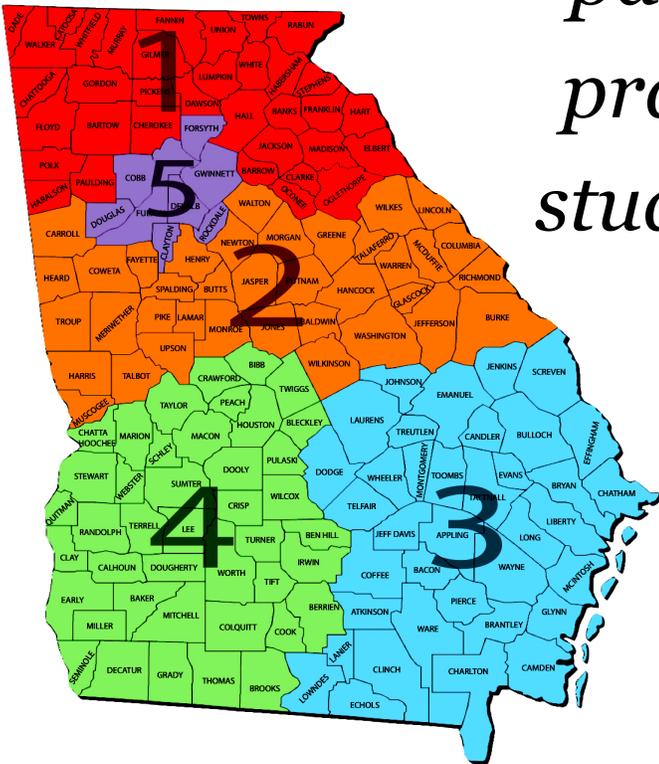


PARENT INVOLVEMENT COORDINATOR SPOTLIGHT

Recognizing outstanding parent engagement practices impacting student achievement across Georgia



Georgia Department of Education

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COORDINATOR SPOTLIGHT



The Georgia Department of Education's Parent Engagement Program strives to highlight the important and extraordinary work Parent Involvement Coordinators (PICs) and other parent professionals are doing across the state. These individuals play a vital role towards providing parents with the opportunities and assistance to participate in school activities, programs, and events designed to support student learning. PICs recognized in this book not only develop parent engagement practices that strengthen parent involvement in their schools, but also implement parent engagement strategies that successfully impact academic achievement.

Each month of the school year, this publication will highlight and catalogue the achievements of different PICs across the state of Georgia who have demonstrated exemplary and innovative parent engagement practices in their schools and/or districts. Parent Involvement Coordinators serve as liaisons between parents and schools by relaying the needs of one to the other and educating teachers and staff on how to communicate and work effectively with parents as equal partners. PICs provide workshops, classes, activities, materials and other opportunities for parents to participate in education initiatives and enrichment.

Individuals are selected for the PIC Spotlight based on the progress they have made with parent engagement programs in their school, district, and/or community. To be considered for this recognition, PICs are encouraged to identify one parent engagement practice that is unique to their school and proven to be strong in helping the school, district, and/or community address specific needs. This practice must also focus on strengthening the learning goals that schools have for students and help to achieve those goals by keeping parents involved in their child's education.

Keep reading to learn more about these outstanding individuals and their exciting work in parent engagement.



PARENT INVOLVEMENT COORDINATOR SPOTLIGHT



2014 ~ 2015



September-Georgia Cyber Academy



October-Centerville Elementary School



November-Shiloh Middle School



December-Clark Creek Elementary School



January-Ware County Middle School



February-Woodstock Elementary School



March-Mitchell County



April-Arnall Middle School



May-Commerce City Schools



PARENT INVOLVEMENT COORDINATOR SPOTLIGHT



2014-2015 School Year

<i>September 2014</i>	<i>Cynthia Jones and Shirley Waldow</i>
Georgia Cyber Academy.....	Family Engagement Coordinators
<i>October 2014</i>	<i>Billie Jo Quinton</i>
Centerville Elementary School, Houston County Schools.....	Parent Involvement Coordinator
<i>November 2014</i>	<i>Bishonna Jones</i>
Shiloh Middle School, Gwinnett County Schools.....	Parent Instructional Coordinator
<i>December 2014</i>	<i>Nora Vizuete</i>
Clark Creek Elementary School, Cherokee County Schools.....	Parent Involvement Facilitator
<i>January 2015</i>	<i>Missy Huber</i>
Ware County Middle School, Ware County Schools.....	Parent Involvement Coordinator
<i>February 2015</i>	<i>Jessica Ruiz</i>
Woodstock Elementary School, Cherokee County Schools.....	Parent Involvement Facilitator
<i>March 2015</i>	<i>Vickie Smith</i>
Mitchell County.....	Federal Programs Coordinator
<i>April 2015</i>	<i>Laura Harbin</i>
Arnall Middle School, Coweta County Schools.....	Math Teacher
<i>May 2015</i>	<i>Stephanie Miceli</i>
Commerce City Schools.....	Parent Involvement Coordinator



PIC SPOTLIGHT SEPTEMBER 2014

Georgia Department of Education



*Cynthia Jones and Shirley Waldow
Family Engagement Coordinators
Georgia Cyber Academy*

Inviting parents to attend school events and hoping they attend is a common challenge many Title I schools face, but imagine for a moment how difficult this would be if there was no school building available to meet with parents. Georgia Cyber Academy (GCA) is the state's free online public school, which celebrated its first graduating class this past spring as more than 300 students walked across the stage. With a rigorous K-12 curriculum and a focus on independent learning, the ability to engage students' parents is essential to the success of the school and student achievement. Since traditional methods to connect and meet with parents across the state are not feasible or effective for GCA, their Family Engagement Coordinators, Shirley Waldow and Cynthia Jones, discover creative measures to provide families with ongoing support and communication.

The GCA Resource Room is like most Title I parent resource rooms, complete with information on math strategies, suggestions for parent-teacher conferences and handouts on test preparation; however, there are no walls in this room. Located on the online idea-sharing service, Pinterest, the GCA Resource Room is conveniently available for parents 24 hours a day at the touch of their tablet, smartphone or keyboard. Pinterest allows GCA the ability to organize and share more information than a brick and mortar building could possibly store, plus push these resources directly to parents instead of only being available when parents come to the school. There are currently over 700 followers who have access to 56 grade level and content specific boards that represent specific topics of interest to parents. Teachers have fully embraced the Resource Room and continuously update it with useful, interesting and engaging supplemental content to assist Title I parents. GCA uses flyers, newsletters and Facebook to send information to parents about how to access and utilize the Resource Room. Through the Resource Room, teachers at GCA are able to provide a wealth of additional resources for differentiated learners.

In addition to the Resource Room, GCA continues to blaze new digital trails for family engagement in order to meet the specific needs of their unique school community. While they offer traditional services for parents like newsletters, meetings, and workshops, GCA is always capitalizing on the latest technology to provide its families with meaningful resources and opportunities. Even though the staff and parents may not have actually met, GCA still hosts monthly meetings for parents to hear updates from the school and regional parent leaders. With creative minds and the latest technology, GCA has been able to connect with families to provide them with the necessary tools and knowledge to help their children.

PIC SPOTLIGHT OCTOBER 2014

Georgia Department of Education



BillieJo Quinton

Parent Involvement Coordinator

Centerville Elementary School, Houston County

Navigating the school curriculum, academic standards and new assessments can sometimes be viewed by parents as an overwhelming task. Realizing that parents need a road map to successfully plot a course for current and future school years, Centerville Elementary and their Title I Parent Involvement Coordinator, BillieJo Quinton, developed an exciting approach to steer parents in the right direction. The Annual Amazing Race is a competitive, educational, and engaging event to provide students and parents with a fun experience to learn and practice everything there is to know about academics for the school year.

Rather than hand parents information while they sit in an auditorium, Ms. Quinton and the staff at Centerville Elementary continually strive to welcome their families to participate in engaging events that provide the skills and knowledge needed to help their students to be successful. Created four years ago, the Annual Amazing Race pits teams of students and parents against each other in a series of academic challenges. Students and their parents begin the race with a clue that leads them to different areas of the building. Upon reaching their destination, they are required to complete an academic challenge. During the task, parents receive information about additional resources to work with their child at home in that academic area. A judge determines if the team successfully completes the task before handing them the clue to their next destination. As teams race through the building, they navigate a Science Road Block, a STEM Detour and other educational pit stops.

This year, the event will be especially valuable to help parents and students learn about the new Georgia Milestones Assessment. Special stations will be added to allow parents and students the opportunity to complete an assessment online. This will help students practice the different response types found on the Georgia Milestones. The parents will not only leave with resources, but with a better understanding of the new assessment and strategies to help their students prepare for these important tests, as well.

Among other requirements, Title I schools are charged with the task of building parent capacity by providing assistance to parents in understanding academic standards and assessments. In addition to meeting this requirement, this event helps reduce test anxiety, improve student achievement, and build positive family-school relationships. After completing the race, students and parents at Centerville Elementary School will be in great shape to cross the finish line this school year.

PIC SPOTLIGHT

NOVEMBER 2014

Georgia Department of Education



Bishonna Jones

*Parent Instructional Coordinator
Shiloh Middle School, Gwinnett County*

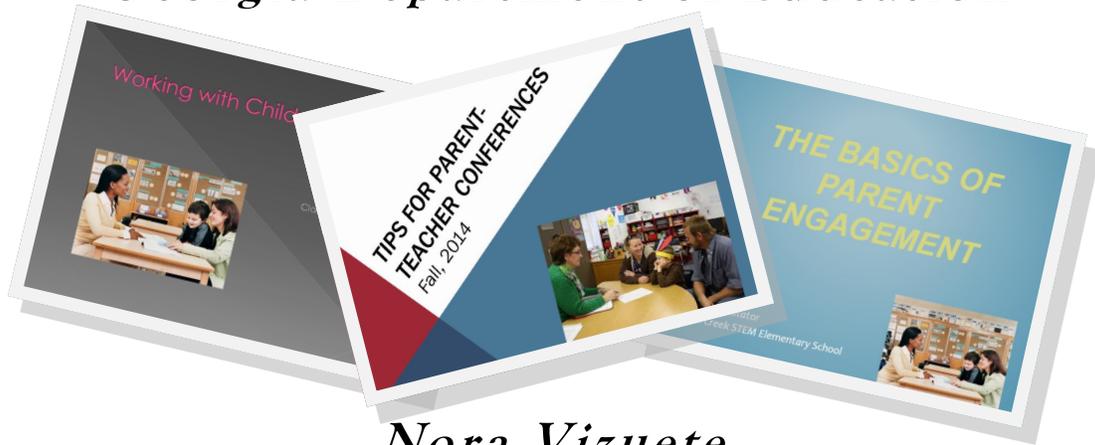
During those important middle school years, students begin developing their independence as parents typically become less involved than in elementary school years. This is not the story at Shiloh Middle School in Gwinnett County. Two years ago, the principal and staff at Shiloh Middle School discussed strategies to better engage their Title I families and launched the highly successful Parent Observation Day program. The program has become a staple in the school and one of the primary reasons Shiloh Middle School became the first secondary school to receive the Georgia Family-Friendly Partnership School Award in 2013. The premise of Parent Observation Days is simple: remove the barriers, open the school doors and provide parents with firsthand classroom exposure and experience. This creates a welcoming environment and builds a culture of mutual respect and accountability in the building.

While parents are always welcome at Shiloh Middle School on any given day throughout the school year, Parent Observation Days mark special, structured learning days for parents. These days are held eight times a year, and each one kicks off with a group orientation followed by classroom observations and education exploration. The orientation is led by the Parent Instructional Coordinator, Bishonna Jones, and provides an opportunity for parents to meet the administrators, gain an understanding of the school day and the school, plus learn about additional parent engagement information. During the overall visit, parents view work samples, sign up for the Parent Portal, and obtain academic materials to use at home. To further enhance Parent Observation Days and build parent capacity, Ms. Jones includes *Lunch-n-Learn* workshops, offered with the assistance of business sponsors. These workshops offer opportunities for parents to learn skills to support their children's academic growth at home while hearing about the various services offered by the partners in education. Parent Observation Days are designed to be flexible opportunities for parents to become more actively involved in their children's academic achievement; they can stay for a brief time or for the entire day based on their schedules.

The overall response from parents and staff to Parent Observation Days has been incredibly positive, and the days have fostered much better communication and collaboration between parents and the school. The days are well attended and highly anticipated. Since their inception two years ago, school data trends show an overall improvement in school climate and student achievement. Parent Observation Days at Shiloh Middle School are a true example of how parents, students and staff can build relationships to make a difference in student outcomes.

PIC SPOTLIGHT DECEMBER 2014

Georgia Department of Education



Nora Vizquete

Parent Involvement Facilitator

Clark Creek Elementary School, Cherokee County

How can you reach more parents and improve family engagement in your school? Just ask Nora Vizquete, the Parent Involvement Facilitator at Clark Creek Elementary School in Cherokee County. In addition to building parent capacity through ongoing support and activities, Ms. Vizquete has also developed a creative approach to building staff capacity in order to improve family-school communication and relationships. She is no longer alone in reaching out to, and working with families because she has equipped her colleagues with the skills, knowledge and capabilities to engage families. Instead of relying on a single meeting at the beginning of the year to share family engagement ideas and strategies with her faculty and staff, Ms. Vizquete offers continuous professional learning opportunities through the learning website, Edmodo. With limited time and increased duties during the day, this approach allows staff to continuously learn and stay connected with each other outside of the usual faculty meetings.

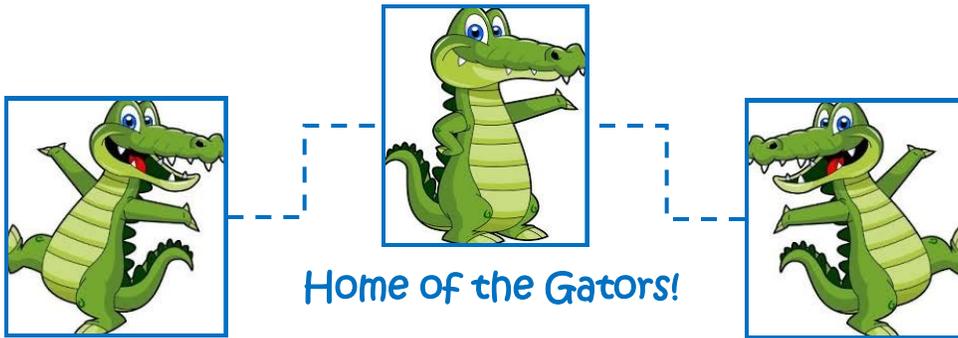
It is a common problem. Most educators have not received proper training and guidance to implement strategies that will strengthen family-school partnerships to support student learning. With Edmodo, Ms. Vizquete has successfully developed a series of meaningful professional learning modules that are relevant and beneficial to the teachers at Clark Creek Elementary. Edmodo is a secure online platform for anytime, anywhere learning that connects teachers and resources. Ms. Vizquete is able to post a training session that allows groups, however big or small, to engage in discussions before, during or after the session. After joining the online learning community, teachers receive a message when there is a new training to complete and every training includes a brief assessment to measure the knowledge gained. Another advantage is the ability to design the professional learning to meet the different needs of specific audiences by grade levels or departments since an entire faculty meeting is not devoted to the lesson. From the basics of parent engagement to the impact of poverty, Ms. Vizquete has developed a variety of learning modules focused on different issues that affect the family-school community.

Teachers are supportive of this new style of professional learning and posted positive feedback after their training sessions - 'Lots of useful information' and 'The benefits are a win-win for all involved'. More importantly, thanks to Ms. Vizquete, teachers are gaining new skills and learning new strategies on their own time to improve family engagement and to ensure that parents are involved in their child's academic success.

PIC SPOTLIGHT

JANUARY 2015

Georgia Department of Education



Missy Huber

*Instructional Coach/Parent Involvement Coordinator
Ware County Middle School*

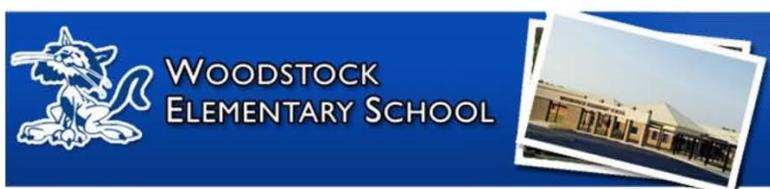
In just her first year as the Instructional Coach and Parent Involvement Coordinator at Ware County Middle School, Missy Huber has inspired a collaborative approach to build strong connections between teachers and parents. Ms. Huber began the year by incorporating the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) as part of the required parental involvement training for her staff with the assistance of the district's Title I Parent Involvement Coordinator, Mary Ann King. This training allowed the staff to realize the importance of building a bridge between all stakeholders to work together and support student academic success. Performance Standard 10 of the TKES focuses on the teacher's communication skills playing a role in developing partnerships with parents and other community members and emphasizes that good teachers must reach beyond the walls of the classroom to solicit support from families. This laid the foundation for new and positive practices to reach more families.

Earlier results from parent surveys at Ware County Middle School told Ms. Huber there was a need to improve communication between the school and parents. After conducting a training for the staff to learn about effective home-school communication practices, Ms. Huber and the staff set into action a plan to build a strong network for parents and teachers to communicate. In addition to a weekly newsletter, the school increased its capacity to provide more parents with current information by using Class DOJO and Remind. Combined efforts with the Parent Teacher Organization also led to new trainings for parents on different ways that they can communicate with teachers to help their students to be more successful in school. Ms. Huber also partnered with other schools to increase their visibility in the community and to find ways to reach parents outside of the school building. Whether it is at Wal-Mart, the county fair, community centers, churches, or neighborhoods, Ms. Huber and her team can be found in the community making a difference for Ware County schools. What began with a staff training has led to a collaborative approach and a true team effort!

These various communication initiatives have created opportunities for the staff to better understand the families and the children they teach every day in their classrooms. At the same time, parents receive more information from their child's teacher and develop a strong sense of trust with the school. This is the foundation for strong school-family partnerships. There is very little doubt that there will be fewer concerns about the level and impact of home-school communication on the parent surveys this year!

PIC SPOTLIGHT FEBRUARY 2015

Georgia Department of Education



Jessica Ruiz
Parent Involvement Coordinator
Woodstock Elementary School

Actively engaging parents and families can prove to be a challenge when you are faced with a very culturally diverse school population. With families hailing from over 25 different countries, even the bilingual Parent Involvement Coordinator at Woodstock Elementary, Jessica Ruiz, was finding it difficult to create activities and events that would engage all 100 families. Seeking to embed authentic, hands-on education with parent involvement, Jessica conceived, organized and hosted Woodstock's inaugural International Festival. The International Festival encouraged family and community engagement by celebrating and embracing the school's unique and diverse culture.

This event not only allowed families to share their delicious native foods, but it also gave them a chance to exchange facts, stories and artifacts about their cultures. This event naturally brought many different families together, and to ensure it would truly be an educational event, Jessica knew it would be the perfect opportunity to allow families to teach each other about their country and culture. By creating rubrics for the parents to follow, Jessica empowered and engaged the parents by allowing them to create display boards featuring information and anecdotes about their country.

Attendees were entertained by performances that highlighted the different cultures such as a Costa Rican dance, Power Tapp cloggers from Ireland, and a Kung Fu demonstration from China. Each guest also received a 'passport' which was stamped as they visited and learned about a new country, plus a panel of judges awarded prizes to the 'country' with the best display board. Parents and students alike had a wonderful time sharing their culture as well as learning about other countries. The event attracted a wide variety of families and promoted pride in their diversity. With nonstop learning and enjoyment, the inaugural International Festival was such a hit that Woodstock's parents, students and staff are now eagerly awaiting next year's festivities.

By thinking outside of the box, Jessica Ruiz was able to reach out to the diverse population in a Title I school, and engage many hard to reach families. Thanks to the success of the International Festival, parents and families have become more involved in Woodstock Elementary, which in turn promotes student success!

PIC SPOTLIGHT

Georgia Department of Education

March 2015

Vickie Smith

Federal Programs Coordinator
Mitchell County

Aside from the generator mounted on its front bumper, the Mitchell County school bus, the Eagle Express (E2), looks like any other bus— until you climb on board. This school bus is a mobile learning center retrofitted with 24 computers, Promethean board, printer, surround sound, and WIFI connectivity. This innovation was the vision of the Mitchell County High School Leadership Team led by Federal Programs Coordinator Vickie Smith.

Due to Mitchell County's expansive size, their brick-and-mortar schools often face challenges in meeting the needs of their many students and families. The Eagle Express is one example of the out-of-the-box ways the county is striving to increase student and family engagement. Many families reside in rural areas without reliable, easy access to internet services or school resources. On the Eagle Express, parents can use the internet to take online college classes as well as have reliable transportation to attend school events. Students can also utilize the bus to complete projects, research post-secondary options, or work with their teachers.

“We have to get out into the community,” says Superintendent Vic Hill. “We are fortunate to have a supportive school board to make this work. We have to reach out to the parents and work with the community. This job takes more than just one person ... it is a total team effort.” The Eagle Express travels the entire district to reach as many students and families as possible. The upcoming dates, times and destinations for the Eagle Express are posted on the school system's website for students and parents to follow.

“We are trying to give our students their best chance at being successful,” says Mr. Robert Adams, Principal at Mitchell County High School. And thanks to Vicki Smith's leadership, the Eagle Express will continue to enrich the lives of the parents, students, and the community in Mitchell County!



PIC SPOTLIGHT

Georgia Department of Education

April 2015

Laura Harbin

Middle School Math Teacher

Arnall Middle School

Coweta County



As students progress through school it can become exceedingly difficult for parents to find ways to be involved in their child's education. Due to more advanced subjects and various teaching methods, many parents are finding it increasingly more difficult to help their child with homework or other school projects.

Sensing parent frustrations, Arnall Middle School math teacher, Laura Harbin, took action by providing her parents with a first-hand look into her class. Ms. Harbin began recording her classroom lessons via Educreations, a free app for recording lessons on an interactive whiteboard, which she shares with parents on her Edmodo page. These engaging virtual lessons allow parents and students to see exactly what is being taught in the classroom. Parents are able to view these videos as many times as necessary at their convenience. Parents hear what students hear in the classroom, and essentially relive the lessons right along with their children at home.

These online recordings have also helped strengthen the connection between high school and middle school math teachers by allowing the high school teachers to gain insight into what students are being taught. This innovative way to engage parents has not only empowered parents, but also aided teachers through increased parent feedback. Parents are able to ask questions and share concerns through email or commenting directly on the Edmodo site, which helps Ms. Harbin to constantly improve her lessons.

Thanks to Ms. Harbin's dedication and innovative ideas, Arnall Middle School parents can continue to play an active role in their child's academics.

PIC SPOTLIGHT

Georgia Department of Education

May 2015

Stephanie Miceli
Parent Involvement Coordinator
Commerce Primary & Elementary
Commerce City Schools



Neighborhood Nights is a community outreach event planned by Parent Involvement Coordinator, Stephanie Miceli, to break down barriers and to build trust with the families and students in the Commerce City School District. The event combines staff members from the Commerce Primary and Elementary Schools along with the Commerce City Fire and Police Departments. Staff members board buses and travel through the town accompanied by police and fire department escorts to visit local neighborhoods. Drawn from their homes by the lights and sirens, students and parents were greeted by school staff members with school calendars, parent resources and school supplies. The children were allowed to explore the emergency vehicles and a new bicycle and helmet, donated by the police department, were raffled off to a lucky boy and girl. The event was a huge success! Many at risk and hard to reach families participated in the event and parents were able to spend time with teachers outside of the traditional school setting. Interpreters were available during the visits so that non-English speaking families could participate in the event and have their questions or concerns answered. This allowed both teachers and parents to see each other in a caring and approachable manner. It also gave teachers the opportunity to inform parents of events and trainings being held at the school that were designed to help parents support their child's academic learning at home. The positive impacts of this evening have been felt throughout the schools as they have witnessed an increase in parent participation and volunteerism as a result of the Neighborhood Nights event. Plus, staff morale had a boost with the laughing and singing that took place on the bus ride over to the neighborhoods. Due to the success of the event, it has been scheduled again for the 2015-2016 school year to build back to school excitement. Stephanie and her fellow colleagues along with public service members are to be commended for their out-of-the-box approach to family engagement.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COORDINATOR SPOTLIGHT



2013 ~ 2014 School Year



September



October



November



December



January



February



March



April



May

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COORDINATOR SPOTLIGHT



2013-2014 School Year

<i>September 2013</i>	<i>Cheryl Guy</i>
Decatur County Schools.....	District Parent Involvement Coordinator
<i>October 2013</i>	<i>Kim DeRose</i>
Little Mill Middle School, Forsyth County Schools.....	Title I Coordinator
<i>November 2013</i>	<i>Gwen Freeman</i>
Hasty Elementary, Cherokee County Schools.....	Parent Involvement Coordinator
<i>December 2013</i>	<i>Annabel Rodriguez-Romero</i>
Cartersville City Schools.....	Parent Involvement Coordinator
<i>January 2014</i>	<i>Christianna Timothy</i>
Coffee Middle School, Coffee County Schools.....	Parent Resource Coordinator
<i>February 2014</i>	<i>Kanya Cornish</i>
Oglethorpe County Schools.....	Coordinator of Student Support Services
<i>March 2014</i>	<i>Keta Martinez</i>
Whitfield County Schools.....	District Parent Involvement Coordinator
<i>April 2014</i>	<i>Tori Bryant</i>
Westside Elementary School, Houston County.....	Parent Involvement Coordinator
<i>May 2014</i>	<i>Angela Burris</i>
Smitha Middle School, Cobb County School District.....	Parent Liaison



PIC SPOTLIGHT SEPTEMBER 2013

Georgia Department of Education



Cheryl Guy, Parent Involvement Coordinator Decatur County Schools

Parents and families in Decatur County School District are now just a fingertip away from receiving important information about their child's education and staying connected with their schools thanks to Cheryl Guy, the District's Parent Involvement Coordinator. With support from the Superintendent, Dr. Fred Rayfield, and the Federal Programs Director, Dr. April Aldridge, Cheryl took a vision of reaching more parents and turned it into the first app specifically designed for Parent Involvement in Decatur County Schools.

As more people rely on their smartphones every day, the DCBOEPI App gives parents easy access to instant information and updates regarding their child's school. The app includes a parent involvement calendar and the monthly newsletter as well as access to the district website and parent portal login so parents are able to view their students' grades, attendance and missing assignments with a few taps of their fingers. Additionally, parents are able to view the Parent Involvement Policies for the district as well as the parent involvement policy and school-parent compact for their child's school. The app also provides an unique feature which allows parents to provide feedback on the parent involvement policies and school-parent compacts or they can leave general comments regarding other parent involvement initiatives. In order to ensure this app was an effective tool to communicate with parents, Cheryl made sure that the app included push notifications to alert users about upcoming events and other new information.

Cheryl admits that one of the challenges is constantly updating the app with live information on a consistent basis so that it is accurate and valuable for all users. She is also working hard to market and advertise the parent involvement app so more families can benefit from the technology. One method of promotion is to utilize parent volunteers to provide training to other parents about downloading and using the app. Word is spreading fast about this new resource for parents and the feedback is overwhelmingly positive including one parent who said, "It seems as if we live our lives by our phones, and fingertip access to parent involvement information via a phone app is exactly what we need to stay in the education loop!"

PIC SPOTLIGHT

OCTOBER 2013

Georgia Department of Education



Kim DeRose, Title I Coordinator
Little Mill Middle School, Forsyth County

It is well known around the hallways of Little Mill Middle School that their outstanding Title I Coordinator, Kim DeRose, is always on the forefront of innovative approaches to increase parent engagement in order to support student learning. She truly understands the challenges facing many of the families who have demanding work schedules or have family responsibilities during the time when schools traditionally schedule meetings and events. To help these families stay involved and overcome such challenges, Kim helped Little Mill embrace every existing form of technology to increase two-way communication with parents through a program called TeleMeet.

Now whenever a meeting is scheduled all parents have the option to Telemeet, which allows parents who are unable to attend the meeting in person to choose whether they wish to participate through conference call, video message, an online chat session or text message. At the beginning of the year, parents are notified about the possibilities and opportunities to participate in meetings through off campus communication. Individuals indicate which form of technology will work best for them and they are sent any documents, forms, report cards or agendas prior to the meeting.

There are countless examples of families who have benefited from Telemeet, such as a father who used Telemeet to provide meaningful input regarding items on an agenda for a family advisory meeting while he attended his son's baseball game because he could not be in two places at one time. Another family had their car repossessed but still maintained an active role in their child's education by participating in teacher conferences and meetings through the Telemeet options. Even parents who are traveling to another state for business are able to engage in a conversation as if they are sitting in the room at Little Mill Middle School.

This initiative has changed the family friendly nature of how Little Mill Middle School conducts everyday business. It has become so popular that the district has provided five HotSpot devices for areas where families might not have viable internet access. Even local businesses and community organizations are starting to become more involved in the school because there is now a convenient way for them to connect with the school during their busy work schedules. When one caring and creative person with a supportive school is willing to find solutions to meet the needs of their parents, the possibilities can be endless.

PIC SPOTLIGHT NOVEMBER 2013

Georgia Department of Education



Gwen Freeman, Parent Involvement Facilitator Hasty Elementary, Cherokee County

Hasty Elementary in Cherokee County is proof that one small idea to involve all parents can lead to huge results for the entire school. As the Parent Involvement Facilitator of a very diverse school, Gwen Freeman realized that she had to find a way to engage *all* parents of *all* cultures in *all* school activities in order help parents learn how to better assist their children. Inspired by a poem about a teacher's fingerprints, Gwen started a new program at Hasty Elementary to encourage all Title I parents to leave their fingerprints on the school, regardless of their talents, abilities, education or backgrounds. This led to the creation of the "Leaving Your Mark" program, which encourages parents to participate, volunteer, assist, and get involved in their child's education.

Whenever parents visit the school, whether to attend a conference, participate in a Title I parent meeting, use the parent resource center or assist with volunteer activities, they receive a "Paw Ticket". Parents fill out their information on the ticket and place it in the "Paw Bucket" before they leave the school. Every month, a winning ticket is drawn from the bucket and the winning parent is selected as the Very Involved Parent (VIP) of the Month. The VIP of the Month is highlighted on the school website, honored at PTA events, and featured in the school newsletter. Parents are also eligible for a special prize drawing donated by a community business at the end of the school year. The more parents participate and visit the school, then the more tickets they receive to increase their chances of recognition and winning.

As a result of this initiative, attendance increased at parent meetings and parent workshops. More parents now use the resource center and benefit from the school's programs. As they engage in activities and classes, parents become more motivated and confident to help their children succeed. Teachers are not only grateful for the additional support and assistance from parent volunteers, but they also enjoy having more parents attend conferences and meetings. There is also a noticeable difference in the children as they point with pride at their parents displayed in the VIP spotlight showcase. Thanks in part to an inspiring poem, Gwen Freeman inspired others and truly made a difference for her school.

I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do.

PIC SPOTLIGHT DECEMBER 2013

Georgia Department of Education



*Annabel Rodriguez-Romero,
Parent Involvement Coordinator
Cartersville City School System*

For the first time, families in Cartersville City Schools have the opportunity to participate in educational and enriching courses specifically designed for parents. With leadership and guidance from the district Parent Involvement Coordinator, Annabel Rodriguez-Romero, Cartersville City Schools successfully launched a parent university this year for its Title I schools. The Cartersville Parent University (CPU), as it is called, is built on the belief that ALL students in ALL schools will be successful when parents, community partners, and the schools work together.

Careful planning and collaboration went into the implementation of the CPU before opening its doors. Dedicated community partners agreed to offer resources to support university classes designed to help develop computer skills, foster career exploration, and support English learners. To remove possible barriers to participation, parents completed a registration form indicating their preferred time to participate in the program. Additionally, the community organizations agreed to serve as hosts in order to provide convenient class locations within the community. To kick things off, every school sent home a colorful brochure to their families to highlight the availability of the free resources and to invite parents to attend any of the upcoming classes. Since this was a true community event, the local newspaper also supported the new program by featuring a story announcing this great opportunity. At the completion of this year's inaugural program, parents will participate in their very own graduation ceremony.

Over 50 parents registered to attend the very first of the nine current class offerings, with more classes being planned for next semester. Among the learning opportunities for parents, there are new math resources for kindergarten through fifth grade, effective reading strategies to use at home, and ways to help their children master the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards. To assist parents who speak Spanish, Annabel attends every class to ensure that they are engaged in their children's education. In only its first year, CPU has already strengthened the partnership between the schools, the parents, and the Cartersville community by sharing a better understanding of the needs of the families as they relate to supporting greater student achievement!

PIC SPOTLIGHT JANUARY 2014

Georgia Department of Education



*Christianna Timothy
Parent Resource Coordinator
Coffee Middle School*

Starting middle school can be an exciting journey that yields many wonderful opportunities and possibilities for student to explore new pursuits and interests. As the only middle school in Coffee County that serves students from all eight elementary schools, Coffee Middle School has the challenging yet rewarding task of ensuring that all students and their families are prepared for the decisions and questions they will encounter along this journey. Thanks to their Parent Resource Coordinator, Christianna Timothy, families in Coffee County are now equipped with a helpful toolkit to successfully guide them on this new voyage.

Understanding that the school transition process generates an array of questions for families of incoming students, Christianna collaborated with other faculty members to publish the first edition of the Coffee Middle School Guidebook to Middle School Transition for students and parents. The contents and information provided in the Coffee Middle School Transition Guidebook replaces the fear and apprehension students and parents may have experienced in the past with excitement and anticipation. The mystery of a large, new campus and expectations for student achievement are now clearly outlined on paper for the benefit of parents. Packed with resources for parents, this guidebook contains everything from detailed biographies of key school personnel to full descriptions of academic courses for each grade. While the guidebook is available online, parents and students also receive a copy while enjoying a tour of the middle school during the 5th grade. Along with the guidebook, this tour introduces students and their families to the many opportunities offered at Coffee Middle School to prepare students for college, career, and life.

Before their students even begin middle school, parents can now readily access information at their fingertips about daily school expectations, Very Important Places (VIPs) in the building, and life beyond Coffee Middle School. In response to the overwhelmingly positive feedback to this guidebook, revisions and updates are already being completed for the second edition. Across the cover of the guidebook is written the school mission statement, "Destination Graduation for College, Career, and Life," and thanks to Christianna Timothy, inside the guidebook lays the map for students and their families to successfully reach their destination.

PIC SPOTLIGHT FEBRUARY 2014

Georgia Department of Education



Kanya Cornish
Coordinator of Student Support Services
Oglethorpe County School District

The parents in Oglethorpe County spoke and the school district not only listened, but responded quickly. Last year, the results of the annual parent survey clearly indicated that parents were seeking more information and ideas about summer learning activities for students. Thanks to teamwork between the district's Parent Involvement Coordinator, Kanya Cornish, and Parent Mentor, Jodie Zeuke, planning and preparations began immediately to address this parent request. Knowing the importance of keeping children active and engaged in learning opportunities during the summer, the school district began making arrangements to coordinate the inaugural Oglethorpe County Summer Activities Expo.

Plans for the Summer Activities Expo began as designs to simply provide parents with the requested information, but they soon blossomed into a fun-filled day that benefited the entire community. Having worked in the district for many years, Kanya used her understanding of the community to ensure that the expo provided helpful information to meet the interests and needs of all families. While younger children enjoyed fun activities, parents were free to explore the expo and gather information from a variety of community groups. Information about summer camps and learning events was provided by day care centers, the local library, the 4-H Club, the school district, and several other agencies. Every participant received a cloth goody bag that included a list of 100 educational activities parents can do with their children during the summer, as well as Title I flyers with program information and ideas for family and student engagement. Students from Oglethorpe County High School even volunteered at the fair to earn community service hours for classroom credit. The expo also provided the added bonus of creating new partnerships between the community agencies and the school district. As a result, these partnerships have strengthened the communication needed in order to share information and resources that will benefit the families of Oglethorpe County School System.

The excitement and participation from last year's expo has led to new ideas to improve the upcoming expo. To help parents better plan, the expo will be offered earlier in the spring and include even more community groups and partners. The school system will also kick off their Book Writing Contest during the expo to encourage students to read, read, read and write all summer long!

PIC SPOTLIGHT

MARCH 2014

Georgia Department of Education



Keta Martinez
Parent Involvement Coordinator
Whitfield County School District

While visiting one of her schools in Whitfield County, Keta Martinez observed a situation in the front office that occurs almost every single day. As part of the sign-in process at the school, parents and visitors are required to enter their information in the computer. Keta noticed this parent was having a difficult time operating the computer, so she kindly offered her assistance and learned that the parent had never used a computer. In the following weeks, Keta watched this same scenario play out in other schools across the district as parents froze upon hearing the instructions to use the computer. Instead of trying to change the front office procedures, Keta realized that there was an immediate need to equip parents with skills and knowledge to navigate the digitally-dependent system of schools and society.

Whether posting notifications online or accessing current student information, schools operate under the notion that most people are computer literate; therefore, not only is there a need for parents to know how to use computers, but schools also depend on parents' ability to use computers as tools to access information. With that goal in mind, Keta created beginner and intermediate adult computer courses that are available at no cost to the parents. The classes teach participants everything from the basic operating components of computers to utilizing the Parent Portal information system to monitor students' grades and progress. In order to maximize participation, the classes are offered in the evening at a local high school computer lab. With the help of several volunteers, parents receive individual assistance to build their varying skills and comfort levels. Additionally, thanks to a partnership with United Way, Keta is able to offer free childcare to provide fun, educational activities for younger children so more parents are able to attend.

When Keta saw a parent in need, she took the initiative to create a solution for a common issue posing a problem for several parents. Now more parents are empowered and equipped with the skills to access resources to help their children, receive information and notifications from the school, and communicate in multiple ways with teachers. Thanks to Keta Martinez, parents are now able to do a lot more than just sign-in when visiting their child's school.

PIC SPOTLIGHT

APRIL 2014

Georgia Department of Education



Tori Bryant

Parent Involvement Coordinator

Westside Elementary School, Houston County

In just her first year as the Parent Involvement Coordinator at Westside Elementary School in Houston County, Tori Bryant successfully built a bridge to connect the family-school community. Mrs. Bryant accomplished this goal by constructing meaningful professional development opportunities for teachers based on suggestions from both parents and teachers on important parent engagement issues. Before the school year started, Mrs. Bryant got to work training staff on understanding the value of using the school-parent compact as a tool to engage families and to impact student academic achievement.

Realizing the school-parent compact affords teachers the opportunity to engage families in their child's education as well as encourages conversations about individual student progress and overall school goals, Mrs. Bryant met individually with teachers to discuss the compact. The focus of the meeting was on conducting productive parent-teacher conferences by using the compacts to review individual responsibilities and discuss student academic achievement. In addition to discussing the compacts with teachers during these meetings, Mrs. Bryant also engaged the teachers in role play activities to practice various scenarios that might occur at a parent-teacher conference. Teachers left the meeting equipped with a packet that included a laminated copy of the school-parent compact, a tip sheet on effective conference techniques, and a list of available resources for parents. Teachers were not only grateful for the training, but also for the reminder of the importance for all parties to adhere to the responsibilities as outlined in the compact in order to strengthen the commitment to help students be more successful academically.

To develop appropriate professional development programming, Mrs. Bryant worked closely with parents and staff at Westside Elementary to identify the needs of the school. Every other week, Mrs. Bryant uses interactive activities, fun role-playing games, and interesting videos to help teachers learn about cultural diversity, effective two-way communication, and other topics on building family-school relationships. By building the capacity in the faculty and staff, Mrs. Bryant creates the conditions for a strong school-family community that will work together to support student learning.

PIC SPOTLIGHT

MAY 2014

Georgia Department of Education



Angela Burris
Parent Liaison
Smitha Middle School, Cobb County

What is the secret to creating exciting school events where students and parents can have fun while participating in academic activities? Ask Angela Burris, the parent liaison at Smitha Middle School, who created an interactive evening filled with laughter and learning. Instead of the traditional meeting where parents sit in the auditorium listening to a presentation, Angela designed the School Daze Maze where parents and students competed in academically themed activities that highlighted the school curriculum. Countless hours of thoughtful planning turned one evening into a memorable event that maximized the educational potential when families, schools, and communities join together.

To kick-off the evening, the school's dance team and chorus welcomed staff and families with musical performances for everyone to enjoy. Following the performances, students and parents traveled to different hallways in the building assigned by each grade level. Parents and students were welcomed inside of the classrooms by teachers who directed them to different activities. Each activity station highlighted what students were learning in the classroom and allowed students to showcase their knowledge to their parents. After participating in hands-on activities, parents received information and strategies that could be used at home as practice and review for the class.

In social studies, families were tested on their knowledge about countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia during a competitive game where the highest scorers received donated prizes. To learn more about vocabulary words and language arts, parents and students challenged each other in Word Baseball and special Mad Lib games. Families explored the world of science by testing different types of soil and exploring the heart through their own heart rate, age, and favorite exercises. Thanks to invitations sent by the school, community members and business partners played a role in the success of the event by donating their time, services, food, and other items that were awarded as prizes and gifts. At the end of the evening, participants socialized and shared stories as they enjoyed refreshments provided by the PTSA. Students and their families gained useful information and a new understating of the school thanks to this event, including the fact that learning can be fun!

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COORDINATOR SPOTLIGHT



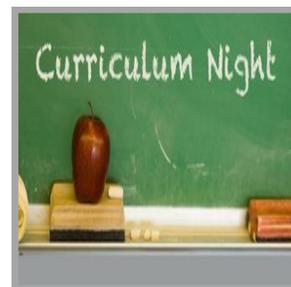
2012 ~ 2013 School Year



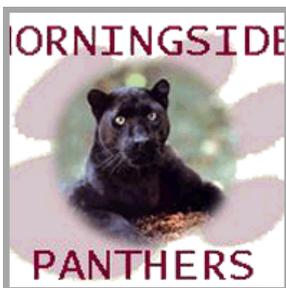
September



October



November



December



January



February



March



April



May

PARENT INVOLVEMENT COORDINATOR SPOTLIGHT



2012-2013 School Year

September 2012.....	Lynn Patterson
Hiram Elementary School.....	Title I Instructional Lead Teacher
October 2012.....	Billie Jo Quinton
Centerville Elementary School.....	Parent Involvement Coordinator
November 2012.....	Stephanie Bell
Wayne County School System.....	Secondary Education Parent Involvement Coordinator
December 2012.....	Pamelia Harper
Morningside Elementary School, Houston County.....	Parent Involvement Coordinator
January 2013.....	Dawn Scott
Walter P. Jones Elementary School, Bibb County School System.....	Title I Parent Trainer
February 2013.....	Tara Terrell
Lanier County Schools.....	Parent Involvement Coordinator
March 2013.....	Regina Jennings
Murphey Middle School, Richmond County Schools.....	Parent Facilitator
April 2013.....	Katy Gunter
Cumming Elementary School, Forsyth County.....	Parent Engagement Coordinator
May 2013.....	Nicole Lamb
Rossville Middle School, Walker County Schools.....	Parent Involvement Coordinator



PIC SPOTLIGHT

SEPTEMBER 2012

Georgia Department of Education



Lynn Patterson, Title I Instructional Lead Teacher Hiram Elementary School

Becoming a Highly Involved Parent (HIP) has been a focus at Hiram Elementary School since the 2010-2011 school year. Parents are given a "reward" card, similar to a preferred shopper card. Each time parents participate in designated school events, a special mark is placed on the HIP Card. Parents are required to attend at least 8 events within the school year to become eligible for prizes donated by local businesses. The prize drawing is held during the last PTA meeting.

The HIP Card encourages parent involvement by creating a strong school and home connection. Parent opportunities are offered during the school year that can be attended during the day or in the evening to accommodate working parents. HIP Card event dates are available on the first day of school, allowing parents to choose when they wish to participate. HIP Card events include Grade Level Orientation and Parent-Teacher Conferences. Learning goals are highlighted during Reading, Math and Science Family Nights. Monthly News You Can Use parent involvement meetings allow parents to establish personal relationships with other parents.

The business and school community unite to encourage parent involvement. Local businesses are approached to donate prizes. Best Buy in Hiram, GA donated flat screen TV's; Home Depot in Hiram donated a gas grill. Other Hiram participating businesses include LaRoss ChiroCare, Stevi B's, Subway, Texas Roadhouse, Jim 'N Nicks Bar-B-Q, Bumble Bee Bakery and Flour Child Cakery & Bake Shop. Participating businesses in Dallas include Dallas Dodge Chrysler Jeep and Davis & Co. Salon. Coach Books and Build-A-Bear in Douglasville also donated prizes to the drawing. The overall experience is rewarding for all school community stakeholders.

PIC SPOTLIGHT

OCTOBER 2012

Georgia Department of Education



*Billie Jo Quinton,
Parent Involvement Coordinator*

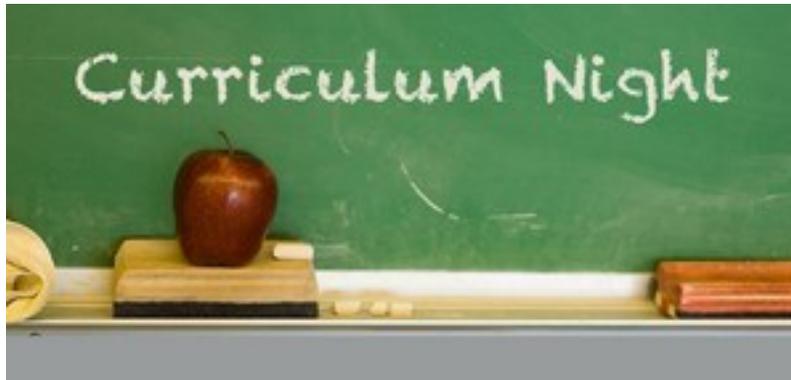
Billie Jo Quinton and the Parent Action Team at Centerville Elementary School (CES) are taking great strides to meet students and parents where they are! Beginning this school year, parents were introduced to Show Me, an educational website and App, that is devoted to problem solving and learning applications. Show Me allows teachers at CES to record voice-over lessons to share with their learning community. Parents at each grade level receive a link for the videos with a problem solving strategy directed towards what is being taught in class. These videos are available to be viewed on a website or on the Show Me App for cell phones and tablets. This engagement activity provides parents with access to step-by-step instruction which helps to show students how to complete homework and improve study skills without ever having to leave home.

This best practice was created in response to an overwhelming request from parents to be contacted about school related matters via email or text message. Centerville Elementary is excited about the possibilities and expects that this new initiative will help increase student achievement and build capacity for its parents.

PIC SPOTLIGHT

NOVEMBER 2012

Georgia Department of Education



Stephanie Bell,
Wayne County School System
Secondary Education Parent Involvement Coordinator

Wayne County Middle Schools are new to Title I this year and their teachers were a little unsure exactly how Title I was going to help them improve parent engagement. This was until Stephanie Bell, Secondary Parent Involvement Coordinator for Wayne County Schools, came up with the idea to have a Curriculum Night conducted by the students instead of the teachers. The first school in Wayne County to implement this new initiative was Arthur Williams Middle School. The staff decided to go with an Olympic theme and call it **“Opening Ceremonies - a Night of Curriculum Performed by Your Child”**. The students prepared to present speeches, posters, interactive demonstrations, and skits that introduced parents to the different components of the curriculum that their student’s grades would be based on throughout the school year. As added fun, the teachers dressed up as people from different countries who were competing in the Olympics.

On the night of this event, families continuously poured into the cafeteria until there was standing room only. This was a shock to Arthur Williams Middle School because the year before they only had 15 parents show up for Curriculum Night. The evening was a booming success! It proved that getting students involved and excited about academics and school events makes parents “want” to come instead of feeling as if they “have” to come. It was said that the relaxed and inviting atmosphere created a more family-friendly environment; one that will continue to be replicated going forward. Teachers went from feeling unsure about the support they would receive from parents to feeling excited about upcoming events and they developed a new vigor for planning activities that both, parents and students, could enjoy together. This event

PIC SPOTLIGHT DECEMBER 2012

Georgia Department of Education

MORNINGSIDE



PANTHERS

*Pamelia Harper,
Houston County–Morningside Elementary School
Parent Involvement Coordinator*

Morningside Elementary School's Parent Involvement Coordinator, Pamelia Harper, has really grabbed the interest and attention of parents, students, and teachers at MSES. Mrs. Harper recently created a wall-sized graph entitled, "Paws"ing For Parent Involvement. The graph identifies the school's parent engagement activities for the year and the level of family participation, by class, that each activity has achieved. The chart is located in the foyer at the front of the school, and it catches the attention of everyone as they enter.

The giant display is multi-purposed, serving as advertisement for upcoming activities as well as a unique way to create friendly competition between the classes for bragging rights as the class with the highest parent turnout. The graph is also being used as a teaching tool to help students read and understand information as it is presented in graph form. Morningside Elementary plans to use the data gathered from this project in conjunction with other assessment results to analyze the effectiveness of their parent program.

PIC SPOTLIGHT JANUARY 2013

Georgia Department of Education



*Dawn Scott,
Walter P. Jones Elementary, Bibb County School System
Title I Parent Trainer*

After surveying and collecting evaluations from students and parents at Walter P. Jones Elementary, results revealed that families preferred hands-on activities along with interactive games and demonstrations. In an effort to steer clear of long lectures and speeches that can decrease the attention span of many, the school decided to implement theme-based activities that would allow families to have fun while learning. Realizing that not all parents could always be in attendance at school events, they utilized technology by creating a YouTube for Schools channel. This school channel has been successful in keeping parents informed about school activities and parent involvement events, as well as in providing examples of hands-on student achievement activities that parents can replicate at home.

For example, this past fall when the school hosted its Neighborhood Common Core Fall Festival they filmed the event and highlighted students completing various science, math, and literacy activities. Both those parents who attended and those who did not were able to view the activities and replicate them at home with their children. This media resource has proved to be invaluable in providing parents unlimited access to teaching tools and materials, while also increasing parent involvement and getting the word out to parents about fun learning opportunities. Parents have responded with rave reviews and noteworthy evaluations. Needless to say, Walter P. Jones Elementary is excited about their advancement in preparing parents and student for the 21st century global economy!

PIC SPOTLIGHT FEBRUARY 2013

Georgia Department of Education



Tara Terrell, Lanier County Schools Parent Involvement Coordinator

Congratulations to Tara Terrell for joining many PICs throughout the state in opening a Parent Resource Center, this time in Lanier County, housed at the county's Board of Education. The center opened at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year and provides parents, grandparents, and children with a variety of instructional materials to use at home. Beyond that, Tara's additional success has been with her workshops'. From the start, she realized that by using catchy and creative workshop titles, she was able to yield greater parent and student enthusiasm which helped them remember and want to participate in these events. Two examples are:

- **Books and Pajamas**– during winter, parents and students came to this event dressed in their pajamas, and then enjoyed cookies and hot chocolate while reading books on warm, comfortable blankets. Over 130 parents attended this event!
- **Homework 911** - this event was held on September 11th and parents from all over came to learn about “emergency” homework strategies they could use to help their children succeed. Parents were also able to engage in hands-on activities with their children to practice the homework techniques they learned about. This event was such a success that Mrs. Terrell was asked to also present this workshop at Moody Air Force Base in Valdosta a week later. Word had spread quickly among parents that this workshop was beneficial in helping them play a role in their children's academic success.

Events such as these have deeply impacted the families of Lanier County and created a segue to bridge the gap between school and home. It has also shown these families that this school system is completely focused on educating the children in this community by giving parents the support they need to get involved in their child's learning at home.

PIC SPOTLIGHT MARCH 2013

Georgia Department of Education



*Regena Jennings,
Murphey Middle School, Richmond County Schools
Parent Facilitator*

At Murphey Middle School, Ms. Regena Jennings has implemented unique parent-teacher conference sessions as extensions to Richmond County Board of Education's county-wide progress report days. Progress reports go out to middle school parents four times per year, and immediately following their release she welcomes all parents, as well as personally inviting some, to participate in parent-teacher conference sessions in the parent resource center. In these sessions, parents meet with teachers during their planning periods to discuss student grades and academic performance. Ms. Jennings plans each quarterly session around a theme focused on student academic progress such as "Pizza for Progress", "Poppin' for Progress" and "Pastries for Progress" so that parents do not view these sessions as traditional "conferences."

This innovative programing has been well received by parents as it creates a fun and relaxing, yet educational atmosphere in which they are comfortably able to discuss their child's progress and academic achievement, including any steps that they can take to support them in the home using the center's resources. These sessions have turned what could be a negative experience into a very positive one for parents. After meeting with the teachers, parents enjoy the theme-based light refreshments while they review and check-out the recommended educational tools and resources available in the center. This strategy has proven to be a winning concept for keeping middle school parents informed about both their own student's progress and the resources offered by the center. Ms. Jennings has found a unique and positive approach to creating a welcoming environment for the parents of Murphey Middle!

PIC SPOTLIGHT

APRIL 2013

Georgia Department of Education



Katy Gunter, Cumming Elementary School, Forsyth County Parent Engagement Coordinator

Cumming Elementary has had an outstanding response to their newest parent engagement practice, *Involvement Matters*. Each time a parent participates in a school-engagement activity, he/she is rewarded with a red token. Parents are encouraged to collect ten red tokens throughout the year. When the tenth token is earned, they can trade in their tangible efforts for a t-shirt for their child that says “My Parent is Involved!” T-shirts are provided by a community/business partner in education. *Involvement Matters* has provided parents with an increased awareness of the multiple ways to become involved in their child’s education and make a difference in their academic progress.

Cumming Elementary has seen an increase in Title I parent feedback, attendance in parent-teacher conferences, and hours served by parent volunteers in the school. *Involvement Matters* has also created a team mentality between parents, students, and teachers. This initiative has allowed parents to get involved and see firsthand the instructional strategies that can be carried out at home from school. Qualifying parent involvement and school-engagement activities may include attending curriculum night, signing and returning the school-parent compact, helping with homework at home (i.e. cutting, creating), working with small groups of children, or supporting classroom teachers as needed. The communication supports all stakeholders in working together to achieve student learning goals. Since September 2012, there have been at least 29 unique parent engagement opportunities, 56 t-shirts earned, and 4099 red tokens obtained. Cumming Elementary has seen a significant increase in parent involvement this school year due to *Involvement Matters* which has strengthened the academic support of all students.

PIC SPOTLIGHT MAY 2013

Georgia Department of Education



*Nicole Lamb,
Rossville Middle School, Walker County Schools
Parent Involvement Coordinator*

The parents at Rossville Middle School are taking notice of new opportunities and are discovering different ways to participate in their children's education thanks to Nicole Lamb, the school's Parent Involvement Coordinator. Recently, Nicole coordinated an event during the school day for all parents called the Parent Focus Walk. The event offered a unique opportunity for parents to gain firsthand knowledge of the school by visiting classrooms to interact directly with students and teachers.

To enhance the experience and prior to heading out on the walk, Nicole provided the parents with a checklist that described specific classroom learning tools and objectives. The list included such things as word walls and examples of student work, as well as academic content information such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) initiatives and academic standards. Using the checklist, parents were able to go beyond merely observing classes to asking meaningful questions focused on student learning. The parents became a part of the learning process as this experience allowed students the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the material by sharing their knowledge with their parents. For parents, this activity helped them to discover a new appreciation for the school and to gain a better understanding of what their children are learning.

As a result of this event, those parents in attendance have begun planning the development of a parent leadership team to encourage the involvement of other parents in the great things happening at Rossville Middle School. Congratulations to Nicole for making a positive connection between student learning and parent involvement that has created a ripple effect throughout her school.