

# School Profile

Created Thursday, December 04, 2014

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## Page 1

### School Information

System Name:	Wilkinson
School or Center Name:	Wilkinson County Middle School
System ID	758
School ID	275

### Level of School

Middle (6-8)

### Principal

Name:	Dr. Angela M. Smith
Position:	Principal
Phone:	478-946-2541
Email:	angela.smith@wilkinson.k12.ga.us

### School contact information

(the persons with rights to work on the application)

Name:	Jessica Dial
Position:	Media Specialist
Phone:	478-946-2541
Email:	jessica.dial@wilkinson.k12.ga.us

### Grades represented in the building

example pre-k to 6

6-8

### Number of Teachers in School

26

### FTE Enrollment

324

# Grant Assurances

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## Page 1

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

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

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

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

- 
- Yes
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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.

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- Yes

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

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- Yes

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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.

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- Yes

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

- 
- Yes
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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
-

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

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- 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.

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- Yes
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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.

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- Yes
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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.

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- Yes
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# Preliminary Application Requirements

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## Page 1

Click on the [General Application Information](#) link below to assist you in the grant development process.

[SRCL General Information Packet-Cohort 4](#)

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 4](#)

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](mailto: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.

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• I Agree

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## **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.

## Conflict of Interest & Disclosure Policy

- 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.

## Conflict of Interest & Disclosure Policy

- 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. **Remedies for Nondisclosure**  
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. **Annual Certification**. 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.

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. **Disclosure of Conflict of Interest after Agreement Execution**

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.

Conflict of Interest & Disclosure Policy

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.

AS. [Signature]

Signature of Fiscal Agency Head (official sub-grant recipient)

Dr. Aaron Geter, Superintendent

Typed Name of Fiscal Agency Head and Position Title

12-4-14

Date

[Signature]

Signature of Applicant's Authorized Agency Head (required)

Dr. Angela Smith, Wilkinson County Middle School Principal

Typed Name of Applicant's Authorized Agency Head and Position Title

12-4-14

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)

# Fiscal Agent Memo of Understanding

The application is the project implementation plan, 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: Dr. Virginia Rozier

Position/Title of Fiscal Agent's Contact Person: Assistant Superintendent

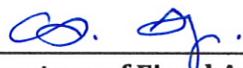
Address: 197 West Main Street; P.O. Box 206

City: Irwinton Zip: 31042

Telephone: (478 ) 946-5521 Fax: ( 478 ) 946-3275

E-mail:

virginia.rozier@wilkinson.k12.ga.us

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

Dr. Aaron Geter  
Typed Name of Fiscal Agency Head (District Superintendent or Executive Director)

11/17/14  
Date (required)

## *Narrative*

Wilkinson County School District is located in a rural community in central Georgia. The total enrollment for the district is 1537 students. The district is comprised of one primary, one elementary, one middle, and one high school, which are all Title I schools. The high school is a priority school at this time and has been required to complete many ongoing instructional initiatives and will not be applying for funds at this time.

While the school district is committed to the high academic achievement of all students, we continue to face the problems inherent to many rural school districts. Obstacles such as generational poverty, limited industry, high unemployment, and inadequate resources to address literacy continue to impact the community and schools. The below poverty rate for Wilkinson County is 23.1% and the school system has 85.50% of students who receive free and reduced lunch.

The mission of Wilkinson County School District is to “Build High Performing Schools” through quality academic achievement for all learners. The vision of Wilkinson County School District is “High Levels of Learning~Every Student~Every Day!” It is with this motivational and forward thinking, that highly qualified educators enter the doors of this school district to lead students to achieve at new heights. Literacy is the pinnacle for this success.

## *Current Priorities*

- **Increase academic performance of all students:**
  1. Weekly progress reports for all students/parents
  2. Student Success Plans: develop plan with parent input to address student failures
  3. Differentiation of instruction
  4. Increase opportunities for enrichment and remediation during the school day (ILT/ELT)
  5. Incorporate constructive response items into daily curriculum
  6. Integrate literacy instruction across the curriculum with an emphasis on informational text in all content areas
  7. Provided targeted assistance to students in a comprehensive RTI process
  8. Increased focus on parental involvement to ensure school-parent communication is open and ongoing
  9. Prepare students for shift to Georgia Milestone Assessments

- **Improve Instruction Immediately!!!**
  1. Consistent implementation of Common Core Georgia Performance Standards and Georgia Performance Standards
  2. Ongoing job-embedded professional development
  3. Alignment of assessments to standards
  4. Increase writing across all disciplines
  5. Development of high-quality lessons
  6. Departmentalized planning times for teachers
  7. Infrastructure to support updated technology
  8. Data analysis to identify student strengths and weaknesses
  9. Use data analysis to incorporate research-based instructional strategies in the classrooms

### ***Strategic Planning***

All district and building level administrators meet weekly to discuss and evaluate status of current initiatives, disaggregate data, and monitor progress toward school improvement process and goals. Stakeholders are involved in this process through school council meeting, parent teacher organizations, and interagency meetings. Additional partnerships include: Wilkinson County Sheriff Department, Oconee Fall Line Technical College, Horace Mann Insurance Agency, Wilkinson County Health Department, Community HealthCare Systems, and Family Connections.

### ***Current Management Structure***

Wilkinson County School System operates on a traditional school system management structure. We are led by a Superintendent and governed by an elected five member board of education. Our schools are led by a principal and an assistant principal. Each school is comprised of a leadership and design team that drives instructional practice.

### ***Past Instructional Initiatives***

- Early Reading First (primary)
- Reading First (primary/elementary)
- E-Math (primary/elementary)

- SRA Direct Instruction (primary/elementary)
- Saxon Math and Phonics (elementary and middle schools)
- Thinking Maps (middle school)-Ongoing
- Study Island (primary, elementary, and middle schools)-Ongoing
- Accelerated Reader (primary, elementary and middle schools)-Ongoing

### *Literacy Curriculum*

Wilkinson County School District utilizes the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards as outlined in the frameworks provided by the Georgia Department of Education. Teachers have been provided with professional development on unpacking standards, aligning activities, and creating common assessments. Our literacy focus has been the inclusion of informational text to make the connection between reading and writing in all content areas. Furthermore, our teachers have been trained in the use of higher order thinking and questioning techniques through Webb's Depth of Knowledge, Blooms Taxonomy, and the Performance Tasks located in GADOE's frameworks.

### *Literacy Assessments Used District-wide*

Literacy assessments that are utilized district-wide include the following:

- Previous CRCT-state administered assessment to determine student achievement
- Benchmarks-are administered five times throughout the school year to determine student progress toward meeting standards.
- Ongoing formative and summative assessments-utilized to determine assessment *for* and *of* student learning.
- STAR Enterprise Assessment is utilized to determine which students need interventions and individualizing instruction to accelerate learning for all students.
- Informal Phonics Inventory (K-3)
- *Pearson Georgia Reading Street* Fluency Assessments (K-4)
- Fry's Sight Word List (K-3)

### *Needs for the Striving Reader's Grant*

Wilkinson County School District will have a need in the area of reading until each and every child in the district is reading on or above grade level. The Striving Reader's Grant will allow the district to address many of the inherent literacy deficits identified. Improving the effectiveness of interventions for struggling readers requires a school-level system for early identification of 'at risk' students and then providing those students with intensive interventions. Although each school utilizes means to identify reading deficits, there is a need for a systematic approach for identifying deficits in grades K-8. Striving Reader funds could support these efforts. With the continued decline in revenue, grant monies will enable the district to close the achievement gap between those subgroups that perform below expected levels. There is also a need for technology upgrades so that students can have access to current technology advances. Finally, as students transition from each grade band, students will have acquired the necessary literacy skills to be successful lifelong readers.

## *District Management Plan and Key Personnel*

The following charts details the management plan for grant implementation. Identified key school personnel were integral in the literacy plan development and grant application completion. Central office staff that will play critical roles in the grant administration have been acclimated with the grant process by Dr. Virginia Rozier, district SRCL coordinator. They are well aware of their roles and grant administration responsibilities. Students and teachers participated in surveys and discussions during literacy plan review and grant development. They will participate in ongoing reviews of budget and plan implementation through surveys and discussions with literacy team members.

<b>District Level Personnel</b>		
<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Duties at Central Office</b>	<b>Duties with School Grant Management Teams</b>
<b>Dr. Virginia Rozier, Assistant Superintendent/ Director of Federal Program</b>	-Coordinate grant implementation with district financial department • Oversee requests for resources and fund allocations • Issue purchase orders • Advise on federal programs regulations • Manage grant audits • Maintain financial records	-Meet with school-level key personnel to select appropriate resources aligned with needs • Develop grant budget and plan for sustainability • Ensure federal guidelines compliance • Audit grant
<b>Dr. Virginia Rozier, Assistant Superintendent/ Director of Federal Program</b>	-Coordinate grant implementation • Plan professional learning (PL) opportunities • Issue PLUs to staff	-Lead monthly meetings with school-level key personnel to ensure grant-funded resources support curriculum, grant priorities, and literacy plan • Select grant-funded resources and programs • Monitor implementation of grant-funded initiatives • Assess effectiveness of initiatives • Plan PL opportunities • Schedule teacher collaboration sessions • Ensure alignment of grant-funded resources/projects with

		literacy plan
<b>Curtis Holton, Technology Director</b>	-Coordinate selection, dissemination, and maintenance of grant-funded technology to ensure equitable and appropriate technology for each school as identified in system technology plan -Confer with contracted technology services provider for hardware recommendations	Further duties for monthly meetings with school-level key personnel -Confer with school personnel to align technology purchases with grant and needs-based priorities and system technology plan -Confer with school personnel to ensure equitable distribution of technology -Communicate with school personnel and develop plans to ensure proper maintenance and use of technology resources -Communicate with technology services provider and school personnel to ensure appropriate maintenance, repair, and dissemination of hardware
<b>Horace Austin, Technology Professional Development Specialist</b>	-Coordinate technology professional developments with district staff	-Provide necessary professional development to teachers and staff on technology
<b>Kathy Jackson, Finance Director</b>	-Submit completion reports and SRCL state required reports -Issue stipends for off-contract SRCL trainings -Issue travel reimbursement for any SRCL-related training	
<b>Janis Smith, Accounts Payable Clerk</b>	-Process SRCL payments on time	-Provide copies of POs to media specialists to match with packing slips

### Key School Personnel

Person Responsible	Duties
<p><b>Literacy Team Members</b> <b>(Includes teachers from all disciplines)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Meet monthly with Dr. Rozier and other key school-level personnel to               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• select grant-funded resources</li> <li>• monitor implementation of grant-funded initiatives</li> <li>• assess effectiveness of implementation</li> <li>• plan PL opportunities</li> <li>• schedule teacher collaboration sessions</li> <li>• ensure alignment of grant-funded resources/projects with literacy plan</li> </ul> </li> <li>-Receive training in new technology and assist peers with its integration</li> <li>-Support CCGPS implementation and SRCL initiatives through modeling, peer observations, and collaboration</li> <li>-Conduct formative evaluation of grant-supported strategies and report results to key personnel</li> </ul>
<p><b>Principals</b> <b>Dr. Bonnie Green</b> <b>Primary</b> <b>Dr. Judith Geter</b> <b>Elementary</b> <b>Dr. Angela Smith</b> <b>Middle</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Oversee management SRCL grant at school level to ensure effective implementation of grant initiatives</li> <li>-Ensure staff member participation in PL activities and collaborative meetings supported by grant funds</li> </ul>
<p><b>Instructional Coaches</b> <b>Jennifer Brooks</b> <b>Dr. Ideal Glover</b> <b>Dr. Karen Grant</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Complete requisitions for grant supported resources</li> <li>-Document receipt of services and provide documentation to Janis Smith</li> <li>-Ensure school implementation of grant initiative</li> <li>-Receive and redeliver professional training</li> <li>-Conduct formative evaluation of grant supported strategies and report results to key personnel</li> </ul>
<p><b>Media Specialist</b>  <b>Lisa Whatley</b> <b>Primary/Elementary</b>  <b>Jessica Dial</b> <b>Middle</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Receive and process grant-purchased resources and provide documentation to Janis Smith</li> <li>-Select SRCL-aligned materials for media center</li> <li>-Lead school literacy team in developing initiatives to encourage reading throughout school</li> <li>-Ensure proper implementation of technology resources</li> <li>-Promote grant-funded initiatives</li> </ul>

Wilkinson County Schools  
Experience of the Applicant

## Recent Initiatives

Wilkinson County Schools has implemented several initiatives targeted at improving student achievement. The table below outlines these initiatives.

Initiative	Grades	Status	Outside Funding
K-12 Instructional Support Specialists	PK-12	Current	No
Design Teams	PK-12	Current	No
SWAET (System Wide Administrative Evaluation Team)	PK-12	Current	No
Class Size Reduction Teachers	3-12	Current	Yes (Title IIA)
GradeCam: Electronic scoring of student assessments.	PK-12	Current	No
Quarterly Benchmark Assessments	K-12	Current	No
Online Lesson Plans (ELA)	PK-12	Current	No
SLO Assessments	K-12	Current	No
TKES/LKES	PK-12	Current	No
Graduation Coaches	6-12	Current	No
After School Program	PK-8	Current	No

Wilkinson County Schools  
Experience of the Applicant

## Audit Findings

	Year	Project Title	Funded Amount	Outside Funding	Is There An Audit?	Audit Results
LEA- Wilkinson	2006	-Title I Grants to LEA	-\$502,684.00	Yes	Yes	Fiscal Requirement of School-wide Program Not Fully Implemented
		-Title VI-B Rural & Low Income	-\$12,770.00			
	2007	-Title I Grants to LEA	-Title I:	Yes	Yes	No Findings
-Special Ed-Grants to States		\$471,188.00				
-Special Ed:		\$309,999.00				
		-Title VI-B Rural & Low Income	\$53,270.00			
	2008	-21 <sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center	-21 <sup>st</sup> Century:	Yes	Yes	No Findings
		\$350,000.00				
-Reading First Center		-Reading First Center:				
			\$353,349.00			
		-Title VI-B Rural & Low Income	\$47,100.00			
	2009	-Title I Grants to LEA	-Title I:	Yes	Yes	No Findings
		\$562,718.00				
-Special Ed-Grants to States		-Special Ed:				
-Special Ed-Preschool Grants		\$326,423.00				
-Safe & Drug Free Schools & Communities		-Safe & Drug Free Schools:				
	\$6,867.00					
-Early Reading First	-Early Reading First:					
	\$377,038.00					
-Title VI-B Rural & Low Income	\$52,976.00					

Wilkinson County Schools  
Experience of the Applicant

		-ARRA-Education State Grants	-ARRA: \$277,785.00			
	2010	-Title I, Part A Cluster	-Title I: \$550,834.00	Yes	Yes	No Findings
		-Special Education Cluster	-Special Ed: \$439,934.00			
		-Title VI-B Rural & Low Income	-\$45,740.00			
		-Community Based Abstinence Education (CBAE)	-CBAE: \$416,404.00			No Findings
	2011	-Title I, Part A Cluster	-Title I: \$585,783.00	Yes	Yes	No Findings
		-Special Education Cluster	-Special Ed: \$338,021.00			
		-Title VI-B Rural & Low Income	\$39,660.00			
	2012	-Title I, Part A Cluster	-Title I: \$580,786.00	Yes	Yes	No Findings
		-Special Education Cluster	-Special Ed.: \$311,970.00			
		-Title VI-B Rural & Low Income	\$35,959.00			
	2013	-Title I, Part A Cluster	-Title I: \$578,919.00	Yes	Yes	No Findings
		-Special Education Cluster	-Special Ed: \$333,021.00			

Wilkinson County Schools  
Experience of the Applicant

		-Title VI-B Rural & Low Income	\$32,953.00			
		Total Funds:	\$7,994,151.00			

**LEA’s Capacity to Coordinate Resources and Control Spending:** From the above data, it is clear that the Wilkinson County School District has a long history of sound fiscal management. An annual audit is conducted by Georgia Department of Audits and no findings have been cited for the past six years. Internal control procedures have been developed and revised over time at the suggestion and directions of state auditors. Wilkinson County School District has procedures in place that require checks and balances for all purchases. The teacher, principal, or program director completes a purchase request that reflects the best price for the specifications of the item needed. The purchase request is approved and signed by the school principal, program director, and superintendent. The clerical staff at the district office completes the purchase order which is approved and signed by the superintendent and places the order. Copies of the purchase orders are sent to program directors and/or schools. All deliveries are accepted at the transportation department. The transportation worker is responsible for internal mail checks in deliveries and distributes them to the facility where the recipient is located. The recipient checks the order and reports any discrepancies to the district office clerical office. Invoices are mailed to the district office. The clerical office matches the invoice to the purchase order. The financial officer prints checks to pay the bills. Quarterly, program directors review a printout from the financial management system and compare it to the program budget.

**Sustainability of Past Initiatives:** The Federal Program Director in Wilkinson County meet weekly in a system level administrative/leadership meeting held by the superintendent. These system level administrative leadership meetings are attended by: Assistant Superintendent (Federal Program Director), Principals, Special Education Director, Assistant Special Education Director, and K12 Instructional Support Specialists. Agenda items include analyzing needs, developing action plans, progress monitoring action plans, and evaluating action plans for School Improvement. This process is on-going and cyclical. During the weekly administrative/leadership meetings led by the superintendent, principals and the Federal Program Director participate in interactive conversation about federal programs. Needs of programs are discussed and reviewed. Adjustments and changes are made on an as needed basis depending fund availability. Budgets are reviewed and revised with the needs of the schools. Programs are constantly monitored. Through this monitoring, programs remain in compliance and spending is controlled. Protocols and guidelines of programs and grants are closely followed. Sustainability of initiatives remains in the forefront of all grant opportunities. Plans are put in place and continuing efforts are made to ensure that the district thoroughly train personnel, gain community and business partners and support, open lines of communication between district and schools, monitor funds to ensure compliance, and balance spending with all funding. All of these strategies ensure long-term sustainability of programs.

## School History

Wilkinson County Middle School is one of four schools in a small rural school district in central Georgia. The school was erected in 1968. The student body of 324 is comprised of 56% African-Americans, 42% Caucasian students, and 1% Hispanic students. We have 86% of students are served in the free or reduced lunch program. There are 171 male students and 153 females. The current enrollment is:

- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade – 110 students (58 Male & 52 Female)
- 7<sup>th</sup> Grade - 107 students (56 Male & 51 Female)
- 8<sup>th</sup> Grade – 107 students (57 Male & 50 Female)

WCMS is committed to providing “higher levels of learning, every student, every day”. WCMS’s theme for the year is “Setting the Stage for Success.” We are determined to have each student at WCMS graduate on time. A quality education is provided for all of our students through our gender-based classrooms. Research shows that males and females learn differently, and the school has made a commitment to the practice of gender separation in all core academic classes to maximize student success. The school had made AYP for four consecutive years (2008-2011) and was designated a Title I Distinguished School in 2010 & 2011. In 2011, WCMS was named a High Flying School by the National Youth at Risk Conference in Savannah, Georgia.

## Administrative & Teacher Leadership Team

WCMS has a total of 30 certified teachers on staff, one media specialist, five paraprofessionals, a school nurse, a guidance counselor, a graduation coach, a principal and an assistant principal.

Our school is a professional learning community that fully implements job-embedded professional development. Teachers are provided time during the school day to participate in professional development that is focused on improving instructional practice.

Leadership collaboration is displayed at school weekly administrative team meetings which include the principal, assistant principal, school counselor, graduation coach, and data clerk. The design team meets monthly and is comprised of school administrators, department chairpersons, grade level chairpersons, and the media specialist. The Design Team addresses instructional concerns and system level policies and procedures that should be implemented to meet the needs of our middle school students. This team, with the addition of parents and other community stakeholders would be responsible for formulating a plan that includes data-driven decision making, implementing school-wide literacy initiatives, and progress monitoring goals.

**Past instructional initiatives** include the following:

- Implementation of the Georgia Performance Standards
- Direct instruction in reading

- Title I Targeted assistance in mathematics
- Supplemental instruction through technology
  - Online Assessment System
  - ILearn
  - Classworks
- Training in implementing standards-based classrooms
- Academic coaches in mathematics and language arts
- Reading interventionist for struggling readers as a required connections class
- Japanese Lesson Studies
- Learning Tomorrow three year grant through the NEA in which teacher's looped with their students all three years.
- Class Keys Evaluation Tool
- 90 Minute Blocks in all classes (4 classes daily)

**Current instructional initiatives** include the following:

- Teacher Keys Effectiveness System
- Common Core Georgia Performance Standards and Literacy Standards
- GPS in Science and Social Studies
- Single-gender instruction in all core academic areas.
- Success by Design "backwards design" approach.
- Writing Across the Curriculum
- Extended learning time - 30 minutes daily, Lessons focus on specific domains of the CRCT
- Use of manipulatives in mathematics
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Afterschool Program
- Reading for Meaning in all content areas
- Use of content related vocabulary word walls
- Study Island computer program
- Concentrated use of COACH books in all core academic areas
- Benchmarks each grading period
- Book Study *Best Practices: Bringing Standards to Life in America's Classrooms*
- Standards-based classrooms
- System-wide Assessment and Evaluation teams monitor standards-based classrooms
- Accelerated Reader
- Thinking Maps
- 72 Minute Periods (5 Classes Daily)

### **Professional Learning Needs**

Teachers determined they need sustained professional development in the following areas:

- Content-area literacy instruction
- Implementation of CCGPS in ELA and other content areas

- Lexile scores and the connection to “text complexity” in fictional and non-fictional texts
- Content area writing strategies
- Development of common rubrics for writing
- Common assessment practices
- Using formative and summative assessments
- Use of performance assessment in the classroom
- Targeted literacy interventions for struggling readers and writers
- Differentiated Instruction
- RTI Process

### **Need for Striving Readers Project**

Since Wilkinson County Middle School is located in a small rural community the need for a sustained, school wide literacy program is even greater. Literacy is an essential component for improving student achievement. Many of our students do not have access to literacy materials at home; therefore, it is imperative that we provide such materials at school. This need is compounded by the fact that the school district has limited resources, and data indicates that we have a significant number of students who are currently reading below grade level. Current research indicates that students must be able to read and comprehend grade level text accurately and fluently in order to become academically successful. The Striving Reader’s grant will enable the school to obtain additional resources that will provide more intensive and targeted reading instruction to those students who are reading below grade level. In addition, the project will enable the school to implement programs that will accelerate those students who are reading at or above grade level. The project will also allow for enhanced supportive instruction in writing, vocabulary, and strategic reading skills.

While WCMS students have performed well on the CRCT overall, there continues to be within-school achievement gaps between various subgroups. These students would greatly benefit from a school-wide program where all teachers have been trained to implement it to target our struggling readers. Many students enter the middle school with literacy gaps and this impacts their ability to perform and master the current standards. In addition, we would like to close the gap between the number of students who meet and exceed on standardized tests.

It is also critical the WCMS be able to implement with fidelity the literacy components of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards and the College and Career Readiness Performance Index. In order to meet the “text complexity” requirement, students must have access to grade appropriate resources and skills to help them navigate content that is above their ability to read and comprehend.

Critical to our being able to move students forward and improve literacy is a core reading program where the literacy skills of students is constantly assessed and evaluated. Through this scientifically research-based program, teachers will have the capacity to administer screening, progress monitor, identify literacy deficits, and design appropriate instructional interventions. Teachers will need extensive professional development on how to utilize these instruments, and formative and

summative assessments to make certain that students are reliably and accurately assessed. Then results can be used to effectively guide instruction and move students towards appropriate Lexile bands.

We currently have no diagnostic tools or universal screener in place with the exception of the Star Test. For years, we have used the Star test to measure student reading ability, and assign Accelerated Reader levels. However, this program may not be an accurate measure of reading levels. This grant will also enable the school to update print as well as non-print resources and utilize the technological resources such as e-books and e-readers to keep our students, school, and community abreast of current technological advances that improve literacy.

Teachers have expressed a need for a variety of reading materials such as magazines, newspapers, primary and secondary source documents, as well as updated computer equipment such as laptops for their use. Overall, the SRCL grant will enable us to provide our students with language and text rich classrooms and environments that engage, motivate, and accelerate students in speaking, writing, listening, and reading.

### **Needs Assessment**

The needs assessment was developed in collaboration with Wilkinson County Middle School teachers and administrators. The design team met and evaluated the schools literacy efforts as well as other instructional concerns. In order to gage the perceptions of all faculty members, a survey using [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) was created that asked teachers for their perceptions in the areas of literacy, instructional practice, professional development, and resources.

### **Needs Assessment Process**

After development of the survey, the school principal met with the design team, who in turn met with the departmental and grade level teams to discuss the needs assessment and the process for applying for the Striving Reader's Comprehensive Literacy grant. All faculty were represented in the discussions including CTAE (Career Technical Agricultural Education), science, social studies, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and the media specialist. The principal emailed the survey link to each department. Teachers in the were given one week to complete the survey online. Upon completion of the surveys, the design team analyzed the data and the overall results were presented during a faculty meeting.

### **Needs Assessment Participants**

The following faculty participated in the needs assessment: ELA (10 teachers), social studies (5 teachers), science (3 teachers), math (4 teachers), CTAE (5 teachers), Special education (5 teachers), Media Specialist (1), Paraprofessionals (5).

### **Major Areas of Concern**

Categories in which teachers strongly agreed there is a need	Teachers		
	Sixth Grade	Seventh Grade	Eighth Grade
Core Reading Intervention Program	96%	95%	96%
Professional development in literacy instruction	92%	95%	95%
Professional development in implementation of the CCGPS	96%	90%	97%
Writing Program	98%	95%	90%
Progress monitoring of student learning	96%	97%	98%
Upgraded technology resources and training in technology literacy	98%	99%	98%
Informational and fictional resources for CCGPS	97%	97%	98%
Differentiated instruction in the classroom	75%	90%	80%
RTI Process	85%	80%	85%

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Understanding Lexile Scores and Text Complexity	100%	98%	98%
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- **Professional Development in Literacy.** Professional development is needed in evidence based programs and interventions for teaching literacy.
- **Professional Development for CCGPS implementation.** Teachers indicated that they needed ongoing training in implementing the CCGPS with rigor especially for students performing below grade level.
- **Progress Monitoring of Student Learning.** Teachers did not understand how to effectively monitor student learning and therefore do not implement progress monitoring with fidelity. The lack of progress monitoring further hinders students that display academic weaknesses because teachers do not use data to guide instruction.
- **Writing.** Currently there is no system wide writing program being used to improve students' writing. Additionally, the area of expository and persuasive writing is a concern. The data has shown no significant growth on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade writing assessments in the previous four years.

**Major Areas of Concern Relative to the "What" Document.** According to the research in the "What" document, the following are critical concerns at Wilkinson County Middle School.

- Lack of systematic, research-based intervention program for struggling readers and writers
- Lack of diverse range of media and formats that can be integrated into the curriculum
- Lack of technology resources to improve reading and writing
- No literacy coaches or reading teachers to implement professional development and intervention strategies
- Lack of job embedded professional development with evaluation and follow through on selected reading strategies
- Lack of resources for interventions for struggling readers
- Lack of vertical team between schools to monitor student progress over time
- No intensive writing program – stagnate writing scores in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Writing Assessment
- Lack of vocabulary development

### **Curriculum Needs**

- Incorporate a broader range of texts such as technical books, manuals, magazines and newspapers to enhance student reading in informational text.
- School wide vocabulary program to implement in language arts classes that focus on higher order thinking skills
- Content-oriented materials that provide different reading opportunities to students
- Complete programs that focus on basic reading accuracy, reading fluency, and vocabulary

- Range of supplemental materials such as magazines, books and newspapers.

### **Technology Needs**

- Data management system that can automatically generate/score different forms of reading assessments. This will enable teachers to provide effective/timely interventions and instructional plans to improve reading.
- Intervention programs with adaptive technology to individualize instruction for students but also provide data for differentiation strategies.
- Reading pens to help students decode text
- Tablets
- E-devices
- Draft-writing software and accompanying hardware
- Auditory word processors that generate feedback to students after they type a word or sentence.
- Classroom laptops for teachers
- Additional laptop carts for students
- Upgraded technology infrastructure (additional cables, drops etc.)

### **What the School Has Done or Not Done to Address These Issues**

All teachers at Wilkinson County Middle School received training in the implementation of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards in the Spring and Fall of 2012. This year, we have focused on the Georgia Milestones Assessment and new requirements for enhanced literacy. Teachers also were required to view the webinars that were available through the Georgia Department of Education. In addition, teachers meet with the K-12 Instructional Support Specialist on a weekly basis to work on the development of high quality lesson and implement best practices in a standard-based classroom. In an effort to address literacy, all grade levels use Accelerated Reader to encourage students to read more frequently. However, this does not incorporate the necessary monitoring to accelerate students toward grade-level reading.

The school has also made literacy a focus during the 30 minute block of extended learning time. Teachers prepare lessons that focus on reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and information and media literacy to help improve skills in these areas. The literacy standards have been fully implemented in all classes, as students are required to write shorter and longer pieces. All teachers provide relevant and timely feedback on a school-wide rubrics developed by the teachers.

WCMS has also implemented the RTI process as a tool to help struggling students, but most teachers do feel they need additional training to fully understand how to progress monitor the students and move them successfully among the tiers to improve achievement.

Teachers work to implement writing and reading strategies in all content areas. There is not a school-wide program in place to address academic concerns in these areas, and teachers have not been adequately trained to deliver effective instruction in these areas especially those who are not language arts teachers. Since literacy technology is also critical in today's society, the school will need to address the lack of technology in this area. The use of tablets, e-books and e-readers will give the school greater flexibility in providing students with the opportunities to be exposed to grade appropriate informational and non-informational text.

### **Root Cause Analysis: Underlying Problems**

One of the underlying problems for our areas of concern is that our students have not been exposed to a variety of materials that challenge them and thus they have not achieved basic levels of reading proficiency. Students have been especially limited in reading informational and non-fiction texts. This lack of access to print and non-print materials coupled with the fact that many students do not read regularly compounds the problem. If students are not reading a range of materials then vocabulary development is impacted as well.

Because Accelerated Reading has been utilized to improve reading, the focus was shifted away from helping students with targeted reading strategies who were reading below grade level. Since there is no individualized reading instruction, we have been unable to focus on the specific skills that each child needs support in. In the classrooms, there are many students who show weaknesses in the same areas so it is difficult for teachers to conduct small groups as they should. However, we are making some progress towards this with differentiation and the RTI model.

Middle school students are also disengaged from reading because they lose interest in the content of the texts they are reading. Many traditional books assigned in schools as well as textbooks fail to capture the interest of today's children because they are used to fast paced movies, video games and Internet sites. Since we do not have access to upgraded technologies such as tablets, e-books, or e-readers, we are limited in our capacity to provide students with high interest material.

Teachers need to have sustained and ongoing professional development in literacy instruction as well as in the implementation of the CCGPS. This professional learning must include practical resources and tools that can be implemented to insure a rigorous curriculum and effective practices in the classroom. In order for our students to meet the technological needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, teachers must also be well trained in how to utilize technology to engage students in meaningful and relevant learning. Teachers need continued training in differentiated instruction since data indicates that at risk students underperformed in the literacy domains on standardized tests.

## Wilkinson County Middle School

### Literacy Plan

Wilkinson County Middle School (WCMS) has developed the following literacy goals:

Goal 1: Implement interventions to ensure that all students are identified and served appropriately to increase learning outcomes and close achievement gaps among sub-groups; specifically, students with disabilities (SWD) will be targeted with the goal of increasing their reading proficiency.

Goal 2: Utilize data-based decision making to drive instruction and that is aligned with the Response to Intervention (RTI) Process.

Goal 3: Incorporate technology into instruction to improve literacy achievement and engage students.

Based on the premises of "The What" (p. 5) and "The Why" (p.31) documents, the Literacy Leadership Team, composed of administrators, building principals, teachers, parents, local business leaders, and local interagency support groups, identified the strengths and weaknesses of the schools and developed a working literacy plan. It is considered a "living document" and will be revised and/or amended as needed to keep current with practices and research so that all students at Wilkinson County Middle School will receive high quality literacy instruction. The six building blocks discussed in both documents provide integral information and research-based strategies that will provide us with the framework to implement an effective sustainable literacy program.

#### *Building Leadership Capacity*

The Wilkinson County Middle School administration continually demonstrates an increased commitment to staff members to learn about and support evidence-based literacy instruction in the schools. All teachers and administrators participated in state-sponsored webinars and face-to-face sessions to learn about the transition to CCGPS during Spring 2012. Additional webinars were viewed during the 2012-2013 school year and teachers participated in professional development opportunities as they were available. WCMS demonstrates research-based guidelines, strategies and resources for literacy instruction set forth in "The Why" (p.37) document by implementing the following:

- a. providing professional learning opportunities for teachers and school personnel to identify and evaluate the characteristics of effective literacy instruction, especially in the areas of reading, writing, and speaking;
- b. equipping teachers, principals, district/school leaders, and after-school providers on how to identify at-risk students with persistent reading and writing difficulties, to implement early intervention strategies, and to monitor students' progress;

- c. providing professional learning and assistance to teachers, principals, and district leaders in grades 6 through 8 about the characteristics of effective literacy instruction strategies in core academic subjects and career and technical education subjects for all students, including English Language Learners, students with disabilities, and gifted students;
- d. providing teachers, principals, and other school leaders with professional learning about the use of data to make informed instructional decisions, including the implementation of assessment strategies, data analysis, and appropriate use of results;
- e. training ALL content teachers in each grade level to use effective instructional content-specific reading and writing strategies;
- f. focusing on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner AASL Standards, in collaboration with the Media Specialist (p. 58 "The Why" Document).

The Middle School Design Team regularly monitors literacy instruction in the schools by reviewing lesson plans and observing colleagues in the classroom. The principal, assistant principal, K-12 Instructional Specialists, and academic coach conduct focus walks as well as review subject lesson plans to ensure the implementation of literacy across all disciplines. Principals facilitate principal chats; this initiative allows principals to establish collegial relationships with teachers.

Wilkinson County Middle School has protected time during the course of the school day that is designated for literacy and teacher collaboration as described on page seven of "The What" document. Teachers have collaborative planning by subject area and grade level so that they can collaborate with their colleagues. All schools have Extended Learning Time (ELT) in which literacy is addressed. This is a 30 minute block of uninterrupted instructional time. In addition, study groups are scheduled for literacy enrichment and teacher collaboration that focus on diagnostic assessments, universal screeners, research based, and literacy best practices.

WCMS is a participant in the district established literacy leadership team that focuses on all stakeholder involvement. The vision for the literacy leadership team is to "*Increase Literacy for All Students in Wilkinson County Schools*". These teams meet on a monthly basis to discuss literacy initiatives that have been implemented, discuss their effectiveness, and determine next steps toward reaching literacy goals. Data analysis is a critical component of these meetings as it is used to assess student achievement, progress monitor, and determine intervention methods.

WCMS maximizes the use of time and personnel through scheduling and collaborative planning. "*Reading Next* states that literacy instruction for adolescents should extend beyond a single language arts period and be integrated in subject and coursework. This extended time for literacy from two to four hours, should occur in language arts and content-area classes. (Biancorosa & Snow, 2006, p.20.)" WCMS supports extended time as depicted the "The Why" document. Administration has designed a

master schedule in which students in grades 6-8 receive extended literacy instruction across language arts and in content area classes. Evidence of this schedule can be found in the project plan-procedures, goals, objectives, and support section of this grant.

An identified need in the area of leadership engagement is that of stakeholder input. Although efforts are continually made to incorporate stakeholder input into the development of literacy and achievement goals, there is difficulty getting stakeholder engagement. Page 28 of the "The How" document provides support for the middle school to establish a system of communication for sharing information with all partners (e.g., e-mails, newsletter, website). Learning supports are available, such as afterschool programs, tutoring services, acceleration, and remediation opportunities.

Due to technological limitations and limited internet access in the surrounding community, there is not an emphasis placed on utilizing social media to communicate and promote the goals of literacy throughout the community at large at this time. However, we recognize that social media is a powerful communicative tool that we need to embrace to reach our greater community. We would like to explore utilization of all the tools of the internet, such as but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Wikis, and Podcasts. Academic successes are celebrated through traditional media, communications sent home with students, School Call, and Parent Teacher Organization meetings/assemblies. Wilkinson County Middle School must continue to concentrate efforts on strengthening partnerships between communities and postsecondary education agencies in order to align College and Career Readiness information with all stakeholders.

### *Strengthening Literacy Development Across the Content Areas*

The middle school has implemented Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) literacy standards in Social Studies, Science, Math, and CTAE which requires all students to read and write in all content areas. Writing Across the Curriculum is essential for students to meet the demands of future employers. Research from the National Commission on Writing published in "The Why" document stresses the importance of writing across the curriculum, "People who cannot write and communicate clearly will not be hired, and if already working, are unlikely to last long enough to be considered for promotion. Half of responding companies reported that they take writing into consideration when hiring professional employees and when making promotion decisions." (p.28). Instructional Support Specialists (ISS), an academic coach, along with building level administrators, work to ensure bell-to-bell instruction in all schools so that these initiatives and standards are implemented with fidelity.

The Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) require that students become proficient in developing four types of texts; persuasive, expository,

explanatory, and narrative, beginning as early as kindergarten. These genres are taught in grades 6-8 in all subject areas with a focus on expository and persuasive writing in eighth grade. According to National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) on page 44-45 of "The Why" document, writing becomes a critical need for workers:

Technological advances, changing workplace demands, and cultural shifts make writing more important than ever, especially because the way we write often predicts academic and/or job success, creates opportunities, maintains relationships, and enhances critical thinking. (NCTE, 2008, p.1)

Because students enter the classroom with such diverse needs, one single approach is no longer effective (NCTE, 2008, p. 1). According to NCTE, "Instructional practices, writing genres, and assessments should be *holistic, authentic, and varied*," (NCTE, 2008, p. 2)

The following are effective instructional and assessment strategies for writing and will be implemented, monitored, and sustained by teachers and administrators at WCMS:

1. Require all students--especially those less experienced--to write extensively so that they can be comfortable writing extended prose in middle school and writing essays in high school (minimum five pages) and college (ten pages). Create writing assignments that ask students to interpret and analyze a variety of texts and to write in various genres.
2. Employ functional approaches to teaching and applying rules of grammar so that students understand how language works in a variety of contexts.
3. Foster collaborative writing processes.
4. Include the writing formats of new media as an integral component of writing.
5. Use formative assessment strategies that provide students with feedback while developing drafts.
6. Employ multiple assessment measures, including portfolios, to assess students' development as writers. (NCTE, 2008, p. 5)
7. Use of "Thinking Maps" to help students think critically and develop ideas for writing.

Based on research from the National Commission on Writing (2004) and "The Why" document:

1. People who cannot write and communicate clearly will not be hired, and if already working, are unlikely to last long enough to be considered for promotion. Half of responding companies reported that they take writing into consideration when hiring professional employees and when making promotion decisions. "In most cases, writing ability could be your ticket in . . . or it could be your ticket out," said one respondent. Commented another: "You can't move up without writing skills." (2004, p.3)

2. Two-thirds of salaried employees in large American companies have some writing responsibility. "All employees must have writing ability.... Manufacturing documentation, operating procedures, reporting problems, lab safety, waste-disposal operations--all have to be crystal clear," said one human resources director. (2004, p.3)
3. Eighty percent or more of the companies in the services and the finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE) sectors, the corporations with greatest employment growth potential, assess writing during hiring. "Applicants who provide poorly written letters wouldn't likely get an interview," commented one insurance executive. (2004, p.3)
4. More than 40 percent of responding firms offer or require training for salaried employees with writing deficiencies. "We're likely to send out 200-300 people annually for skills upgrade courses like 'business writing' or 'technical writing,'" said one respondent. (2004, p. 4)

Writing demands for the 21st century are increasing not only in schools but also in workplaces that demand effective communication skills. Georgia advocates strong writing skills beginning in elementary and continuing through high school. All content areas have writing components in their expectations for Georgia students. The implementation of strong writing programs is crucial to our literacy initiative.

#### THE IMPACT OF WRITING ON READING COMPREHENSION

For instance, for summary writing for grades 3-12, the "effect sizes compared favorably with effects obtained by other researchers examining the impact of specific reading approaches, such as reading programs at the secondary level, reciprocal teaching (a popular method for teaching comprehension), and vocabulary instruction. The effect size for writing about text that was read (0.40) exceeded each of these effects, providing additional validation of its effectiveness as a tool for improving students' reading comprehension (Graham & Hebert, 2010, p. 14).

Wilkinson County Middle School's administrators and Design Team will establish writing requirements as listed on page 46 of "The Why" document but not limited to the following:

- A. Have students write about the texts they read.
  1. Respond to a text in writing (writing personal reactions, analyzing and interpreting the text)
  2. Write summaries of a text
  3. Write notes about a text
  4. Answer questions about a text in writing, or create and answer written questions about a text
- B. Teach students the writing skills and processes that go into creating text.

1. Teach the process of writing, text structures for writing, and paragraph or sentence construction skills (improves reading comprehension)
2. Teach spelling and sentence construction skills (improves reading fluency)
3. Teach Spelling Skills (Improves Word Reading Skills)

C. Increase how much students write.

Students' reading comprehension is improved by having them increase how often they produce their own texts ((Graham & Hebert, 2010, p. 5).

### Text Complexity

According to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2006), reading complex text requires the ability to comprehend information, understand style and structure, dissect vocabulary, and infer implicit ideas. Readers are presented with complex text in both higher education and the workplace, yet millions of middle and high school students lack the reading and writing skills they need to succeed in college and compete in the workforce. Today, American students must have strong literacy skills in order to compete in the global world (NCTE, 2006).

In a 2006 report published by ACT, Inc., (NCTE, 2006) that company shared its analysis of what distinguished students who scored at least the benchmark score on the reading section of the ACT. The following statement highlights the importance of text complexity:

Surprisingly, what chiefly distinguished the performance of those students who had earned the benchmark score or better from those who had **not** was their relative ability in making inferences while reading or answering questions related to particular cognitive processes, such as determining main ideas or determining the meaning of words and phrases in context. Instead, the clearest differentiator was students' ability to answer questions associated with complex texts.

The ACT research has shown that students unable to score at least the benchmark score do not have a high probability of earning a C or better in an introductory, credit-bearing course in U.S. History or psychology. That, along with other research, led to the inclusion of text complexity as an integral part of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS).

The final standard in the anchor standards of the CCGPS, which remain the same for each grade level, states that students will, "Read and comprehend complex literary and informational text independently and proficiently." Teachers are provided exemplars within a two-grade span that illustrate the level of complexity that is needed to ensure that their students will be prepared for the challenges of that grade and the next. Appendix A of the CCGPS provides an in-depth discussion of its definition of text complexity with an analysis of a few texts that illustrate that definition. In its explanation of the Common Core State Standards' (CCSS) approach to text complexity,

the CCSS panel discusses of three aspects of text analysis: qualitative, quantitative and Reader and task considerations.

In order to clarify for teachers exactly what is meant by the text complexity at each level, teachers are provided with samples of the kinds of texts required at each grade band. In the bands through grade 5, exemplars of stories, poetry, informational texts, and read-aloud texts through grade 3 are provided to give teachers examples of the text complexity that will be expected of their students. For grades six through twelve, there are exemplars for: English Language Arts, stories, drama, poetry, and informational texts; history and social studies; science; mathematics; and technical subjects. To further support teachers, sample performance tasks are provided for each text.

The development of cross-disciplinary teams is in progress at WCMS. Although there has been a focus on writing and reading across the curriculum, additional strategies to ensure that all students are reading grade appropriate texts need to be implemented. Also, professional development for teacher to ensure that teachers understand the concept of text complexity grade bands and how they can be applied to improve reading levels in all content areas. Interdisciplinary teams meet at scheduled times for regular collaboration; protocols for team meetings are in place. Professional learning community models are understood and in place. Effective leaders create a “teachable point of view”: a succinct explanation of the organization’s purpose and direction that can be illustrated through stories that engage others emotionally and intellectually (Tichy, 1997). Specific, measurable student achievement goals aligned with grade-level expectations are shared by teachers in all subjects. Teachers are made aware of Smart Goals and play a crucial role in the development of the school improvement plan.

Teachers meet horizontally at this time and vertical alignment of instruction is being developed to ensure carefully articulated scope and sequence of skills that is integrated into a rich curriculum of literacy and informational texts. This is an area that must be addressed. Efforts are being made to integrate appropriate and necessary technology (flip cameras) for teachers to record instruction to share with colleagues and give feedback on the use of literacy strategies in the classroom. Teachers are currently using school-wide, commonly adopted rubrics that are aligned with the CCGPS to set clear expectations and goals for performance. Limited technology will not allow teachers access to all types of literacy to infuse into all content areas throughout the day. WCMS realizes that technology upgrades are critical to support 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning.

### *Strategic Interventions for Struggling Readers and Writers*

WCMS has a need for effective screening tools to identify achievement levels of all students, advanced as well as struggling. Professional development will be implemented to address the use of new diagnostic and universal screening tools purchased by the grant. Assessment and intervention materials developed primarily by teachers are currently available and personnel are continually trained so that there is a clear

understanding of how to use formative and summative assessment to increase student achievement and literacy skills.

WCMS has developed a formative assessment calendar based on local, state, and program requirements including specific timelines for administration and persons responsible.

The instructional levels of all students are screened and progress monitored by utilizing common, formative, and summative assessments which includes a variety of formats (multiple choice, short answer, constructed response, essay). Response to Intervention offers four tiers of intervention to all students. All students fall within the tier-level of identification by the utilization of universal screeners. Technology infrastructure is not adequate, but attempts are continually made to make additional upgrades when funding is available.

The Georgia Literacy Plan includes a deliberate and comprehensive plan for assessment. The plan promotes the use of ongoing, frequent, and multiple measures that will be used as diagnostic and monitoring tools to plan for instruction. It is necessary to examine both summative and formative assessments, to determine how that data positively affects instruction, and to see how formative assessments enhance the overall picture of assessment. These documents found in "The Why" can be used to support professional learning for administration and staff:

- *From State Policy to Classroom Practice: Improving Literacy Instruction for All Students.* National Association of State Boards of Education (2007)
- *Reading at Risk: How States Can Respond to the Crisis in Adolescent Literacy.* National Association of State Boards of Education (2006)
- *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy.* Alliance for Excellent Education (2006)
- *Reading to Achieve: A Governor's Guide to Adolescent Literacy.* National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (2005)

All four documents emphasize the need for improvements in the use of various forms of assessments for learning. Stiggins (2007) acknowledges recent accomplishments in developing high-quality summative assessments, but adds, "...behind these considerable accomplishments there is almost complete neglect of assessment where it exerts the greatest influence on pupils' academic lives: day to day in the classroom, where it can be used to help them learn more." He also suggests, "The principle assessment challenge that we face in schools today is to ensure that sound assessment practices permeate every classroom—that assessments are used to benefit pupils....This challenge has remained unmet for decades, and the time has come to conquer this final assessment frontier: the effective use of formative assessment to support learning."

Effective reading and writing instruction requires both summative and formative assessments. The key to a comprehensive assessment plan is conducive to the timing. According to the Center on Instruction 2009, three crucial timing categorizations exist: (p. 97 "The Why" document):

- **Beginning of the year:** First, a screening helps determine the level of intervention needed to assist individual students; second, an informal diagnostic assessment helps the educator plan and focus on various interventions.
- **Throughout the year:** This process allows the educator to adjust the instruction. Because of new information with each assessment, the educator is able to provide a continual cycle for student improvement. Another benefit is the connection to targeted professional learning regarding the data driven information derived from the assessments.
- **End of the year:** The summative assessment component provides the information regarding grade level expectations. In Georgia, the CRCT, the GHS GT, and the EOCT assess the Georgia Performance Standards of certain content areas. (Torgesen & Miller, 2009, p. 16)

WCMS recognizes the necessity that ongoing professional learning expectations center around the marriage of effective instructional strategies based on assessments and the alignment of instruction currently to the Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS by 2014). The focus is to ensure the following (p. 98 "The Why" document):

- High quality formative assessment practices that focus on a sound understanding of grade level academic standards. This can help alleviate some 'information' consequences of 'high stakes' test.
- A good formative assessment program that has 'unpacked' the state standards and identified the specific learning goals can help focus classroom activities on real learning rather than on test preparation. (Abrams, 2007)

WCMS recognizes the necessity for consultation and collaboration between the Georgia Department of Education's Academic Standards Division and the Assessment Division. This consultation and collaboration is necessary in providing support for formative and summative assessments and how to use the data effectively to ensure sound instructional practices. (p. 98 "The Why" document)

The one consistent and urgent theme coming from all three 2011 Literacy Committees in Georgia is the need to identify or develop a set of grade-specific screeners to assist educators for students of all ages. The RTI Network is an excellent resource for information and even provides a listing of the various instruments currently available for students from preschool through grade twelve.

The following are identified on page 100 of "The Why" document as three criteria that should be found in screening approaches:

- Must accurately identifies students at risk or not at risk for reading failure
- Must not be expensive, time-consuming or cumbersome to implement
- Must result in equitable, timely and effective intervention, thus having good outcomes for all students

One less frequently mentioned reason for the use of universal screeners is that they may allow administrators to detect **patterns** of achievement during the school year to provide additional support to particular teachers or classrooms. (NASDE, 2005)

The role of progress monitoring in RTI is to:

- Determine whether primary prevention (i.e., the core instructional program) is working for a given student.
- Distinguish adequate from inadequate response to the secondary prevention and thereby identify students likely to have a learning disability.
- Inductively design individualized instruction programs to optimize learning at the tertiary prevention in students who likely have learning disabilities.
- Determine when the student's response to tertiary prevention indicates that a return to primary or secondary prevention is possible. (Fuchs, Retrieved Jan, 2011)

WCMS will use the recommended universal screener at all age and grade levels as adopted by Georgia. As stated earlier in this document,

The one consistent and urgent theme coming from all three 2011 Literacy Committees (birth-to-five, elementary, and middle-and-high-school committees) is the need to identify or develop a set of grade or age-specific screeners to assist educators for students of all ages. The RTI Network is an excellent resource for information and even provides a listing of the various instruments currently in wide use for students from preschool through grade twelve. (See Section 5.A.5. for a more thorough discussion of this topic.)

A necessary component is the need for teachers to be trained in administration and use of the assessments used at their grade level. An additional complementary need is that they become conversant with the assessments at the grade or age-level below them. A protocol is in place for ensuring that students identified by screening routinely receive diagnostic assessment. Students are screened at the beginning of the school year and if weaknesses and/or strengths are noted, interventions are implemented. At this time, WCMS does not have a diagnostic assessment to isolate the component skills needed for mastery of literacy standards. If these skills could be isolated, more effective differentiation of instruction could take place for all students, avoiding one-size-fits-all approach. A reading inventory is needed to provide immediate feedback and meaningful interventions to meet the literacy needs of individual students in grades 6-8. It would

be beneficial if this program is aligned with the RTI process so that appropriate interventions can be made at each tier.

In order for students to demonstrate accountability toward College and Career Readiness, assessments results are discussed with them to set individual goals for literacy.

### *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction*

Wilkinson County Middle School utilizes The Language of Literature textbook McDougal Littell including Reading Toolkit, Audio Library, CCGPS (Novel Studies), Study Island, and 21st Century Reading. These materials are used by all students.

Assessment data is reviewed and students are constantly monitored for strengths and weaknesses. Benchmarks are given on a quarterly basis to ensure understanding and retention of instruction.

Administration has developed System-wide Administrative Evaluation Teams (SWAET) that includes Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Special Education Director, Assistant Special Education Director, Instructional Support Specialists, Principals, and Assistant Principals. This team of administrators evaluates all teachers in the system on designated days. The system has been included in the implementation of Teacher Keys and began to use the evaluation instruments that is encompassed and recommended by this Georgia Department of Education teacher evaluation program.

Professional learning opportunities are ongoing for all staff. Areas of needs are identified by teachers and administrators and professional learning opportunities are provided. Many professional learning opportunities are provided to all teachers. For example, gender-based learning, developing constructive response assessments, differentiating instructions, and CCGPS implementation are just a few.

Teachers meet horizontally at this time and vertical alignment of writing instruction across the curriculum needs to be continually developed to ensure writing skills are crafted from K-12. All subject area teachers have participated in professional learning on best practices in writing instruction in all content areas. Students are required to write in every class on a chosen topic at least one day a week—regardless of subject area. Teaching students the writing process is the focus of all writing instructions across the curriculum. Technology does not play a major role in the use of production, publishing, and communication across the curriculum. The technological environment has been unstable this school year and there is work that has to be done to ensure stability so that enhancement to curriculum can take place.

Within the conceptual framework, tasks refer to the rigorous work involved in both teaching and learning. Instructional tasks are used as a means of addressing the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards and the elements. Instructional tasks include sample assessments and suggestions for differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students.

## *Response to Intervention*

WCMS accepts Georgia's RTI as the model to be used in the District. Intervention strategies are systematic compilations or well-researched, evidence-based specific instructional techniques. Schools have the responsibility of implementing scientifically validated intervention methods that efficiently and effectively offer students opportunities to be successful (Wright, 2007). RTI is a technique of tiered layers of interventions for students needing support. Implementation of RTI requires a school-wide common understanding of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (GPS), assessment practices, and instructional pedagogy. According to Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast (REL), "interventions designed to provide support to teachers can have impacts at two levels: teacher practices and student outcomes" (Lewis et al., 2007). Thus, professional learning in intervention strategies must be aligned with the needs of the students and the goals of the school's leadership team.

Georgia's RTI process includes several key components (P. 125 "The Why" document):

- A 4-Tier delivery model designed to provide support matched to student need through the implementation of standards-based classrooms
- Evidence-based instruction as the core of classroom pedagogy
- Evidence-based interventions utilized with increasing levels of intensity based on progress monitoring
- The use of a variety of ongoing assessment data to determine which students are not meeting success academically and/or behaviorally
- Data Teams comprised of teachers, administrators, parents, and business/community leaders in each school or school district who serve as the driving force for instructional decision making in the building
- Purposeful allocation of instructional resources based on student assessment data

### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT PYRAMID OF INTERVENTIONS

Interventions at Tier1 include the instructional practices in use in the general education classroom. Teachers routinely address student needs and environmental factors to create the optimal learning environment. Tier 1 interventions include seating arrangements, fluid and flexible grouping, lesson pacing, collaborative work, demonstrations of learning, differentiation of instruction, and student feedback. Responding to student performance is a critical element of all classroom learning environments. The teacher's ability to identify areas of focus, scaffold the learning for the individual to reach the expectation, and support the solidification of new learning behaviors is vital to student success.

Interventions at Tier 2 are typically standard protocols employed by the school to address the learning and/or behavioral needs of identified students. These protocols are typically implemented in a specific sequence based on the resources available in the school. For example, students who are identified as needing additional reading support will go to a reading intervention during Connections. During the intervention, the teacher uses specific research-based practices to address the group's reading needs while keeping a clear focus on the GPS, grade level expectations in the content areas, and transfer of learning to the general classroom. Collaboration between the intervention teacher and the general teacher team is required. During the intervention, progress monitoring is used to determine the student's response to the intervention. The progress monitoring tool and frequency of implementation are collaboratively determined by the teaching team and the intervention teacher. Based on the progress monitoring data, the school standard protocol process may require individual students to continue in the intervention, move to another Tier 2 intervention, or move to Tier 1 interventions. For a few students, the data team may consider the need for Tier 3 interventions based on individual responses to Tier 2 interventions.

Interventions at Tier 3 are tailored to the individual and in some cases small group. The Student Support Team should choose interventions based on evidence-based protocols and aggressively monitor the student's response to the intervention and the transfer of learning to the general classroom.

Interventions at Tier 4 are specially designed to meet the learning needs of the individual. These specially designed interventions are based on the GPS and the individual learning and/or behavioral needs of the individual.

The WCMS Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions has the following components:

- Tier 1: Standards Based and differentiated instruction, universal screening, and progress monitoring. WCMS ensures this Tier is implemented by: identifying students and target groups in need of specific instructional support through universal screening, implementing learning in a Standards-Based Classroom to ensure all students receive high quality instruction on the GPS as well as the CCGPS, quality instruction that assures that 80 to 100% of the students are successful in the general education classroom, differentiating instruction to tailor curriculum, teaching environment and practices based on interests, readiness level and or learning style, administering a variety of consistent, relevant, and common formative assessments, using data from formative assessments to guide instruction. There is a need for the middle school to determine the actual percentage of students currently being served in each tier at each grade level and ensure consistency of a universal screener for all students.
- Tier 2: Implementation of researched based instructional strategies and frequent on-going progress monitoring. WCMS ensures this tier is implemented

by identifying academic or behavioral weaknesses resulting in an academic/behavioral goal as determined by the RTI team, identifying personnel needed for the implementation of interventions as well as schedule time for interventions to be implemented, implementing appropriate research based instructional strategies for each area of need (no more than three areas of need) and implementing and progress monitoring interventions consistently, monitoring progress, adjustable flexible grouping to meet Tier 2 objectives based on data discussed in the RTI meeting, and involving parents in the RTI process. Due to a lack of an interventionist on staff, there is a need to provide sufficient resources (time, training cost, materials and implementation of interventions) and ensuring that interventions are provided by competent, well-trained teachers.

- Tier 3: Intense and individualized implementation of research based instructional strategies and more frequent on-going progress monitoring. WCMS ensures this Tier is implemented by providing adequate time for Tier 2 implementation before determining the need for Tier 3 support, implementing and progress monitoring interventions consistently, implementing and progress monitoring for at least 8 weeks before discussing or determining the need for Tier 4 support, and graphing data to show progression or regression. Interventions need to be delivered 1:1-1:3 during a protected time daily by a trained interventionist.
- Tier 4: Specially designed instruction, programs and methodologies and more frequent progress monitoring. WCMS ensures the Tier 4 is correctly and consistently implemented. This tier includes Special Education, Gifted Education, English Language Learners and Section 504. Special Education services include eligibilities that support the practice of providing high quality instruction where interventions match the students' individual needs, monitoring progress frequently, making needed changes in instruction, and applying child response data when making educational decisions within special education. With the large population of Tier 4 students identified in the school, creating a subgroup, special education, ELL, and gifted teachers need to participate in professional learning communities to ensure strict alignment with delivery of CCGPS, even in separate settings. Also, staff need to ensure support of the delivery of instruction for students with the most significant needs.

Gifted Education eligibility support students who demonstrate a high degree of intellectual, creative, and or artistic abilities, process exceptional leadership skills, or excel in specific academic fields, and who need special instruction and/or special ancillary services at levels that commensurate with their abilities.

English Language Learners (ELL) eligibility supports students who use English as a second language. The ELL program is a standards-based curriculum emphasizing social and academic language proficiency. It is critical that instructional approaches, both in ELL and general education classes, accommodate the needs of Georgia's ELL students

Section 504 Plans, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, prohibits discrimination against individuals whose physical or mental impairment substantially limits one or more life activities. Through the RTI process, WCMS will identify and evaluate student's need for and eligibility for educational accommodations under Section 504.

### *Teacher Professional Development*

Pre-service teachers are prepared when entering the school district. Wilkinson County Middle School provides the opportunity for many student teaching placements and interns local college students. Since the middle school has already established a collegial relationship with colleges and universities, it would be beneficial to enlist the support from institutions of higher education to require pre-service teachers to demonstrate competency in reading theory and practice as well as in the development of disciplinary literacy.

The professional learning opportunities focus on the area of Common Core Georgia Performance Standards with an emphasis on reading and math. Yet there are also professional development opportunities in writing and advancement in technology. Standard based classrooms were a focus of staff development as WCMS continued implementation of high quality lesson plans. Many teachers continued working toward obtaining endorsements in the areas of Math, Gifted, and ESOL. This will allow the middle school to increase the rigor of instruction provided to students every day. Professional learning communities are in use and include various type of book studies on prevalent and current trends taking place in the educational arena. The current book, *Best Practices: Bringing Standards to Life in America's Classrooms*, focuses on plans and strategies for exceeding state and Common Core Standards, as well as various other initiatives. Data analysis has also been a focus of professional development for this school year and the upcoming school year. With the purchase of Data Director, all staff will be able to utilize student data more effectively. Training in this area will enhance test scores and student performance as well. WCMS has also received training on the SLDS system and utilizes it as well to study student longitudinal data. Literacy across the curriculum has been an added approach that has been successfully introduced this school year. The importance of professional growth and learning will continue to play a major role in WCMS in order to improve instruction and promote student achievement.

According to Darling-Hammond (p.140 of "The Why" document), professional learning opportunities must focus on ensuring that teachers understand learning as well as teaching. They must be able to connect curriculum goals to students' experience. WCMS has conducted professional learning with the k-12 Instructional Support Specialists that includes class profile sheets to assess learning and tasks boards to aid in differentiation. Starting during pre-planning and continuing weekly, Thinking Maps staff development has been conducted and implemented in all subject areas. In an increasingly competitive global economy, the need for students to have the strong literacy skills of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing is critical for college-

and- career-ready opportunities. This requires teachers to learn to teach in ways that promote critical thinking and higher order performance.

The goal of professional learning is to support viable, sustainable professional learning, improve teacher instruction, and ultimately promote student achievement. Professional learning is organized to engage all teachers in ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded, sustained, collaborative learning. Effective professional learning is linked to higher student achievement. In a policy brief on reform in adolescent literacy, the authors cite Greenwald, Hedges & Lane, 1996, (NCTE Policy Brief, *Adolescent Literacy Reform*, 2006, p. 7) stated:

Teachers possess the greatest capacity to positively affect student achievement, and a growing body of research shows that the professional development of teachers holds the greatest potential to improve adolescent literacy achievement. In fact, research indicates that for every \$500 directed toward various school improvement initiatives, those funds directed toward professional development resulted in the greatest student gains on standardized achievement tests (Greenwald et al., 1996).

Because effective professional learning enhances teacher knowledge and skills, improves classroom teaching, and increases student achievement, the crucial role of the Georgia Department of Education is to develop a comprehensive, professional learning system for educators. The crucial role of the WCSD is to use the comprehensive, professional learning system for WCSD educators. Recommendations outlined in this document are dependent on supporting the professional learning network currently in place through the Regional Education Support Agencies (RESA's) with increased manpower and consistent access to information and learning, The state needs to assist WCSD to ensure that that support (1) spans the district, (2) enables professional learning that differentiates based on teacher expertise and curriculum mandates, and (3) provides credible data to track its efficacy.

#### STAGES OF LEARNING THROUGH PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Many policy makers and administrators are anxious to improve student outcomes and are looking, correctly, to professional learning for solutions. However, as stated in the NCTE policy brief for Adolescent Literacy Reform, the expectations for change need to be tempered with the recognition that change is difficult and takes time. The danger of unrealistic expectations is that policy makers may become impatient with the slow pace of progress and abandon their reform before it has had time to mature. The protracted nature of the change process is shown in this schematic which the authors used to illustrate what is involved in the issue of teacher learning: (NCTE, 2006, p. 9)

#### THE ROLE OF THE LEADER IN LITERACY: THE LINCHPIN

The role of leadership in developing literacy in the nation, state, district, school and classroom cannot be overstated. It is a key piece in virtually every literacy initiative

undertaken at any level in education. A quick perusal of the literature reaps calls for strengthened leadership at every level. WCMS accepts this challenge by requiring all leadership to be a part of the professional learning at the appropriate level.

## PARTNERSHIPS

WCSD has developed partnerships with, but not limited to, local businesses, non-profits, faith-based groups, health agencies, police, other governmental agencies, other educational entities, parent groups, public libraries, et.al. Some are listed below:

- a. Faculty
- b. County Commissioner Representative
- c. City Government Representatives
- d. Department of Family and Children Services
- e. State Licensing Agent for Child Care from Bright from the Start
- f. Georgia Child Care Resource and Referral Agency
- g. Wilkinson County Department of Public Health
- h. Oconee Fall Line Technical College
- i. Family Connection
- j. Development Authority of Wilkinson County
- k. Wilkinson County Public Library System
- l. Wilkinson County Primary School Counselor
- m. PEC Director
- n. Assistant PEC Director/RTI Coordinator
- o. Title I Director
- p. Title I Parent Coordinator
- q. Math/Literacy Academic Coach
- r. Pre-K Project Director
- s. Pre-K Coordinator
- t. Parents of Wilkinson County Primary/Elementary School students
- u. Georgia College and State University School of Education Representative

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## Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment

(percentages)

<b>All Students</b>				
Year	Did Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds	Meets + Exceeds
2013-14	20	79	1	80
2012-13	19	75	6	81
2011-12	19	79	2	81
2010-11	21	78	1	79
2009-10	12	76	13	89

<b>Black Students</b>				
Year	Did Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds	Meets + Exceeds
2013-14	24	75	1	76
2012-13	23	75	2	77
2011-12	21	78	2	80
2010-11	20	80	0	80
2009-10	13	81	6	87

<b>White Students</b>				
Year	Did Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds	Meets + Exceeds
2013-14	15	85	0	85
2012-13	16	73	10	83
2011-12	16	81	3	84
2010-11	24	74	3	77
2009-10	12	67	21	88

<b>SWD Students</b>				
Year	Did Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds	Meets + Exceeds
2013-14	85	15	0	15
2012-13	83	17	0	17
2011-12	82	18	0	18
2010-11	55	45	0	45
2009-10	25	75	0	75

WCMS has seen improvement in the CRCT test scores and writing test scores. While we are meeting in areas, we have not had a significant increase in the "Exceeds" area on our CRCT scores. Our writing scores decreased from last year in the "Does Not Meet" area by 2%, increased by 1% in the "Meets" area, and increased by 1% in the "Exceeds" area. While there have been some gains on the writing tests, they have been minimal. Students with disabilities still perform at much lower level than their peers. In recent years, their scores have been on a decline leaving huge achievement gaps. Because of limited resources, moving students from the "Meets" category to the "Exceeds" category has been difficult. We anticipate an increase in the "meets" and "exceeds" category due to funding to support the school-wide literacy plan and resources. Our goal is to close the gap between "Meeting" and "Exceeding" and close the huge gap between students with disabilities and other student populations.

Recommended Lexile Level			
(percentages)			
	6	7	8
Below	55%	55%	53%
At or Above	46%	45%	47%

More than half of our students in all three grades are below the recommended Lexile level. Increased training of teachers in the use of effective reading strategies to improve literacy instructions along with updated reading materials and resources will raise the students' Lexile levels.

### Reading and English/Language Arts CRCT Assessment

(percentages)

All Students - Reading					All Students - ELA			
Year	Did Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds	Meets + Exceeds	Did Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds	Meets + Exceeds
2013-14	8	58	33	91	7	56	37	93
2012-13	6	68	27	94	8	62	30	92
2011-12	6	72	22	94	8	63	28	91
2010-11	7	74	10	84	4	61	34	95
2009-10	9	74	17	91	10	58	31	89

Black Students - Reading					Black Students - ELA			
Year	Did Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds	Meets + Exceeds	Did Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds	Meets + Exceeds
2013-14	8	60	32	94	8	61	31	92
2012-13	7	73	20	94	11	64	25	89
2011-12	7	74	19	93	19	63	19	82
2010-11	12	76	12	88	10	65	25	90
2009-10	6	75	19	94	3	67	30	97

White Students - Reading					White Students - ELA			
Year	Did Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds	Meets + Exceeds	Did Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds	Meets + Exceeds
2013-14	3	50	47	97	5	51	44	95
2012-13	4	61	35	96	3	60	37	97
2011-12	5	66	29	95	7	69	24	93
2010-11	6	69	25	94	10	50	40	90
2009-10	0	59	41	100	0	65	35	100

SWD Students - Reading					SWD Students - ELA			
Year	Did Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds	Meets + Exceeds	Did Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds	Meets + Exceeds
2013-14	8	83	9	91	14	81	5	86
2012-13	31	59	10	69	45	48	7	55
2011-12	31	69	0	69	77	23	0	23
2010-11	45	55	0	55	73	27	0	27
2009-10	18	82	0	82	18	82	0	82

### CRCT Domains

	Sixth Grade	Seventh Grade	Eighth Grade
Literacy Comprehension	71%	70%	76%
Information & Media Literacy	72%	69%	77%
Reading Skills & Vocab Acquisition	56%	71%	72%

The CRCT scores in Reading decreased from last year by 3% in the “Did Not Meet” category, and also decreased by 10% in the “Meets” category. Although we saw a 6% increase in the “Exceeds” category, a wide gap still exists between “Meets” (58%) and “Exceeds” (33%). The CRCT English Language Arts scores show a slight decline from last year’s scores by 1% in the “Did Not Meet” category and an increase by 7 in the “Exceeds” category. The difference between the “Meets” category (56%) and the “Exceeds” category (37%) is still significant. The CRCT domains in the most need of improvement across all three grades include Literacy Comprehension; Information and Media Literacy; and Reading Skills and Vocabulary Acquisition. While students with disabilities made some gains, there are still significant achievement gaps between them and their other peer groups. The support of the literacy grant for a systematic approach in using research-based strategies with our students will contribute to an improvement in these scores.

### Teacher Retention Data

	Number of Teachers*	Retention Rate	
2013-14	30	93	
2012-13	30	80	
2011-12	30	83	
2010-11	30	90	

\*including all administration

Currently, the teacher retention rate is 93%. 99% of all teachers are highly qualified. The faculty and staff at Wilkinson County Middle School hold the following degrees: bachelors (23.3%), masters

(36.7%), specialists (30%), and doctorates (10%). The average teacher has 11 years experience. New hires for 2014-2015 included 2 new teachers as a result of two staff retirements.

**Project Goals and Objectives to be Funded by Striving Readers**

Goal One: Implement interventions to ensure that all students are identified and served appropriately to increase learning outcomes and close achievement gaps among sub-groups

Objectives:

- Ensure the implementation of an assessment system to identify and monitor students in need of interventions and enrichment
- Implement a system to provide appropriate evidence-based interventions for identified students
- Implement all interventions with fidelity
- Implement high quality job-embedded professional development so teachers can understand and apply effective literacy instruction that is aligned to the CCGPS

Goal Two: Utilize data-based decision making to drive instruction and that is aligned with the Response to Intervention Process

Objectives:

- The school-wide literacy team and teachers will consistently review assessment data and make recommendations to improve interventions and instruction
- Establish standardized processes to examine and discuss data and increase literacy achievement
- The school-wide literacy team and teachers will have access to data tools that are relevant, timely, and user friendly
- Utilize ongoing formative and summative assessments practices to monitor reading growth

Goal Three: Use technology effectively to improve literacy achievement

Objectives:

- All teachers will demonstrate competence in the use of technology as both a teaching and monitoring tool
- Teachers will incorporate technology in their daily instructional practice.
- Teachers will use technology to engage students and enhance learning

The primary consideration for a reading intervention program is the establishment and oversight of effective progress monitoring of student performance data to make instructional decisions in the school. Regular screenings will be conducted to help determine what interventions will be needed. The current school schedule would need to be revised to provide additional time for students who are reading below grade level. Extended instructional blocks, before and after school sessions, summer programs, and literacy-related activities during homeroom and lunch may be other options to consider.

The schedule would be designed to allow for the RTI model in the following ways:

<b>Tier I</b> Group interventions and high quality instruction for all students	<b>Tier II</b> Evidence-based instructional practices based on frequent progress monitoring of all struggling readers Provide specialized prevention and remediation within the general education setting	<b>Tier III</b> Students will received research-based targeted intervention strategies Progress will be monitored frequently to determine the intervention's effectiveness If intervention is unsuccessful – more intense interventions will be implemented General education teachers will receive additional professional development.	Tier IV Comprehensive evaluations will be conducted by grade level teams with parental consent to determine eligibility for special programs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible groups</li> <li>• Reading partners</li> <li>• Supplementary Texts</li> <li>• Direct Instruction</li> <li>• Graphic organizers</li> <li>• Frequent read-alouds</li> <li>• Universal screening (3 times yearly)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study Island</li> <li>• Computer Assisted Reading</li> <li>• Coach Books</li> <li>• Guided Reading</li> <li>• Small groups</li> <li>• Reading Enrichment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Enrichment</li> <li>• Strategic Literacy</li> <li>• Summer Enrichment</li> <li>• Weekly Progress Monitoring</li> <li>• Evidence-Based Reading Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Education</li> </ul>

**Tier II**

This is a sample schedule for students in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade on Tier II that did not meet standards on the reading portion of the CRCT.

Period	Subject	Time
1 <sup>st</sup>	Math	70 minutes
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Language Arts	70 minutes
3 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>Reading Enrichment</b>	<b>70 minutes</b>
4 <sup>th</sup>	Science	70 minutes
5 <sup>th</sup>	Social Studies	70 minutes

**Tier III**

This is a sample schedule for students in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade on Tier III that met either one of the two criteria:

Students who needed targeted assistance in reading comprehension, information on media literacy, and vocabulary acquisition.

Students who failed Language Arts the previous year.

Period	Subject	Time
1 <sup>st</sup>	Social Studies	70 minutes
<b>ELT</b>	<b>Strategic Literacy Enhancement (Reading/Writing)</b>	<b>45 minutes</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>Reading Enrichment</b>	<b>70 minutes</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Math	<b>70 minutes</b>

4 <sup>th</sup>	Language Arts	70 minutes
5 <sup>th</sup>	Science	70 minutes

**Tier IV**

This is a sample schedule for a special education student in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade on Tier IV. These students will be receiving remediation and intensive reading strategies to improve their literacy through their Language Arts class and a resource lab.

Period	Subject	Time
1 <sup>st</sup>	Language Arts	70 minutes
<b>ELT</b>	<b>Literacy Focused Lab(Reading /Writing)</b>	<b>45 minutes</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Social Studies	70 minutes
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Science	<b>70 minutes</b>
<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Reading Enrichment</b>	<b>70 minutes</b>
5 <sup>th</sup>	Math	70 minutes

Sample schedule for 4 hours literacy instruction through content areas:

Period	Subject	Time
<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Science</b>	<b>70 minutes</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Math	70 minutes
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>Social Studies</b>	<b>70 minutes</b>

<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Business Computer Science</b>	<b>70 minutes</b>
<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Language Arts</b>	<b>70 minutes</b>

### **Implementation Plan**

Because of the emphasis on more rigor in classrooms and preparing students for college and careers, teachers will continue to receive comprehensive professional development that focuses on practical tools and resources. Teachers will incorporate the CCGPS standards as well as the literacy standards in all classrooms. Content reading teachers will utilize the Frameworks established by the Georgia Department of Education and teach units in literature and informational text. All teachers will be expected to incorporate writing, speaking, and listening activities on a weekly basis in their lesson plans. The principal, assistant principals, and the district evaluation team will monitor the ensure implementation. Significant time will be devoted to job-embedded opportunities but it will also be necessary for off-site training as well. The principal will work with instructional support specialists to make certain that these opportunities are provided for all teachers. School personnel will work closely with district technology personnel to ensure teachers have ongoing training in using the software and devices that will be purchased with grant funds. This is critical because this will have an impact on the teacher's confidence in integrating these technologies in the classroom. It is expected that e-books, e-readers, laptops, tablets, computers for labs, writing software be purchased. Instructional support specialists will work with all teachers (including science, social studies, special education, and CTAE) make certain up-to-date print and non-print resources are readily available for use in their classrooms. The media specialist will be responsible for making certain these materials are ordered. Moreover, the school literacy team will meet each month to make certain that that the grant is implemented with fidelity. It will be the role of this team to make certain that teachers receive coaching, technical assistance, and professional development necessary to improve literacy. This team is comprised of members of each academic area as well as a connections teacher, the media specialist, the guidance counselor, and school administrators. Parents will be placed on the team as well. The make-up of the team ensures that all literacy initiatives are a school-wide effort. The team

will work closely together to identify current strengths and weaknesses in the school's literacy efforts, prioritize for improvement, identify resources that can be utilized, and the implement strategies that will support change. All of these efforts should lead to a sustained culture of literacy at WCMS. The overall initiatives of the team would include writing across the curriculum, targeted reading interventions, vocabulary across the curriculum, and implementation of job-embedded professional development opportunities that support literacy.

In an effort to maximize our students' potential in reading literacy, we currently utilize the following resources on a consistent basis:

- The Language of Literature textbook including Reading Toolkit,
- Audio Libraries of novels,
- Study Island,
- Class sets of novels
- Periodical subscriptions
- Active boards which are in majority of the classrooms,
- Video recordings,
- Flip and digital cameras,
- One teacher designated computer per room.
- Only six rooms have computers available for student use.
- Math- textbooks and standardized test preparation books
- Social Studies- textbooks and related textbook resources (i.e. power points on CD and enrichment materials.
- Science- textbooks, standardized test preparation books, and limited lab resources.

### **Shared Resources**

- 2 mobile laptop carts with 12 computers on each (currently not in working order)
- 1 computer lab with 40 workstations
- ELA class sets of novels
- Study Island
- Online Assessment System

### **Library Resources**

- Galileo
- Encyclopedias and other reference materials
- Outdated nonfiction- approximate copyright date is late 1980's
- 4 student computers

- 1 color laser printer
- 4 flip digital video cameras
- Outdated VHS collection
- Limited DVDs
- 8 mobile TV/DVD/VHS for teacher checkout

### **Resources Needed to Implement Literacy Plan**

- Designated literacy labs
- Digital mobile devices that include note taking applications
- E-readers and digital texts for students and teachers
- Software for creating assessments
- A student progress monitoring system
- Additional books in print and digital format that are diverse
- Instructional materials to support the implementation of the CCGPS
- A comprehensive reading program to enhance vocabulary and comprehension skills
- Resources to support CCGPS Units
- Document cameras

### **Activities that Support Classroom Practices**

- Students are provided with independent reading opportunities.
- Writing resource packets
- Teachers use standards based rubrics for assessing students' writing skills.
- Weekly collaborative planning
- High quality CCGPS and GPS lessons
- Common Core Literacy standards are incorporated into every subject area S
- Small group instruction

- Think-pair-share
- Read, think, write
- Interactive word walls
- Literacy anchor activities

### **Activities that Support Literacy Intervention Programs**

- Reading instruction
- Tutoring sessions through the afterschool program,
- Response to Intervention
- 18 weeks of ELA focused Extended Learning Time.
- Writing in all classrooms

### **Additional Strategies Needed to Support Student Success**

- Differentiation of Instruction
- The incorporation of higher order thinking skills
- Focused interventions in vocabulary instruction that target root word acquisition
- Instruction phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary
- Computer-based assessments that provide timely feedback to drive instruction
- Direct and explicit reading comprehension strategies
- Intensive interventions for students who are unable to meet grade level standards
- Literacy instructional blocks that are 90 minutes

WCMS receives Title I and Title II funds primarily for resources, professional development, and personnel. Along with the literacy initiatives of the grant, the school will continue to rollout the Common Core GPS, and provide quality professional development for all staff members. Grant funds will be aligned with other programs supported by federal funds. We will continue to use Study Island in the labs to address academic deficits. The WCMS plan fully aligns with the building blocks of the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy grant. The principal will work to ensure that research and evidenced based strategies are included in the School Improvement Plan. The literacy team, teacher leaders, and the principal will monitor progress to make certain the core literacy program is

implemented with fidelity. We will incorporate the effective use of technology through this grant. The focus will be to provide students with interactive texts and resources to strengthen their acquisition of literacy skills in both reading and writing. Students will have greater access to nonfiction literacy, and we will be able to offer support to families of our at-risk youth since technology will offer greater flexibility in their gaining access. Our literacy plan and professional development will focus on how to effectively utilize technology to improve overall student learning outcomes.

Topic	Hours	% of Staff Attended
Book Study (Todd Whitaker)	5 hours	100%
Design Team Meetings	8 hours per Month	15%
ELT Study Group Math/Reading/ELA	16 hours	100%
Faculty Meetings		100%
Grade Level		100%
Assessment for Learning	1 hour	100%
Depth of Knowledge	1 hour	100%
Four Assessment Method	2 hour	100%
7 Strategies for Assessment	1 hour	100%
Designing Formative Assessments	1 hour	100%
Class Keys	10 hours	100%
GLISI Conference and training	24 hours	15%
At Risk Conference	24 hours	10%
Georgia Educational Technology Conference	24 hours	10%
RTI/H.Q. Lessons	1 hour	100%
Preplanning Department Retreat	6 hours	100%
Writing Conference	24 hours	10%
Evaluation, Standard Based Classroom	1 hour	100%
High Quality Lesson Plans and the Standards Based Classroom	10 hours	100%
Science Conference	24 hours	10%
Gifted Endorsement	200 hours	15%
AR Conference	24 hours	10%
Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training Program	10 hours	2%
Autism Society Workshop	5 hours	2%
Data Director	5 hours	2%
Bulling and Harassment	5 hours	4%
School Law Update	20 hours	3%
Progress Monitoring	2.5 hours	2%
Thinking Map Training	25 hours	100%

Wilkinson County Middle School staff attend weekly training sessions presented by the system wide Instructional Support Specialists. Also teachers redeliver at faculty meetings held twice monthly and at weekly grade level meetings. Trainings are conducted during planning times for each grade level. Topics discussed throughout the year include-

- 1.) Common Core Implementation
- 2.) Differentiation
- 3.) The RTI process

## 4.) Standard-based Classrooms

Our staff feels we need more professional learning in:

- Targeted literacy interventions for struggling readers and writers
- Differentiated Instruction
- Scientific-based Reading Strategies for Struggling Readers
- Literacy focused assessment tools
- Implementation of CCGPS and Text Complexity
- Integration of new technologies (E-books etc.)
- Vocabulary Development
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WCMS uses feedback from participants including but not limited to surveys, questionnaires and evidence in lesson plans to determine if the professional development was adequate and effective. We use the feedback provided, to determine if the skills have been mastered, or if more training is necessary.

Assessment Data

At Wilkinson County Middle School, data from a variety of formative and summative assessments is used to inform instruction, monitor student learning, and determine teacher professional development. Use of the Statewide Longitudinal Data System is used as an invaluable tool in assisting in this process. Additionally, data is used to identify the needs and root causes that guide the school improvement process. While teachers administer state-mandated tests, they also design and utilize other quarterly benchmark assessments, performance tasks, and common formative assessments in order to tailor instruction to meet the individual needs of the learners. Weekly data analysis included class profile and progress monitoring sheets.

**a) WCMS current assessment protocol**

<b>Current Assessment Protocol for Wilkinson County Middle School</b>			
<b>Assessments</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>Benchmarks</b>	On-going assessment for monitoring progress and needs for acceleration and/or remediation	CCGPS	Quarterly (once each 9 week grading period)
<b>Pretest</b>	To identify students' current knowledge of the standards	CCGPS	Once at the beginning of the school year (fall)
<b>Performance Task</b>	For students to demonstrate their knowledge of the content	CCGPS	Several times during each grading period
<b>STAR Test</b>	Assess overall student reading achievement	Vocabulary, comprehension, analyzing text, author's craft	three times per school year (August, December, April)

Assessment Data

<b>Classroom Formative Assessments</b>	Monitoring student learning and growth	CCGPS	Daily
<b>8th grade Writing Test</b>	Assess student writing proficiency	Persuasive or expository genre CCGPS	Once per school year (January)
<b>Georgia Milestones Assessment</b>	Assess student competencies in reading, math, ELA, science and SS	CCGPS	Once per school year (spring)
<b>Post-test</b>	Evaluating end of semester mastery	CCGPS	Twice per school year (winter/spring)

**b) Comparison of the current assessment protocol with the SRCL assessment plan**

The major drawback of the assessment system that is currently being utilized is that it is directly related to the Accelerated Reader program. This assessment does not provide the student's Lexile level. In addition, teachers may not consistently administer formative assessment. Conversely, with the Striving Reader Comprehensive Literacy Grant assessment plan, educators will be able to more accurately gauge students' reading abilities. For example, the SRCL assessment plan will afford teachers the opportunity to monitor fluency, comprehension, and Lexile levels using one comprehensive assessment. In the end, the main goal of Wilkinson County Middle School is to offer a more reliable and thorough literacy assessment. While we have some assessment methods in place, the SRLG provide more effective screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic tools that will be common across all classroom. This will allow us to routinely follow up with strategies and instruction in the intervention program.

**C) Implementation of SRI into the current assessment schedule**

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**Assessment Data**

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The SRI will be utilized as the universal screener and progress monitoring assessment tool and will be administered three times per school year. This assessment tool will replace the STAR test, which is currently being employed. The data gathered from the initial testing at the beginning of the year will be used to identify the baseline for beginning instruction. The data gathered from the mid-year assessments will indicate how instruction must be tailored in order to continue meeting the needs of the learners. Furthermore, with SRI, teachers will be able to target and monitor those in need of interventions. A testing calendar will be developed at the beginning of the year and will include Georgia Milestones Assessment, SRI, etc. All teachers will adhere to the time frames indicated on the calendar and data must be provided within a week of testing.

**d) Possible discontinuation of current assessments as a result of SRCL**

The STAR Test may potentially be discontinued as a result of the execution of SRCL. The data provided through the use of SRI will function as a more precise indicator of student growth as it relates to literacy. The implementation of SRI will require no additional assessment testing time, being as it will replace the STAR test.

**e) Professional learning needs for implementation of SRCL**

Teachers will be provided with appropriate professional development opportunities so that they will understand how to use the data acquired from the implementation of SRCL. Teachers will need to receive thorough training and continuous support on all components of this assessment program, namely SRI. Teachers will need learning opportunities that will help gain a better understanding of the relationship between Lexile levels and text selection. Professional development

opportunities will be job embedded; however, teachers may opt to attend off-campus professional learning sessions.

**f) Methods of data presentation to parents and stakeholders**

Data is shared with stakeholders in a variety of ways. Individual score sheets are provided to parents at the beginning of each school year and overall achievement data is presented at parent teacher conferences, school council meetings, and board of education meetings. Weekly classroom reports are sent home to inform parents of student learning. Progress reports and report cards are sent home every 4.5 weeks. Parent conferences are scheduled on early dismissal days from 4:00-7:00 PM and this will be an opportune time to share information with parents as well. The district is also making progress towards a parent portal so that they may go in and view individual student data. Data is disaggregated, presented, and discussed at the monthly design team meetings and departmental meetings. Furthermore, results are available on the Georgia Department of Education website.

**g) Use of data to develop instructional strategies and determine needed materials**

Teachers will utilize the data gathered to drive instructional practices and determine the literacy needs of each student. After the administration of the benchmark assessments, teachers generate an item analysis, and a list of those who meet, do not meet, and exceed, and provide teacher commentary based upon the student performance. Additionally, teachers use pre and post assessments to identify where to begin instruction, as well as, design remediation, enrichment, or acceleration activities. CRCT (Georgia Milestones Assessment) data is also reviewed and

disaggregated in design team in order to tailor instruction for the upcoming school year. The Design Team meets monthly as well to identify and discuss trends that are found in the data.

**h) Assessment performance- "Who" and "How"**

Educators at WCMS will administer assessments. The system-wide testing coordinator coordinates all state-mandated testing and each building has a testing coordinator to make sure assessments are administered. The English/language arts teachers and media specialist coordinate the STAR testing. If WCMS is awarded the SRCL grant, the school literacy team will follow the established procedures and work toward mastery of the goals of the SRI program.

## Plan for Sharing Lessons within the LEA

- Instructional practices learned through the SRCL project will be provided by our K-12 Instructional Support Specialists, currently employed in our system, to all new staff in the fall of each year.
- The instructional coach, housed at the Elementary School, will play a vital role in leading collaborative trainings within the school district.
- Professional learning communities, already in place within the district, will meet as teams to share lessons, strategies and formative/summative assessments.
- Continued horizontal and vertical teaming meetings will occur in an effort to align curriculum documents to ensure seamless transitions from grade level bands.

## Plan for extending assessment practices beyond the funding period

- Continue the system-wide benchmark testing initiative, once every nine weeks, at local system cost to ensure students are mastering the instructional content. Teachers and administrators will disaggregate data and shared with students and parents.
- Title 1A, Title II A, Title I C, Title III, Title VI Part B funds, as well as local and QBE funds will be coordinated to ensure appropriate assessment opportunities from other vendors are available.

## Plan for extending professional learning practices beyond the grant period

- K-12 Instructional Support Specialists that, currently employed in our system, will provide SRCL project training to all new staff in the Fall of each year and provide continuous training throughout the year with ALL staff.
- Utilization of RESA consultants to provide content training in the Common Core Standards and best instructional practices will be utilized.
- We will make every effort to take advantage of state-sponsored trainings and webinars and redeliver essential literacy components during weekly collaborative planning days and study group days.
- Funding for all sustainability practices may be provided by Title 1A, Title II A, Title I C, Title III, Title VI Part B, local funds, QBE, and/or state staff development funds. Professional learning needs assessments will be surveyed by teachers in the spring of each year to help guide in the use of funds for training based on grant initiatives.

## Plan for sustaining technology

- Funding for licenses and equipment obtained through SRCL funds will be maintained through Title 1A, Title II A, Title I C, Title III, Title VI Part B, local and QBE funds.
- eRate funds will be sought to continue infrastructure upgrades and development. The system currently has technology personnel in system to ensure appropriate use and training on technology purchases beyond the grant period.



## Budget Summary

WCSD embraces the need for the SRCL grant to address the necessity to improve reading and writing instruction across all content areas for all students and particularly students with disabilities. The grant will allow our school district to increase access to print materials, especially in science and social studies. Our literacy needs were identified through needs assessments, teacher surveys, root cause analysis, and student assessment data.

Resources that will help us impact literacy in the WCSD include: a systematic intervention program for struggling readers and writers, interventionists to assist teachers in implementing intervention strategies with struggling students, a library of informational texts at various Lexile levels and interests, a systematic writing program, and a various range of media and technology that can be used to enhance curriculum in the areas of reading and writing.

Professional learning will be implemented to train all teachers in literacy instruction, assessment, and in other instructional practices essential through the grant. Teachers as well as early providers will be given an opportunity to receive specialized training in the literacy components of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) and writing instruction to include all content areas.