

## Welcome to the Second Semester of the 2021-22 School Year

Dr. Stephanie Johnson, Deputy Superintendent/Chief Turnaround Officer

Welcome to second semester of the 2021-22 school year! Local school districts and our state agency were charged with immense and urgent tasks of planning, launching, and sustaining a successful school year for staff and students after months of educating during a pandemic. Despite changes and unknown circumstances, our Georgia teachers, leaders, support staff, parents, and students are to be commended for the high level of resiliency and commitment displayed during the productive restart of school last semester. As the year progresses, our staff is committed to serving and supporting each school district's efforts as they focus on teaching and learning to improve outcomes for all students.

Our focus remains the same: Every student must receive a high-quality education. This is true whether students are educated in person, remotely, or through a hybrid of the two. We realize there are no single-solution or one-size-fits-all strategies. In fact, school districts in Georgia are structured and function in significantly different ways across our state. However, focusing on meeting the needs of the whole child unifies our mission statewide to increase outcomes for all students.

Reaching educational success for each child begins with reflection:

- How do we shift our practices to become forward thinking in the use of data, accountability metrics, planning, and funding in support of the Whole Child?
- What is our current reality and what is our desired state?
- Who is involved in our work? Who should be involved?
- How can we maximize our resources to better support our staff and students?
- What do our students and staff need to be successful?
- How is my leadership helping?

This newsletter is designed to help educators across Georgia explore how to best work with and leverage evidence-based resources and support available at GaDOE and through our partners. In the sections that follow, the articles present relevant information about opportunities to increase school and district effectiveness along with links to resources addressing wraparound support, instructional practice, learning supports, and leadership for schools and districts. This includes examples of promising practices that school districts throughout Georgia are successfully employing to provide the greatest level of support for their students and staff.

Please enjoy the newsletter and remember to check our website, [www.gadoe.org/SDE](http://www.gadoe.org/SDE), for the professional development calendar, evidence-based resources, and archive of presentations from our instructional leadership workshops and conferences.



## Perfecting the PLC at Ingram-Pye Elementary School

### North Area News

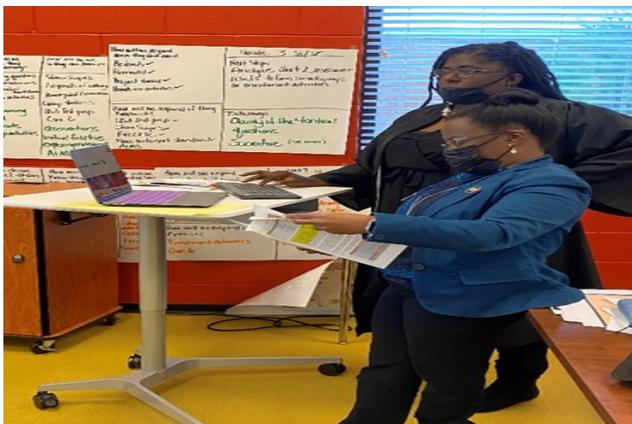
Anthony Pack, Program Manager

Administrators and teachers at Ingram-Pye Elementary in the Bibb County School District are working daily to live out the school's mission to build strong leaders, demand high level instruction, and expect high levels of learning.

After conducting a root cause analysis, the administrative team determined there was a need to strengthen collaborative planning processes. Principal Danielle Howard recognized the need to enhance teacher engagement in professional learning communities (PLCs). Teachers engaged in a full day of grade-level instructional planning that focused on an upcoming unit.

Teachers utilized the four critical questions of collaborative planning to guide their work: What do we want all students to know and be able to do? How will we know if they learn it? How will we respond when some students do not learn? How will we extend the learning for students who are already proficient?

Teachers examined longitudinal and current data to identify and prioritize essential standards. Teachers then selected high-leverage instructional strategies and resources to support the implementation of quality instruction. Academic coaches Chasity Holmes and Richa Shannon facilitated the process and provided clarity to teachers to ensure the work aligns with the rigor and intent of the standards. These laser-focused efforts are intended to produce improved academic achievement and promote better instructional practices at Ingram-Pye Elementary School.



Principal Dr. Danielle Howard (blue) and Academic Coach Chasity Holmes reviewing unit documents.

## Supporting Literacy at Kay Road Elementary School



Dr. Brandon Hall, Principal; Joy Prince, second grade teacher; and Dr. Sylvia Rose-Brown, Coordinator of K-8 School Improvement

Kay Road Elementary School in Peach County School District continues to be a leader in data-driven instruction. Staff continuously use formative and summative data to understand student learning needs, and every staff member takes ownership of student data while seeking solutions for identified needs. When data showed students were reaching second grade without strong phonics skills, the school leadership team, with district support, implemented the CAPIT Reading program with identified students. Recently, both the school and a second-grade teacher, Joy Prince, were recognized as national winners in the CAPIT Reading Challenge. Currently, the school is supporting 235 students using the CAPIT curriculum. Over three-fourths of those students are demonstrating marked phonics and literacy proficiency.

Middle Georgia RESA continues to support instruction in the school by providing tailored professional learning based on STAR Reading and DRC BEACON assessment data. The implementation and impact of instructional best practices on student learning are continually monitored by RESA, school, and district staff.

The school and district partnered with United Way to provide one-on-one tutoring weekly for students who need extra support and motivation in reading. Volunteer tutors include two local Board of Education members. Students receive specific support based on individual goals and books to build home libraries.

The Peach County School District and Kay Road Elementary are laser-focused on improving literacy instruction and student outcomes. The coordination of district, GaDOE School Improvement, and RESA supports illustrate the impact of effective collaboration on continuous school improvement.

## An Intentional and Laser-Like Focus

### Metro Area News

Susan Patrick, Program Manager

Dr. Lisa Herring, Superintendent of Atlanta Public Schools (APS), brought a clear vision to the district in 2020. This vision is now being realized as the roadmap the district will follow to ensure the continuous improvement of its schools. Dr. Herring has prescribed and communicated three distinct academic improvement strategies to all district stakeholders. Those strategies include the APS 5, the ACES Process, and school support.

The first improvement strategy, the APS 5, is comprised of five evidence-based practices that are prioritized and implemented in all APS schools to increase student outcomes. The APS 5 includes:

1. Data
2. Curriculum and Instruction
3. Whole Child and Intervention
4. Personalized Learning, and
5. Signature Programming

The five practices are designed to provide access to curriculum and instruction for all students, integrate a comprehensive approach to whole child development to meet students' needs, and implement targeted strategies for specialized student populations.

The ACES Process is designed to support each leader by promoting accountability, continuous improvement, and support. The process is simple. District staff and principals gather to engage in a structured discussions regarding improvement initiatives and the data that support these initiatives. The process, which is aligned to the district's strategic plan, allows for tiered support to schools, direct communication between the district and school, and a way to celebrate growth and success.

Finally, APS is implementing a data-driven tiered system of supports model. The district provides differentiated support to schools to ensure growth is fostered and students' needs are addressed in alignment with the district's strategic plan. Collaboration between APS, GaDOE, and RESA staff has strengthened the district's efforts to achieve its school improvement goals.

Dr. Herring continues to foster a culture of continuous improvement across APS, demonstrating the importance of implementing a coherent process to improve teaching and learning.

## Harper-Archer Elementary Blazing a Path to Academic Success

It's 8:58 a.m. and music begins to play through the halls at Harper-Archer Elementary School in Atlanta Public Schools. Immediately, scholars from first through fifth grade begin moving to their assigned areas. The transition is swift and smooth because the scholars know what is expected of them. This is the scene every morning at HAES as the Intervention and Enrichment Block begins.



HAES scholars are receiving focused, personalized instruction based on their unique needs as determined by the results of reading and math screening assessments. During the 30-minute Intervention and Enrichment Block, scholars work in small groups led by teachers, or engage in personalized learning using electronic platforms that adapt to their skill level. School leaders and teachers continually monitor progress and make the necessary instructional adjustments by analyzing usage and mastery data. Teachers receive ongoing training on the district-approved curriculum materials utilized during the Intervention and Enrichment Block.

"We're excited about the progress that our scholars and educators are making with the implementation of the Intervention and Enrichment Block, as well as the quality of the services being provided during this time," HAES Principal Dr. Dione Simon said. "As we review and respond to first semester data for each scholar and prepare our kindergartners to engage in the district-approved curriculum materials, our team's focus is to continue strengthening the five elements of fidelity: student engagement, adherence, exposure/duration, quality delivery and program specificity."

The HAES Intervention and Enrichment Block is one of many ways the school community is committed to fulfilling its mission to "lovingly prepare all scholars to blaze a path towards their college and career choice."

## Reimagining Learning During and After COVID-19

### South Area News

Janie Fields, Program Manager

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School (SGSC) in Shellman has kept student learning at the forefront amid the pandemic. Beginning Fall 2020, SGSC implemented the following initiatives:

- Weekly Collaborative Planning Sessions
- Focused Professional Learning Communities
- Effective Leadership Team Practices
- Georgia Numeracy Project
- Leveled Literacy Intervention
- STEM Endorsement for all teachers and administrators
- Effective small group instruction
- Face-to-Face Learning
- Attendance Incentives
- Summer Learning Program
- STEM Camp
- Hired an ELA Coach

As a result of these initiatives, SGSC experienced an increase in Georgia Milestones scores and a daily attendance rate of 93.5% or higher. For the 2021-22 school year, SGSC also implemented the following:

- Implemented Core ELA & Math programs with fidelity
- Hired a Math Coach, Guidance Counselor, & MTSS Coordinator
- Assigned 1-2 certified teachers in all remediation courses for middle/high students

Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School continues to implement positive changes and new practices to improve teacher instruction and increase student achievement. Keep your eyes on SGSC as they accomplish this year's theme: One School. One Mission. No Excuses.

## Strengthening Instructional Practices at Baker Middle School

The leadership of Baker Middle School (BMS) in Muscogee County School District has incorporated several practices to strengthen instructional practices and increase student achievement. Principal Ramona Horn, and BMS's instructional coaches, provide a myriad of ways to engage teachers and students. Teacher supports are tailored based on school improvement goals and professional learning survey results. Additional personalized teacher supports are provided based on classroom observation feedback and coaching cycle artifacts. Student supports are also tailored based on need and student outcomes.

Teachers have access to information and resources through the monthly newsletter, *The Coaches' Corner*. The newsletter provides teachers with school, district, GaDOE and RESA updates and professional learning information. Teachers are also given "shout outs" in the newsletter based on the degree of implementation of high-impact, evidence-based classroom practices as measured by classroom observations conducted by the principal, academic coaches, GaDOE school effectiveness specialist, and RESA school improvement specialist.

Baker Middle School is also piloting a program created to engage overaged learners. The program, Successful Outcomes through Acceleration and Restoration (SOAR) offers a continuum of wraparound supports for all identified students. Students receive targeted supports at each grade level and can earn up to three high school credits by the end of 8th grade. The goal is to decrease the likelihood of overaged students dropping out by providing the tools needed to be successful and an opportunity to earn high school credits.

- [Coaches' Corner Newsletter & Professional Development Catalog](#)
- [SOAR Program Proposal](#)
- [SOAR Agreement and Tracking Tool](#)

## Title I-A School Improvement Grants

The U.S. DOE granted Georgia's waiver request to extend the period of availability for FY20 Title I, Part A, 1003 School Improvement funds to September 30, 2022. Additionally, LEAs will have the opportunity to carryover remaining FY21 Title I, Part A, 1003 School Improvement funds to September 30, 2022. The deadline for the Rural Resource, GSCI, & Digital Learning Grants, including the final grant report, was extended to December 30, 2021. Any districts that have not completed the final grant report need to do so as soon as possible. If awardees need additional time due to outstanding invoices, etc. please contact your district effectiveness specialist.

## A Unique Partnership between Southwire and Local School Systems Created to Improve Graduation Rates

### Alternative/Non-Traditional Education News

Dr. Samuel Taylor, Program Manager

Dr. Debra White, District Effectiveness Specialist



12 for Life is a partnership between Southwire, North America's largest wire and cable producer, and the Bremen City, Carrollton City, Haralson County, Heard County, and Carroll County school districts. The focus is to increase graduation rates by offering targeted supports to at-risk students. The shared mission of the partnership is to provide an opportunity for students to "learn and earn" during the school day as they develop teamwork and leadership skills in a program that includes on-the-job training, classroom education, life-skills coaching, adult mentorship, and an opportunity to earn a living. This model is one other businesses and school systems should consider to improve both graduation rate and long-term earning capacity for the community by providing students with the skills needed to successfully enter the workforce after graduation.



Visit [www.gadoe.org/alternative](http://www.gadoe.org/alternative) for more information.

## Highlights from the 33rd GAAE Annual Conference

The Georgia Association of Alternative Education held its 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference September 22-24 at the Evergreen Marriott Conference Resort in Stone Mountain. The theme was "Maintaining Excellence During Unprecedented Times." The three-day conference was packed with informative content and dynamic presentations. Some of the conference highlights are as follows:

**Pre-Conference Workshops** offered opportunities for in-depth exploration on the following topics: "Using Alternative Texts to Engage Learners," "Standards for Alternative Education," "Invisible Wounds," and "Developing Courageous Leaders and Teachers."

### Featured Speakers:

- Deputy Superintendent Dr. Stephanie Johnson shared about the work of GaDOE's Alternative Education team. She also shared an inspirational account of the opportunities alternative schools provided for two of Georgia's students.
- Keene M. Walker delivered a passionate speech about the importance of educating all youth.
- Paul Burke emphasized the importance of building reciprocal partnerships with the business community to support opportunities for students to transform their lives.

### Special Recognition:

- Leaders from around the state received recognition for distinguished service. Rashada Tedder, Regional Vice President of Operations for ChanceLight™ ; Andrew Britt, Alternative School Director for Taylor County Schools; & Superintendent Jennifer Albritton of Taylor County Schools received special recognition.
- Dr. Julia Daniely, Principal of SOAR Academy, Bibb County School District, was awarded Administrator of the Year.
- Shawn Bertrang, of Habersham Success Academy, Habersham County School District, was awarded Teacher of the Year.
- Jarrad Turner, of GIVE Center West, Gwinnett County School District, was awarded Student of the Year.

The conference was a huge success.

## School Improvement Listserv

We are excited to share our Office of School Improvement listserv. It will provide pertinent and timely information to subscribers, including upcoming professional learning opportunities, quarterly newsletters, resources, annual conference information, grant opportunities, and other statewide school improvement information. To join, send a blank email to [join-schoolimprovement@list.doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:join-schoolimprovement@list.doe.k12.ga.us).



### Office of School Improvement Public

Welcome to the Office of School Improvement Community! This group is recommended for district and school leaders who have a passion for the work of school improvement. Here we will discuss common problems of practice, share resources among colleagues across the state, and provide essential information to support district and school improvement efforts.

## GaDOE Community

District and school leaders are invited to join the Office of School Improvement Community!

### Step 1: Register

Go to [community.gadoe.org](https://community.gadoe.org). Create an account using your professional, work-provided email.

### Step 2: Complete Profile

After you log in the first time, take a moment to complete your user profile so others can connect with you.

### Step 3: Join Group

Search available groups hosted by GaDOE departments. Some groups allow for public access and others require access to join.

Please submit any comments or concerns on the site or to [gadoecommunitysupport@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:gadoecommunitysupport@doe.k12.ga.us).

# Save the Date

## OFFICE OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT'S INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE • 2022

**MARCH 8**  
9:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.



**MARCH 9**  
9:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.



Save the date! The GaDOE Office of School Improvement is hosting its **Instructional Leadership Conference**, a two-day virtual event providing resources and best practices from school and district leaders, as well as GaDOE staff.

### Recommended Audience:

#### District Level

superintendents, assistant superintendents, and curriculum directors

#### School Level

principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, school improvement specialists, and teacher leaders

### Dates and Times:

March 8, 2022  
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
March 9, 2022  
9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

### Registration Information:

Registration information will be released on the [School and District Effectiveness Events and Conferences webpage](#) and shared via email on February 1. There are no registration costs associated with this conference.

### Questions:

Please direct any questions to Shekina Beckham [sbeckham@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:sbeckham@doe.k12.ga.us).

We hope to see you virtually on March 8 and 9!