grade. The numbers are statistically significant enough to consider if social pressures might be impacting the boys' scores.
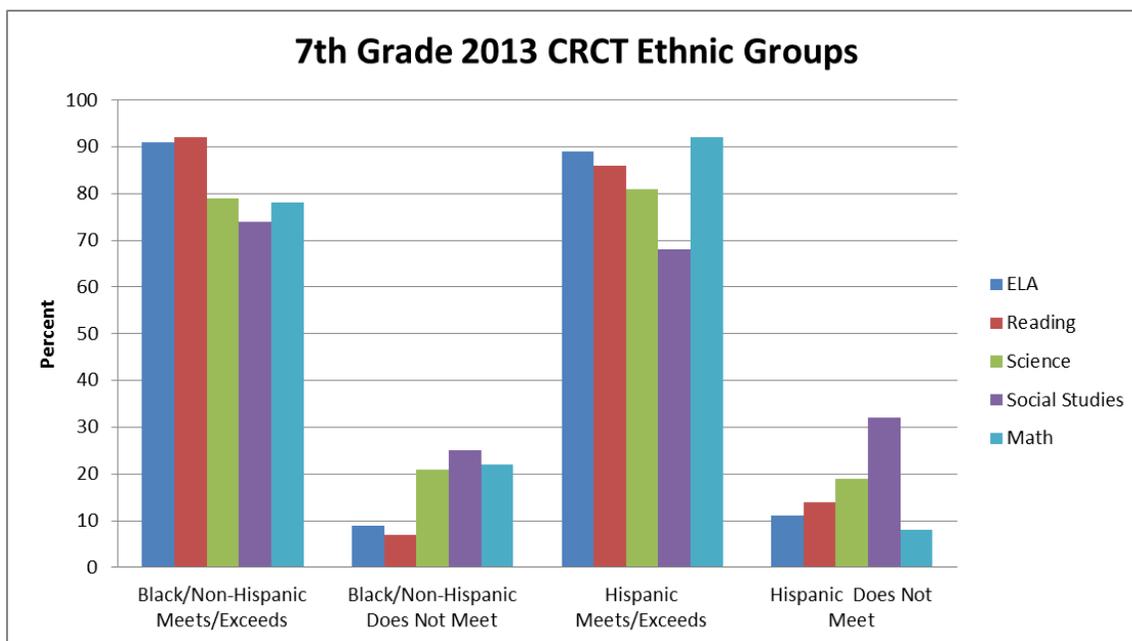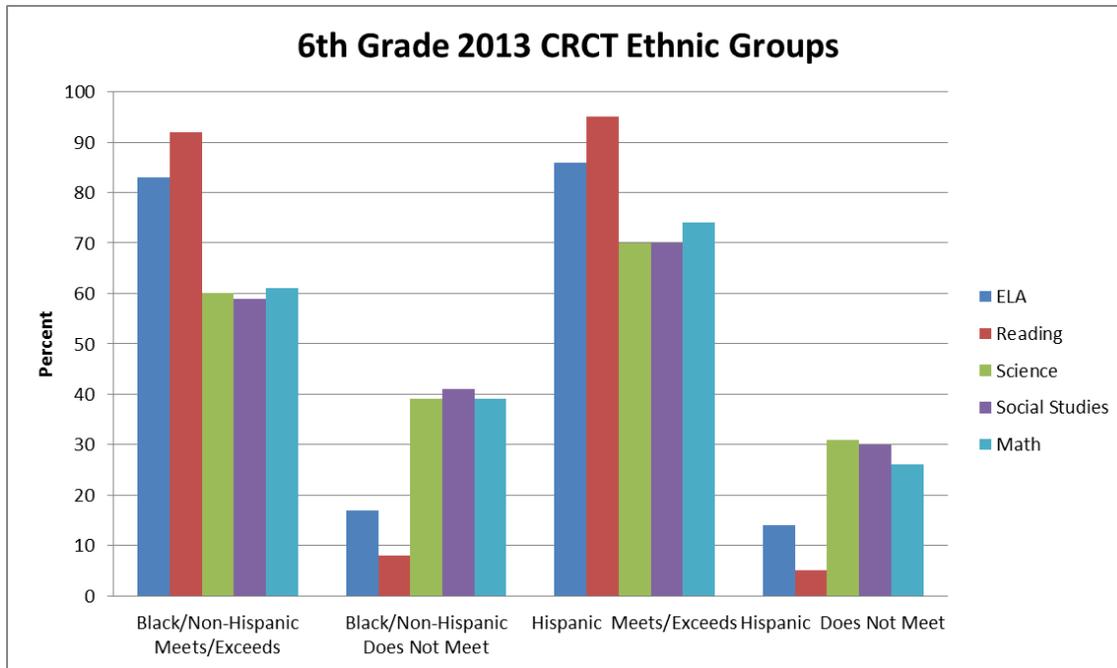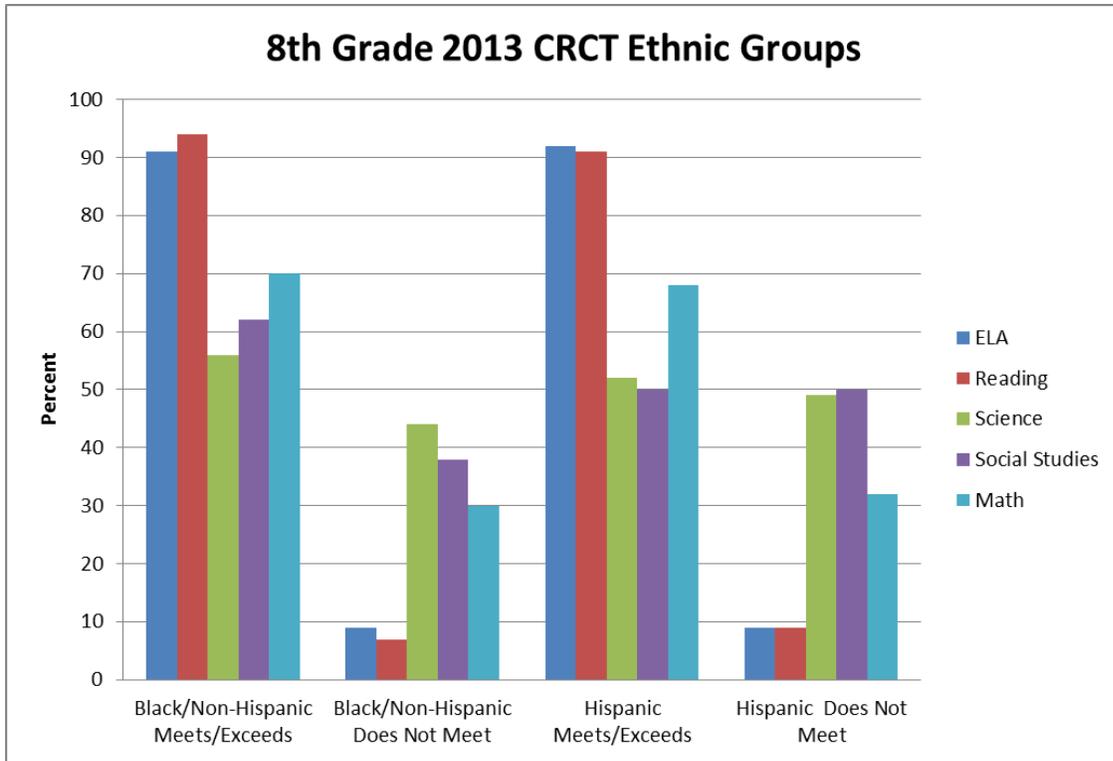
2013 CRCT Gender Breakdown
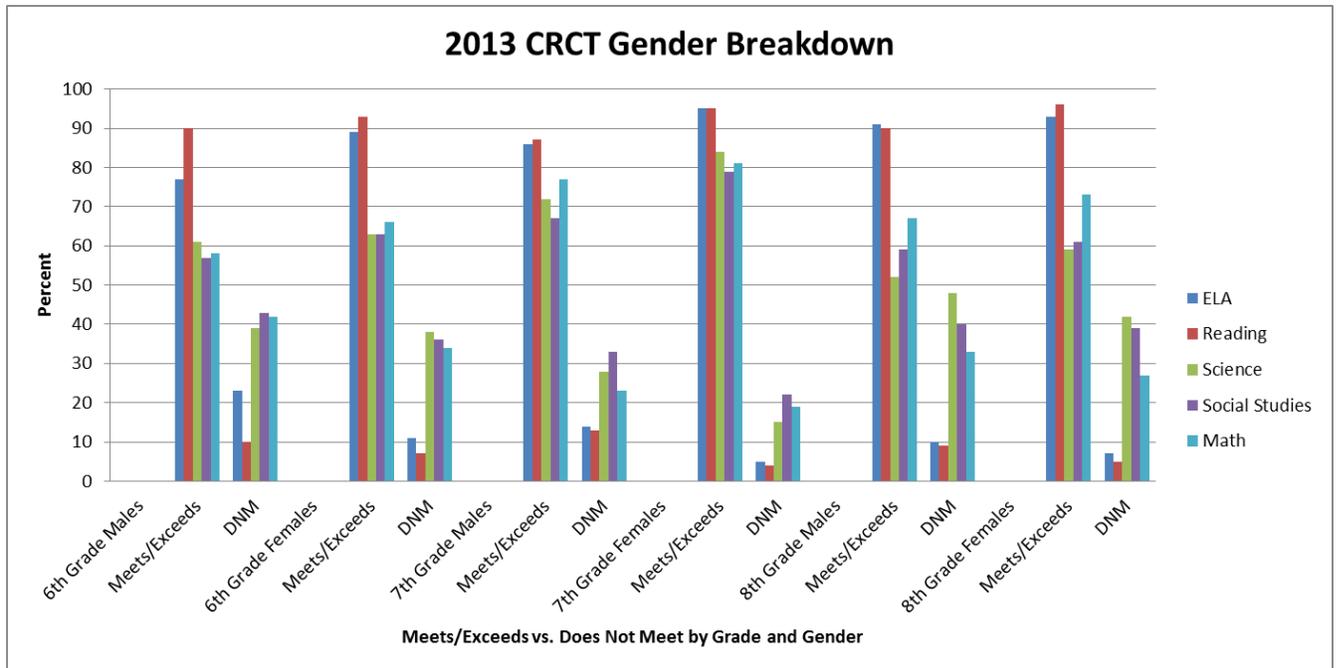
Ethnicity

The ethnic breakdown of the school remains a majority Black with a significant Hispanic population.

2013 Student Population: Ethnic Breakdown
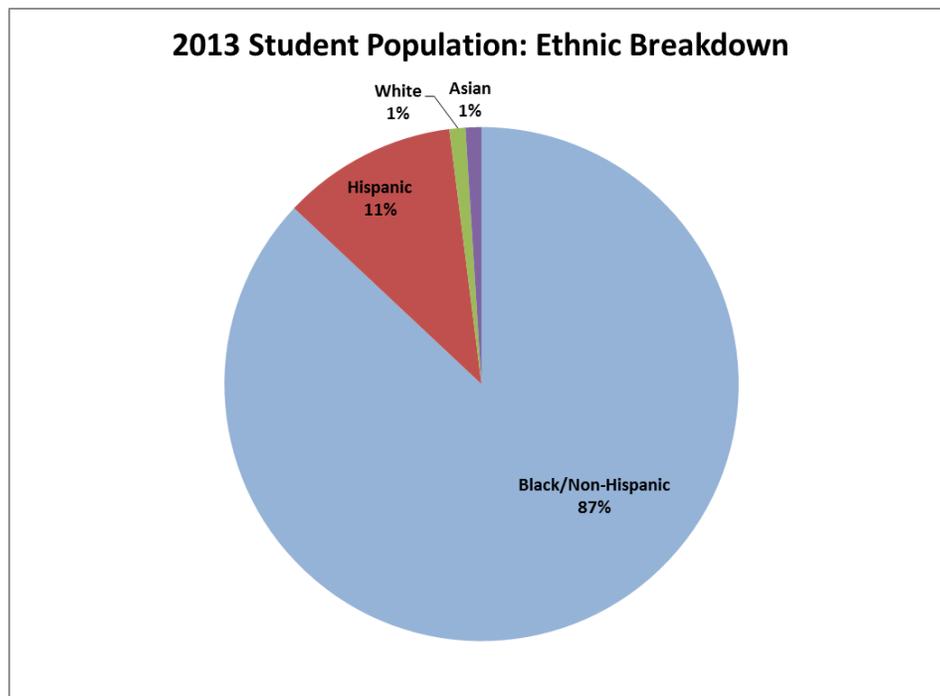
During the 2013 CRCT administration data was reported for only two ethnic groups: Black/Non-Hispanic and Hispanic. The total number of students in other ethnic groups was less than ten. The data shows that in grade 6, Hispanic students performed better than Black students in math, science, social studies, reading, and language arts. In fact, there is evidence of a 13 point spread in math. In grade 7, the distinctions begin to change with Black students improving in ELA, science, social studies and math, while Hispanic students start to lose ground in reading and social studies. Grade 8 illustrates an even larger drop off with the Hispanic students in science, social studies and math. In fact, the math scores drop almost 25 points between 7th and 8th grade. Black students also drop in grade 8 in the same core subjects. Even though the reading scores remain high, students are unable to demonstrate minimum proficiency in science and social studies. Both content areas are dependent on vocabulary proficiency, literary comprehension, media literacy, and effective use of informational texts.

Ethnic Group/Grade	ELA	Reading	Science	Social Studies	Math
6th Grade Black/Non-Hispanic					
Meets/Exceeds	83	92	60	59	61
Does Not Meet	17	8	39	41	39
6th Grade Hispanic					
Meets/Exceeds	86	95	70	70	74
Does Not Meet	14	5	31	30	26
7th Grade Black/Non-Hispanic					
Meets/Exceeds	91	92	79	74	78
Does Not Meet	9	7	21	25	22
7th Grade Hispanic					
Meets/Exceeds	89	86	81	68	92
Does Not Meet	11	14	19	32	8
8th Grade Black/Non-Hispanic					
Meets/Exceeds	91	94	56	62	70
Does Not Meet	9	7	44	38	30
8th Grade Hispanic					
Meets/Exceeds	92	91	52	50	68
Does Not Meet	9	9	49	50	32

6th Grade 2013 CRCT Ethnic Groups

7th Grade 2013 CRCT Ethnic Groups

8th Grade 2013 CRCT Ethnic Groups

Teacher Data

There are currently 94 certified teachers at Woodland with 78% holding advanced degrees. Teacher retention is a determining factor in the success of a school. The chart below shows that Woodland is consistently retaining a significant part of its faculty from year to year. This allows for greater freedom in implementing innovative practices and monitoring their success against previous years. The retention levels may be impacted within the next five years when 10% of the instructional staff becomes eligible for retirement.

School Year	Percentage of Certified Teachers Retained
2012-13	97%
2011-12	88%
2010-11	86%

Based on feedback from its School Quality Review team, Woodland identified five "North Stars" to guide its professional development sessions during the 2012-2013 school year: Collaboration/Centers, Student Engagement, Differentiated Instruction, Balanced Assessment, and Rigor. The primary focus was on differentiation strategies and flexible grouping. This year, all teachers meet every other week for 90 minutes to focus on those instructional North Stars. A focus on our North Stars is what unites us a professional learning community and defines what is universally important in our classrooms. As a result of our focus on developing effective professional learning communities, we now realize that literacy instruction is of equal importance to our current instructional North Stars and must be given similar prominence within our professional learning community.

Project Plan, Procedures, Goals, Objectives, and Support

Woodland Middle School's project plan is derived from its literacy plan which is predicated on the staff's commitment to being perpetual learners who support evidence-based literacy instruction. The literature has demonstrated that evidence-based intensive reading instruction can result in significant gains. Therefore, we anticipate that effective execution of a literacy plan at Woodland Middle School will result in similar positive outcomes (Graves, Brandon, & Duesberry, 2011). Our plan has a three-pronged approach. First, we plan to provide literacy across content areas professional development so that all core content areas are aware of their responsibility for literacy instruction. Some proposed professional learning topics: Close Reading, Text Annotation, Cornell Notes, Literature Circles, Writer's Workshop, and various others all geared toward making sure teachers have the tools they need to deliver the literacy instruction. Secondly, we plan to maximize the results of reading interventions by personalizing students' learning environment through the use of technology. Students will also benefit from extended time for literacy. This extended time for literacy, anywhere from two to four hours, will occur in language arts and content-area classes, specifically science and social studies (Biancorosa & Snow, 2006, p. 20). Finally, we plan to make a concerted effort to more fully involve the community in our literacy efforts by increasing communication with families through email, phone calls, tweets, blogs, and the school's website. We also plan to host family literacy workshops to provide an overview of the importance of literacy birth to adult and to share our literacy initiatives. In addition, to the workshops will provide an opportunity for parents to learn about literacy strategies that may be implemented at home. We also plan invite community members to join us in a community reading program similar to One School, One Book.

Project Goals and Objectives

Based upon our needs assessment data, Woodland Middle School has developed goals for our literacy plan to be achieved by the end of projected grant period of 5 years. In establishing these goals we have taken into consideration the state of Georgia's new proposed achievement expectations and readiness indicators (Needs Additional Support, On Track, and Commendable) which will be in place in 2015. Using the new readiness level threshold scores, we project that approximately 35% of our students who currently are categorized as "Meets Expectations" for

the 2013 administration of the CRCT would be categorized as "Needs Additional Support" for the 2015 test administration.

To achieve our goals, we also plan to continue a program we have established where a cadre of locally funded subject area certified teachers will work with small groups of students (3-5 students) who are struggling. We plan to keep and expand our Extended Learning program which is funded through Title I.

Goals

Goals	Baseline	Measurable Objectives	Activities	Timeframe
Improve meets and exceeds scores in ELA for all students.	2013 CRCT 6th Gr: 83% 7th Gr: 91% 8th Gr: 92%	Increase student performance by 5%.	1.1 Create school-wide writing rubric 1.2 Assess students using SRI 1.3 Install technology to support program 1.4 Differentiate online instruction 1.5 Schedule students in targeted tutoring 1.6 School-wide professional learning	Fall 2014 through Spring 2019
Improve meets and exceeds scores in Reading for all students.	2013 CRCT 6th Gr: 91% 7th Gr: 92% 8th Gr: 93%	Increase student performance by 5%.	1.1 Assess students using SRI 1.2 Install technology to support program 1.3 Differentiate online instruction 1.4 Schedule students in targeted tutoring 1.5 School-wide professional learning	Fall 2014 through Spring 2019
Improve meets and exceeds scores in Science for all students.	2013 CRCT 6th Gr: 61% 7th Gr: 79% 8th Gr: 56%	Increase student performance by 10%.	1.1 Assess students using SRI 1.2 Install technology to support program 1.3 Differentiate online instruction 1.4 Schedule students in targeted tutoring 1.5 School-wide professional learning	Fall 2014 through Spring 2019
Improve meets and exceeds scores in Social Studies for all students.	2013 CRCT 6th Gr: 61% 7th Gr: 73% 8th Gr: 60%	Increase student performance by 10%.	1.1 Assess students using SRI 1.2 Install technology to support program 1.3 Differentiate online instruction 1.4 Schedule students in targeted tutoring 1.5 School-wide professional learning	Fall 2014 through Spring 2019
Increase	2013	Increase	1.1 Assess students using SRI	Fall 2014 through

Goals	Baseline	Measurable Objectives	Activities	Timeframe
number of Students with Disabilities scoring in exceeds category in Reading	CRCT 6th Gr: 3% 7th Gr: 8% 8th Gr: 0%	student performance by 5%.	1.2 Differentiate online instruction 1.3 Schedule students in targeted tutoring 1.4 School-wide professional learning	Spring 2019
Reduce number of Students with Disabilities scoring in the "does not meet" category in Science	2013 CRCT 6th Gr: 81% 7th Gr: 65% 8th Gr: 85%	Reduce "does not meet" by 10%	1.1 Assess students using SRI 1.2 Differentiate online instruction 1.3 Schedule students in targeted tutoring 1.4 School-wide professional learning	Fall 2014 through Spring 2019
Reduce number of Students with Disabilities scoring in the "does not meet" category in Social Studies	2013 CRCT 6th Gr: 81% 7th Gr: 73% 8th Gr: 83%	Reduce "does not meet" by 10%	1.1 Assess students using SRI 1.2 Differentiate online instruction 1.3 Schedule students in targeted tutoring 1.4 School-wide professional learning	Fall 2014 through Spring 2019
Increase students performing at or above proficient on the STAR Reading Diagnostic	2013 Fall STAR Report 6th Gr: 35% 7TH Gr: 29% 8th Gr: 30%	Increase to 60%	1.1 Assess students using SRI 1.2 Install technology to support program 1.3 Differentiate online instruction 1.4 Schedule students in targeted tutoring 1.5 School-wide professional learning	Fall 2014 through Spring 2019
Increase the number of school clubs and after-school activities	7 current active clubs	Increase after school activities by 20%	1.1 Install technology to support additional clubs 1.2 Advertise to encourage participation	Fall 2014 through Spring 2019
Increase the number of students participating in Extended Learning	2013 Data: 50 students, Ratio 12:1; Funded through Title 1	Increase Extended Learning by 15%	1.1 Install technology to support additional clubs 1.2 Advertise to encourage participation 1.3 Contact parents to encourage participation	Fall 2014 through Spring 2019
Increase the number of	2013 Summative	Increase by 10%	1.1 Provide professional development in-house and out	Fall 2014 through Spring 2019

Goals	Baseline	Measurable Objectives	Activities	Timeframe
teachers rated "Exemplary" on TKES Standard 1, Professional Knowledge	0%		1.2 Install technology to support PD 1.3 Plan a calendar of professional development opportunities	
Increase teachers rated "Exemplary" on TKES Standard 3, Instructional Strategies	2013 Summative 1.3%	Increase by 10%	1.1 Provide professional development in-house and out 1.2 Install technology to support PD 1.3 Plan a calendar of professional development opportunities	Fall 2014 through Spring 2019
Add science & social studies classroom libraries	0 classroom libraries	Increase number of science & social studies classroom libraries by 100%	1.1 Use funds to purchase starter books from Scholastic 1.2 Provide small bookcases to each classroom 1.3 Work with Media Specialist to find appropriate material	Fall 2014 through Spring 2019
Parent Contact	81 Twitter followers; 5 Woodland Voice newsletter	Increase number of parent contacts by 50%	1.1 Increase frequency of tweets to encourage parents 1.2 Provide email, phone call reminders 1.3 Update Website frequently 1.4 Weekly online newsletter with photos of students to encourage viewing	Fall 2014 through Spring 2019
Parents attendance	Average 20 attendees	Increase number of parents attending curricular events by 50%	1.1 Increase communications through email, phone, tweets, blogs & websites 1.2 Engaging family literacy workshops	Fall 2014 through Spring 2019

School Schedule

Sample Proposed 7th Grade Instructional Schedule	Literacy Plan Strategies
8:00-8:25 – **Literacy Instruction** Students receive additional instruction one day per week during Advisement period with alternative materials to support deficits.	Books in audio format eBooks, Interactive Technology, Classroom libraries
8:05 – 10:05 **Reading/World Languages/Language Arts Block** During this block, students are exposed to a wide range of literature in a variety of media. Students either read from a basal, multiple copies of trade books, or big books. Instruction is activated with a discussion led by the teacher to build or review any background knowledge necessary to scaffold future learning. Comprehension strategies are taught and practiced at this time with assistance being provided for developing fluency, phonics, and vocabulary. Students will engage in writing activities based on a model that is sequential and consistent and which demonstrates a thorough understanding of the writing process from prewriting to publication.	Professional development (phonemic awareness, decoding, Close Reading, Text Annotation, Cornell Notes, Literature Circles, writing, technology, and general educator/special educator cross-training). Books in audio format, eBooks, Classroom libraries, Interactive Technology, Mobile laptop labs, Writer's Workshop
10:05 – 11:35 **Connections**	Leveled texts in a variety of content areas. Mobile laptop labs, eBooks
11:35– 12:35 **Math Block** To build connections to real-life experiences, we utilize trade books and use of interactive technology provides for hands-on manipulatives.	Classroom libraries Interactive technologym, Mobile laptop labs
12:35 – 1:05 **Lunch**	
1:05 – 3:05 **Science/ Social Studies Block** To build content appropriate vocabulary and prior background knowledge, we will utilize the class textbook, classroom library sets, county funded databases, periodicals from the Media Center, and various non-fiction trade books.	Classroom Libraries eBooks, Media Center books, Subscription Databases, Web-based software, Interactive Technology, Mobile laptop labs, Authors' visits
3:05-5:30 Extended Learning All grades participate in remediation for Math, Language Arts, and Reading. Class sizes are currently 15:1. Students begin in October and end in March. They meet two times per week. The program focuses on test preparation.	Digitally published books, Interactive technology, Mobile laptop labs

Plan for Tiered Literacy Instruction

Most of the Tier 1 interventions will be centered on our instructional North Stars (student engagement, differentiated instruction, balanced assessment, and rigor) with an increased focus on literacy standards across the content areas. Universal screening through the STAR assessment has been utilized for identifying students requiring further intervention or extension. Progress monitoring in Tier I will occur every 4-6 weeks. For Tier 2 progress will be monitored every 2-3 weeks. Smaller group instruction will be delivered based on focused deficits. Interventionists will participate in additional professional learning on supplemental intervention materials, diagnosing reading difficulties, and differentiating instruction. Tier 3 interventions will be delivered 1:1 – 1:3 during a protected time daily by a trained interventionist. Progress monitoring is once a week, need based, and interventions occur daily.

<u>**Assessment and Data Analysis Plan**</u>

Explanation of Data Analysis

Assessment is a term used to evaluate, collect, and review information for the ability and quality improving education. While there are several forms of assessment, there is not a single assessment that gives teachers both adequate and detailed information needed for instructional decisions. Multiple assessments therefore will be used as measurement tools to assess and conduct student improvement. The collection of data starts at the beginning of each school year. Through screenings, progress monitoring, and diagnostics, data reliability increases especially if assessments are implemented consistently. Data is then used to determine the students' level of instruction needed and is used as a guide for teacher instruction when designing and implementing their lesson plan according to the Georgia Performance Standards. Data is collected using summative assessments from Unit Tests, monthly Common Assessments and weekly assessments. This alone is not an accurate way to drive student improvement. By utilizing alternative methods of assessment, relative data is ensured to meet the students where they are and improve in areas where they lack. With these additional measures of assessment, teachers are able to impact instruction wholly by using the different assessments to identify a different area of need. The following table of assessment tools with their description and purpose for assessing students is what we will use to drive improvement.

Assessment Tool	Description/Purpose	Frequency
STAR	Standardized computer based assessment to measure and analyze student growth in Reading.	Star assessment can be used any number of times but respectively, 60 day intervals are suggested for progress monitoring.
DRA2	Developmental reading assessment used to assess and document an individual student's primary reading development.	This tool is not frequently used; however it can be applied for use as a monthly running record for determining student's leveled and or

		benchmark books.
Achieve 3000	Computer based tool which differentiates online instruction to improve students' reading and writing. It meets the students where they are to help them reach higher levels of reading and writing proficiency, by providing web-based, differentiated instruction solutions. The instructions enable all learners to increase their literacy proficiency, and reach the 1300 Lexile level.	Level Set assessments (Achieve 3000 pre-test) are given once at the beginning of the school year and at the end of the school year. An interim test is administered to the following students: Students who score below 50Lexile on the Level Set pre-test and have Lexile levels below 50Lexile.
EasyCBM.com	An enhanced district assessment system that provides a full suite of assessment and reporting options, along with benchmarking and progress monitoring assessments for Reading, while delivering information for instruction and intervention. Its methodology is for obtaining measures of student achievement over time by repeatedly sampling proficiency on the school's curriculum at a student's instructional level.	Assessment depends on the skill being monitored. For Reading comprehension, it is recommended as frequent as 3-4 weeks. There are two questions related to assessing students using this tool: how reasonable is it for teachers to see growth in a particular skill and the amount of intervention the student has received?

Scholastic Reading Inventory	Computer Adaptive Reading assessment that measures reading on the Lexile framework. It has the ability to administer fast and reliable low-stakes assessment to inform instruction and make accurate placement recommendations	SRI should be administered three to four times a year: at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Spacing the assessments in this way allows time between tests for students to make gains through instruction and practice, and for teachers to make informed instructional decisions.

Assessment Analysis

Currently, and as noted in our Needs Assessment, the driving force behind our data and instruction stems from the CRCT (Criterion Referenced Competency Test) which is not relatively accurate to our student's reading level and ability. Each over the assessments highlighted in the table above will focus on the aspects mentioned earlier: screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic. Every student will be assessed with all of the assessments at the onset of the school year because again, they all provide different levels of data. In the middle of the year, STAR will be administered to determine the progress of each student's reading level since the administering of the first assessments. To continue monitoring the progress of each student, DRA2 will be administered to those students that have been identified by STAR as reading below grade level, with a goal to understand the students fluency rate and benchmark level. With this in mind, Achieve 3000 will be employed by every student along with CBM and Scholastic Reading inventory. These particular assessments will monitor the students' progress in their overall achievement in success for reading and writing. In addition, students will be screened, diagnosed and monitored for progression. The assessment tools will give the teachers the adequate information for proper planning and implementation of the standards.

Professional Learning Required

There is and have been systematic gaps between teacher's knowledge of assessment tools and how to effectively utilize the data gathered from such tools. Due to such, all teachers and administrators will be required to participate in professional learning sessions on the administration, evaluating and effectively utilizing the assessments. Teachers will gain an understanding of the usefulness of the assessments in relation to planning and instruction in their individual classroom. In addition, in-school professional learning courses will also be required to ensure understanding about research findings, reading acquisition and reading strategies to implement school wide as determined by the literacy team. The professional learning courses will promote teacher's active engagement in the data dissection process, allowing them to collaborate with other subject areas to identify a student's strength or weakness (according to the assessments). Particularly, it's important that teachers understand the text readability (derived from both DRA2 and STAR) and level of the individual student.

Assessment for Parental Use

In our Needs Assessment, it was noted from our parent surveys that the parent's understanding of their child's reading habit showed true inconsistency with the child's reading habits in school. From this finding, and the overall climate of the school, parental involvement is a top priority. During parent conferences, Open House and PTA meetings, teachers and administrators will share with parents the data gathered from assessments as evidence to show their child's current academic level, progress made thereafter and any goals set forth. However, like teachers, there is also a lack of knowledge in understanding data, how to read it, and how to interpret meaning. Parental workshops will be offered to assist parents in interpreting data and ultimately helping their child. These workshops will be held quarterly to give parents a greater understanding of the assessments being administered, the results of the assessment and what do the results mean. Additionally, literacy will be encouraged in the home as parents are introduced to and encourage reading with their child as modeled in a school "Literacy Night."

Assessment Overview

A team of teachers and administrators will oversee the various assessments for the students, While individual reading or English Language Arts teachers will administer many of the

assessments, it will not be done in isolation. This same team will also review the data on an aggregate basis to understand the needs of the school, grade, group, as a whole, while individual teachers can focus on individual students.

Resources, Strategies, and Materials

Woodland Middle School currently has three computer labs, eleven computers in the Media Center, and one Apple cart with 40 iPad 2s. With these items and some creative scheduling, all of the students in Woodland were evaluated on the STAR program this year. It is important to note that Fulton County Schools upgraded the wireless network during the previous summer and it vastly increased the workability of the carts.

However, it's not enough to truly enable the students to use all of their resources. Many of the best resources for both evaluation and instruction require higher and more individualized equipment. With almost 1,100 students, Woodland Middle School is seeking to add more capacity in terms of individual machines – laptops, netbooks or tablets – to best handle the different learning styles, levels and abilities of the students. The immediate goal is to provide 1:3 ratios of machines to students. The long term goal is to reach a 1:1 ratio for optimal interaction with the students and other resources.

Existing Resources, Strategies, Materials, and Technology that support our Literacy Plan

The Media Center provides a wide selection of print non-fiction and fiction books for teachers and students. Non-fiction e-books are also now available and mainly focus on science and social studies content. E-books allow teachers to show/share the book in the classroom, to use the computer lab in order for shared reading, and/or to read at home with internet access. Books and e-books were purchased for all reading levels. Graphic novels, focusing heavily on math and science, were also purchased for student use. The Media Center provides eleven computers, generally reserved for students working on projects. The iPads are distributed heavily to sixth grade science teachers to use for science literacy instruction in their rooms. The current carts are checked out with only one cart serving approximately 12-15 classrooms.

Proposed Resources, Strategies, Materials, and Technology that are needed to support our Literacy Plan

One major resource the school will continue to use is the STAR reading assessment tool. This tool is used three times a year to get measure each students reading and math level. The

data from the STAR assessment will be used to help teachers gauge projected student development and comprehension over the course of a year. The data will also help teachers develop personalized learning targets for students. The Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) and Pearson's WriteToLearn program are tools that can allow students to work at their own level and allow the teachers to monitor progress and assist their teaching without a huge amount of wasted time. In fact, the advantage to the technology is the speed at which both the student and teacher receive feedback.

To provide the mostly timely feedback, the students must be able to use the resources frequently. Based on our current equipment standards, we are woefully underequipped. The plan to purchase several more carts of equipment will make a difference in both the quality of teaching and the access to learn. The additional equipment will allow students to also utilize existing programs such as Galileo – Georgia's Online Library, United Streaming, Maps 101 and other Fulton County supported programs.

In another effort to support our literacy plan, we plan to provide literacy across content area and DIBELS professional development to all of our teachers in order to build each teacher's capacity in reading and writing across the content. In addition to professional learning in DIBELS, we intend to hire Metro RESA consultants to train all teachers to embed the Common Core Literacy Standards into all content areas using tools created by the Literacy Design Collaborative. This training will assist with the creation of school-wide curricular maps and calendars as well as literacy embedded instructional units. Professional development will be necessary for teachers without reading instruction experience. In particular, the teachers will need help with close reading, text annotation, Cornell Notes, Literature Circles, and Writer's Workshop.

Funding Sources

The Grant Committee at Woodland Middle School is currently active and applying for additional grants throughout the year. Woodland currently has two open grant proposals out with a recently accepted proposal for the Young Adult Top Ten Teen Books award. Competitive grant writing will continue as we plan to seek out additional funding sources. As a Title 1 school, we will also be looking at investing some of the Title 1 money in continuing the

successful strategies. In addition, Woodland is actively seeking business partners to help with this effort. We currently have a small team of teachers that actively organize materials to work with our business partners.

Professional Learning Strategies Identified on the Basis of Documented Needs

A commitment to developing our staff is currently an integral part of Woodland's school culture. Currently, all teachers meet every other week for 90 minutes to focus on our instructional North Stars: differentiation, rigor, student engagement, balanced assessment, and classroom management. A focus on our North Stars is what unites us as a professional learning community and defines what is universally important in our classrooms. We have come to the realization that literacy instruction is of equal importance to our current instructional North Stars and must be given similar prominence within our professional learning community.

Professional Learning Conducted within Past Year

Professional Learning Topic	PL Hours	% of Staff Attending
Differentiated Instruction	9	100% Core Content Areas $6^{th} - 8^{th}$
Balanced Assessment	9	100% Core Content Areas $6^{th} - 8^{th}$
Defining School's Instructional North Stars	3	100% Core Content Areas $6^{th} - 8^{th}$
Refining School's Structure	6	33% School-wide all classes
Standards based classrooms	1.5	100% Core Content Areas $6^{th} - 8^{th}$

This year our professional learning again is centered once again around the Instructional North Stars. We will continue fine tune our practice around these North Stars with a 6-week professional learning series on each.

In the school's needs assessment, our literacy team identified six focus areas that would drive our school to meet its literacy goals. Those focus areas were: (1) Reading Instructional Strategies (2) Reading across the content areas (3) RTI Tiered Instruction (4) Effective Use of Instructional Technology (5) Additional Literacy Learning Time and (6) Family and Community Involvement.
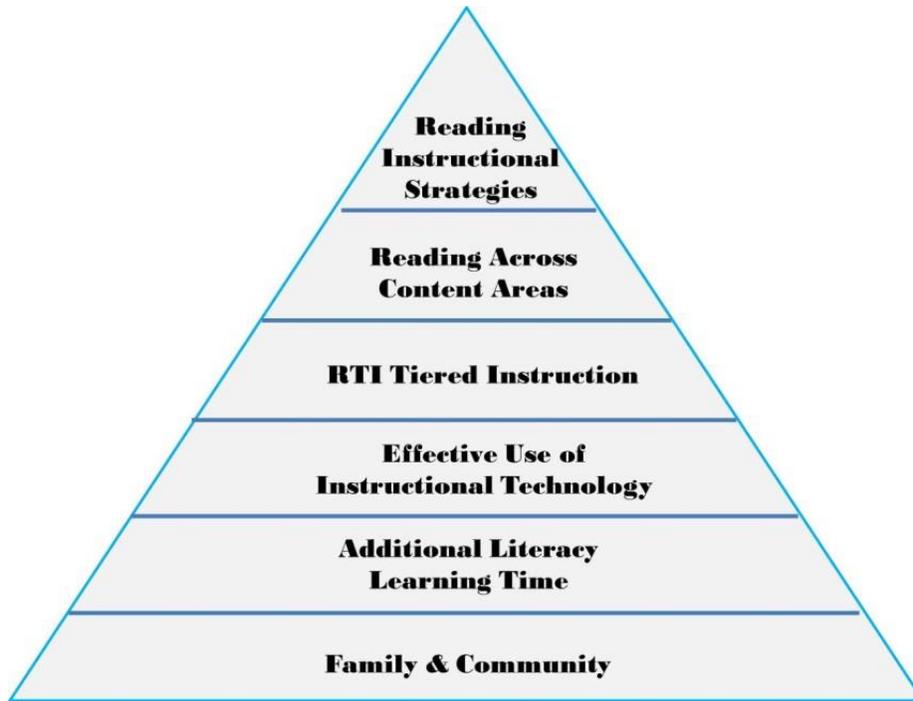
Figure 1: Woodland Middle School's Literacy Focus

The team then met to assess our literacy goals versus our staff's current capacity and determined that in addition to our current instructional North Stars, our school will need additional professional learning in the areas of reading instructional strategies, reading in the content areas, RTI tiered instruction and instructional technology.

Reading Instructional Strategies

Although most of the staff relies on the students' ability to read in order for them to access core curricular content, very few secondary teachers are trained in how to teach students to read. It is usually assumed that middle grade students have already acquired adequate literacy skills. However reality is inconsistent with this assumption. The majority of our students are below grade level in reading. Therefore, our staff will need additional professional development in research based literacy strategies such as close reading, text annotation, and the seven reading comprehension strategies.   Much of the expertise for training our staff in these methods already exists within our school and our district's central office. Therefore, successful implementation will be based on our ability to develop a comprehensive program to integrate into our existing structures.

Reading Across the Content Areas

In our needs assessment it was presented that 40% of students do not meet standards in science and 30% did not meet standards in social studies. Our students' literacy skills impact their ability to access the content in all of their classes.   Therefore, to optimize the use of time throughout the school day, it will be important to effectively integrate literacy instruction in those core content classes.   An important resource for this effort will be the Literacy Design Collaborative. The Literacy Design Collaborative tools help content area teachers to embed literacy standards into instruction. They provide teachers with templates, strategies, and quick access to articles for designing literacy-intensive relevant projects and tasks. Training for the use of these tools is available within our district's central office and through Metro RESA.

Additional training around the use of Document Based Questions (DBQs) with primary source documents will also be useful in advancing both literacy instruction and content instruction. Although DBQs are commonly used within Advanced Placement High School courses, this structured approach to thinking, analyzing, and writing about a primary source document can be useful in developing literacy skills, providing a deeper understanding of content, and preparing students for future challenging coursework.

RTI Tiered Instruction

The RTI framework provides a structured approach for supporting struggling students. Our teachers will need additional training in the general approach to providing and monitoring the efficacy of interventions. In addition, we will need additional support on literacy specific RTI strategies such as tiered vocabulary. Quality data is at the root of effectively implementing the RTI process. Therefore, our staff will also need additional training in the use of Excel and other data analysis tools and resources.

Effective Use of Instructional Technology

Although technology cannot replace a skillful teacher, it can be used to assist teachers with some tasks that can enhance literacy skills. For example, reading meaningful texts at appropriate levels of difficulty is one way for children to increase their vocabulary and practice their phonics skills. Computer software can be used to quickly assess a reading level and provide meaningful passages at the student's reading level. In addition, technology can provide broad based access

to other scaffolds, such as access to word pronunciation and definitions, that can help students read successfully. Effective use of instructional technology that extends beyond software intended for the education market can also enhance our literacy program. Twenty first century students expect content that is catered to their individual interests. Teachers need to be able to develop digital content specific to the interest and needs of the students in front of them. Often this can occur through the use of simple video software coupled with an online course management system to facilitate the dialogue of assignments and feedback that will occur between students and teachers. For example, teachers can have students write about an assigned video and provide more meaningful feedback to students at a quicker pace by simply inserting audio clips of their comments into a student's work. Our teachers and leaders will need additional training in the integration of such technologies into their current workflow.

Measuring the Effectiveness of Professional Learning

To measure the effectiveness of the professional development, the school is going to employ several techniques. Following professional development sessions, participants will be surveyed to determine whether they feel they have increased their knowledge through the professional learning experience and the extent to which they plan to use the new skills. An excerpt from the survey instrument is shown below.

1a. Before participating in this professional learning experience my *knowledge* level for this content was:

1- Little to no knowledge	2- Some knowledge	3 Adequate knowledge	4 Knowledgeable	5 High level of knowledge Could teach others

1b. After participating in this professional learning experience, my *knowledge* level for this content is:

1- Little to no knowledge	2- Some knowledge	3 Adequate knowledge	4 Knowledgeable	5 High level of knowledge Could teach others

2a. Before participating in this professional learning experience, how well did I implement these skills?

1- Little to no implementation	2- Beginning to use these skills	3 Implementation is improving	4 Skills in use routinely	5 High level of effective implementation Could coach others

2b. After participating in this professional learning experience, how much do you anticipate using these skills?.

1- Little to none	2- I will slowly bring them out into my classroom	3 I plan to use them right away	4 I will use them at least 3 times a week	5 I plan to use them daily with my students

Local Data Collection

Please rate this professional learning experience on the following scale:
1-poor, 2-fair, 3-average 4-good 5-excellent

Content	1	2	3	4	5
Presenter(s)	1	2	3	4	5
Interaction Opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of implementation	1	2	3	4	5
Overall Rating	1	2	3	4	5

Please list any comments you have about this activity and/or suggestions for future topics:

Figure 2: Professional Learning Survey Instrument

In addition to teacher surveys, both administrators and teachers will perform focused classroom observations to determine how well new strategies are being implemented. Woodland Middle wishes to expand teacher cooperation and peer learning. Learning walks involve teachers going into other teachers classrooms, not just to observe teaching skills but to talk to students directly.

Sustainability Plan

In the development of our literacy plan, special care was given to select programs and supports that could easily fit into our existing school structures. We intend to use grant funds for purchasing additional software, hardware, and professional learning experiences. The following plans are in place to sustain the benefits of the aforementioned purchases.

Software and Extending the Assessment Protocol

The primary assessments in our literacy plan are the STAR reading program and the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). Funding for the STAR assessment is provided through the Fulton County School District and we are held accountable for communicating results at the district level. The Scholastic Reading Inventory would continue to be funded through Title I dollars. Specific software platforms have been selected to support different parts of our literacy plan. The startup costs will be provided by the grant and future subscriptions costs can be supported through a combination of our standard budget and Title I funds.

Hardware

In order to fully integrate the software into instruction, we will need to purchase additional computers and tablets so that teachers and students have easy access to reliable technology. The Fulton County School District is currently planning to increase the amount of technology available in schools. The SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) education tax is expected to raise $912 million for Fulton County school improvements over its five-year lifetime. The SPLOST proposal calls for technology enhancements, particularly in the areas of wireless, mobile learning devices for student use, updated video and audio recording tools, improved and expanded distance learning for students, updated equipment for technology and career-oriented classes, teacher/student communication and collaboration tools, and online professional learning resources for staff. The district's technology plan will help sustain the Striving Reader investments made in educational technology.

Professional Learning and Expanding Lessons Learned

Woodland Middle School faces many of the same problems faced by schools with similar demographics throughout the region. The processes that we intend to put in place to facilitate

academic gains for our students can be easily scaled and leveraged across other schools and districts. We hope to serve as a model for how schools can take learners with some significant literacy challenges and make significant gains.

Building capacity within our staff is at the root of our school's core values. Every external professional learning experience attended by our staff is attended with redelivery in mind. Redelivery most commonly occurs through our mandatory in-house professional learning session every other week at weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings or through faculty meetings. In addition, we put a comprehensive new teacher support group in place. All teachers new to our school are paired with a mentor and required to meet monthly as a group to receive professional learning on the "Woodland Way".   As a new instructional North Star, literacy would be integrated into this program. As part of our new teacher mentoring program, teachers are encouraged to visit their mentor teacher's classroom and see the best practices in place.

Sustaining the Literacy Plan

A key responsibility of the literacy team will be not only to monitor student progress but also to monitor the efficacy of programs associated with the literacy plan in general. This team will continue to compare our results with those found in the literature to ensure that we continue to make the best use of grants funds, our school budget, and our Title I budget. In addition, our school has a strong tradition of pursuing grants that will help us in our quest to build teacher capacity and improve student achievement.

Budget Summary

Woodland Middle School is always mindful of using the money we receive wisely. To meet our needs, we are planning to spend money on technology and software, professional development, family literacy workshops, and grant management.

Software is the first focus with plans to purchase Scholastic Reading Inventory to form a basis for monitoring and assessment of students. Other reading programs are being reviewed for the ability to teach to students at each level, adjust as the student adjusts to a higher level, and expand to include science, math and social studies in the reading units. The technology will increase the speed and ability of the teachers to assess and react to student abilities and achievements.

To support the software, Woodland will need to purchase additional carts of equipment – laptops, iPads, or tablets – and support them. The immediate need is to provide at least one cart of equipment for every 3 classrooms instead of the current ratio of 1 cart to 12 classrooms. The carts will need to be tracked and maintained by the Fulton County technology support person.

The key to making these purchases successful is to have professional development in both the software and the hardware. It does not help the students to struggle with the hardware for half of the class period. Fulton County and its new PD 360 program provide a number of options on the training. The staff would need additional training for some software specific programs like Scholastic Reading Inventory. And, substitutes will be requested as needed to help the training continue throughout the school year.

To engage Woodland's families throughout the school year, we will add several family literacy workshops. These workshops will be fun events that will be appropriate for the whole family. One goal is to have families leave with at least one book that they can take home. Another goal is to show parents how to support their student's literacy. Food will be provided to help encourage family participation.

Lastly, the school will need to have some funds for grant management. This includes the Striving Readers Grant along with other grants currently in progress. This part-time position will ensure the continuity of this program and plan for long-term grant endeavors. The following chart is a proposal on how the budget money would be parsed.