



DIVISION OF SCHOOL & DISTRICT EFFECTIVENESS

ADVANCING LEADERSHIP | TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS

Advancing Leadership...Transforming Schools

March 2017

FROM THE DIVISION

This week, prepopulated Comprehensive Needs Assessments (CNAs) were sent to the LEAs for all Priority, Focus, and SSIP schools. These will be forwarded by the LEAs to principals to complete as part of their planning for the 2017-2018 school year. All schools receiving Federal Funds will be required to complete these forms to receive their monies for next year.

The CNA has consolidated the needs assessments required by many of the federal programs into one document, which will enable a school to look at its needs as a whole and not as separate, unconnected issues. The CNA is built around the Five Systems of Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement: Coherent Instructional System, Effective Leadership, Professional Capacity, Family and Community Engagement, and Supportive Learning Environment.

Soon a School Improvement Planning (SIP) document will be sent to schools which directly aligns with Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement and the CNA. This document will help schools look at their identified needs and plan interventions for improvements. The work of completing the CNA and SIP is not new work, but this is a transitional year with new systems and new forms. School and District Effectiveness will offer support and technical assistance to schools in completing the CNA and SIP. Webinars will be available in May on Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement and our SDE and RESA School Effectiveness Specialists will offer assistance to schools.

The due date for the school's CNA and SIP to be completed is September 15, 2017. To receive your 1003(a) funds for 2017-2018, the **District's** CNA and Strategic Plan must be submitted and reviewed, and the **school's** CNA and SIP must be submitted and reviewed by the designated due dates. We will notify schools how to submit these documents and how Federal Title 1003(a) funds will be awarded at a later date.

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide school and district leaders with just-in-time information on issues surrounding continuous improvement and to celebrate the great work occurring in the state's six [Regions](#).

FROM THE DIVISION (continued)

Again, this is a transitional year and we will continue to communicate with you about the CNA and SIP as you work through these processes. Our intent is to align the tools we ALL use for continuous improvement, and we ALL look at the work from the perspective of school and district leadership.

[Dr. Will Rumbaugh](#)

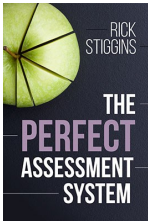
Director, Division of School & District Effectiveness

UPCOMING EVENTS

BALANCED LEADERSHIP TRAINING

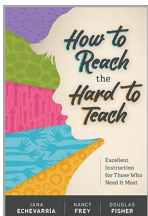
The Division of School and District Effectiveness is excited to offer training on McREL's Balanced Leadership Framework. This training is designed for principals, assistant principals, and principals' supervisors. More details, including registration information, can be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

READING AND RESOURCES



[*The Perfect Assessment System*](#)

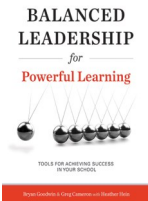
by Rick Stiggins



[*How to Reach the Hard to Teach: Excellent*](#)

[*Instruction for Those Who Need It Most*](#)

by Echevarria, Frey, and Fisher



[*Balanced Leadership for Powerful Learning:*](#)

[*Tools for Achieving Success in Your School*](#)

by Goodwin, Cameron, and Hein

GEORGIA VIRTUAL LEARNING “TOOL” PROGRAM

TOOL is a professional learning opportunity available to all Georgia educators through [Georgia Virtual Learning](#). The **TOOL** program is free, and anyone can participate. There are a variety of courses and topics available, and more will be offered in the future.

REGISTRATION FOR 2017 IDEAS CONFERENCE

It's time to register for the 2017 Institute Designed for Educating All Students (IDEAS) Conference.

Dates: June 6-9, 2017

Location: Epworth by the Sea, St. Simons Island, GA

Special education and general education teachers are invited to attend Georgia's only teacher conference supporting the education of students with disabilities: IDEAS 2017, showcasing excellence in the field.

[IDEAS 2017 Registration Link](#)

Additional information can be found on the [2017 IDEAS website](#).

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

WEBINAR UPDATES

Our fourth quarter Principal-to-Principal webinar and Professional Learning webinar have been postponed. More information will be sent once they are re-scheduled.

BALANCED LEADERSHIP COHORTS

The Division of School and District Effectiveness is excited to offer training on McREL's Balanced Leadership Framework. This training is designed for principals, assistant principals, and principals' supervisors.

The complete Balanced Leadership training is comprised of three modules that will be delivered over the course of a year. Participants are expected to commit to all three modules. The only costs for schools would be those associated with travel (lodging, travel reimbursement, parking, etc.). There is no cost for the training itself.

We are offering two cohorts and registration will be capped at fifty participants per cohort. **We only have a few spaces left in each cohort.** If you are interested, please register using the appropriate link below. Lodging information will be sent to those who register closer to the first training dates.

Cohort 1:

Dates: June 26-28, 2017; December 5-6, 2017;
March 13-14, 2018

Location: [Macon Marriott City Center](#)

Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM each day

[Cohort 1 Registration Link](#)

Cohort 2:

Dates: July 25-27, 2017; November 7-8, 2017;
March 6-7, 2018

Location: [Courtyard Atlanta Decatur Downtown/Emory](#)

Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM each day

[Cohort 2 Registration Link](#)



DIVISION OF
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SESI UPDATES

**SYSTEM FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL INSTRUCTION (SESI)
 A MODEL FOR SCHOOL LEADERS TO BUILD
 AN EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM**

What impact has your schoolwide instructional system had on teacher practices and student achievement? What worked? What made it effective? What did not work? Why? What changes need to be made?

As effective teachers and leaders assess entire chunks of teaching (lesson delivery, units of instructions, assessments, etc.), they determine where the instruction went well and where improvements are needed the next time the content is taught. They do not merely teach the same thing, in the same way, each time; they look to improve their planning, delivery of instruction, and monitoring of student mastery.

In this same way, school leaders must continually evaluate the schoolwide instructional system and refine strategies for continuous instructional improvements. The [System for Effective School Instruction](#) (pgs. 79-88) offers resources to assist school leaders in developing a process to assess their current instructional system through four strategies: Reflection, Adjustment, Celebration, and Identifying Needs.

SIG 1003(g)

[Meadowcreek High School](#) in [Gwinnett County](#) is involved in the federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) program as part of Cohort 3 which started in 2013. Dr. Tommy Welch has served as principal since 2011, and recently he was named Principal of the Year by the [Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals](#). He now advances to a national competition where he will compete against winners from every state.

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SIG 1003(g) (continued)

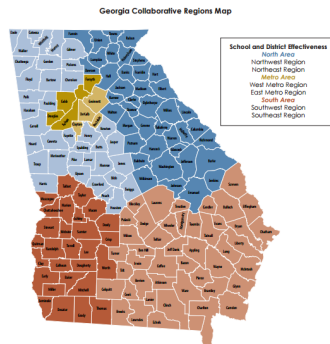
SIG 1003(g) supports the lowest-performing schools by promoting strong school turnaround efforts. Turnaround leaders are an essential aspect of a focused school improvement effort, and Dr. Welch has taken his role as principal of a SIG school very seriously. The work is very challenging, and Dr. Welch gives credit to his team at the school that serves 3400 students.

The data reviewed for Dr. Welch’s selection included Meadowcreek’s graduation rate, which has increased by more than twenty percent during his time as principal. SAT scores have also improved by forty percent, ninth-grade retention rates are up, and the school has expanded Advanced Placement options. In fact, the College Board named Gwinnett County an Advanced Placement District of the Year for increasing the number of students who take AP courses and the improved student performance on AP exams, including those from low-income backgrounds. Since 2014, student participation in AP has increased in Gwinnett by five percent each year. Welch also led Meadowcreek’s transformation to an academy school under the branding of “Meadowcreek U,” which fosters smaller learning communities, and has drawn attention from across the country for implementing an academy style at such a large school.

SIG provides a unique opportunity for identified schools in that funding is provided while allowing school leaders and staff to have the flexibility to choose improvement initiatives that are most likely to bring about improvement. According to Dr. Welch, the success at Meadowcreek High School is credited to everyone including school faculty and staff, students, families, and community and business partners. Dr. Welch is eager to share the turnaround work of Meadowcreek High School with other school leaders and districts.

FROM THE REGIONS

The Division of School and District Effectiveness is organized into six collaborative regions to best serve our schools and districts. Click [here](#) to view these regions. Below are news and notes from each Region.



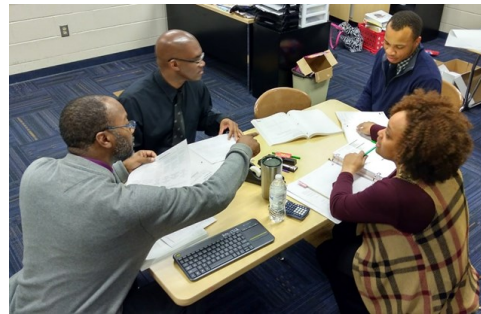
NORTHWEST REGION

[Twiggs County Schools](#) have been focusing on the instructional framework this school year. After walk-throughs conducted by the Northwest Region team, the faculty at [Jeffersonville Elementary School](#) decided to launch a book study using [Better Learning through Structured Teaching](#), by Nancy Frey and Douglas Fisher. The faculty is reading one chapter every two weeks, followed by meetings between teacher teams and the academic coach to discuss portions of each chapter and identify ways to apply the information to instructional practices. The instructional staff feels that this book study is helping them evaluate the quality of their work with students and is having a positive impact on teaching and learning. For more information contact Ms. Charlene Thorpe at cthorne@twiggs.k12.ga.us.

The instructional team at [Southwest High School](#) in [Bibb County](#) has revamped their collaborative planning to focus on job-embedded professional learning around standards-based instruction and PLCs. Before rolling out the new structure to the staff, the team established explicit look-fors for leaders, academic coaches, and teachers. The team also identified the desired student outcomes, data, and evidence that they would collect to determine the effectiveness of the new process. Finally, the team identified and eliminated initiatives that would compete with the focus on intentional, data-driven planning. An essential aspect of the plan focused on monitoring the outcomes of collaborative planning through focus walks that included administrators, coaches, and department chairs.

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NORTHWEST REGION (continued)



The Southwest High School math team during collaborative planning.

Focus walks are on-going and help the team assess the effectiveness of collaborative planning and identify teachers who need additional coaching. The math department is looking at student work from common daily formative assessments to discuss what students learned and how the next day's lesson may need to be adjusted. The new structure has shifted the culture towards authentic collaboration focused on student learning and formative assessment data. For more information about the process, contact Ms. Demeiko Vaughn at demeiko.vaughn@bcsdk12.net.

NORTHEAST REGION

Greetings!

It is so hard to believe that we are already in March! While we know you will take home a pile of work to complete during your time off, the Northeast team sincerely hopes you use this time to relax and enjoy some "you" time.

We hope you found the sessions at our ILC helpful! We have heard that some of you have reached out to one another and have started networking, which is wonderful.

As you continue to implement your school improvement plan and prepare for the upcoming year, you are also making monitoring instruction a priority.

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NORTHEAST REGION (continued)

Some collaborative strategies are helping teachers make effective changes to their own instruction. Dr. Stacey Mabray, Principal at [Butler High School](#) in [Richmond County](#), meets with her teachers as a group after she observes their lesson. Through her process, each teacher shares what went well, what needs improving and the next steps. Then she gives them feedback about their lesson. Meeting as a group nudges teachers closer towards a true culture of collaboration. It encourages them to ‘de-privatize’ their teaching by sharing and discussing with each other. This type of sharing in public will also help teachers learn new ways of doing what they do!

WEST METRO REGION

Metro West is spotlighting [Banneker High School](#), a SIG Cohort 5 School in [Fulton County](#):

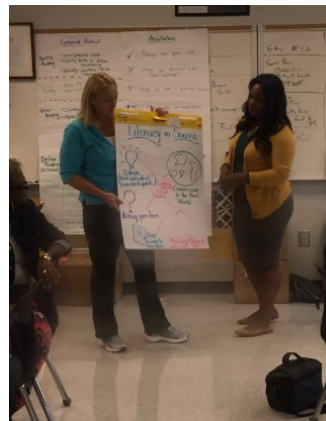
It’s a new day at Banneker High School, and their focus is increasing teachers’ collaborative planning and instructional capacity to increase student achievement. Professional Learning Communities are the key lever they use to build and maintain a systematic, collaborative planning process. The school’s master schedule was built so that all departments could have a common planning period every other day, and that enables all departments and course teams to participate in PLCs for 75 minutes of their planning period twice a week. During this time, teachers develop a shared understanding of expectations for standards, curriculum, assessment, and instruction through unit and lesson planning, assessment design, and data analysis. Guided by Rick Dufour’s work, teachers plan for their PLC time based on four questions:

- 1) What do you want the students to learn?
- 2) How do you know they learned it?
- 3) What will you do when they don’t learn it?
- 4) What will you do when they do learn it?

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WEST METRO REGION (continued)

Banneker’s instructional coaches – one for each core content area – provide support and accountability for the effective time management of the PLCs, and teams engage in self-reflection and discussion of the quality of their PLC using our PLC rubric.



*Banneker High School engaging in
Balanced Literacy
professional learning.*

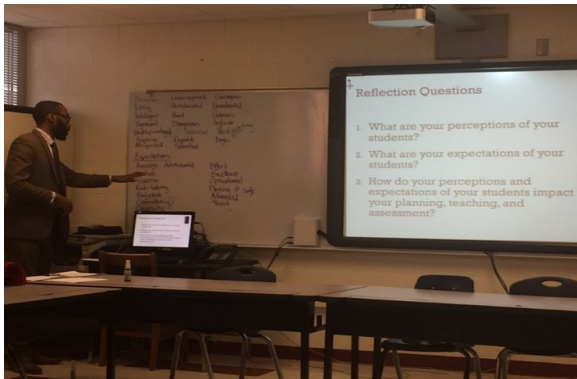
One advantage of Banneker’s PLC structure is that it builds a bridge between the professional learning teachers receive on instructional strategies and the implementation of those strategies in their classrooms. For example, ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies teachers have received professional learning this year on balanced literacy strategies, including reading protocols and discourse strategies.

After teachers attend the professional learning to learn the strategies, they then meet with their content teams in PLCs to plan lessons with the newly learned instructional strategies. As teams submit their weekly plans, instructional coaches identify when teachers are implementing the strategies to then schedule an observation to provide feedback and coaching on the teachers’ implementation of the strategies. This process provides a consistent framework for ongoing coaching that holds teachers accountable for implementing what they learn in PD and continuously improving their execution of instructional practice in the classroom.

As a result of PLCs and the role they play in implementation of research-based instructional strategies, Banneker’s staff has seen an increase in students’ engagement in literacy across the core content areas. Most promising is the mid-year benchmark data, in which students showed much higher proficiency scores as compared to last year’s benchmark results.

EAST METRO REGION

[Towers High School](#) in [DeKalb County](#) is empowering their teachers and developing their teams with an innovative professional learning series on their spotlight [Georgia School Performance Standard](#), Curriculum 1. After attending a PL on C-1, their leadership team wanted to take a deeper dive and explore ways to enhance their C-1 protocols. First, their teachers completed a self-assessment on the five components of the [Collaborative Planning Overview Rubric](#): team leadership and facilitation, reflective teaching practice, standards-based instructional planning, lesson plans, and assessment and evidence of student learning. They then determined their next step was to develop a common school-wide understanding of the collaborative planning process.



Teacher Wesley Ellis facilitates reflective dialogue about perceptions and expectations in the 5-part PL series on collaborative planning at Towers High School.

Committed to developing teacher leaders and teacher buy-in, Principal Vincent Denson challenged teachers from across departments to pair up and become experts in one of the five components and then lead the learning for all staff. What resulted was a powerful PL series at Towers. First, the teacher pairs prepared overviews of each component. On their planning day, all teachers rotated through five stations in which they learned about each component and discussed their previous self-assessment results in light of the rubric descriptors. For the next five Fridays, the teacher leaders facilitated additional activities during department meetings.

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EAST METRO REGION (continued)

Spanish teacher Roxana Soriano presented the session on assessment and evidence of student learning. When asked why she thought the PL series would impact student learning, she replied, “This makes us think about adjustments we can make right away. It made me reflect on my practices as an individual teacher and as a member of my team.” Darrell Smith, a business teacher who presented on reflective teaching practices, added, “Effective collaborative planning takes the pressure off the individual teacher and builds confidence through shared work. Having common understanding and expectations gives us a blueprint for success across all classrooms.”

Principal Denson and his team are consistently supporting their efforts. They attend the teachers’ meetings weekly and they have completed calibration rounds across departments to ensure that their monitoring feedback also reflects common understanding and expectations. Assistant Principal Tamra Watts concluded, “We are excited about the direction of our work at Towers!”

SOUTHWEST REGION

Randolph County Elementary School

Superintendent: Dr. Marvin Howard

Principal: Robbin Temples

Assistant Principal: Liz Knighton

Instructional Coach: Becky McPherson

SIS: Verna Scroggins

[Randolph County Elementary School](#) has aligned their work with a focus on providing professional learning with implementation expectations, collection and analysis for classroom implementation data and student achievement data. Their focus has centered on all content areas with implementation of TKES 8: Academically Challenging Environment with student learning as the focused end result. Their school wide focus has been: Effective communication of learning targets and success criteria; Rigorous assessments aligned to GSE that require higher order questioning and thinking; Student engagement that enables students to collaborate and engage in conversation based on rigorous tasks; and teacher and student feedback building to self-efficacy of student self-monitoring.

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SOUTHWEST REGION (continued)

RCES is a data-focused school collecting and analyzing student achievement data for benchmark assessments of Lexile reading levels, reading comprehension, writing, and math performance tasks. Weekly classroom achievement data is also collected and analyzed to inform whole and small group instruction. RCES also collects and analyzes process data with monthly focus walks on TKES 8 implementation conducted by the Principal, Assistant Principal, Instructional Coach, and RESA School Improvement Specialist. Informal classroom observations occur weekly and formal evaluations are conducted by administrators aligned to TKES 8 which aligns to all other TKES standards.

Randolph County Elementary has celebrated much success this year as they analyze data in weekly leadership and data team meetings. Although leaders and teachers know there are still many areas for continued improvement, they are confident that the formative data indications will result in higher student achievement on the Georgia Milestones and RCES CCRPI report.

SOUTHEAST REGION

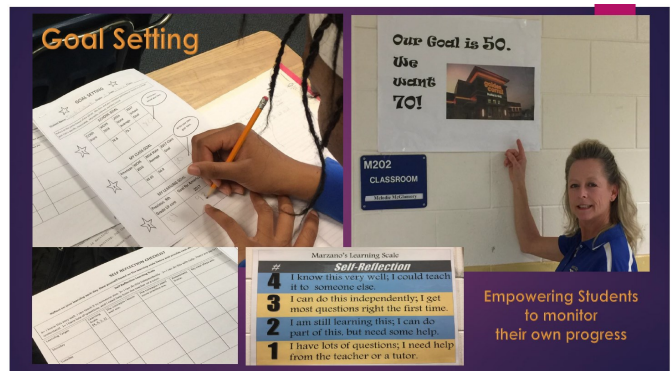
A targeted action step for most schools after a [GSAPS](#) review is to provide training and support to teachers in creating opportunities for students to take ownership of their learning using self-monitoring tools. In the Southeast Region, [Wilcox County High School](#) has really enjoyed learning about Instruction Standard (I8) by establishing a learning environment that empowers students to monitor their own progress. The teachers received professional learning on ways for students to self-assess, reflect on their learning, and set goals/next steps. Teachers especially liked Marzano's Learning Scale: 4= I know this very well, and can teach it to my peers, 3= I can do this independently and get most questions right the first time, 2= I am still learning this and can do part of this, but need some help, 1= I have lots of questions, and I need help from the teacher. A poster of the learning scale is in every classroom.

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SOUTHEAST REGION (continued)

The teachers get feedback from the students by using a self-reflection checklist tool for students to write the following:

1. The learning target
2. Rate their learning on a 1-4 scale
3. The concept(s) they have learned well
4. The concept(s) on which they need more practice
5. A goal or next step that would enable the student to master the learning target.



The principal shared that teachers have added the self-reflection checklist in their lesson plans and are using it in the classroom on a regular basis. The administrators also visited every GA Milestones class to share the importance of setting goals and working hard to achieve the goals. Students received a goal sheet to set a school goal, a class goal, and an individual goal. Administrators met with each individual student to review their SLDS history profile that included the student's attendance, Lexile level, and previous test scores so students could set individual SMART goals. The goal setting was such a great success that the principal in the middle school and elementary school plan to do the goal setting with their students as well.

We want to hear from you! Please send your ideas for future editions of the newsletter to Andrea Cruz at acruz@doe.k12.ga.us.