

## **Catoosa County Improving the Graduation Rate**

Catoosa County Schools is transforming our culture from one that supports working in isolation to one where instructional experts work collaboratively. The system has embraced and is implementing the strategies in the PLC at Work and RTI at Work. Students with special education needs are no longer seen as the sole responsibility of the special education department. Collective ownership begins the moment a student enters our school district.

Collective ownership or collective responsibility is demonstrated through our actions and process such as:

- **Implementing a graduation task force.** This team meets monthly. Members include the superintendent, assistant superintendent, school improvement specialists, the special education director, student services director, high school and middle school principals, alternative school and online academy leaders, homeless coordinator and system social worker, graduation coaches from each high school, and representatives of school support services such as Communities-In-Schools. Members annually review data to develop action steps, identify barriers, and determine the effectiveness of current practices. While the graduation rate of the “all students” category is monitored, so is the graduation rate of our subgroups. The “all students” graduation rate has improved from 80.4% in 2014 to 87.8% in 2018. The graduation rate of the “students with disabilities” subgroup has improved from 50 to 83.1. In 2019-2020, our graduation task force will focus on ways we can support social-emotional learning across the school district.
- **Department Head leadership for immediate intervention.** There are several steps to this process. First, Department heads are assigned consultation segments only so that they are available to work with students who are struggling, academically and/or behaviorally. This provides the time needed to support success. Second, the department heads meet monthly with the high school special education facilitator to determine a plan for each student to address barriers to student success. On-going monitoring continues until the student is successful and is on track for graduation.
- **Special Education Department leadership as support for department heads.** The high school Special Education Department Special Education Facilitator (SEF) works closely with Department Heads, the Gateway program, Catoosa Online Academy and Performance Learning Center sped staff to ensure that students are on track to graduate. The SEF meets monthly with the department heads to review student needs and develop individual plans for action to meet the needs of the student. The Special Education director meets twice a month at a minimum with the high school SEF to discuss student needs.