

Deputy Superintendent's Corner

The Power of Preparation

PREPARING FOR A POSITIVE ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR

Friday night football, crisp morning air, and pumpkin spice lattes can only mean one thing—fall has arrived. With this new season underway, schools and districts are off to a great start.



In this edition, we are showcasing how schools and districts prepare for a positive academic year. To plan effectively, leaders must begin with the end in mind. What goals do you have for student achievement? *"A goal without a plan is just a wish."* This quote from *The Little Prince* is widely used in business and education environments when discussing the topic of goal setting. Ensuring that your goal is SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) will not only assist in keeping the aim specific but correlate the goal to a time frame, promoting efforts to determine goal achievement.

We believe working to reduce variability in student learning among schools is a win for our students, families, and communities. Reducing variability is challenging, but you can do it. We are committed to helping you every step of the way. I want to thank you all for your work in supporting schools by providing opportunities for optimal learning experiences to ensure positive outcomes for all students.

Please enjoy this quarter's newsletter, highlighting the power of preparation and positivity. Student achievement increases when school and district leaders are both prepared and hopeful.

Dr. Stephanie Johnson
Deputy Superintendent/Chief Turnaround Officer

Atlanta Office News

Statewide Supports

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

Shawn Keim, Program Manager for Statewide Support

While School and District Improvement (SDI) strongly supports federally identified schools, our division also offers support and resources for all Georgia schools and districts. We are committed to providing value-added resources and supports for all educators to effectively engage in continuous improvement at every level of teaching and learning. This support manifests in several ways.

The Academic Recovery team supports schools in addressing lost learning opportunities through teacher clarity training, instructional coaching, standards-based classroom experiences, and various professional learning and coaching on various topics.

The Area Program Assessment Specialist team supports schools and districts by performing diagnostic reviews, which are available to every school and district by request. In addition, they support educators in effective data analysis and provide support in helping educators assess the use and impact of instructional initiatives. The Professional Learning team plans and coordinates learning experiences for educators. In addition, through various platforms, the team works to share all of SDI's resources, professional learning, and processes with all Georgia educators.

Together, these teams strive to bring all SDI's supports to every school and district. Our team encourages all educators to reach out and ask for support. We are ready, willing, and able to continuously support Georgia's schools and districts to improve student outcomes!

Area News

Academic Recovery Specialist Team**COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS****Dr. Taijuan Clayton-Brookes, Lead Academic Recovery Specialist**

Lovejoy High School's relationship with the Academic Recovery Specialist Team began in February 2022. Lovejoy High School ranks number one among all traditional high schools in the Clayton County Public Schools. They also have an impressive graduation rate of 91%. We are continuing the relationship for the 2022-2023 school year in support of Principal Rodney Jordan's vision to sustain high academic achievement for all students and increase the graduation rate. In addition, their support plan includes assisting the instructional coaches with the coaching cycle and improving standards-based instruction in all classrooms.

The Academic Recovery Specialist Team, under the guidance of Simone Danielson, has observed classrooms, provided instructional feedback to teachers, and collaborated during Math PLC with instructional coaches on developing and initiating the coaching cycle. The year is off to an exciting start, and everyone is looking forward to continuing to increase student achievement and building the instructional capacity among the teachers and leaders.

The Academic Recovery Specialist Team forges a collaborative relationship with Lovejoy High School in Clayton County, GA.



L to R: Simone Danielson (Region 2 Academic Recovery Specialist), Jody Pate (Region 5 Academic Recovery Specialist), Taijuan Clayton-Brookes (Lead Academic Recovery Specialist), Rodney Jordan (Lovejoy High School Principal), Molly Nigro (Region 1 Academic Recovery Specialist), and Taniya Wilder (Region 4 Academic Recovery Specialist)

Alternative Education News**SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR THE WIN****Dr. Samuel Taylor, Program Manager**

The Alternative Education Program Team



The alternative team recently traveled to South Georgia to visit seven non-identified alternative education programs and schools and introduce the nine standards of the Georgia Alternative Education Program (GAEP). The following schools agreed to share the structure of their alternative education programs and how they implement the standards: WINGS Elementary Alternative Learning Program, Wayne County High School Alternative Program, Sixth Street Academy Program, Telfair Alternative Preparation School, Crisp County High School Alternative Program, Dooly County Prep Academy, and Crawford Middle Alternative Education Program. As part of the process, they completed a GAEP Self-Assessment — a tool for identifying areas of strength and areas needing improvement. The self-assessment ratings were the precursor to robust conversations regarding all GAEP standards. Each alternative/nontraditional program was housed in a facility conducive to learning, offered wrap-around services for students, implemented graduation plans, and identified an instructional framework. The communication between all stakeholders was evident and included updates to the school board. Common feedback included providing the following:

- networking opportunities for alternative schools
- alternative education professional development
- resources to support alternative and nontraditional education

Area News

North Area News

FROM GOOD TO GREAT

Anthony Pack, Program Manager

Kay Road Elementary School (KRES) was shocked when identified as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school. Under the leadership of Dr. Brandon Hall, KRES implemented tools and supports framed by the Georgia Systems of Continuous Improvement to move the proverbial needle. In addition, Dr. Hall underwent a Comprehensive Needs Assessment to determine the first items needing attention were culture and climate.

Once there was evidence of a strong, unified team, KRES utilized processes and tools such as their Leadership Team and an intentional commitment to Collaborative Planning. In addition, the GaDOE School Effectiveness Specialist (SES) and RESA School Improvement Specialist (SIS) supported Dr. Hall's team by coaching them to use the Data-Driven Decision-Making guide effectively. As a result, their 2022 Georgia Milestones scores were the highest among all elementary schools in Peach County.

The summer months allowed the school's team to focus on effective lesson planning and meeting the needs of the whole child. In addition, KRES staff recognized the connection between student engagement and well-being.



"How do I feel today" check-ins, "the power of YET" statements, and clear, consistent classroom expectations created an environment where learning

was productive and protected.

KRES is committed to the whole child. Based on their SMART Goals, they will participate in the Emotional Poverty workshop by Ruby Payne, sponsored by Middle Georgia RESA, as their next professional learning event. Because of their partnerships with GaDOE's Office of School and District Improvement and RESA specialists, the sky is the limit for Kay Road Elementary School!

Metro Area News

THE CORE OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Susan Patrick, Program Manager

Dr. Tim Guiney, Assistant Superintendent of Clayton County Public Schools, and his school improvement team developed a district plan of support that promotes continuous improvement. This intentional approach, CORE (Commitment, Organization, Responsibility, and Effectiveness), will positively impact student learning.



A group of Northcutt Elementary teachers planning and preparing for a new school year.

Dr. Guiney and members of his planning team assigned a point of contact for each action. Hence, data collection and communication at the monthly District CIT meetings are well-organized and manageable. Moreover, they follow W. Edward Deming's philosophy that "Without data, you are just another person with an opinion."

The district team explicitly communicates with the schools and shares their expectations of assuming responsibility for implementing improvement actions and monitoring student performance. The school leadership teams in Clayton County Schools hold each person within their schools responsible for accomplishing their part in fostering the development of structures and processes that are sustainable for years to come.

When improvement teams fully commit to their work, organize their efforts to ensure efficiency and clarity, and accept responsibility for their roles in continuous improvement, it optimizes the plan's effectiveness to sustain these transformational efforts. As a result, the students of Clayton County Public Schools are at the CORE of all district and school improvement!

Area News

South Area News

CAREER PREPARATION

Janie Fields, Program Manager

Leaders of the Georgia Rural Health Innovation Center (GRHIC), Andrew College, Mercer University School of Medicine (MUSM), and Randolph County School System (RCSS) recently joined efforts to pilot Mercer Med Camp at Andrew College.

This collaborative effort aims to help cultivate students in rural parts of Georgia for healthcare careers. Eleven rising ninth graders participated in the week-long summer medical program at Andrew College. The rising high school students attended virtual seminars taught by MUSM doctors, scientists, and medical students and in-person sessions led by Andrew College instructors on cardiology, vitals and bowel sounds, nutrition and blood sugar, respiratory health and CPR, and mental health and wellness. In addition, the online sessions offered interactive experiments, games, and hands-on activities. The students received scrubs and stethoscopes as part of their career-prep experience. The program culminated in a graduation ceremony, and parents were in attendance to support their child's newfound accomplishments.

The RCSS administrators and Randolph-Clay Middle School staff were delighted their middle school students received hands-on career development exposure during this summer learning opportunity. The students will receive continued mentoring, personal development, and academic support from Southwest Georgia FOR Southwest Georgia. This support will benefit the students in preparation for pursuing goals such as attending medical school or attaining other health profession education (physicians, pharmacists, registered nurses, physician assistants, respiratory therapists).

RCSS is also pleased to announce that Georgia Public Broadcasting has selected a separate group of rising ninth graders from Randolph-Clay Middle School to demonstrate how to complete specific math tasks for other Georgia middle school students.

Randolph-Clay Middle School Red Devil scholars are on the rise!



Students practicing CPR during the Mercer Med Camp. Pictured along with Med Camp instructors are: Jada Darby, Kelshia Engram, Cassidy Flowers, Austin Gandy, Chassity Brown, Ziyah Johnson, Hazel Jordan, Jayvion Jackson and Demarcus Coleman.



GaDOE Community

We invite all district and school leaders to join the Office of School and District Improvement Community!

Step 1: Register

Visit community.gadoe.org, and create an account using your professional, work-provided email.

Step 2: Complete Profile

After your initial login, complete your user profile so others can connect with you.

Professional Learning

Save the Dates

CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Mark your calendar for the 2023 Instructional Leadership Conference scheduled for **February 28–March 1, 2023**, at the Macon Marriott. We look forward to seeing you there!



Professional Learning Events

Upcoming virtual webinars, in-person events, on-demand content, and by-request workshop opportunities are available at

<https://community.gadoe.org/events>.

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gadoe.org/SDIevents

About the Office of SDI

The Office of School and District Improvement (SDI) provides a statewide system of supports and processes for school and district improvement. Our work is to engage with and support schools and districts' improvement efforts by providing tools, resources, and professional learning. SDI collaborates with other divisions within the Georgia Department of Education and external agencies such as the Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs), Georgia Learning Resources System (GLRS), colleges, and universities to provide school and district support. While SDI works with all Georgia schools and districts, the primary focus is on schools identified as needing comprehensive or targeted support and improvement.



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