

Georgia Reading On My Mind



The Governor's Reading Instruction Mentor Initiative

Governor Nathan Deal's New Initiative to
Improve Early Literacy in Georgia

IN THIS ISSUE:

Mission and Goals
Directors
Mentors
Participating Georgia Schools
School System Spotlight
News You Can Use!



A Message From Our Governor

“We must make a concerted effort to increase the percentage of children reading at grade level by the completion of 3rd Grade... Students must learn to read in order to be able to read to learn, and when we fail to invest in our youngest students, we are forced to spend money on remediation for the remainder of their academic careers.”

—
Governor Nathan Deal
State of the State Address
January 10, 2012

LEARNING TO READ

I've got great news.
I'm learning to read!
I can sound out my letters
Like “sp” “sp” – SPEED.
It's exciting to learn the
mysteries that hide in a book.
The names of Pirates
.. like Captain Hook.
I can unlock the secrets
that are hidden in words.
My mind is set free and
it flies like the birds!
So hop on this Magic Carpet
and see where it leads.
There are worlds to explore
when you learn how to READ!
Written By: Governor Nathan Deal
February 27, 2011

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Look for the magazine online with more ideas and lesson plans in reading and writing.

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Reading



What is the Governor's Mentor Initiative to Improve Reading Instruction?

The Governor's Reading Instruction Mentor Initiative began in the summer of 2012 with an invitation sent to school superintendents throughout Georgia. Twenty-two districts and one multi-district charter school requested help. The team got busy devising a strategic plan to help these schools. The framework began in July with the hiring of Pamela Gay as the Statewide Early Literacy Director. Fifteen of the best reading instructors

and literacy coaches were hired as reading instruction mentors.

"We did not want to create just another reading program. When programs are no longer in place, the gains for the students are lost. We wanted this reading initiative to have a lasting impact. Our plan is to change teachers' instructional practices," said Mrs. Gay.

Now this is being done across the state by supplying research-based assessments, professional

development, and monthly training sessions.

"We want to provide each teacher with the best in reading practices that will stay with her or him throughout their career," she added.

With the reading instruction mentors to guide them, these teachers are practicing more effective ways to teach reading that will not only impact their current class of learners, but also their future classes of students as well.

Missions and Goals

1. To Create a Gold Standard in Excellence for Teaching our Children How to Read.

By providing support of new practices for principals and teachers, our schools will be models for the state in dynamic leadership and strong literacy instruction.

2. To Provide Evidence-Based Professional Development

Through ongoing training, our staff provides focus on the best leadership and reading practices for our schools, teachers, and staff.

3. To Implement Assessment-Driven Instruction

Using the research-based screening tool DIBELS Next, data is collected and progress monitoring is completed on students having problems in reading. Differentiated reading instruction is provided based on the data from these assessments. Target areas of deficiencies in reading are identified and individualized instruction is designed for each child.



The NEW MOVEMENT

ASSESS IT! CHART IT!

GIVE STUDENTS A TARGET!

One of Georgia Governor Nathan Deal's top priorities is to have every child reading on grade level by completion of third grade. But how is this going to be done differently than other reading programs that have been attempted in the past?

"The mentors and I are on a mission to truly change instructional practices across the state leading to steadfast student achievement gains," says Pamela Gay, Statewide Early Literacy Director. "Our goal is simple – to work closely with our schools, building strong **Partnerships for Performance** where a Gold Standard for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is at the forefront of all we do."

She adds that they are willing to work diligently with all state agencies and communities so that all Georgia schools will succeed. "Our core schools are beginning to blaze a trail in reading that will start a movement for schools across Georgia to follow," she said

"It is time to create Real Readers for a Real World- Every Student, Every Day, and in Every Classroom!"....Pamela Gay

THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT



In his 2012 State of the State address, Governor Nathan Deal introduced a new initiative to improve early literacy in Georgia, directing \$1.6 million in the state budget to a reading instruction mentor program that will improve the percentage of children reading at grade level by the end of third grade.

The appropriated funds were designated to support 15 regional mentors serving schools throughout the state. Because of the inter-agency collaboration involved in this project, it was placed at the Governor's Office of Student Achievement since they are the state's P-20 education agency.

While GOSA's direct affiliation remains with the Governor's office, it also works closely with all of Georgia's education agencies.

Go to: <http://www.gaosa.org/index.aspx>, for information.

The Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) strives to increase student achievement and school completion across Georgia through meaningful, transparent, and objective analysis and communication of statewide data. In addition, GOSA provides policy support to the Governor and, ultimately, to the citizens of Georgia through:

- An education scoreboard that indicates the effectiveness of Georgia's education institutions, from Pre-K through college;
- Research initiatives on education programs in Georgia and corresponding findings to

- inform policy, budget, and legislative efforts;
- Thorough analysis and straightforward communication of education data to stakeholders;
- Audits of academic programs to ensure that education institutions are fiscally responsible with state funds and faithful to performance accountability and
- Collaborative work with the Alliance of Education Agency Heads (AEAH) to improve education state wide.

ABOUT OUR DIRECTOR

Bonnie Holliday is the Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Student Achievement. Prior to joining the GOSA team, she worked for the Office of Planning and Budget as the Accountability Manager for the Race to the Top Innovation Fund and for the Georgia Charter Schools Commission as the Program Manager for Accountability.

She received both her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from the University of Georgia. She is currently a Doctoral Candidate in UGA's Educational Administration and Policy Program.



Pamela Gay

Statewide Early Literacy Director

Governor's Office of Student Achievement

Pamela Salter Gay was appointed Statewide Early Literacy Director for the Governor's Office of Student Achievement in July 2012. Pamela has specialized in the professional discipline of education for the past 25 years. She has focused her career on teaching children how to read and find meaning from many varied styles of text.

Pamela received her Master's degree in Educational Leadership from Western Michigan University and her Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from Georgia Southwestern State University.

Her experiences as a teacher range from kindergarten through college. She has taught kindergarten, 3rd, 6th, 7th and 8th grades, as well as college reading classes. She has served in preparatory, charter, and public

school settings with a strong background in administration and curriculum.

Before taking this position, Pamela worked as a Reading Consultant for the Georgia Department of Education and as a facilitator for the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Summer Learning Project in Savannah. She is a state and national speaker and the author of a children's book, *"Journey to Sittabacuttaba Land."*

Her quote for teachers, "Just say NO to down instructional time and yes to instructional time filled with assessment-based reading interventions." Her goal for students is that all children will be reading at or above grade level by third grade.

She won't stop until those words ring true for classrooms across Georgia.

THE MENTORS

Tiffany Adams

Waynesboro Primary,

SGA Elementary, Blakeney Elementary,

BURKE COUNTY SCHOOLS

Our children must be nurtured and encouraged to exceed expectations. We must be vigilant with our instruction and assessment process to ensure every child is a successful reader.Tiffany Adams



Tiffany Adams was born and raised in Southeast Georgia. Her mother was an educator and reading was a big part of her life. It was a ritual and routine for my parents to read to me before going to bed every night. She is in the process of publishing her first book, "T" is for Tracy, inspired and dedicated to her oldest son, Tracy.

Her educational background includes a Bachelor of Science Degree in Child and Family Development from Georgia Southern University and Graduate/ Post-Graduate Degrees in Child & Youth Studies and Elementary Education from Nova Southeastern University.

She has previous experience teaching in a Reading First school where data were used consistently to drive all instruction and where collaborative planning and differentiation were implemented solidly as well.

Her experiences also include being a Literacy Instructor for Adult Education in a Family Literacy Program and she has worked as a mentor and tutor to at-risk foster children. She has served in a number of capacities such as Grade Level Chairperson, Reading/Language Arts Teacher in Residence, DIBELS Mentor, Leadership Team, School Improvement Team, and an RTI Chairperson.

GOALS

- Assist teachers with implementation of progress monitoring and diagnostic assessments to drive building instruction
- Offer professional development on the Five Pillars of Reading and Differentiated Reading Instruction
- Provide modeling of explicit and systematic reading instruction
- Provide coaching to principals and teachers

Tia Adkins



Tia Adkins

**Bartow Elementary
East Broad Elementary
Haven Elementary**

**CHATHAM COUNTY
SCHOOLS**

As a mentor to

Southeast

Georgia

schools,

I believe in

helping teachers

through:

- Teamwork
- Data-Driven Instruction
- Accountability

All students have the capacity to learn. It is our job as educators to provide the best possible instruction to meet the individual needs of the child. Together we can make a difference. Tia Adkins

Her career as an educator began in 1995. She spent 11 years as a classroom teacher, teaching at various grade levels. She served in many capacities, including grade chair, inclusion teacher, and was also a member of the school improvement team. She was a literacy coach for the final three years of the Reading First grant.

Her accomplishments are many including being a coordinator for the *Rockin' Reader Program*, Math endorsed teacher support specialist, and a state and national presenter. She has written an educational manuscript called, *"Setting the Standards for Centers and Beyond the Game."* She has delivered professional development in reading and language arts at the school, district, state and national levels.



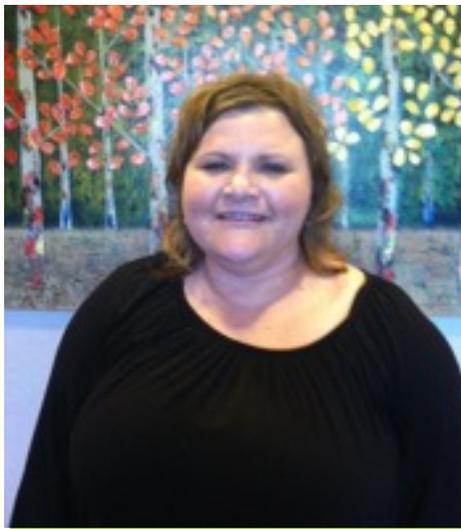
- Teachers
- Teamwork
- Data-Driven Instruction
- Students
- Parents
- Every Child Reading on Grade Level!

CREATING A GOLD STANDARD



Patsy Black

Alps Road Elementary
Gaines Elementary
Winterville Elementary
**CLARKE COUNTY
SCHOOLS**



Patsy Black's education includes:

- **B.A. in Early Childhood Education, Piedmont College**
- **M.A. in Reading and Literacy, Walden University**
- **Ed.S. in Teaching and Learning, Piedmont College**

She is certified in Georgia and South Carolina to teach P-5 and General Special Education

She has 10 years experience in the classroom and has extensive experience working with students with a wide range of abilities and needs.

Patsy Black's Educational Journey

As an educator, I have a deep passion to help students who struggle with reading. My late father roots my desire. My father did not have a formal education. He was illiterate.

Despite his lack of a formal education, he was a well-known and highly demanded carpenter. As a child, I can recall reading books to him and wanting so badly for him to be able to read to me.

As an adult, I am still in awe of the natural abilities he exhibited to work and care for our family.

My experience with my father continues to drive my desire to help students exceed and to promote literacy.

Ms. Black's goals are to provide workshops in the area of Basic Early Literacy. She hopes to provide additional opportunities for parent involvement in schools.

She wants to provide professional learning sessions with teachers during common planning periods to discuss data, skills, and strategies.

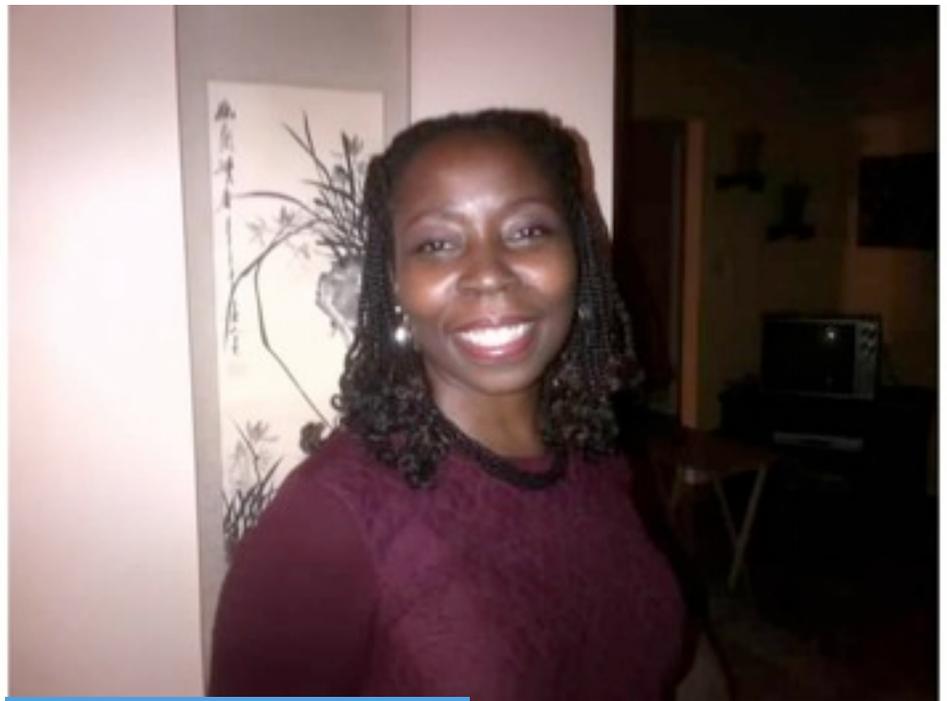
She says by helping teachers analyze their data on how the students are performing, she can better assist them in making plans for more focused teacher instruction.

Her top priority as a mentor is to be a resource to her teachers, the students, and their schools.



Cheryl Cooper-Smith

Rowland Elementary
Brockett Elementary
DEKALB COUNTY
SCHOOLS



“Being a Reading Instruction Mentor is to improve student learning in Pre-Kindergarten through Third grade. It is a calling to assist in utilizing assessment data to examine current student achievement levels. We must use the information gathered to direct instructional decisions. This approach will ensure that we are implementing effective strategies to address the deficiencies in students’ basic literacy skills.

“I am excited about partnering with teachers, principals and instructional leaders to focus on performance-based methods that positively impact school improvement.”

by Cheryl-Cooper-Smith

EDUCATION

- B.S. Ed., Elementary Education, City College of New York
- M. Ed., Early Childhood Education, Piedmont College, Georgia
- Educational Leadership Certification, University of West Georgia

Her goals to assist schools are through:

- The use of universal screeners
 - Progress monitoring and diagnostic assessments
- The role of data in promoting a cycle of continuous improvement
- The Five Essential Components of Reading

Cheryl Cooper-Smith has taught Kindergarten through Fifth Grade and worked in a variety of positions. She has been a classroom teacher, Early Intervention Teacher, and a remediation tutor.

Over the course of her experience she adopted the core belief that a teacher’s attitude, expectations, and knowledge can have a profound effect on their students academic achievement.

Her leadership experience includes:

DIBELS Data System, Reading First Coach, CCGPS ELA Coach, Leadership Team, School Improvement Team, Student Assessment Team, SST Grade Level Chair, SACS Committee , and Disciplinary Committees.

Dr. Karen Davis' model for achieving excellence in teaching is to integrate research and knowledge to establish self-regulated, engaged learners who draw upon their prior knowledge, develop strategies for inquiry, problem solve, think critically and creatively, and become productive in real world functions and social interactions through various communications.



Dr. Karen Davis
Edmonds Elementary
Fountain Elementary
McGarrah Elementary
CLAYTON COUNTY
SCHOOLS

Karen Davis has been teaching for 23 years. Her experience includes teaching preschool, elementary school, and middle school for eight years. Her strongest areas of expertise are literacy theories and methods, language development, reading diagnosis and remediation, online course design, and program development. Dr. Davis is also a tenured professor in the Tift College of Education at Mercer University where she served for 12 years.

Dr. Davis completed her Doctorate from Purdue University in 2002 in Literacy and Language Education. She has taught courses on literacy and language arts methods, children's literature, linguistics, reading diagnostics, and creative arts.

Dr. Karen Davis is an active presenter at local, regional, and international conferences.

Dr. Davis has five publications that cover a variety of topics including: social justice, literacy skills, test preparation, and a passion for teaching. She is a member of the International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Since 2005, she has served on the Community Projects Committee for the Georgia Reading Association.





Ruth Durham
Forrest Road Elementary
MUSCOGEE COUNTY
SCHOOLS
Chattahoochee County
Education Center
CHATTAHOOCHEE
COUNTY SCHOOLS



Education: BS.Ed., Early Childhood Education, University of Georgia, M.Ed., Reading Education, University of Georgia Ed.S., Early Childhood Education, University of Georgia

Ruth Durham has had vast experiences in teaching literacy. Her career as an educator began in 2002. She spent eight years as a classroom teacher and served in many leadership roles during her ten years as an educator.

The wide range of her experiences include working with low income and at-risk students, English Language Learners, gifted and talented students, and students with special needs.

Her abilities to implement standards-based classroom strategies, provide data-driven instruction, and her skills with differentiated reading instruction allow her to meet the needs of all learners.

By serving on data teams and working with Response to Intervention (RTI) processes, she has been

able to use and apply these experiences to identify and develop assessments aligned to the Georgia Performance Standards.

One of her strongest abilities is identifying individual student needs. This enables her to assist teachers to adjust their instruction based on the student's assessment results.

Using these strategies she can advise and assist teachers in implementing the appropriate interventions to help each child reach their greatest potential.



Ms. Durham says, "I was honored to serve on the CCSD curriculum revisions committee in 2008. My task involved creating third grade English/ Language Arts units which were completely aligned to the GPS. The units I wrote include research-based best practices for instruction and assessment along with differentiation suggestions and family involvement components."

I have also been privileged to expand my reach beyond the local school districts through the production of curriculum materials."

Ruth Durham has now authored five teacher's guides that support reading series books with standards-based lessons and activities that address learning styles.



In that position she provided assistance to Reading First schools. When the Reading First Grant ended, she began working with schools and agencies throughout the state as an Independent School Improvement Specialist providing assistance to elementary and middle schools.

Carol Hartley’s career as an educator began as a first grade teacher. For 23 years she enjoyed that position in Peach County.

For the next six years she was the *Success for All Reading Facilitator* for grades K-3 in Peach County. After her school became a Reading First School, she became a Reading First Literacy Coach.

After 32 years of teaching school in Peach County, she was given the opportunity to work for the Georgia Department of Education serving as a Reading First Statewide Literacy Specialist.

She has served as a facilitator for the Annie E. Casey Foundation Georgia Summer Program in Savannah.

As a member of the Georgia Literacy Task Force she helped create our state Literacy Plan, and is continuing her educational journey as a Reading Instructional Mentor with the Governors Office.

EDUCATION
 B.S. Ed., Elementary Education, Georgia College
 M.Ed., Elementary Education, Georgia Southwestern State University

Carol Hartley
Sarah Cobb Elementary
SUMTER COUNTY
Telfair County Elementary
TELFAIR COUNTY

“Through our relentless efforts, Georgia students can be successful in meeting or exceeding high expectations in reading achievement.”
Carol Hartley

- LEADERSHIP**
- SACS Visiting Team Member
 - SACS School and Committee Chairman
 - Two Rivers Migrant Summer School Lead Teacher
 - Northwest RESA Reading Endorsement Instructor
 - Collaboratively developed Reading First state wide professional learning
 - Federal Grant Monitor



Sian Lott

**Calhoun Elementary
CALHOUN COUNTY
Clay County
Elementary
CLAY COUNTY
Pataula Charter
Academy**

Education

**Troy University
B.S.Ed, Elementary
Education,
Reading Endorsement,
Southwest Georgia,
RESA
ESOL Endorsement,
North Georgia
College
Troy University
M.P.S.Ed,
Post- Secondary**

"All children that I encounter are a masterpiece, each in their own special way, contributing to my growth as I contribute to theirs."

Sian Lott



AN EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY

Sian Lott has classroom, coaching and leadership experience with a solid foundation in early childhood development. She has served as a Reading First Coach for five years and K-5 Academic Coach for two additional years. During this time she organized and conducted professional development for adult faculty and provided intervention for students in all grade levels as well as maintained all records and required RTI documentation.

SKILLS

Sian's skills include being a DIBELS Next Trainer, PPVT Trainer, Common Core integration and guidance, and the ability to analyze universal screeners, benchmarks, and progress monitoring data. She has a solid knowledge of the five components of reading and has had experience coordinating school wide assessment teams. She has served on the Georgia Department of Education CRCT Item Review and Data Analysis Team.

Cary Moore

Ellijay Primary School

Ellijay Elementary School

Mountain View

Elementary School

GILMER COUNTY SCHOOLS

“Reading is the cornerstone of learning in a young child’s life and being a successful reader is an indicator of being a productive, independent, and satisfied individual.”

by Cary Moore



EDUCATION

B.S.Ed, Early Childhood Education, North Georgia College

M.Ed., Middle Grades Education, North Georgia College

Ed.S., Leadership, Lincoln Memorial University

Cary Moore comes from an educational background and always felt she was born to teach. After graduating with a B.S. in Early Childhood Education from North Georgia College, she was given her first teaching job in Dahlonega as a reading teacher in Lumpkin County.

The next year, she found a position as a behavior management teacher. This led to three years with Madison County teaching second and third grade elementary classes. Cary then returned to Lumpkin County, teaching reading and language arts at the elementary school and elementary grade levels.

In addition to receiving the honor of “Teacher of the Year,” other awards and positions she has held include: SST Coordinator, GAE President, SACS Chairperson for Language Arts, and was the recipient of the Jackson EMC Reading Grant.

“With coordination, organization, training, teamwork and dedication, we can provide an environment in which children can grow intellectually, socially and emotionally, producing valuable citizens for today’s world but more importantly-literate and educated people to solve tomorrow’s problems.” Cary Moore



PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY

Children can learn.

Given high expectations and solid, curriculum-based instruction, students will soar.

From parents to teachers, to paraprofessionals, to bus drivers, and lunchroom workers, custodians to fellow classmates-- ALL must work together to set our students up for success. “



Mindy Palmer

Harper Elementary School
Jerger Elementary School
Scott Elementary School
THOMASVILLE CITY
SCHOOLS



“Within each child there is a unique world of possibilities. It is my job to open my heart to each student and unveil their eyes to the wonderful world of education.”
Mindy Palmer

Mindy Palmer’s career as an educator began in 2003. She spent nine years as a classroom teacher, in the first and third grades at Annie Belle Clark Primary School in Tifton, Georgia. While serving as a classroom teacher, she felt privileged to teach a wide variety of learners.

Her experiences in teaching include at-risk students, English Language Learners, EIP students, gifted and talented students, and students with special needs. These experiences have given her the opportunity to work collaboratively with other educators, families, and community stakeholders.

During her nine years as a classroom teacher, she provided students with data-driven instruction using research-based best practices. She practiced differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all learners in a standards-based classroom by implementing flexible groups and tiered levels of learning activities. In addition, she has had extensive experience with data teams and Response to Intervention (RTI) processes, including identifying individual student needs, regularly gathering and analyzing data and student work, implementing appropriate interventions, adjusting instruction based on assessment results, and progress monitoring.

Some of her leadership experiences include: Co-Vice President of the Tift County Reading Association, Writing Fair Coordinator, and a Leadership Team Member.

Education

B.S. Ed., Early Childhood Education,
Valdosta State University

M.Ed., Reading Education,
Valdosta State University

Ed.S., Educational Leadership,
Valdosta State University

Personal Philosophy

I believe that flexible groups, student-centered learning, and differentiated instruction are the best ways to meet the needs of each student. It is my job to provide teachers and students with the tools they need to be successful lifelong learners.

Jamie Thomas

Montgomery County Elementary School

MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCHOOLS

Wilcox County Elementary School

WILCOX COUNTY SCHOOLS

Sally D. Meadows Elementary School

J.D. Dickerson Elementary School

VIDALIA CITY SCHOOLS

Jamie Thomas loves teaching and loves reading. She has taught everything from kindergarten to college students.

She says, "In the quest to learn to read, there are many misconceptions. Many believe that reading will just happen automatically, as if by some magical act or perhaps by the nature of things. Early literacy teachers know this is not the case. Learning to read requires explicit teaching on the part of the teacher and practice on the part of every child. Not all words are sight words, but a child must have knowledge of sight words in order to be able to read effectively."

Jamie also has strong thoughts about phonics. "Reading is not only about phonics, but a child needs some knowledge of phonics in order to decode unfamiliar words while reading." She says that comprehension is the goal of reading and vocabulary acquisition is a very important part of reading. "All of these things must be taught for fluent, meaningful reading to occur."

Besides teaching, Jamie has had experience as a Reading First Literacy Coach, an Assistant Principal, an Intervention Coordinator, a School Improvement Coordinator, and an Adjunct College Professor.



"Reading opens many doors that may otherwise remain closed for a number of children and adults. Astute readers will find themselves more knowledgeable in many ways.

For students, vocabulary acquisition, knowledge of history and science, sentence structure for use in writing, and the success of their academic career depends upon the knowledge they attain through reading."

EDUCATION

B.S. in Early Childhood Education,
Brewton Parker College,
Presently Enrolled

M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education,
Georgia Southwestern State University,
Ed.S. in Educational Leadership,
Georgia Southern University



Keila Tucker
Carver Elementary
Louisville Academy
Wrens Elementary,
JEFFERSON COUNTY
SCHOOLS

All students can learn, if proper modeling and guided practice are incorporated into their learning process. Students need academic coaching to become better learners, and exemplars should be presented to students.

This will create a 'start to finish' paradigm shift in learning settings because the goal is presented before the process begins.
by Keila Tucker

Keila Tucker holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Augusta State University. It was there that she also completed her Master of Education in Special Education and Educational Specialist in Teaching and Learning instruction.

She has taught school in Grades Pre-K through Twelfth Grade in Richmond, McDuffie, and Columbia Counties and has worked collaboratively with administrators, teachers, and parents to form partnerships for student achievement.

Besides Keila's vast credentials in higher education, she also has had experience in

Gifted, Early Childhood Education and Middle Grades. She has a Reading Endorsement, as well as having certification as Teacher Support Specialist.

Keila is certified in Special Education in Language Arts, Math and Science Cognitive Levels, and in Learning Disabilities.

She has worked with many programs and different kinds of instruction such as: Data-driven instruction and analysis, Multiple Intelligences, Differentiated Instruction, and Inquiry Based Learning. She has worked with DIBELS Next and student motivation techniques.



Claudia Weathers

Creekside Elementary School

Midway Elementary School

BALDWIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

Lewis Elementary School

HANCOCK COUNTY SCHOOLS



Claudia Weathers entered a career in education as a second grade teacher for Jones County Schools in 1991. Seven years later she was asked to teach Spanish Exploratory to grades K-5.

She missed the classroom and returned the next year as a First Grade EIP host teacher. That is where she discovered her passion for early literacy.

“The experience of seeing little ones “break the code” and enter into a world of narrative and informational delight became my passion,” she said. It was during this time that she became certified as a Reading Specialist and earned her Master’s Degree in Educational Leadership. In 2005 she became the first Instructional Coach for Jones County Schools.

For the following seven years, she worked with teachers as they implemented Standards Based-Classrooms, Differentiated Instruction, and Response to Intervention. She earned her Specialist in Educational Leadership in 2009 and continued to work with teachers in all areas of curriculum and instruction.

Being an Instructional Coach gave Claudia daily opportunities to lead individuals as well as groups in promoting excellence to improve learning for children. She worked with schools to engage in data analysis and conducted reflective conversations about best practices.

Together they made critical decisions concerning student needs. In that capacity she had the opportunity to develop and implement Teacher Leader Cohorts, where teachers were able to develop their own leadership skills.

In addition, her role as an Instructional Coach allowed her to provide professional

“I have made the choice to dedicate my professional life to the field of education.

I have made the choice to spend time with educators at all levels to help them reach their fullest potential, discover their passions, and see their choices change the lives of children.”

Claudia Weathers

development to educators at all levels and areas directed by the school’s improvement plan.

Facilitating a wide variety of professional learning communities and developing and monitoring the implementation of RTI on the school and district level, gave her the training and experience to be a mentor for the Georgia Governor’s Office.

Her belief for moving students to read on grade level is simple. She says, “Effective leadership is based on working together toward an agreed upon result. “



Lynn Woodruff

Quitman County
Elementary School
QUITMAN COUNTY SCHOOLS
Randolph County
Elementary School
Randolph County Pre-K
RANDOLPH COUNTY
SCHOOLS

EDUCATION

B.S.Ed., Middle Grades
Education, Georgia Southwestern
University
M.Ed., Reading Specialist,
Georgia Southwestern University
Ed. S., Early Childhood
Education, Georgia Southwestern
University

“As educators it is our duty to provide guidance and support to families and to promote positive family involvement in our student’s education.”

Lynn Woodruff

Lynn Woodruff has served in many leadership roles during her career. These include serving as a Grade Level Chair, Subject Area Chair, and on School Improvement Leadership Teams, on SACS Committees, and as a grade level representative for the Language Arts/Reading Curriculum Development Team in Macon County.

She has a wide variety of teaching experiences ranging from special needs and at-risk students to English Language Learners and severe emotional and behavior disorders to gifted and talented students.

Ms. Woodruff has also developed reading curriculum and used formative and summative assessment materials. She has supervised the field experiences for student teachers at Georgia Southwestern University and served as a Reading Resource Specialist.



“Supporting data-driven instruction is so important. It is imperative that teachers know where their students are academically and where they need to be. This allows us to plan effectively and provide instruction that meets the needs of all learners.”



Kristina R. Yant
Barton Chapel Elementary
Bayvale Elementary
Wilkinson Gardens
Elementary
RICHMOND COUNTY
SCHOOLS

LITERACY EXPERTISE

- Delivery of various core and intervention programs.

- Experience in DIBELS and DIBELS Next

- Data Director using data analysis tools to drive instruction.

- Extensive training in Reading First

- Five Pillars of Reading Instruction

EDUCATION

In 1998 Kristina Yant received a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from Augusta State University. She earned her Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from Troy State University in 2002. In 2008, she completed a Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership from Augusta State University.

EXPERIENCE & LEADERSHIP

Kristina Yant was a classroom teacher for 13 years. Her experience ranges from teaching Kindergarten through Third grade. She taught in Richmond County for nine years, one year in North Fulton, and worked in Columbia County for three years.

As a classroom teacher she was responsible for redelivery and development of the Georgia Performance Standards and Core Curriculum Units.

She also mentored new teachers and was part of the Augusta State Master Teacher program.

Her goals to help schools in Georgia are:

- To provide additional support to principals and teachers in the areas of Basic Early Literacy

- To refine and/or establish comprehensive early literacy plans

- To provide additional coaching and lesson modeling on explicit and systematic classroom reading instruction

- To continue meaningful progress monitoring and assessment





PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

NORTH

GILMER COUNTY
ELLIJAY PRIMARY
ELLIJAY
ELEMENTARY
MOUNTAIN VIEW
ELEMENTARY

CLARKE COUNTY
ALPS ROAD
ELEMENTARY
GAINES
ELEMENTARY
WINTERVILLE
ELEMENTARY

CENTRAL EAST

BURKE COUNTY
WAYNESBORO
ELEMENTARY
SGA ELEMENTARY
BLAKENEY
ELEMENTARY

JEFFERSON
COUNTY
CARVER
ELEMENTARY
LOUISVILLE
ACADEMY
WRENS
ELEMENTARY

RICHMOND
COUNTY
BARTON CHAPEL
ELEMENTARY
BAYVALE
ELEMENTARY
WILKINSON
GARDENS
ELEMENTARY

BALDWIN
COUNTY
CREEKSIDE
ELEMENTARY
MIDWAY
ELEMENTARY

HANCOCK
COUNTY
LEWIS
ELEMENTARY

VIDALIA CITY
SALLY D.
MEADOWS
ELEMENTARY

JD DICKERSON
ELEMENTARY

ATLANTA METRO

CLAYTON
COUNTY
EDMONDS
ELEMENTARY
FOUNTAIN
ELEMENTARY
MCGARRAH
ELEMENTARY

DEKALB COUNTY
ROWLAND
ELEMENTARY
BROCKETT
ELEMENTARY

CENTRAL WEST

MUSCOGEE
COUNTY
FORREST RD
ELEMENTARY

SUMTER COUNTY
SARAH COBB
ELEMENTARY

TELFAIR COUNTY
TELFAIR
ELEMENTARY

MONTGOMERY
COUNTY
MONTGOMERY
ELEMENTARY

WILCOX
WILCOX
ELEMENTARY

SOUTH

THOMASVILLE CITY
SCHOOLS
HARPER ELEMENTARY
JERGER ELEMENTARY
SCOTT ELEMENTARY

CHATHAM COUNTY
BARTOW ELEMENTARY
EAST BROAD
ELEMENTARY
HAVEN ELEMENTARY

QUITMAN COUNTY
QUITMAN ELEMENTARY

RANDOLPH COUNTY
RANDOLPH COUNTY
ELEMENTARY
RANDOLPH PRE-K

CALHOUN COUNTY
CALHOUN COUNTY
ELEMENTARY
CHATTAHOOCHEE
COUNTY
CHATTAHOOCHEE
COUNTY
EDUCATION CENTER

CLAY COUNTY
CLAY ELEMENTARY

PATAULA CHARTER
ACADEMY
SERVES: BAKER,
CALHOUN, CLAY, EARLY,
AND RANDOLPH
COUNTIES

**FORTY - FIVE
SCHOOLS**

15 MENTORS
are developing
classroom
INSTRUCTIONS
that produce
optimal levels of
performance with
students who **WILL**
read at or above
grade level.
**These Georgia
schools are
making it
happen.**



Dynamic Leadership

Superintendent Dr. Molly Howard
Jefferson County Schools

SPOTLIGHT
JEFFERSON
COUNTY
SCHOOL
SYSTEM



*“Without hope, why try?”
“And so that’s what we do:
try to create hope.”*

Dr. Molly Howard is the Superintendent of Jefferson County Schools. She is a leader with a hands on philosophy. This is a job she takes seriously. It is more than a job to her, it is a responsibility.

“Every day is a challenge to improve our community, one child at a time.”

She was the 2008 MetLife/NASSP High School Principal of the Year. However, none of her awards have made her unapproachable. She is available to anyone who is willing to help her schools.

Molly Howard was working as a special education administrator in another part of Jefferson County when a new High School was being constructed in the fall of 1994. Dr. Howard’s route to work took her past the construction. Daily, she felt something tug at her as she drove by. “I really knew that I could pull the county together,” she said. When the school opened in 1995, Dr. Howard was named as principal. This led her to receive the National Principal of the Year Award. She is still pulling Jefferson County together, but now as Superintendent of Schools. “Schools have got to find ways to personalize their environment,” she said. “Our children need it. Our future, depends upon a personalized learning environment.”

Her school system last year received the Striving Reader Grant and her district is a trailblazer in the Governor’s Reading Instruction Mentor program. “We are using all of the resources we receive everyday and following the assessments to deliver differentiated instruction. Our system is working together to make a difference in every student’s education.”

SPOTLIGHT

JEFFERSON
COUNTY
SCHOOL
SYSTEM

LOUISVILLE,
GEORGIA



The Jefferson County School Board's vision statement, *"A unified community ensuring that EVERY CHILD will graduate from high school post secondary ready,"* provides a clear direction for the success of the Jefferson County Schools.

As a participant in the Governor's Reading Instruction Mentor Initiative and a Striving Reader Grant Award recipient, the top priority for their school system is to continue to increase learning and achievement for all students and to close the achievement gap between the lowest achieving students and the highest achieving students. Their goal is that every child can read on grade level and be post-secondary ready.

"We want them ready without the need of remediation or tutoring," says Superintendent Molly Howard. *"Jefferson County students are facing a whole new set of challenges with changing economics, science and technology, health and security issues, and demographics,"* she says. *"To meet the challenge of global competence for our students, our school system is dedicated to ensuring excellence in our instructional programs."*



*Every Child,
Every Day*

*The guiding principle of
Jefferson County Schools*



A South Georgia school speaks out about the success of the Governor’s Reading Instruction Mentor Initiative.

IT’S A BIG DEAL!

Harper Elementary School was recently selected to participate in the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement’s Reading Instruction Mentor Program. Local superintendents were asked by the governor to nominate elementary schools that had a strong commitment from building level leadership to improve reading instruction and student achievement.

According to the Governor’s office, Harper Elementary School rose quickly to the top of the list. The objective of this new

program is to improve early literacy. Literacy skills frequently serve as a foundation for future learning across subject areas.

Each selected school will be provided targeted professional development and instructional coaching to Pre-Kindergarten through Third grade teachers to improve comprehensive school literacy plans. Teachers believe it is a ‘BIG DEAL’ to have been selected to participate in this program and have accepted the challenge to ensure that students at Harper are better prepared to meet this critical benchmark.

A Teacher Speaks :

“It is the first time in a long time that I have heard a presenter from anywhere say things that I not only feel are relevant to my everyday job, but know they are.” *Ondrya Devane, Kindergarten teacher, Harper Elementary School*

“When I first heard about this project, I must admit I thought. ‘Oh No, here we go again.’

There have been so many times in the past that teachers have been ‘given a new whatever,’ and then left floundering and wondering how to accomplish it.

Then I met my Reading Instruction Mentor, Mindy Palmer and my opinion began to shift. After spending time with Mindy, and listening to Mrs. Gay, I now feel confident that we at Harper Elementary School in Thomasville are going to not only meet the challenge, but we are going to surpass expectations.

I not only hear you saying ‘how much you care,’ but I see it.”

From one willing and committed teacher to another, I just want to say THANK YOU to the Governor’s Mentors for what you are doing and be prepared to see Harper Soar!

A Principal Speaks :

“The Reading Instruction Mentor program has provided teachers with essential ongoing professional development. As a result, teachers are confident that they can teach the reading foundational skills needed to help our students become fluent readers.” *by Catherine Swain, Principal Harper Elementary School.*

Harper Elementary School is located is part of Thomasville City Schools.

What's Next?

Addressing Reading Standards in the New Core Curriculum

by Freida McGee

You do not put new wine in old wineskins. This is a New Testament metaphor taken from the culture of that day. Old wineskins stretched and became brittle, risking problems when new wines were put into them. This metaphor keeps coming to mind when I think about the shifts in instruction called for by the Common Core ELA Standards. Simply putting the new standards into previously used practices may not result in the outcomes we want to achieve.

One shift in instruction focuses our attention to teaching sentence structure (syntax). Because syntax can predict student performance as much as vocabulary does, we need to learn how to teach more complex sentence structures in the texts we read and discuss in class. A powerful way to focus on sentence structure when reading and discussing texts with our students is to ask text dependent questions about the longest, most complicated, or most confusing sentences. We can also ask students to paraphrase complex sentences. ("Text Dependent Questions" Professional Development Module 4, www.achievethecore.org). You can find examples of text dependent questions focusing on sentence structure in lesson plans written for the Basal Alignment Project(www.edmodo.com). Some of these lesson plans can be paired with read aloud texts you have on hand if your school does not use the basal program.

Dr. Michael McKenna has suggestions for teaching sentence composing to help us link reading, speaking and writing. In his training module, he describes four sentence composing strategies: Sentence Combining, Sentence Imitating, Sentence Expanding, and Sentence Unscrambling. He suggests choosing any two of the sentence composing strategies to teach a few minutes every day. Students can practice composing more complex sentences orally and in writing. The sentence examples are selected from a text you are reading with students in class, so you are using read alouds as springboards for teaching more complex sentences. You can view Dr. McKenna's module at:www.comprehensivereadingsolutions.com. The website is funded by Georgia Department of Education through the Striving Readers initiative. This particular module is "Writing and Differentiated Reading Instruction" (K-5).

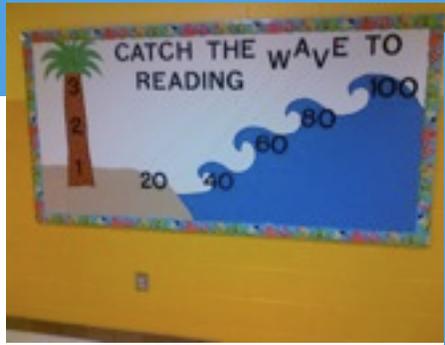
These resources have been very helpful as I learn how to teach complex sentence structure. They serve as new "containers" for the new shifts in teaching the Common Core ELA Standards.

Freida McGee is a Reading Consultant and coach and works for the Chattahoochee Flint Regional Education Center.

SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

4DX

The Four Disciplines of Execution



- 4 Disciplines of Execution
- Changing Human Behavior TOGETHER
- Focus on the Wildly Important Goal (WIG)
- Act on Lead Measures (Behavior that is predictive!)
- Keep Compelling Scoreboards
- Cadence of Accountability

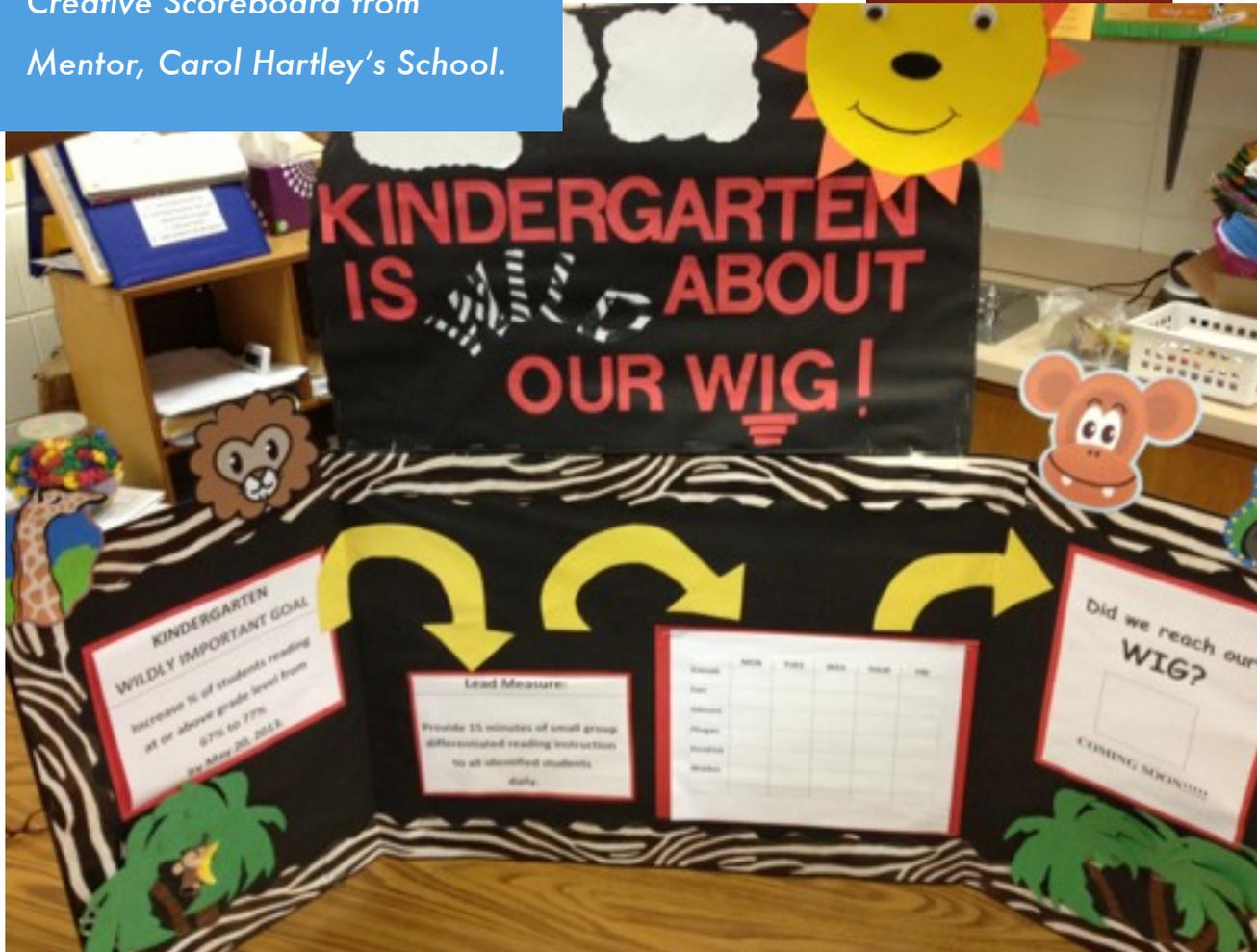
The 4 Disciplines of Execution are basic strategies that the Governor's Reading Instruction Mentors are using based on the best selling book, *The 4 Disciplines of Execution: Achieving Your Wildly Important Goals*, by Sean Covey.

The author says this book was written and the strategies exists for one reason: to execute on a plan in the midst of the whirlwind of distractions.

What better place to execute these 4 Disciplines than in a classroom where there are always distractions?



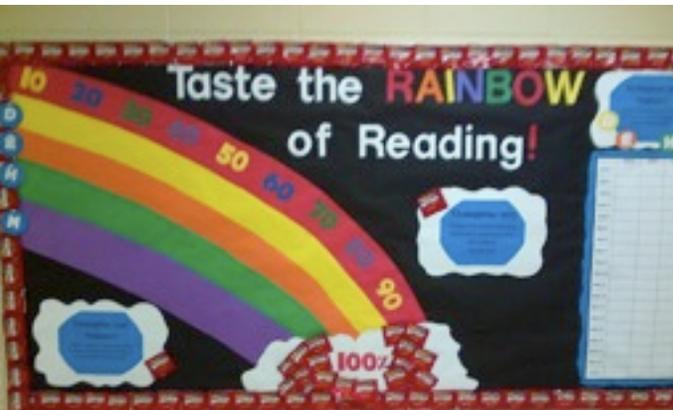
Creative Scoreboard from Mentor, Carol Hartley's School.



4DX Scoreboards

The fundamental purpose of a scoreboard is to motivate the players to win. It's true! People play differently when they are keeping score.

The Governor's Reading Instruction Mentors across the state utilize compelling scoreboards at each grade level to hold one another accountable. These scoreboards are giving the state team the laser focus needed to drive student achievement upward.



Thanks to Mentor Mindy Palmer for assistance and pictures.



Scoreboards:

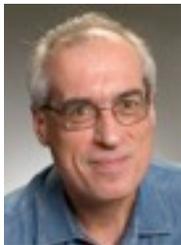
- Are Simple
- Are Highly Visible to the Players
- Have the right "Lead" (behavior that will get to goal) and "Lag" (the goal) Measures
 - Tells us IMMEDIATELY if we are Winning or Losing!

RESEARCHED BASED READING TOOLS

DIBELS^{Next} Powerful Measures to Predict Reading Success



IT BEGINS WITH RESEARCH BASED ASSESSMENT



The Governor's Reading Initiative chose DIBELS NEXT as the program for assessment because of the vast amount of research by authors, Roland Good and Ruth Kaminski

Roland Good, III, Ph.D., is an associate professor of the school of psychology at the University of Oregon and coauthor of **DIBELS NEXT**.

Dr. Good taught briefly in elementary general education and special education classrooms before earning his doctorate in school psychology from Pennsylvania State University. In 2005, Penn State awarded Dr. Good the Excellence in Education Award, and for the past 20 years, he has led the program of Research and Development, culminating in DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills). He has presented more than 100 papers at national conferences including presentations and training at the Georgia Department of Education and for the Governor's Reading Instruction Reading Initiative.

DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP

Dr. Louisa Cook Moats, Ed.D., spent four years between 1997 and 2001 directing the NICHD Early Reading Interventions Project in Washington, DC. Her interest in spelling began while she was a doctoral student at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Dr. Moats has also been a teacher, school psychologist, and licensed psychologist in private practice.

She worked on the California Reading Initiative from 1996-1997 as a Distinguished Visiting Scholar at the Sacramento County Office of Education. Her research interests include the language knowledge of teachers, spelling development and instruction, and the implementation of school wide interventions for improving literacy.

Author's Corner

Dr. Louisa Moats delivers the Keynote Address for the Principals Leadership Summit at the University of Georgia. She is one of the author's of the *Principal's Primer*.

"The Principal's Primer is a how-to manual for principals who want to improve their school's overall reading performance. It explains in very practical terms exactly how a principal can lead a school to implement research-based, reading instruction and achieve optimal results, especially with students from economically, socially, or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds."

by Dr. Louisa Moats



Dr. Moats is an author and national and international speaker on educational leadership and reading instruction.

Georgia Council for the Social Studies

The Professional Association of Social Studies Educators in Georgia



The Mission of the Georgia Council for the Social Studies is to advocate for, support, and celebrate the advancement of quality social studies teaching for Georgia students.

The Vision of the Georgia Council for the Social Studies is to prepare students to be knowledgeable, effective decision makers and engaged citizens in a globally interdependent world.

Our website is your window to Social Studies: www.gcss.net



The GCSS website contains News and Notes on the latest information on teaching social studies and how to implement the Georgia Social Studies Performance Standards. It is where teachers go to find out what they need for the new Core Curriculum. For all your social studies information, go to: www.gcss.net



Insanity: “Doing the same thing
over and over again and
expecting different results.”

Albert Einstein

LET'S FIND THE SOLUTION

