

## Deputy Superintendent's Corner

### GEORGIA SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IS "ON THE MOVE"!

Dr. Stephanie Johnson  
Deputy Superintendent  
School Improvement



From new competitive grant funding to participating in a Harvard University Institute, schools and districts served by GaDOE School Improvement are "On the Move"! There are so many positive stories showcasing student success in Georgia. Our team appreciates every opportunity to work collaboratively with educators and our intermediaries such as Georgia's Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) and the Georgia Learning Resources System (GLRS) to improve outcomes for students.

To begin, our School and District Effectiveness staff has been celebrating a major success story: 47 identified schools made the necessary improvements to exit CSI-lowest 5 percent status, CSI-low graduation rate status, or TSI status. They accomplished this in one year, under a much more comprehensive accountability plan. And this number does not include all school districts that showed improvement on CCRPI indicators or the Tier I non-identified schools supported voluntarily by GaDOE School Improvement this year.

After carefully digging into data, identifying root causes, and running cycles of inquiry from a three-year average of indicators represented on the CCRPI, Comprehensive Needs Assessments, and School Climate Surveys, we are working with schools to ensure well-defined, effective school and district leadership strategies. The resources, training, and interventions provided through our continuous improvement team approach increase the impact of implementation and transfer specific actions and behaviors into a theory of action to increase outcomes for all students served in Georgia. *(cont. on page 6)*

## Improvement Opportunities

### HARVARD COMES TO GEORGIA

The Office of School Improvement, in collaboration with [Harvard University's Center for Education Policy Research](#), provided 10 Georgia school districts with grants to participate in the [Proving Ground Multi-Day Institute](#) in November. District teams from Atlanta Public Schools, Valdosta City Schools, and Bibb, Dougherty, Fulton, Gwinnett, Macon, Muscogee, Richmond, and Thomas County schools (pictured below) engaged in rich conversation to address common challenges and concerns with chronic absenteeism. Over the course of the four-day institute, district teams dug deep into their data to identify root causes for attendance issues within specific student subgroups. Each team developed an action plan to address their identified concern.



Proving Ground Director, David Hersh, Dr. Faya Paul, Dr. Curtis Jones, Harvard Faculty Director, Dr. Tom Kane, Dr. Stephanie Johnson, and Dr. Bi Vuong



**Contact the Division Director,  
Dr. Faya Paul**  
404-464-3456 | [fpaul@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:fpaul@doe.k12.ga.us)





## Spotlight on School and District Successes

### North Area News

Jo Johnson, Interim Area Program Manager

#### TEACHER CLARITY IN THE CLASSROOM



Union Elementary and Southfield Elementary in Bibb County are working to implement **teacher clarity** within their classrooms.

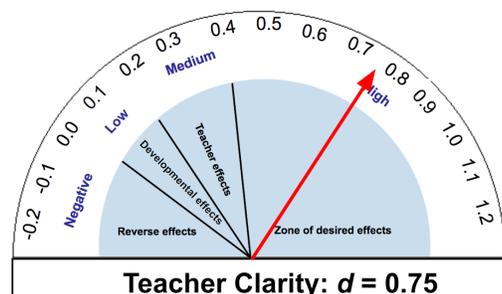
According to the research of John Hattie, teacher clarity, when done well, can have a significant impact on student learning. The schools are working in stages to implement this program; the first stage of implementation involved professional learning with our RESA partners.

Currently, the focus is on creating learning intentions and success criteria, with time for teachers to explore the differences between learning targets and success criteria and how to align those with the rigor and intent of the Georgia Standards of Excellence.

One major emphasis in providing teacher clarity is ensuring that students are clear about their learning. This is accomplished by having students answer three questions:

- *What am I learning today?*
- *Why am I learning it?*
- *How will I know that I have learned it?*

Classroom observations will be conducted and data gathered to determine the impact on student learning.



### Metro Area News

Susan Patrick, Area Program Manager

#### COLLABORATIVE PLANNING RESET FOR CARVER STEAM HIGH SCHOOL

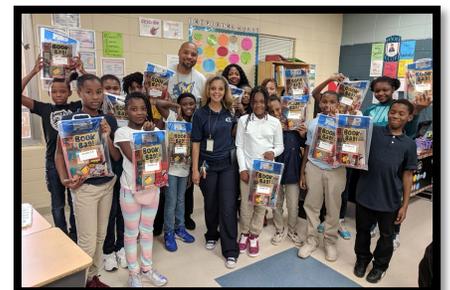


After observing and receiving teacher feedback, administrators and instructional coaches at Carver High in Atlanta Public Schools

decided to “reset” processes for their weekly collaborative team meetings. Teachers have embraced new norms, peer observations, live lesson plan feedback, and ensuring common assessments are in place to adequately gather student data needed to improve achievement in all content areas. The Carver instructional coaches and our Metro RESA school improvement specialist (pictured above) conduct regular coaching conversations with teachers and leaders to ensure instructional strategies meet all student’s needs.

#### MURPHY CANDLER ELEMENTARY IS SERIOUS ABOUT LITERACY!

The Growing Readers partnership between the GaDOE, GOSA, and DeKalb County Schools is off to a great start! There is a firm commitment to get all students reading on grade level by the end of the third grade. Pictured below are book sets Principal Marsha Sears provided to all students as part of the schoolwide literacy focus. The school launched its One Million Words Campaign earlier this year, and was able to purchase the books through their 1003 (a) School Improvement Grant.





## Spotlight on School and District Successes

### South Area News

Janie Fields, Area Program Manager

#### SAVANNAH-CHATHAM DISTRICT LEADERS SET THE PACE FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Savannah-Chatham district leaders implemented district-wide expectations for school leadership team meetings including templates for agendas, monthly data

reports, 45-day short term action plans (STAP), and a communication plan. GaDOE DES Dr. Debbie Rodriguez and district leaders attend school meetings to determine progress and identify next steps.

GaDOE SES Dr. Rebecca Gillette serves Hubert Middle School, which has shown an 18.9-point gain on the 2019 CCRPI. Principal Brian Dotson and his leadership team (pictured above) attributes this double-digit gain to their focus on improving team processes and closely studying formative data to ensure increased student achievement. The leadership team conducts bi-annual self-assessments using the [Leadership Team High Impact Practices Rubric](#) to determine action steps for moving the team toward exemplary performance in leading their school improvement work.

The new leadership team agenda ensures all conversations are focused on the work of school improvement. Strategies on the 45-day STAP are aligned to local formative data sets that allow the team to monitor progress during each meeting. When data indicates a strategy is not working, the team identifies root causes and modifies the strategy as necessary. As progress is reported, their data wall is updated to reflect the impact on each indicator of the CCRPI to monitor progress from year to year.



### SIG 1003(g) Highlights

Patricia Rooks, SIG Program Manager

#### WILCOX COUNTY SCHOOLS COMMITTED TO LITERACY SUCCESS

District leaders in Wilcox County Schools, a Cohort 5 State Model SIG 1003(g) Grant recipient, are committed to improving student literacy and have focused their attention on the areas of reading and writing. Elementary ELA teachers are working diligently to develop and grow their capacity in effective literacy practices through participation in the [RESA Growing Readers](#) Program. These teacher-leaders are building their knowledge and skills to ensure every student is reading on or above grade level before exiting the third grade. Other teachers in grades 5-12 are leading the way by working toward a Reading Endorsement certification. Collectively, the teachers are hyper-focused on pedagogical practices in the domains of literacy and are united in their vision of establishing a common understanding of the reading process.

To ensure a quality balanced literacy program, teachers from all content areas are also committed to building proficient student writers. Teachers established a writing protocol and crafted goals to explicitly teach a common text-based writing structure, with the ultimate goal of students producing coherent and substantial writing. This system-wide initiative has been beneficial to all teachers as they embark upon the journey to increase literacy overall.



Learn more at:  
[gadoe.org/SIG](http://gadoe.org/SIG)

Wilcox County Elementary teachers shop from books purchased to build classroom independent reading libraries.

## Georgia Department of Education News

### SDE Area Program Assessment Specialists News

#### GEORGIA SCHOOL ASSESSMENT OF THE PERFORMANCE ON SYSTEMS (GSAPS)

What is a GSAPS? The current [Georgia School Assessment of Performance on Systems \(GSAPS\)](#) review process has been in existence for two years, and provides detailed information for a school on its progress toward full implementation of [Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement \(GSCI\)](#). The review process is required for schools upon their identification as a [Comprehensive Support and Improvement \(CSI\) school](#), and again every third year the school remains in that status.

Any school in Georgia can request a school review from SDE or their RESA. Schools can also utilize the tools to self-assess progress on the GSCI framework. This can help schools meet the ESSA requirement to evaluate their programs through data-driven, evidence-based practices.

The GSAPS process triangulates data collected from multiple sources, including stakeholder surveys, focus group interviews, classroom observations, artifact/document analysis and trend data analysis. A GSAPS team is generally comprised of an Area Program Assessment Specialist, School Effectiveness Specialists and a RESA School Improvement Specialist. A District Effectiveness Specialist and/or an Area Program Manager will often join the GSAPS team in their professional collaboration regarding the rating of the 22 GSCI structures and determination of 3-5 high impact target actions for the school.

In addition to the GSAPS process, SDE currently offers a menu of different school improvement reviews and tools to help school and district leadership teams.

Learn more at [www.gadoe.org/SDEreview](http://www.gadoe.org/SDEreview).



Metro GSAPS Team in Action: Jerome Huff, Angela Strozier, Termerion McCrary, Chris LeMieux, and Allison Barbour

### Alternative Education Program (AEP) News

#### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE STATE AND NATIONAL ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION CONFERENCES

The Alternative Education Program team shared the innovative work of Georgia alternative education school leaders at the [Georgia Association for Alternative Education](#) and [National Alternative Education Association](#) conferences. Presentations included evidence-based best practices and interventions for transforming alternative schools using the [Georgia Alternative Education Program Standards](#) to drive student achievement. Highlights included successful alternative/non-traditional school principals who have implemented the standards to transform their schools. The following principals were highlighted: Dr. Christopher Ray at Gwinnett Online Campus, Sherri Travisano at Phoenix High School, Brian Howell at Moore Street School, Dr. Terry Young at Perry Career Academy, Ernie Garrett at Habersham Success Academy, and Michele Dyal at Bleckley County Success Academy.

Learn more at [www.gadoe.org/alternative](http://www.gadoe.org/alternative).

## Georgia Department of Education News

### Title 1, Part A, Section 1003 Funding and Monitoring

Dr. Gary Wenzel, Operations Specialist

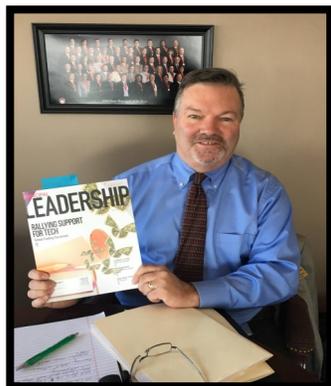
#### FY 19 TITLE 1003(A) FUNDS OVER 90% DRAWN

A special thanks to SDE staff, CSI/TSI/Promise school principals, and district Title and Finance Directors for ensuring a more-than-90% drawdown of the FY19 1003 (a) School Improvement Grant funding. The FY20 Title I-A 1003 (a) School Improvement Grant period is July 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020. Our CIT teams have been working with principals and school leadership teams to develop budgets and complete the Justification of Expenses form, which outlines goods and services to be purchased to support the School Improvement Plan. Nearly all district Title I Directors have imported budgets into the Consolidated Application for approval.

### Farewell, Dr. LeMieux!

The Division of School and District Effectiveness and the Area Program Assessment Specialist team would like to recognize Dr. Chris LeMieux, who retired at the end of November. Chris has served as the Metro APAS since joining GaDOE and has been instrumental in guiding the transition of the school review process to the new GSCI framework, and in helping to make the GSAPS process more efficient and effective. His thoughtfulness, thoroughness and focus on what is best for schools and students was an essential component of our team.

We wish Chris the best in retirement and appreciate all his work on behalf of Georgia schools, students, and our division.



## Professional Development

### Instructional Leadership Workshop

#### ILW 4: Best Practices for Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

**Workshop Description:** Dr. Tessie Rose Bailey from the [American Institutes for Research \(AIR\)](#) will provide an overview of the essential components of the nationally aligned framework for a multi-tiered system of supports.

**Date:** May 5, 2020

**Location:** Sloppy Floyd Building, Twin Towers West

**Time:** 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Registration Fee:** \$150

**Seats Available:** 300

[Registration Link](#)

### 2020 Winter Instructional Leadership Conference, Feb. 25-26

**Save the Date!** The SDE Winter Instructional Leadership Conference will be held at the Macon Centreplex Feb. 25-26, 2020 pending SBOE approval. This two-day conference for educational leaders of federally identified schools and districts will address the data-based and expressed needs surrounding effective leadership and coherent instruction.

**Required Audience:** CSI Principals; CSI Principal Supervisors; TSI, Promise, and Alternative School's District Point of Contact

**Recommended Audience:** TSI, Promise and Alternative School Principals

**Registration Fee:** \$500.00 per person

**Seats Available:** 300

**Registration is by invitation only.** A link will be provided by your SDE CIT team.

## Deputy Superintendent (cont.)

With ESSA implementation, our department changed our approach for supporting school and district effectiveness. We worked to incorporate evidence-based interventions, strategies, and resources and move from a compliance-based organization under No Child Left Behind to one focused on comprehensive service and support.

Our overarching goal is for Georgia's schools and districts to have access to professional learning resources that help teachers, principals, and district leaders increase outcomes for students. The opportunities shared in this month's newsletter address the practical "how-to" knowledge available to help Georgia's educational leaders translate pedagogy into evidence-based practices that produce high levels of student achievement. Please enjoy the newsletter and remember to check the [SDE website](#) for more resources and information.

### BOOK VENDING MACHINES REWARD POSITIVE BEHAVIOR AND ENGAGEMENT IN HART COUNTY

Superintendent Floyd shared his excitement about book vending machines as a PBIS strategy, which also supports the poverty task force with building little community libraries. "Literacy k-12 is a districtwide initiative we take seriously. Our teachers are thinking outside the box. Book vending machines are part of the plan and have spread across all schools. Our poverty task force supports our literacy initiative with creating little libraries throughout the community. When students receive tokens for positive behavior, they can select a book from a vending machine. They can also swap the book they selected for another one at one of the little libraries in the community."



## Office of School Improvement

Division of School and District Effectiveness  
Professional Learning Program Specialist



**Dawn Ashmore, Ed.S.**

Email: [dashmore@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:dashmore@doe.k12.ga.us)  
Georgia Department of Education  
1870 Twin Towers East  
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive, SE  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334  
Office: 404.656.3436  
Mobile: 678-372-0791

[gadoe.org/SDEvents](http://gadoe.org/SDEvents)



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## Helpful Resources

[2019 College and Career Ready Performance Index \(CCRPI\) Reports](#)

[CSI, CSI Alternative & CSI Promise School Information](#)

[CCSSO Professional Standards for Educational Leaders](#)

[Georgia Insights](#)

[Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement](#)

[SDE Events and Conferences](#)

[School and District Effectiveness Review Processes](#)

[The Georgia Department of Education's \*Selecting Evidence-Based Interventions\* document](#)

The State Board of Education approved the FY20 Title I, Part A, 1003 School Improvement Rural Resource Competitive Grants on November 7, 2019 totaling \$3,632,828 for nine rural districts, including Macon, Meriwether, Miller, Montgomery, Quitman, Telfair, Thomas, Thomasville City, and Troup. Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement Competitive Grants have been submitted for SBOE approval in December.