Georgia's Literacy Conceptual Framework for Birth-to-Grade 12

Georgia Literacy Plan: The "Why"

Professional Learning

Intervention

Assessment

Standards

Tasks

Birth- to- Grade 12 Learner

Texts

Strategies
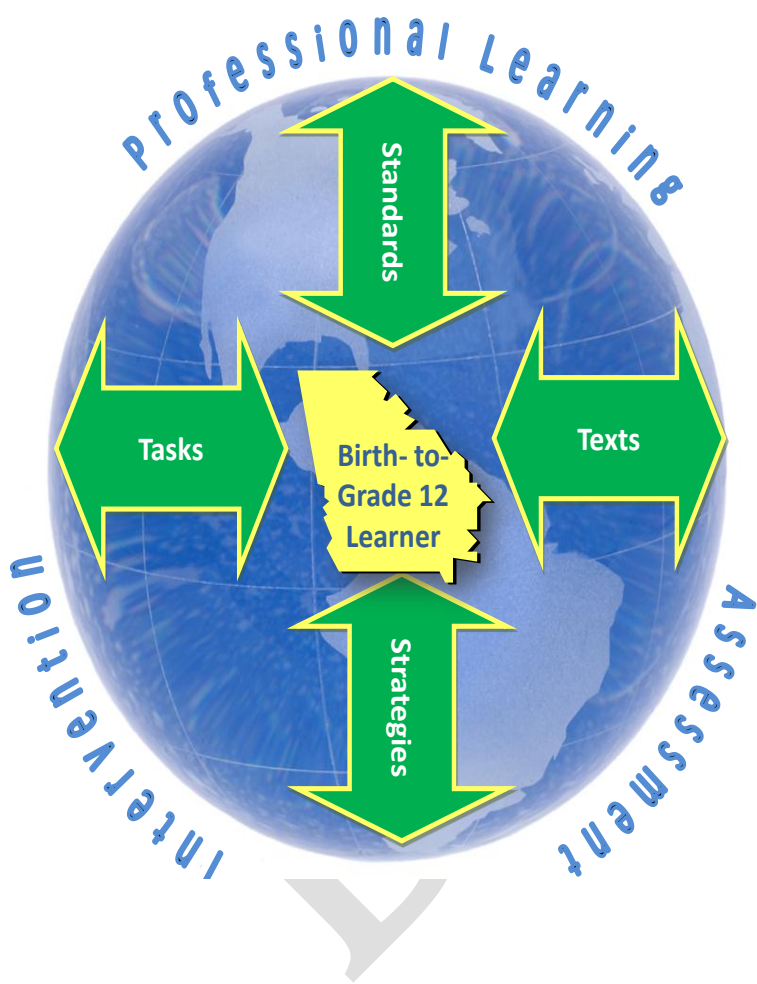
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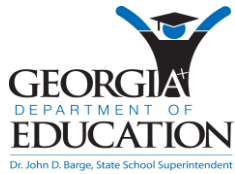
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Table of Contents

This document is the first part of the second iteration of Georgia's Literacy Plan. It attempts to capture the conclusions of the most knowledgeable experts in the field of literacy based on the most recent research findings. As such, it tells "why" we have made the choices in the second document, titled "Building Blocks for Literacy". As a follow up to these two documents, Georgia will develop an Implementation Guide for schools and districts as they attempt to craft the best possible framework for literacy in their communities. The "Building Blocks" portion of this current plan is a listing of the components identified in the research as being necessary for districts to have in place in order to provide maximum access to literacy for all of the children and students in their communities. This is the "what" that districts will need to have in place to make it work. The need for a final document, the Implementation Guide, (which is outside of the scope of this current undertaking) issues out of the findings of the first and second Literacy Task Force documents. It is intended that it will provide districts a roadmap for implementation of those Building Blocks, "the how". This is intended to give districts guidance in "how" to work the plan as well as to provide a means of assessing the level of implementation as it progresses.

P. 1 BACKGROUND: 2009-2010 LITERACY PLAN

In the fall of 2008, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) convened a Literacy Task Force for the purpose of writing the first iteration of a literacy plan for K-12th grades. Over fifty members from a variety of educational contexts statewide were asked to participate. Participants included educators from local districts, Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs), institutes of higher education, Georgia's pre-kindergarten agency (Bright from the Start), and representatives from the GaDOE. From within those entities, there were members representing literacy instruction in regular and special education in elementary, middle, and high school, literacy assessment, adolescent literacy, curriculum directors, English Language Arts, reading specialists, and the birth-to-school population. Members were nominated from a variety of sources but drawn primarily from contacts made by GaDOE staff in interactions with schools, districts, and agencies throughout the state.

The task force met throughout the 2008-2009 school year. Participants were divided into areas of expertise and asked to read the research within four separate domains: professional learning and literacy; K-12 literacy with an emphasis on content-area literacy; assessment and literacy; and intervention for literacy. This research on each domain was

compiled from suggestions from group members and was augmented by advisors from the Southeastern Regional Education Board (SREB) and the South Eastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE). Members were assigned specific areas within each domain and then asked to read and summarize the most current research. Later they reconvened to share the information they had gathered and to develop recommendations based on what had been learned.

Several group members from each area were then asked to compile those summaries and recommendations into a coherent statement of the findings. Those statements were further refined by GADOE staff to provide a smooth transition and a single voice. The result is a literacy document that contains the research necessary to guide the team in designing a comprehensive plan that will be inclusive of all children birth to grade 12. Further, the current document contains four recommendations that outline the way forward for the Georgia Department of Education in its long-range planning for literacy.

P.2. CURRENT PLAN: 2010-2011 LITERACY PLAN

Since the completion of Georgia's Literacy Plan last year, a number of changes have occurred in education that necessitate taking the work that was done at that time to the next level. The Georgia State Board of Education adopted the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards in July of this year. In August of this year, Governor Perdue announced that Georgia had been selected to receive the Race to the Top grant. In September, it was announced that Georgia had been chosen to participate in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's College & Career-Ready Policy Institute. Finally, Georgia has received funding from the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Initiative to allow states to underwrite the development of a literacy plan that encompasses not only K-12, but birth-to-school age as well. This funding was used to convene a second Literacy Team comprised of many of the original members, but with many new members particularly those representing the birth-to-five-year-old population.

P.3. STRATEGY FOR 2010-2011 LITERACY PLAN

The strategy for this next iteration of Georgia's Literacy Plan is as follows:

- ➢ Revise the 2010 Literacy Plan to incorporate the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards.
- ➢ Update the 2010 Literacy Plan to reflect Georgia's participation in Race to the Top will have upon the state's efforts in literacy.

- Update the 2010 Literacy Plan to incorporate efforts currently underway as a result of Georgia's participation in the Gates' College & Career-Ready Institute.
- Update the 2010 Literacy plan to incorporate the latest research impacting the field of literacy.
- Review the 2010 Literacy Plan to ensure that it meets all the requirements stipulated by the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Initiative and amended where necessary.
- The 2010 document will be appended to include:
  - A compilation of the latest research on the birth-to-school-age population as well as a statement of current and future strategies for addressing their needs. (See these sections in this document: Preface, Incorporating Birth-to Five; Sections 3.A.; 4.B, C, D)
  - Research about efforts to improve alignment and transition within the state, districts and schools. (See Section 4. F. of this document.)
  - The impact of Georgia's adoption of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (See Sections 4.D.; 4.F.4.; 5.K of this document)
  - Building Blocks for Literacy that can be used by districts as a guide for improving literacy for all of Georgia's young citizens from birth through high school graduation.

P.4. LITERACY TASK FORCE 2010-2011

In order to accomplish the tasks listed above, GaDOE convened two meetings of approximately forty professionals with expertise in various areas and age groups in education and childcare. The first was with representatives of the birth-to-five community to solicit as much information as possible from that group before meeting with the task force as a whole. The next meeting included professionals representing birth-to-12th grade children and students. They divided themselves into three committees: birth-to-five, elementary, and middle and high.

One theme that came from all of these groups was the need for screening for children and students at all stages of the educational spectrum. In the birth-to-five population, screening will need to take two forms. First children in this age group need to be screened for physical problems such as vision and hearing. Second, Bright from the Start has stated that they will be seeking to make valid and reliable assessment that is appropriate for their

population a central part of early childhood programs. (See Section 5.A.5.a. for further discussion of this topic.)

For students kindergarten to grade 12 screening will be based on standardized that are considered valid and reliable measures. Of particular concern, while high school students are assessed by end of course tests (EOCTs) to determine mastery of a particular course of study, there is no generalized assessment of a student's literacy skills in reading or writing. Therefore students may continually fail EOCTs without anyone being aware that the core issue is reading. While the need for screening is an issue at all age and grade levels, it is especially troublesome at the high school level. This was a recurrent theme in all the committee discussions; all committees recognized the need to identify those in need and to track their progress.

Another key issue of concern that emerged throughout the discussions has been the need for professional learning on the assessments used by out-going and receiving teachers from grade to grade and school to school. This is particularly evident in the transition from early childhood programs into local schools. Professional learning in this area would address coordination needs throughout our educational system and permit receiving teachers and/or schools to interpret the findings of the earlier grade level while also helping to inform those of the earlier grade levels of the expectations of the later grades. For example, Georgia's Pre-K Program uses the nationally validated and developmentally appropriate instrument Work Sampling System. However, many times when those records are passed to Kindergarten teachers, they are often unfamiliar with the instruments and therefore less likely to fully incorporate the assessments in their classroom instruction. Conversely, many times Georgia's Pre-K teachers are unfamiliar with the assessments used in Kindergarten and elementary schools and therefore less likely to incorporate some of those learning objectives in their classroom instruction.

This highlights an issue throughout our education system as students move along the educational trajectory. There is a concrete need for professional learning that includes the early childhood community and local school districts. If we are to improve students' literacy skills, such issues of coordination and alignment will need to be addressed. (See Section 4.F. of this document.)

Finally, the inclusion of the birth-to-five community into this Literacy Plan has allowed the state to bring an entirely new and greatly needed dimension to our planning. But it has involved a steep learning curve for many in the K-12 world in Georgia. A large part of our efforts in the Literacy Task Force meetings was becoming familiar with the array of services available to the youngest members of our state. Much of that information has been captured in two documents located in Appendix A. The first is a document prepared by Bright from the Start to help the K-12 community learn more about the language and literacy efforts being implemented, Bright from the Start has compiled a list of available initiatives and resources currently available. The list, which is not exhaustive, will provide a sense of the current efforts. The second is a compilation of the information gathered from the participants of the two Literacy Task Force meetings.

The state is grateful to the many professionals who found the time to meet and continued to provide their expertise and counsel throughout this latest process of updating Georgia's Literacy Plan.

P.5 BIRTH-TO-FIVE COMMUNITY

P.5.A. History of Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL): Bright from the Start During the gubernatorial campaign of 1990, candidate Zell Miller proposed the creation of the Georgia Lottery for Education to fund, among other things, a voluntary prekindergarten program for four year olds. In 1992 Georgia voters approved the lottery referendum, and a pilot Pre-K program for 750 at-risk four year olds was begun.

Each year as the proceeds from the Georgia Lottery for Education increased, the Georgia General Assembly approved increases in the number of children served by the Pre-K program. In 1996, the Georgia General Assembly created the Office of School Readiness to administer Georgia's Pre-K Program and other state efforts and programs serving the birth-to-five population. Georgia's Pre-K Program currently serves 84,000 children statewide.

In 2004 the Georgia General Assembly went even further by creating Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, one of the first state agencies in the country dedicated solely to the early child care and education needs of its citizens. Bright from the Start was formed by merging the Office of School Readiness with units from the Department of Human Resources, the Department of Education, and the Georgia Child Care Council. Today, Bright from the Start oversees a wide variety of services and resources for

Georgia's families with children birth to age five including administering the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licensing child care centers and home-based child care, and administering federal nutrition programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education.

P.5.B. Georgia's Pre-Kindergarten Program

Since its inception, one of the goals of Georgia's Pre-K Program and of Bright from the Start has been to change parents', child care providers', the public's, and policy makers' perception of child care from one of "baby sitting" to one of early education. Research clearly supports that the first years of a child's life are critically important in laying the foundation for future academic success, including success in literacy. For this reason, Bright from the Start has continued to focus on supporting early language and literacy skills in children from birth to age five.

As a regulatory agency and a department devoted to early care and education, Bright from the Start oversees services to Georgia's children from birth to age four through the private, for profit and private, nonprofit sectors, that includes child care centers (for profit and nonprofit), Head Start programs, family day care homes, and group day care homes. State regulations require that owners, directors, and other child care professionals working with children birth to age four receive a certain amount of professional learning each year to maintain their licensing with the state. This requirement for annual professional learning provides an opportunity to train caregivers of children from birth to age four on supporting pre-literacy skills of infants and toddlers.

The model for providing services through Georgia's Pre-K Program for four year olds is unique, i.e., it serves children in a variety of contexts, including, but not limited to, private, for profit and nonprofit child care centers, Head Start programs, local public school districts, military bases, colleges/universities/technical colleges, etc. Pre-K guidelines require that owners, directors, teachers, and other child care professionals working in Georgia's Pre-K Program receive program specific professional learning to remain in the program. Much of this program specific professional learning concentrates on developmentally appropriate ways to enhance language and literacy skills.

P.5.C. Two Studies by Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute

BFTS recently commissioned two representative studies that underscore the need for further literacy intervention in Georgia's early education community. These studies, commissioned by the department but conducted by nationally renowned researchers from Frank Porter Graham (FPG) Child Development Institute at UNC-Chapel Hill, found that many environments serving children birth to five are lacking in quality and basic literacy practice. The first study, representing child care (non-Georgia's Pre-K Program) from birth to five found that the quality of care provided in classrooms serving infants and toddlers was rated as "low" quality in 67% of child care centers. The results for classrooms serving preschool aged children were not as dire (only 35% of the classrooms were rated as "low" quality); however, in 80% of these classrooms, basic language and literacy practices were not offered. As a result of this study, BFTS has initiated the Infant Toddler Specialist Network to help child care providers improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers. Part of the training, technical assistance, and other support provided to infant toddler caregivers will focus on nurturing pre-literacy and language skills. Furthermore, many of the professional learning opportunities currently offered all early education teachers in preschool classrooms focused on improving their classrooms language and literacy environments.

The second study focused on measuring quality in Georgia's Pre-K classrooms. The study found overall quality to be medium with fewer than 11% of classrooms rating as "low quality" and the average of most classrooms being above those found in most national studies. With regards to language and literacy practice, the majority of classrooms were found to be meeting "basic" language and literacy practice, and 15% scored in the high range. However, these scores were not high enough to ensure that all Georgia's Pre-K classrooms were providing instruction congruent with the program's content standards.

These studies show that Georgia is moving in the right direction, especially with the new initiative related to infant toddler classrooms and the quality found in Georgia's Pre-K classrooms. However, the studies also reveal that much more could be done, and a coordinated effort with the Georgia Department of Education can help ensure that children exit Georgia's early education programs poised to excel in their elementary school environments.

Executive Summary

The Georgia Literacy Task Force's definition of literacy is the ability to speak, listen, read, and write, as well as to view print and non-print text in order to achieve the following:

- to communicate effectively with others,
- to think and respond critically in a variety of settings to a myriad of print and non-print text, and
- to access, use, and produce multiple forms of media, information, and knowledge in all content areas.

As a result of a state-developed literacy plan, Georgia students will become sustaining, lifelong learners and contributors to their communities and to the global society (Georgia PreK-12 Literacy Task Force, 2009).

HISTORY OF THE GEORGIA LITERACY TASK FORCE

In 2008, responding to the request of then State Superintendent of Schools, Kathy Cox, a Literacy Task Force was established to holistically look at all aspects of literacy in primarily kindergarten through grade 12. This group spent the better part of two years synthesizing all of the available research into an extensive draft document that captured what was needed for all children to learn to read.

In July, 2010, The Georgia State Board of Education adopted the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). With the roll out of the CCGPS, it became apparent that Local Education Agencies (LEAs) were going to need tools for implementation and a system by which to determine specific needs in the area of literacy. When revisiting the draft plan, it was apparent that while the draft had addressed the "why", it clearly lacked the "what" and "how" of implementing such a system.

It also became clear while reading the plan, that all of the recommendations were for the Georgia Department of Education. It read like a Georgia Department of Education plan, when in fact, literacy is a community necessity. As a result, the leadership decided to involve a more inclusive membership in the Task Force and entered into a relationship with those who impact the education of Georgia's youngest learners. This relationship has served the plan well in that the hope that children will enter school with a much broader sense of oral vocabulary and knowledge base, all aspects of student achievement will

improve. The Literacy Taskforce is made up of educators, researchers and leaders serving learners birth to five, elementary and middle/high.

OUTCOME OF THE PLAN

Upon completion of the templates of the literacy plan, communities will have a well- crafted plan that will detail their literacy instructional program for learners Birth through Grade 12.

AYOUT OF THE PLAN

- *"THE WHY"* is a document synthesizing the research that the Literacy Task force members worked with for more than two years. Throughout the document, recommendations from the task force are cited along with research to support each recommendation. It is

- *"THE WHAT"* is a listing of what systems and schools will need in order to implement the plan. Each recommendation in part two is aligned to the research presented in part one. Part two will give the districts a beginning point from which to determine what road blocks to literacy are occurring in their community, as well as to again affirm that they are on the right track. It is quite possible for the reader to use

- *"THE HOW"* are the template materials that Local Education Agencies will use to determine needs in their community as well as to build a model of implementation for their plan. The basic layout for these materials are included in this draft. They are by no-means complete and will not be sent to LEA's without Georgia State Board of Education consideration or approval.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LITERACY TASK FORCE

The Literacy Task Force had several overarching recommendations that extended across sub committees. One being the need for a universal screener at all ages and grades. The other salient theme was that there needs to be coordination among those screeners and assessments that would permit the receiving teachers and/or schools to interpret the findings of the earlier grade or level. Teachers need intense professional learning on administering the screeners and then how to both interpret the data and determine the best course of instructional action.

Key recommendations of the Literacy Task Force are embedded in the "What" document with the research supporting the recommendations in the "Why." Each recommendation or supporting statement is linked to the research by heading.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

With the first two sections of the plan complete, the Literacy Task force will continue to work to develop "the How" which will be the working document that local education agencies use to guide their Literacy Plan development. As the Georgia Department of Education, is in transition with new leadership, it is unclear as to how this work will be accomplished. There have been several scenarios presented in conjunction with the roll out of the Common Core GPS.

Section 1. LITERACY IN GEORGIA

Literacy is paramount in Georgia's efforts to lead the nation in improving student achievement. All teachers, therefore, are literacy instructors who must coordinate the development of students' skills in accessing, using, and producing multiple forms of media, information, and knowledge in each content area. Georgia's Literacy Task Force established content literacy as a goal for each Georgia student; consequently, a common understanding of literacy must be recognized and valued by all stakeholders, including all teachers, students, parents, and community members. Emphasizing the importance of literacy in today's world, President Barack Obama made the following statement:

> In a global economy where the most valuable skill you can sell is your knowledge, a good education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity---it is a prerequisite. The countries that out-teach us today will out-compete us tomorrow (2009, para. 101).

The Georgia Literacy Task Force's definition of literacy is the ability to speak, listen, read, and write, as well as to view print and non-print text in order to achieve the following:

- to communicate effectively with others,

- to think and respond critically in a variety of settings to a myriad of print and non-print text, and

- to access, use, and produce multiple forms of media, information, and knowledge in all content areas.

As a result of a state-developed literacy plan, Georgia students will become sustaining, lifelong learners and contributors to their communities and to the global society (Georgia PreK-12 Literacy Task Force, 2009).

Educators are responsible for ensuring that students are capable of manifesting the definition of literacy. Specifically, content-area teachers at all grade levels must include reading comprehension and processing subject-specific texts in all areas: mathematics, science, social studies, Career Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE), world languages, English Language Arts (ELA), fine arts, physical education, and health. Students acquire literacy skills by accessing information through a variety of texts with specific organizational patterns and features. Content area teachers must address the components of adolescent literacy: advanced word study, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and

motivation. In addition, improving content literacy in all grade levels will lead to improved graduation rates and improved readiness for college and careers.

The focus of the 2009 Literacy Task Force on the need for content area literacy has been affirmed by Georgia's adoption of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). Because the current Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) included standards that address the need for reading across the curriculum, this is a focus that is not new to Georgia. However, with the adoption of the CCGPS that focus is given even greater specificity. In grades K-5, there are separate standards for reading literature and for reading informational texts. The standards for grades 6-12 are divided into those for English Language Arts (ELA) and a separate section containing standards for reading in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. The following statement is found in the introduction of the CCGPS:

> The Standards insist that instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language be a shared responsibility within the school….Part of the motivation behind the interdisciplinary approach to literacy promulgated by the Standards is extensive research establishing the need for college and career ready students to be proficient in reading complex informational text independently in a variety of content areas. (p. 4)

The national literacy landscape reflects the need for the education communities to develop and implement a comprehensive literacy program. According to the National Commission on Writing (2004), the demands for clear and concise communication, especially writing, in the workplace are increasing. If students are not prepared for these demands, the chances for employment and advancement decrease. Joseph M. Tucci, president and CEO of EMC Corporation and chairman of the Business Roundtable's Education and the Workforce Task Force, stated in the press release by the National Commission on Writing (2004) the following:

> With the fast pace of today's electronic communications, one might think that the value of fundamental writing skills has diminished in the workplace. Actually, the need to communicate clearly and quickly has never been more important than in today's highly competitive, technology-driven global economy (para. 4).

Based on research from the National Commission on Writing (2004),

People who cannot write and communicate clearly will not be hired, and if already working, are unlikely to last long enough to be considered for promotion. Half of responding companies reported that they take writing into consideration when hiring professional employees and when making promotion decisions.

- Two-thirds of salaried employees in large American companies have some writing responsibility.

- Eighty percent or more of the companies in the services and the finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE) sectors, the corporations with greatest employment growth potential, assess writing during hiring.

- More than 40 percent of responding firms offer or require training for salaried employees with writing deficiencies.

Unfortunately, recent studies also paint a dismal picture of students' critical reading and comprehension skills:

- One in four students in grades four through twelve was a struggling reader in 2005, and fewer than one-third of public school 8th graders read at or above grade level (Perie, Grigg, & Donahue, 2005).

- Sixty-nine percent of 8th grade students fall below the proficient level in their ability to comprehend the meaning of grade-level text (Lee, Griggs, & Donahue, 2007; NAEP, 2007).

- Twenty-five percent of students read below the basic, proficiency level, which means they do not have minimal reading skills to understand and learn from text at their grade level (Kamil, Borman, Dole, Kral, Salinger, & Torgesen, 2008).

Georgia's data also supports the critical need to address literacy based on the following findings:

- Forty-four percent of students in the graduating Class of 2010 (or 39,436 students) completed the ACT. In Reading, those students had an average score of 20.9 compared to the nation's average score of 21.3. Although the overall Reading score for Georgia students was 20.9, which has remained unchanged since 2008, forty-

nine percent of the Class of 2010 met the College Readiness Benchmark score of 21 or more. Fifty-two percent of the nation's students met the College Readiness Benchmark.

- Seventy-four percent of Georgia's graduating Class of 2010 (or 66,019 students) took the SAT. In Critical Reading the score average was 488 compared to the nation's score average of 501. Georgia's composite score average in Writing was 475 compared to the nation's score average of 492.

Georgia has participated in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) since 1992 beginning with fourth-grade reading followed by eighth-grade reading as of 1998. During this time NAEP reading frameworks have undergone some changes; in spite of the changes between the 1992 version and the 2007 version, the results from the 2009 reading could still be compared to those from earlier assessment years.

- In 2009, the average reading score for fourth-grade students in Georgia was 218. This was not significantly different from that of the nation's public schools (220).

- The average reading score for fourth-grade students in Georgia in 2009 (218) was significantly higher than that in 1992 (212) and was not significantly different from that in 2007 (219).

- In 2009, the average reading score for eighth-grade students in Georgia was 260. This was not significantly different from that of the nation's public schools (262).

- The average reading score for eighth-grade students in Georgia in 2009 (260) was not significantly different from that in 1998 (257) and was not significantly different from that in 1998 (257) and in 2007 (259).

However, the results that really indicate that Georgia needs to focus on literacy development are those that show in which performance level students fall. The NAEP performance levels include: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. In particular, the focus should be on how many students in Georgia are classified as "at or above Proficient" readers.

- In 2009, the percentage of fourth-grade students in Georgia who performed at or above Proficient in reading was 29 percent. This was not significantly different from that for the nation's public schools (32 percent).

- In 2009, the percentage of eighth-grade students in Georgia who performed at or above Proficient in reading was 27 percent. This was significantly smaller than that for the nation's public schools (30 percent).

The 2009 NAEP results show that slightly less than 3/4 of Georgia students are proficient readers, and these results echo those for the nation's public schools. Along with the nation, Georgia has much work to do in developing competent readers.

In conclusion, Georgia will continue its focus on increasing student achievement in the areas of reading and writing. National and state results from NAEP indicate that too many students lack proficient reading skills. Spring test results from the (Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) and Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT), when coupled with the Lexile Framework® for Reading (2006), which measures both reading ability and text difficulty on the same developmental scale, echo the idea that students who minimally meet state standards are not equipped with sufficient reading comprehension skills to handle much of the grade-level instructional material. Consequently, Georgia's students need support and intervention in the next grade. In today's world, literacy extends well beyond the basics of reading (phonics and decoding skills). Not only does literacy include a person's ability to be a lifelong learner and contributor to society, but also the ability to retrieve and understand new information. A student must be able to communicate information by producing quality writing or other delivery modes (e.g., speeches, visual presentations, debates). Georgia's mission is to develop students' literacy skills, especially reading comprehension and writing productivity in multiple contexts. To better prepare Georgia's students, the Department of Education has outlined various steps that state, district, and school leaders can take to redesign more effective literacy instructional practices for all grade levels and for all content areas.

1.A. LITERACY AS DEFINED BY THE GEORGIA LITERACY TASK FORCE

Literacy is the ability to read, write, listen, speak, and view in order to communicate effectively with others, which includes being able to adopt the appropriate register for a variety of audiences. It also includes thinking and responding critically in a variety of complex settings. The Georgia definition for literacy encompasses the ability to access, use, and produce multiple forms of media, information, and knowledge in all content areas at all grade levels. That includes learning to evaluate the validity of the content on website; and familiarity with the vocabulary associated with technology. Georgia's goal for all students is that they become self-sustaining, lifelong learners and contributors to their communities (Georgia PreK-12 Literacy Task Force, 2009).

1.B. BELIEF STATEMENTS OF THE GEORGIA LITERACY TASK FORCE

1. A learner's literacy ability is the root of ALL academic performance, and a direct relationship exists among the language capacities of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

2. Literacy skills are embedded and emphasized in each content area in all grade levels.

3. ALL stakeholders, including educators, media specialists, and parents of PreK, primary, adolescent, and post-secondary students, are responsible for promoting literacy.

4. ALL teachers, media specialists, and administrators must be competent advocates of promoting literacy by helping students develop strategies and skills for accessing texts and media, expressing ideas in writing, communicating ideas orally, and utilizing sources of information efficiently and effectively.

5. ALL students flourish when educated in a language-rich environment designed to meet their communication, language, and academic needs

6. A rigorous, standards-based curriculum and specialized academic and/or enrichment programs are the foundations for students' literacy successes in career and life skills.

7. Strategic literacy instruction integrated into all curriculum areas is critical for the development of students' ability to use language.

8. Continuous use of assessment data, strategic and targeted instruction, and/or intervention will improve the language abilities of all learners.

9. Open, direct articulation and recursive literacy professional learning opportunities among PreK-12 teachers are central to developing the language capacity of each student.

10. The 2010-2011 Literacy Task Force recommends adding viewing and representing as they are vital to multimedia technology.

This document reflects these fundamental beliefs as well as the belief that ALL Georgia educators and citizens are responsible for ensuring that Georgia students successfully meet the literacy demands of global communities. This plan outlines guidance and support strategies essential to creating a comprehensive literacy program for Georgia students.

1.C. GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STRATEGIC GOALS

In addition to the fundamental beliefs and support strategies necessary for this plan to impact ALL Georgia students, it is imperative also to note that the strategic plan for the Georgia Department of Education is evident throughout. Georgia's strategic plan has as its focus six major goals:

Goal 1: Increase high school graduation rate, decrease high school dropout rate, and increase post-secondary enrollment rate.

Goal 2: Strengthen teacher quality, recruitment, and retention.

Goal 3: Improve workforce readiness skills.

Goal 4: Develop strong education leaders, particularly at the building level.

Goal 5: Improve the SAT, ACT, and achievement scores of Georgia students.

Goal 6: Make policies that ensure maximum academic and financial accountability.

These six strategic goals in combination with the recommendations of the Georgia Literacy Task Force ensure a viable and cohesive literacy plan for Georgia students.

1.D RECOMMENDATIONS/GOALS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CARE AND LEARNING (DECAL) TO GADOE FOR CHILDREN BIRTH TO AGE FIVE (2011)

RECOMMENDATION 1: DECAL will address the literacy needs of children birth to age 5 including children who are English learners and students with disabilities. To accomplish this goal, DECAL will:

1. design and distribute brochures that address the literacy needs of birth to age five including second language learners and children with special needs to all licensed and registered child care providers and parent support agencies.
2. identify and train literacy coaches/resource persons in each region.
3. expand the summer transition program to include a pilot program serving children ages three and four identified as at risk who will be transitioning into a Georgia's Pre-K Program.
4. expand comprehensive language and literacy-based learning objectives as a part of the Georgia's Pre-K Summer Transition Program.

RECOMMENDATION 2: DECAL will align literacy plan with K-12 goals and provide for transition support. To accomplish this goal, DECAL will:

1. create, distribute, and provide training on pre-literacy transition support guidelines for children moving from infant to toddler programs.
2. utilize the Pre-K Standards Study to implement recommendations for changes to better align all standards in Georgia for children birth to third grade (language and literacy).
3. create, distribute, and provide training on pre-literacy transition support guidelines for children moving from toddler to preschool programs.
4. expand the summer transition program to include a pilot program serving children ages three and four identified as at risk who will be transitioning into a Georgia's Pre-K Program.
5. expand comprehensive language and literacy-based learning objectives as a part of the Georgia's Pre-K Summer Transition Program.

RECOMMENDATION 3: DECAL will promote the GELS and Pre-K language and literacy standards in programs serving children birth to age 5. To accomplish this goal, DECAL will:

1. create a website for parents and providers that will promote the language and literacy standards of the GELS and provide activities to enhance pre-literacy skills.

RECOMMENDATION 4: DECAL will promote and provide guidance on developmentally appropriate literacy-based curriculum for children birth to age 5. To accomplish this goal, DECAL will:

1. develop a series of computer-based/electronic pre-literacy professional learning courses to be distributed to infant and toddler teachers across the state.
2. develop and distribute fact sheets regarding the quality continuum, infant toddler network, and pre-literacy goals to all licensed and registered child care programs throughout the state.
3. develop a series of computer-based/electronic literacy professional learning courses to be distributed to preschool teachers across the state.
4. develop and distribute fact sheets regarding language and literacy to all licensed and registered child care programs throughout the state.
5. Continue partnership with GPB to expand the use of PBS Raising Readers Online Resources and other professional learning opportunities including scholarships for teachers birth to five to participate in appropriate Teacherline courses.

RECOMMENDATION 5: DECAL will establish evidence based professional learning opportunities for teachers serving children birth to age 5. To accomplish this goal, DECAL will:

1. offer eight statewide professional learning conferences that feature pre-literacy topics.
2. work with a cadre of language and literacy specialists to increase community based language and literacy training by 25%.
3. provide targeted literacy courses to Georgia's Pre-K teachers based on CLASS evaluations.
4. offer additional GPB Teacherline course scholarships for teachers of children birth to age 5.

RECOMMENDATION 6: DECAL will establish a system of data collection, evaluation, and program improvement. To accomplish this goal, DECAL will:

1. conduct pre and post knowledge assessment tests at each language and language and literacy professional learning event (50% or higher increase in scores).
2. track increase in number of professional learning opportunities promoting language and literacy across the state (increase of 25%).
3. track changes in formal education coursework with regards to language and literacy enhancement (increase 10%).

4. collect data regarding practitioner changes in practices with regard to language and literacy support (50% report changes in practices).
5. compile summer transition data.
6. conduct a pilot using the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) tool in classrooms for children birth to age 5 to assess language and literacy environments.

RECOMMENDATION 7: DECAL will implement a system of screening assessments to inform planning and instruction. To accomplish this goal, DECAL will:

1. promote and develop community based access for vision and hearing screening and appropriate follow-up.
2. promote the utilization of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to inform classroom instruction.
3. promote the utilization of *Ready to Read* as a screening tool in center based classrooms.
4. promote the utilization the ELSA **(**The Early Literacy Skills Assessment) to measure the emerging language and literacy skills (comprehension, phonological awareness, alphabetic principles, concepts about print) of children attending licensed and/or registered child care programs.
5. increase access to the online version of Work Sampling System so data can be electronically transferred to Kindergarten teachers.

1.E RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GEORGIA LITERACY TASK FORCE (2009) FOR GADOE

RECOMMENDATION 1: GaDOE will collect, analyze, disseminate, and monitor state and national data and scientifically valid research related to literacy achievement, including instructional resources, strategies, and student performance. To accomplish this goal, the GaDOE will:

1. Disseminate information about national and international scientifically-valid literacy research, effective practices, and recent developments in literacy achievement for students;
2. Provide districts with coherent, well-defined models of scientifically valid literacy instruction for PreK-12, with emphasis on appropriate interventions for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities;
3. Measure state-level reading and writing achievement in an international context to ensure that all students are receiving the preparations needed to compete in the 21st century economy;
4. Hold districts accountable for implementing a PreK-12 literacy plan that will ensure consistent quality instruction in reading and writing for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities; and
5. Provide timely and appropriate feedback from reading and writing assessments to districts, schools, teachers, and parents.

RECOMMENDATION 2: GaDOE will provide a comprehensive, statewide program of targeted professional learning and support strategies in the area of literacy based on requirements of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards by 2014 and the identified needs of the state and district. To accomplish this goal, the GaDOE will:

1. Provide professional learning opportunities for teachers and school personnel to identify and evaluate the characteristics of effective literacy instruction, especially in the areas of reading, writing, and speaking;
2. Equip teachers, principals, district leaders, and after-school providers on how to identify at-risk students with persistent reading and writing difficulties, to implement early intervention strategies, and to monitor students' progress;
3. Provide professional learning development and assistance to teachers, principals, and district leaders in grades PreK through 12 about the characteristics of effective literacy instruction strategies in core academic subjects and career and technical education subjects for all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities;
4. Provide teachers, principals, and other school leaders with professional learning about the use of data to make informed instructional decisions, including the implementation of assessment strategies, data analysis, and appropriate use of results;
5. Train ALL content teachers in each grade level to use effective instructional content-specific reading and writing strategies;
6. Provide secondary teachers with consistent support from specialized staff, which includes literacy coaches who understand the nature of adolescent and adult learners;
7. Provide local/district professional learning for literacy and instructional leadership through partnerships with postsecondary institutions, professional organizations and/or foundations, and state/community business leaders; and
8. Promote professional collaboration among primary, secondary, and postsecondary educators in order to develop an increased understanding of literacy instruction--with an emphasis on reading and writing--which may have significant impact on student growth in all content areas.

RECOMMENDATION 3: GaDOE will develop and disseminate information about a variety of resources that support the literacy through the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards by 2014. To accomplish this goal, the GaDOE will:

2. Provide professional learning opportunities for teachers and school personnel to support them in the transition to the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) by 2014;

3. Develop a coherent framework of research-based best practices of instructional models for reading, writing, and speaking across the grades to support implementation of the CCGPS;

4. Provide exemplars for primary, elementary, middle, and high school for instruction in reading, writing, and speaking in the content areas;

5. Benchmark all content areas' state literacy standards with national and international academic content and achievement standards to ensure that students are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to be globally competitive;

6. Provide scientifically valid early and adolescent literacy development and instructional resources to support teachers, administrators, instructional coaches, paraprofessionals, PreK providers, after-school providers, and other education providers;

7. Provide guidance about methods to measure, assess, and monitor progress in literacy at the school and district level;

8. Provide guidance on developing, selecting, and using screening and diagnostic assessments that indicate student performance of reading and writing skills identified on state assessments;

9. Provide credible, targeted intervention strategies and resources for students who are reading and writing below grade level;

10. Align state-developed resources, such as digital media, curricula, and assessments to internationally-benchmarked standards from high-performing nations;

11. Provide a statewide network (e.g., face2face, online, regional, etc.) of communications and assistance for the statewide PreK-12 literacy plan; and

12. Seek significant, long-term funding to support the statewide PreK-12 literacy initiative through state, federal, and other sources.

RECOMMENDATION 4: GaDOE will develop policies to support the alignment and implementation of the statewide, comprehensive early (PreSchool & PreK-3) and adolescent (4-12) literacy initiative as components of literacy through the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards by 2014 literacy education program. To accomplish this goal, the GaDOE will:

1. Develop policies that support reading instruction for students based on their assessed needs;
2. Develop state policies for training teachers, principals, school leaders, and district leaders to evaluate the quality of (existing) literacy programs (not core curriculum) currently being used and skills taught at all grade levels;
3. Establish a State Literacy Leadership Team that includes representatives from Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), After School Programs, the Board of Regents of the University District of Georgia (BOR), the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), Head Start, and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC), to guide the development and implementation of the State Literacy Plan;
4. Collaborate with the PSC to implement a required literacy course for initial middle and secondary certification and for recertification of all teachers;
5. Coordinate with the BOR and the TCSG in the development of teacher preparation courses that strengthen and enhance literacy strategies and interventions among instructional approaches for all grade levels; and
6. Develop, maintain, and monitor certification standards and/or requirements for Reading/Literacy Specialists and Literacy/Instructional Coaches.

1.F. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 2010-2011 LITERACY TASK FORCE

The Georgia Literacy Task Force, 2010-2011, recommends that the definition of literacy be expanded to include ensuring that students be able to:

- Evaluate websites for content validity
- Understand the vocabulary associated with technology
- Teach students the necessity for and the ability to adopt appropriate register for a variety of audiences
  (See amended definition in Section 1.A)

Second, noting the importance of and often the difficulty of disseminating information about any new initiatives to the whole community of Georgia educators, the task force

recommends that this document and its recommendations be presented to the State Board of Education, the legislature, to all content area heads within the GaDOE. Then they recommend that it be presented to district-level school boards as well as superintendents. See Flow Chart below: (developed by the 2010-2011 Literacy Task Force)

Graphic 1: Flow chart
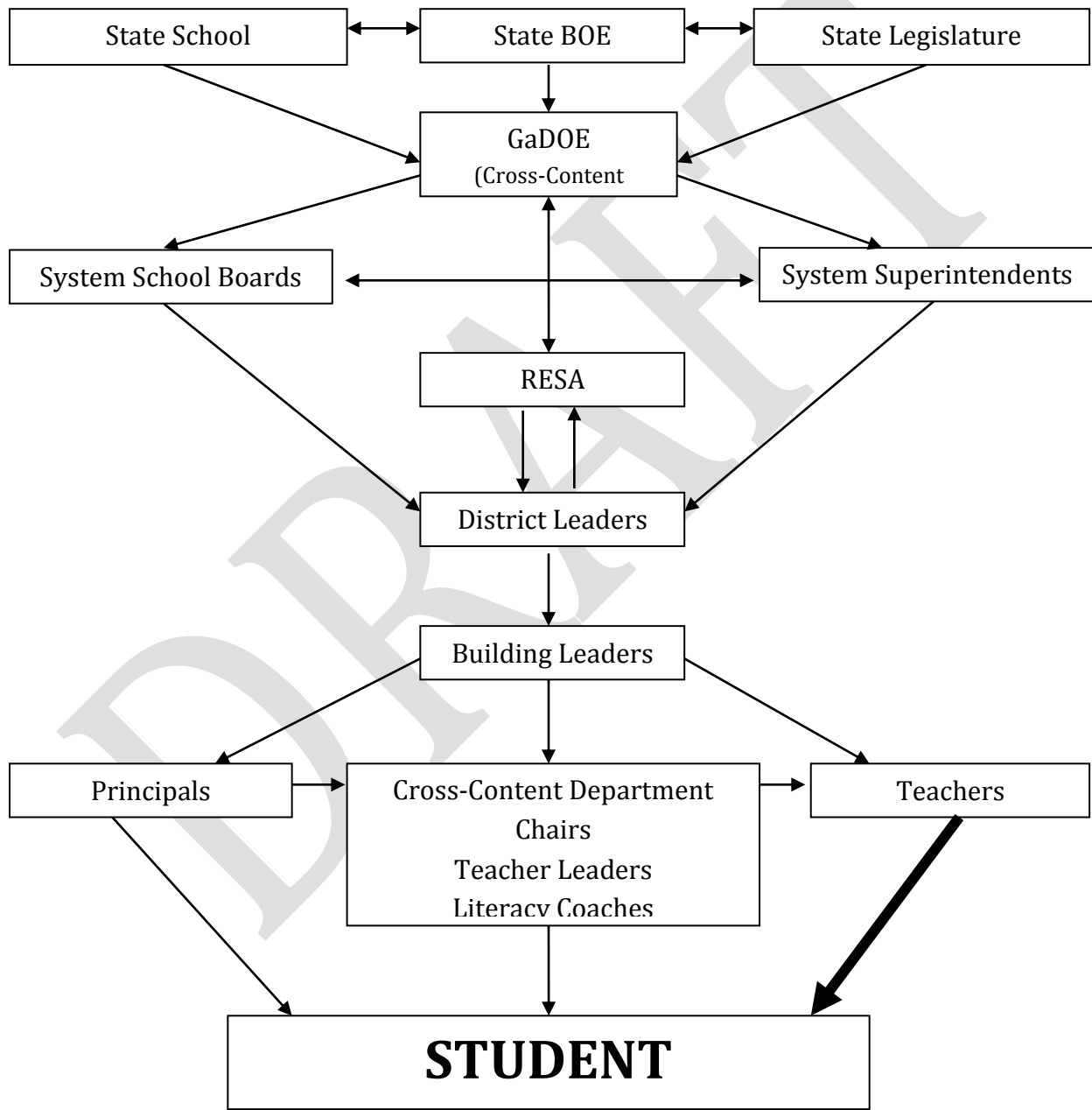
SECTION 2. BEST PRACTICES IN LITERACY

In the conceptual and practical framework for Birth-to-12th Grade literacy in Georgia, the learner is central to the instructional decision-making of educators. As educators plan instruction, they must consider the range of standards available at each age and grade level. Subsequent to the curriculum, however, is the consideration of the unique needs, skills, and interests of individual students. In keeping with the expectation of a rigorous curriculum and standards for all students, including English Language Learners, students with exceptional needs, and other at-risk populations, it is crucial that teachers access students' prior knowledge and build upon students' background experiences. By taking into consideration the individual needs and strengths of all students, teachers build a foundation for the implementation of appropriate strategies that lead to academic success.

2.A. BIRTH-TO-12 LEARNERS

In the conceptual and practical framework for Birth-to-12th Grade literacy in Georgia, the learner is central to the instructional decision-making of educators. As educators plan instruction, they must first consider the range of standards that guide each age and grade level. In addition to the curriculum, however, is the consideration of the unique needs, skills, and interests of individual students. In keeping with the expectation of a rigorous curriculum and standards for all students, including English Language Learners, students with exceptional needs, and other at-risk populations, it is crucial that teachers access students' prior knowledge and build upon students' background experiences. By taking into consideration the individual needs and strengths of all students, teachers build a foundation for the implementation of appropriate strategies that lead to academic success.

2.B. THE SEVEN HABITS OF AN EFFECTIVE READER

As reported by Dole, Duffy, Roehler, and Pearson (1991), reading comprehension struction can be highly effective when teachers focus on seven main strategies for readers (listed below). However, it is important to note that these strategies should not be taught as isolated units. Instead, strategies need to be taught as orchestrated strategies and the most important outcome of reading comprehension instruction should be a reader's ability to self-monitor for understanding, thus motivating a reader to use the strategies flexibly and with purpose (Duke & Pearson, 2002). Strategies identified by researchers include:

Visualizing:

Forming mental images or pictures about what they are reading, such as characters, settings, or events, in a text helps students connect new information to previous experiences. Visualizing turns words into pictures in the readers' minds as they access texts to aid in comprehension. Using think-aloud to help visualize what they read allows students to make connections.

Questioning:

Formulating questions about the text gives readers a purpose for reading, re-reading, reading further, or devising an experiment to test their ideas. Readers may ask questions about characters, motivation, captions, headings, reactions, settings, events, or topics in the text. Questions that are explicitly found in the text may influence students to make inferences and form predictions, determine importance, and synthesize ideas.

Making Connections:

Making connections helps readers activate prior knowledge to make reading meaningful. There are three types of connections that readers make to previous experiences as they encounter text.

1. Text-to-Text Connections occur when readers are reminded of something they have seen, read, or heard.
2. Text-to-Self Connections occur when readers are reminded of something they have experienced in their own lives.
3. Text-to-World Connections occur when readers are reminded of something they have noticed or experienced in the world such as events or settings.

Predicting:

Readers frequently use clues or information in a text along with their own experiences in order to make predictions. Predictions create anticipation and give readers a purpose for further reading in order to determine if their predictions are supported in the text or not.

Inferring:

Readers often use clues from the text and their own experiences to make inferences and draw conclusions about the text. These inferences may or may not be stated in the text but can be supported with specific evidence from the text. Inferring helps readers interact with the text, thereby creating meaning from evidence in the text and their own experiences.

Determining Importance:
Readers must decide which terms, topics, ideas, elements, or concepts are important to the overall text. This process helps readers understand the content of the text and which parts require the most attention. Often texts indicate importance by using italics, highlights, or bold-faced terms. During a read-aloud, a teacher may stop and think-aloud about the significance of a bold term; repetition enhances awareness about clues that texts often use to signify importance.

Synthesizing/Creating:
Synthesizing or creating new information is the key to learning the content presented in the text. When readers successfully make sense of the meaning of the text and can gain new perspectives based on their reading, they are able to communicate their comprehension of the text. When students bring together parts of knowledge to form a whole and build relationships to address new situations, they show mastery at the synthesis/creating level, the highest level of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Each of these seven habits of effective reading has been substantiated in a paper presented at an NCTE conference in 2008 done by Kathy Mills. Citing Anstey & Bull, 2004, Mills says, "Research with students in the middle primary grades showed that learners benefited from instruction in metacognitive strategies, assisting them to become effective learners early in their school careers." These seven strategies should be overlearned so that they can be used flexibly in a variety of reading situations.

2.C. THE ROLE OF WRITING IN THE CLASSROOM

The Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) require that students become proficient in three types of texts, argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative, beginning as early as kindergarten. According to National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), writing becomes a critical need for workers:

Technological advances, changing workplace demands, and cultural shifts make writing more important than ever, especially because the way we write often predicts academic and/or job success, creates opportunities, maintains relationships, and enhances critical thinking. (NCTE, 2008, p.1)

Because students enter the classroom with such diverse needs, one single approach is no longer effective (NCTE, 2008, p. 1). According to NCTE, "Instructional practices, writing genres, and assessments should be *holistic, authentic,* and *varied,"* (NCTE, 2008, p. 2) The following are effective instructional and assessment strategies for writing:

1. Require all students--especially those less experienced--to write extensively so that they can be comfortable writing extended prose in elementary school and writing essays in high school (minimum five pages) and college (ten pages). Create writing assignments that ask students to interpret and analyze a variety of texts and to write in various genres.
2. Employ functional approaches to teaching and applying rules of grammar so that students understand how language works in a variety of contexts.
3. Foster collaborative writing processes.
4. Include the writing formats of new media as an integral component of writing.
5. Use formative assessment strategies that provide students with feedback while developing drafts.
6. Employ multiple assessment measures, including portfolios, to access students' development as writers. (NCTE, 2008, p. 5)

Based on research from the National Commission on Writing (2004),

1. People who cannot write and communicate clearly will not be hired, and if already working, are unlikely to last long enough to be considered for promotion. Half of responding companies reported that they take writing into consideration when hiring professional employees and when making promotion decisions. "In most cases, writing ability could be your ticket in . . . or it could be your ticket out," said one respondent. Commented another: "You can't move up without writing skills." (2004, p.3)
2. Two-thirds of salaried employees in large American companies have some writing responsibility. "All employees must have writing ability.... Manufacturing documentation, operating procedures, reporting problems, lab safety, waste-

disposal operations--all have to be crystal clear," said one human resources director. (2004, p.3)

3. Eighty percent or more of the companies in the services and the finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE) sectors, the corporations with greatest employment growth potential, assess writing during hiring. "Applicants who provide poorly written letters wouldn't likely get an interview," commented one insurance executive. (2004, p.3)

4. More than 40 percent of responding firms offer or require training for salaried employees with writing deficiencies. "We're likely to send out 200-300 people annually for skills upgrade courses like 'business writing' or 'technical writing,'" said one respondent. (2004, p. 4)

Writing demands for the 21st century are increasing not only in schools but also in workplaces that demand effective communication skills. Georgia advocates strong writing skills beginning in elementary and continuing through high school. All content areas have writing components in their expectations for Georgia students. The implementation of strong writing programs is crucial to a literacy initiative.

2.D. THE IMPACT OF WRITING ON READING COMPREHENSION

A recently completed report titled *Writing to Read* builds on the findings of *Reading Next* and *Writing Next.* This latest report documents the efficacy of writing to improve reading comprehension. This report has identified three major recommendations that have been demonstrated through rigorous research to produce a significant impact on comprehension, outperforming all of the traditional approaches, i.e. simply reading the text, reading and rereading it, reading and studying it, reading and discussing it, and receiving reading instruction (Graham & Hebert, 2010) ((Biancorosa & Snow, 2006).

For instance, for summary writing for grades 3-12, the "effect sizes compared favorably with effects obtained by other researchers examining the impact of specific reading approaches, such as reading programs at the secondary level, reciprocal teaching (a popular method for teaching comprehension), and vocabulary instruction. The effect size for writing about text that was read (0.40) exceeded each of these effects, providing additional validation of its effectiveness as a tool for improving students' reading comprehension (Graham & Hebert, 2010, p. 14).

The recommendations from this report are as follows (listed in order of their supporting evidence):

A. Have students write about the texts they read.
   1. Respond to a text in writing (writing personal reactions, analyzing and interpreting the text)
   2. Write summaries of a text
   3. Write notes about a text
   4. Answer questions about a text in writing, or create and answer written questions about a text

B. Teach students the writing skills and processes that go into creating text.
   1. Teach the process of writing, text structures for writing, paragraph or sentence construction skills (improves reading comprehension)
   2. Teach spelling and sentence construction skills (improves reading fluency)
   3. Teach Spelling Skills (Improves Word Reading Skills)

C. Increase how much students write.
   1. Students' reading comprehension is improved by having them increase how often they produce their own texts ((Graham & Hebert, 2010, p. 5)

2.E. THE LITERACY DEMANDS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

2.E.1. Text Complexity

According to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE, 2006), reading complex text requires the ability to comprehend information, understand style and structure, dissect vocabulary, and infer implicit ideas. Readers are presented with complex text in both higher education and the workplace, yet millions of middle and high school students lack the reading and writing skills they need to succeed in college and compete in the workforce. Today, American students must have strong literacy skills in order to compete in the global (NCTE, 2006).

In a 2006 report published by ACT, Inc., that company shared its analysis of what distinguished students who scored at least the benchmark score on the reading section of the ACT. The following statement highlights the importance of text complexity:

Surprisingly, what chiefly distinguished the performance of those students who had earned the benchmark score or better from those who had **not** was their relative

ability in making inferences while reading or answering questions related to particular cognitive processes, such as determining main ideas or determining the meaning of words and phrases in context. Instead, **the clearest differentiator was students' ability to answer questions associated with complex texts**. (emphasis added) (*Common Core State Standards*, Appendix A, p. 2)

The ACT research has shown that students unable to score at least the benchmark score do not have a high probability of earning a C or better in an introductory, credit-bearing course in a U.S. History or psychology. That, along with other research, led to the inclusion of text complexity as an integral part of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS).

The final standard in the anchor standards of the CCGPS, which remain the same for each grade level, states that students will, "Read and comprehend complex literary and informational text independently and proficiently." Teachers are provided exemplars within a two-grade span that illustrate the level of complexity that is needed to ensure that their students will be prepared for the challenges of that grade and the next. Appendix A of the CCGPS provides an in-depth discussion of its definition of text complexity with an analysis of a few texts that illustrate that definition. In its explanation of the Common Core State Standards' (CCSS) approach to text complexity, the CCSS panel discusses of three aspects of text analysis: qualitative, quantitative and Reader and task considerations.

In order to clarify for teachers exactly what is meant by the text complexity at each level, teachers are provided with samples of the kinds of texts will be required at each grade band. Appendix B of the CCSS includes exemplars at each of these bands: K–1, 2–3, 4–5, 6–8, 9–10, and 11–CCR. In the bands up through grade 5, exemplars of stories, poetry, informational texts, and read-aloud texts up through grade 3 are provided to give teachers examples of the text complexity that will be expected of their students. For grades six through twelve, there are exemplars for: English Language Arts, stories, drama, poetry, and informational texts; history and social studies; science; mathematics; and technical subjects. To further support teachers, sample performance tasks are provided for each text.

In 2006, anticipating the need for calibrating the complexity of texts, Georgia purchased the rights to use the Lexile Framework for the state. Since then, Lexiles have been aligned to the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) to provide parents and teachers with information about the level of text complexity at which their students are able to read

successfully. Recently, Lexiles have been realigned to match the CCSS text-complexity grade bands and have adjusted their grade bands upward to ensure that students are prepared for the demands of college and careers.

Graphic 2: Text Complexity Grade Bands and Associated Lexile Ranges (in Lexiles)		
Text Complexity Grade Band in the Standards	Old Lexile Ranges	Lexile Ranges Aligned to CCR expectations
K-1	NA	NA
2-3	450-725	450-790
4-5	645-845	770-980
6-8	860-1010	955-1155
9-10	960-1115	1080-1305
11-CCR	1070-1220	1215-1355

2.E.2. Content Area Reading

As stated earlier, the integration of literacy skills into the content areas has been made even more explicit in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). In grades K-5, there are separate sets of standards for reading literature and for reading informational texts. In grades 6-12 the standards are divided into those for English Language Arts (ELA) and a separate section containing standards for reading in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. While supporting the same anchor standards as those for narrative reading, the CCGPS delineates the skills that are unique to content area reading, e.g., identifying main idea, using diagrams, using text features, skimming to locate facts, analyzing multiple accounts of the same event. The standards become even more specific in grades 6-12 in recognition that the technical nature of reading in science presents a different set of challenges from those in social studies, e.g., following multistep procedure in an experiment vs. analyzing primary and secondary sources, such as the Constitution. The CCGPS provide guidance as well for writing

arguments and informative/explanatory texts and in the content areas. (See Section 4.D.2.) in this document.) Such writing is not only necessary for the work place but has been shown to significantly support comprehension and *retention of subject matter when used to support content area instruction. (Writing to Read*, 2010)

In content area reading, the reader must be able to flexibly employ a set of skills specific to that discipline. Acquisition of those literacy skills should provide the student with the ability to transfer those skills into workplace or college. Students must be able to comprehend, to make inferences, to draw conclusions, to communicate in oral and written formats, and to create and synthesize ideas. With the support of literacy in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, content-area teachers will have specific guidance on the kinds of skills that students need in order to access the more complex texts generally found in content area classrooms.

2.E.3. The Challenges of Accessing Information in a Variety of Formats

As stated above, literacy demands in content areas are rigorous for all students. Students' interactions with texts are influenced by comprehension demands, features, and structures of the discipline's text. These texts take a variety of forms:

- Nonfiction (scientific writings, political writings, advertisements, technical materials, biographical materials, etc.)

- Fiction (novels, short stories, plays and scripts, poems, etc.)

- Nonprint "text" (art, photographs, political cartoons, etc.)

And, too, texts are no longer limited to books, but also include Internet and other modes of discourse from a variety of media and educational disciplines. A successful interaction with any text depends on the student's ability to access, use, and evaluate content material based on background and vocabulary knowledge, word study strategies, fluency, motivation and now even familiarity with the media used to deliver the content.

To illustrate the kinds of challenges that teachers and students are now confronted with, Mills listing of the kinds of skills with which they and their teachers now need to be familiar. She describes these non-conventional reading as "multimodal".

1. Attending to multimodal cueing systems (e.g. camera angles, spatial layouts), rather than using the linguistic cueing systems in isolation (e.g. orthography, syntax, genre);

2. Recognizing and interpreting the new conventions of emergent, screen-based genres (e.g. using hyperlinks, tool bars, SMS abbreviations, and eye-contact with webcam);

3. Non-linear reading comprehension and navigation skills (e.g. directional patterns of reading the Internet differs to the left-right, top-down reading of books);

4. Rapid interactivity between reader and writer that requires switching between reading and writing (e.g. internet relay chat, blogging);

5. A need for heightened critical literacy skills in the inundation of globally disseminated information (Mills, 2006).

During early literacy development, visual, textual, and auditory texts form the primary basis of content literacy. Adolescent literacy (grades 4-12) requires students to progress to engaging with the text themselves, extending content learning by recognizing patterns of structure, and deciphering the complexity of texts specific to the discipline. Because the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards values reading skill and sophistication equally, what students are asked to read becomes a major determiner of their competency. The final standard, Anchor Standard 10, at each grade level addresses the ever increasing demands of text complexity which is necessary to prepare students for Career and College Readiness.

The Common Core Georgia Performance Standards require students to read and analyze a wide range of print and non-print materials that foster reading closely and the ability to think, speak, and write with textual evidence that supports an assertion. Literacy includes not only written texts, but also the viewing and representing digital images, aural images, and other special effects used in various forms of media. Additionally, the students will need to explore a range of texts from historical, artistic, or literary periods and from different cultures and genres:

2.F. 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Evolving technological developments, increasing demands of the workplace, and increasing access to knowledge mandates that every citizen must be able to read, write, and

communicate at increased levels. To keep up with the higher levels of literacy expectations in a global society, students must have a repertoire of strategies that will enable them to access, use, and retain information from different sources. Georgia's commitment to lead the nation in improving student achievement has necessitated the inclusion of strategies that will help all students become literate and productive, lifelong learners.

To prepare all students for increased academic achievement in a technological society, the Georgia Birth-to-12 Literacy Plan must include 21st century skills that include digital-age literacy, inventive thinking, effective communication, and high productivity.

2.G. THE ROLE OF MOTIVATION IN STUDENT LEARNING

One of the most salient issues raised in *Reading Next* is that of motivation. Though it is listed as one of nine recommendations for improving instruction for adolescents, the Georgia Literacy Team has taken the stance that this is an area that requires unique focus. Two recommendations are contained in that document. The first is to provide students with a certain amount of autonomy in their reading and writing. To the extent possible, they need opportunities to select for themselves the materials they read and topics they research as well as time during the school day to read. A second is to take deliberate steps promote relevancy in what students read and learn. To facilitate relevance, another suggestion made in *Reading Next* was to coordinate assignments and reading with out-of-school organizations and the community to provide students with a sense of consistency between what they experience in and out of school. (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004, pp. 16 & 22)

In the 2008 Center on Instruction Practice Brief titled *Effective Instruction for Adolescent Struggling Readers*, the recommendations are derived from a summary of the research by Guthrie and Humenick on improving students' motivation to read. Those recommendations are:

1) providing content goals for reading: 2) supporting student autonomy, 3) providing interesting texts, and 4) increasing social interactions among students related to reading. (Boardman *et al.*, 2008)

In a frequently cited position paper for the National Reading Conference, Alvermann anticipates many of these later findings while adding several of her own. She lists the following findings regarding ways to maintain adolescents' interests during reading instruction:

a. Adolescents' perceptions of how competent they are as readers and writers, generally speaking, will affect how motivated they are to learn in their subject area classes (e.g., the sciences, social studies, mathematics, and literature). Thus, if academic literacy instruction is to be effective, it must address issues of self-efficacy and engagement.

b. Adolescents respond to the literacy demands of their subject area classes when they have appropriate background knowledge and strategies for reading a variety of texts. Effective instruction develops students' abilities to comprehend, discuss, study, and write about multiple forms of text (print, visual, and oral) by taking into account what they are capable of doing as everyday users of language and literacy.

c. Adolescents who struggle to read in subject area classrooms deserve instruction that is developmentally, culturally, and linguistically responsive to their needs. To be effective, such instruction must be embedded in the regular curriculum and address differences in their abilities to read, write, and communicate orally as strengths, not as deficits.

d. Adolescents' evolving expertise in navigating routine school literacy tasks suggests the need to involve them in higher level thinking about what they read and write than is currently possible within a transmission model of teaching, with its emphasis on skill and drill, teacher-centered instruction, and passive learning. Effective alternatives to this model include participatory approaches that actively engage students in their own learning (individually and in small groups) and that treat texts as tools for learning rather than as repositories of information to be memorized (and then all too quickly forgotten).

e. Adolescents' interests in the Internet, hypermedia, and various interactive communication technologies (e.g., chat rooms where people can take on various identities unbeknown to others) suggest the need to teach youth to read with a critical eye toward how writers, illustrators, and the like represent people and their ideas—in short, how individuals who create texts make those texts work. At the same time, it suggests teaching adolescents that all texts, including their textbooks, routinely promote or silence particular views. (Alvermann, 2001):

Alvermann's first observation above deals with the issue of self-efficacy. The literature on adolescent literacy links the establishment of learning goals to the development of self-efficacy (Roeser, Midgley, & Urdan, 1996). Implicit in the establishment of goals is the need

to provide students with timely information on their progress toward the achievement of those goals. Both of these issues involve the need to provide students with a sense of autonomy. Deci and Ryan identified the need for a sense of autonomy, relatedness and competence as being key to the development of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1992).

In confirmation of the last item in her list, a policy brief on Adolescent Literacy cites Merchant (2001) saying, "Many adolescents are drawn to technology, and incorporating technology into instruction can increase motivation at the same time that it enhances adolescent literacy by fostering student engagement." (National Council of Teachers of English, 2006)

Susan Ebbers (February 1, 2011) has recently published a brief summarizing the research on the effect of motivation on comprehension. Citing a study by Schraw, Flowerday, & Lehman (2001), she lists the following as avenues for developing interest, either situational for subject matter under discussion or to nourish a more long-term interest. (Note: The citations in the following list are provided in Schraw, Flowerday, & Lehman, 2001.)

- Curiosity: Students are often interested in mysteries, puzzles, secrets or provocative questions.
- Surprise: Providing students with something that is the unexpected, a surprising plot twist or a surprising fact can encourage interest.
- Novelty: Giving students something unusual, different, new, including artifacts.
- Relevance: Showing students how the subject at hand relates to their lives increases interest.
- Complexity: Because the mind seeks to find patterns and relationships, providing student with a challenge within her grasp increases motivation.
- Prior Knowledge: Giving students background knowledge about a topic make their becoming interested more likely. (Kintsch, 1998; Tobias, 1994).
- Explicitness and Coherence: Provide for texts that do not assume prior knowledge, but are written in a more complete and explicit style. (Beck, McKeown, Sinatra, & Loxterman, 1991; see also Schraw, Bruning, & Svoboda, 1995; Schraw, 1997).
- Purpose: "Fabricate" interest to help readers focus attention, by asking "who, what, where" questions (For more ideas, see Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Ozgungor & Guthrie, 2004).
- Perspective: Focus attention and interest on a certain character by having students take on person's perspective in an historical situation. (for more ideas, see Schraw, Flowerday, & Lehman, 2001.)

- Discussion: Topic-specific peer conversation has been found to promote interest and learning in third graders (Guthrie, Hoa,Wigfield, Tonks, & Perencevich, 2006) and in adolescents (Hidi, Berndorff, & Ainley, 2002).
- Interest-Alignment: Ensure that texts are aligned with students' interests.
- Surveys: Survey the students to determine which topics interest them and how much they already know about the topic. Build on those interests. (Ainley et al., 2005)

Finally, adolescents are not the only students for whom motivation is an issue. In an IES Practice Guide on *Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through Third Grade*, Recommendation Five is to establish an engaging and motivating context in which to teach reading comprehension. An analysis of the research suggests the following to encourage engagement: (1). Help students discover the purpose and benefits of reading: (2) Create opportunities for students to see themselves as successful readers; (3) Give students reading choices. (4) Give students the opportunity to learn by collaborating with their peers. (pp. 37-34.)

For young children, motivation for literacy learning is especially intertwined with playful interactions and routines (Dooley, 2003; Martinez, Roser, & Dooley, 2003; Roskos & Christie, 2007; Rowe, 2009). Playful social interactions with adults and peers motivate young children to explore, create with, and begin to make meaning with print. Indeed, as indicated by the Kindergarten Lab at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, play is likely a motivation for many learning objectives at any age (see http://llk.media.mit.edu/). Merging recommendations from the IES Practical Guide with what we know about the importance of play, the literacy advisory committee suggests that children be given time to playfully explore books and other print media (computers, pencils/pens/crayons, paper, etc.) with peers and adults.

2.H. THE ROLE OF INSTRUCTION

The goal of reading is to comprehend text, in whatever format it is being read. For many students, explicit instruction in how to comprehend is necessary. In a 1995 survey of a number of studies of verbal protocols collected from good readers, Michael Pressley found that good readers activate strategies before, during and after reading. "The good reader can be active before reading (e.g., overviewing the text and making predictions), during reading (e.g., updating predictions, constructing mental images), and after reading (e.g., constructing summaries, thinking about which ideas in the text might be useful later. The

list that he constructed has provided us with guidelines for how to teach students what is involved in comprehending a text. (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995)

Therefore we know that successful readers think and ask questions about the text as they read, and they employ different strategies for different types of texts. Good readers apply effective habits for reading: visualizing, making connections with the text, asking questions, making predictions, inferring, determining the purpose of parts of the text, and synthesizing content. Unfortunately, these habits do not come naturally to many students, especially to struggling readers and should be explicitly taught to struggling students via actual reading. In other words, strategy instruction must be intertwined with assisting a reader to make sense of real text. These strategies must be used by the reader flexibly and called upon as needed. The goal is for a reader to be able to self-monitor meaning making, and use the strategies as tools to make sense of text (Duke & Pearson, 2002).
 (See Section 2.B of this document.)

In order to help students become more proficient at comprehension, teachers should model the seven habits of good readers in the classroom. Read-Aloud/Think-Aloud (RATA) is one of several effective strategies for modeling strategies for students. The RATA strategy slows the reading process and helps students learn to think when they read. RATA allows the teacher to model the thought processes and strategies involved when reading. Students are able to hear and see what proficient readers do, especially as they access and make sense of content-specific text.

In an IES Practice Guide on improving instruction, the following recommendations are presented on how to improve both how teachers organize instruction and help students learn and retain information across disciplines. While these recommendations are not limited to literacy, they offer strategies for teaching that will strengthen instruction in all areas.

> 1. Space learning over time. Arrange to review key elements of course content after a delay of several weeks to several months after initial presentation of several weeks to several months after initial presentation.

> 2. Interleave worked example solutions with problem-solving exercises. Have students alternate between reading already worked solutions and trying to solve problems on their own.

3. Combine graphics with verbal descriptions. Combine graphical presentations (e.g., graphs, figures) that illustrate key processes and procedures with verbal descriptions.

4. Connect and integrate abstract and concrete representations of concepts. Connect and integrate abstract representations of a concept with concrete representations of the same concept

5. Use quizzing to promote learning. Use quizzing with active retrieval of information at all phases of the learning process to exploit the ability of retrieval directly to facilitate long-lasting memory traces.

> 5a. Use pre-questions to introduce a new topic.

> 5b. Use quizzes to re-expose students to key content. (Pashler *et al.*, 2007)

2.I. THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Reliable research supports the integration of technology in reading, English language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, fine arts, CTAE, health, and physical education. Universities, the Partnership for 21st Century Schools, the National Council of Teachers of English, as well as content-area organizations, support the importance of technology in instruction. Research from 21st Century Schools includes the integration of information, media, and technology skills. Specifically, people in the 21st century live in a technology and media-driven environment marked by access to an abundance of information, rapid changes in technology tools, and the ability to collaborate and make individual contributions on an unprecedented scale (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009). To be effective in the 21st century, citizens and workers must be able to exhibit a wide range of functional and critical thinking skills, such as information literacy; media literacy; and information, communications, and technology literacy.

Graphic 3.

Some implications for instruction have been substantiated by research on adolescent literacy; some are so new that there is no research yet, but are intuitively attractive.

1. The efficacy of the use of word processing to improve student writing for all student writers, but most significantly for low-achieving writers.

2. Creative uses of technology to support the use of strategies in reading are being developed and are currently being used with students e.g., Reciprocal Teaching, a well validated comprehension approach, is being used in a digital environment using embedded strategy prompts, coaching avatars and feedback.

3. The use of hyperlinks to provide additional support by providing background knowledge, define unknown words, embedded video and animations, and technology that reads texts aloud also shows great promise for struggling readers. (Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010) (Caveat: There is other research indicating that the presence of hyperlinks negatively impacts overall reading comprehension.)

The use of technology serves another need for adolescents as well—that of remaining relevant in a rapidly changing world. Not only is technology vital in the workplace, it has become the major tool for young people to communicate with one another. "New technologies and new job tasks have changed the meaning of what it means to write and write well." (Lenhart, et al, 2008, p. 3) In an article for EdTech Magazine, titled "21st Century Skills", the author said, "The new mandate for schools is simple: Be relevant to

students while giving them the latest skills to compete globally." (Sturgeon, 2008) Rather than viewing technology as a distraction, educators must learn to rethink instruction in order 2008) to leverage their students' fascination with technology rather than to see it as a distraction only.

2.J. EXTENDED TIME FOR LITERACY

The need for extended time for literacy has been recognized in numerous sources including *Reading Next, Writing to Read* , ASCD, Center on Instruction, National Association of State Boards of Education (NASCB), Kappan Magazine as well almost all other state literacy plans. Citing a study done in 1990 titled, "What's all the Fuss about Instructional Time?" by D. C. Berliner, the authors of a report to the NASCB stated, "Providing extended time for reading with feedback and guidance across the curriculum has been well documented and conforms to the extensive literature on academic learning time."

 More specifically, the CIERA researchers, Taylor, et al., found that the most effective elementary schools provided an average of 60 minutes a day of small, ability-grouped instruction. That was instruction that provided differentiation at the students' achievement level and therefore presumes additional time for grade-level instruction as well. *Reading Next* states that literacy instruction for adolescents should extend beyond a single language arts period and be integrated in subject area coursework. This extended time for literacy**,** anywhere from two to four hours, should occur in language arts and content-area classes. (Biancorosa & Snow, 2006, p. 20.)

2.K THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA SPECIALIST WITHIN THE SCHOOL

The Library Media Specialist (LMS) is the classroom teacher's partner in promoting reading and teaching literacy skills. There are many ways in which the two can work together to positively impact students' engagement with texts and improve their reading proficiency. The LMS and classroom teacher should collaborate in order to gear the monthly literacy events/school-wide literacy initiatives to the interests and needs of students and the classroom curriculum. When the two plan for instruction, the LMS will contribute ideas related to the wide variety of texts available in the Library Media Center and beyond. Together, the LMS and the classroom teacher can determine which reading comprehension strategies can help students improve their skills. The two can co-teach lessons in which strategies are modeled and jointly monitor students' guided practice. They can give students more individualized attention and integrate strategy lessons into inquiry-based

units so that students can practice strategic reading while engaging in authentic learning experiences.

Very often administrators are concerned about students' reading proficiency and library media specialists can help reach the school's goals for achievement in reading. Students must find relevance in what they read, and the LMS is committed to helping teachers select the most engaging resources to teach their curricula. Students must be strategic readers in order to learn from library resources, to read the Web, to succeed in class, and in life. The strategies the LMS and classroom teacher coteach through the library program are 21st-century skills. Library Media Specialists work with the entire faculty to involve them in literacy initiatives and teaching reaching comprehension skills in order to ensure that students make meaning, think critically, and produce knowledge from the ideas and information with which they interact.

2.L. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 2010-2011 LITERACY TASK FORCE

In keeping with the research on motivation, the Literacy Task Force, recommended the following to improve engagement and motivation in grades 4-12:

- Provide students with opportunities to make choices, particularly in what texts to read. This highlights the importance of having rich classroom libraries

- Provide students with work that allows them to experience success, thus increasing their self-efficacy

- Construct opportunities for students to work with peers

- Incorporate technology into literacy through the use of e-readers, blogs, and social neworking

3.A. BIRTH-TO-FIVE POPULATION

Among early childhood education literacy researchers, there is near-universal agreement that the foundations of early literacy consist of two interrelated sets of underlying abilities: (a) code-related skills; and (b) oral language skills (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008). Code-related skills are those that allow children to crack the code for translating the written word into speech. Oral language skills include skills that relate to deep understanding of spoken and written communication.

Code-related skills include skills such as learning the letters of the alphabet, phonological awareness, and phonics rules. Children who have these code-related skills prior to formal instruction in reading are considerably more likely to do better on assessments of early reading than those without them. All high quality early childhood education programs should provide instruction in these. Indeed, the National Early Literacy Panel Report (2008) suggested that these skills may be even more important to the development of early reading than oral language skills. However the nature of these skills make them rather quickly mastered by most children in a year or two, so the earliest years of learning (i.e., 0-3) need not be as strongly focused on these skills as they should be during the preschool (3-5) years. That is, these code-related skills are constrained skills with a definable number of items to be learned. After all, there are only 26 letters of the English alphabet. Phonological awareness skills can be boiled down into large- (rhyme and syllable awareness) and small-unit skills (phoneme awareness and blending). Although there are varying estimates as to the number of phonics rules that need to be taught (ranging from 18, Clymer, 1963; to several hundred), the ones that might be focused on by teachers toward the end of preschool are probably ones linked to simple letter-sound correspondence rules (e.g. b=*/b/*). However, a concerted focus on these code-related skills in the infant and toddler years is a slippery slope. We fear that an emphasis that is anything but very general (i.e., alphabet books, environmental uses of print, general attention to sound features) in the very early years (0-3) might quickly become developmentally inappropriate for children who have not yet even mastered the rudiments of linguistic communication and comprehension.

Oral language skills are generally considered to include comprehending and producing complex sentences, drawing inferences, the ability to listen, and, perhaps most importantly, acquiring new vocabulary. Indeed, it appears that oral language skills in and of themselves importantly underpin reading and listening comprehension during kindergarten and preschool (Lynch, Van den Broek, Kremer, Kendeou, White, & Lorch, 2008). Typically, many early literacy programs, including ones in Georgia, do not focus nearly enough on oral language skills.

While children can master code-related skills in a year or two, oral language skills are continually developed over time throughout a lifetime. They require the integration various types of knowledge that are ever-expanding throughout children's lifetime--vocabulary, oral, and written language skills, and an underlying and growing knowledge base. This extended developmental timeframe causes oral language problems to be

persistent and more long lasting (Paris, 2005). Children with insufficient oral language may struggle in later elementary grades and beyond as encounter what K. Stahl (2007, p. 56) calls "heavy texts" or long books with well-developed themes, complex plots and sentence structure, and complex vocabulary.

We can see areas where vocabulary and oral language skills can become involved in the earliest phases of learning to reading, as children are learning to decode words. In this regard, we resonate with the following statement: "A child just learning to read conventionally might approach (a) word…by sounding it out…Not infrequently, one can hear a beginning reader get that far and be stumped, even though all the letters have been sounded out correctly" (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998, p.849). When this happens, comprehension and word recognition suffer (Nation & Snowling, 2004; Schwanenflugel & Noyes, 1996). So, as we can see, vocabulary and oral language skills are important for every aspect of learning to read.

The relationships between early childhood vocabulary, oral language, and early reading skills have yet to be fully untangled by research. Some researchers find that, although children with good vocabularies tend to be better readers, vocabulary skills do not tell us much about who will end up as good readers once phonics and alphabet skills are taken into account (Muter, Hulme, Snowling, & Stevenson, 2004). Others have found that both vocabulary knowledge and oral language skills are important in learning to read (Dickinson, McCabe, Anastasopoulos, Peisner-Feinberg, & Poe, 2003). A large study following 1100 children from the age of three to third grade carried out by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network (2005) found that preschool oral language skills helped children to learn code-related skills as well as their later reading comprehension. Yet other theories say that preschool oral language and vocabulary skills operate by helping children develop sound discriminations between words (consider the distinction between the words "bait" and "bat") that later help them learn to read (Bracken, 2005; Metsala, 1999). Regardless of how these intellectual debates turn out, it is clear that an early emphasis on oral language and vocabulary is necessary, if not for early reading, for later reading. Common sense tells us that good oral language skills are important in school success. We also know that classroom interventions can be quite effective in improving children's oral communication skills (National Early Literacy Panel, 2009).

Unfortunately, Georgia's child care currently is not of the quality that it needs to have to support early vocabulary and oral language skills in an optimal fashion. This is a gap that the state hopes to fill with the current plan. Recently, an independent evaluation commissioned by Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) and carried out by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (Maxwell, Early, Bryant, Kraus, Hume, & Crawford, 2009) reported some troubling findings. Observations using standard instruments such as the ELLCO, ITERS-R, and ECERS-R preschool classrooms in child care settings uniformly indicated that low to moderately low scores on items related to literacy. For example, one the ELLCO 80% of the preschool classrooms were rated as having less than "basic" practice (i.e., scores < 3.0) supporting children's language and literacy skills. On the ITERS-R, 67% of infant and toddler classrooms were rated "low" or "moderately low" in terms of general quality and the average fell in the "moderately low" range in terms of listening and talking activities, in particular.

3.A.1.The Problem with Vocabulary and Oral Language Skills

Conversational Language Skills

Conversational language skills are what we most think of when we think of oral language skills. Children who have oral language problems, and speak in ungrammatical sentences with limited use of vocabulary words often have later reading problems (DeThorne, Petrill, Schatschneider, & Cutting, 2010; Scarborough, 1990). Unfortunately, many children come to preschool and kindergarten having had fairly limited conversations with adults in their home of the kind that promote language development (Hart & Risley, 1995). Further, it appears that current child center quality is replicating the problems that some children already have at home. Interventions that focus on these conversational skills can have a dramatic impact on the development of oral language (Ruston & Schwanenflugel, 2010).

Listening Comprehension Skills

Having good listening comprehension during preschool is a strong indicator of which children will show good reading comprehension later (Lynch et al., 2008; Verhoeven & Leeuwe, 2008). One of the most common ways in which children develop good literacy-related listening skills is through having adults read to them. Experience with being read to have been distinctly linked to good general literacy and language development (Mol, Bus, & de Jong, 2009; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1999). Interactive reading, where adults engage in

open-ended, inference-inducing interactions while reading to children, is particularly beneficial for preschoolers (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Senechal, Cornell, & Broda, 1995; Whitehurst, Arnold et al., 1994). Unfortunately, many families in Georgia and elsewhere have remarkably limited access to children's books in their homes and neighborhoods (Neuman & Celano, 2001). There are programs, however, such as the one carried out by the Ferst Foundation for Early Literacy (http://ferstfoundation.org/programoverview.htm) dedicated to remediating the issue of early access to children's literacy materials within the state.

Vocabulary skills

Many of our children come to school lacking the vocabulary they will need for early academic success. By the time they enter their prekindergarten or kindergarten years, their peers may already know several thousand more words than they do (Hart & Risley, 1995). Unless teachers intentionally focus on building vocabulary skills, the needs of these children may go unmet even in the best early childhood programs. Generally, programs directed at vocabulary skills use either interactive book reading, conversational strategies for encouraging language development, and direct instruction of vocabulary, either alone or in combination (see Hamilton & Schwanenflugel, in press; Schwanenflugel et al., 2010; Ruston & Schwanenflugel, 2010).

3.B. EARLY LITERACY INSTRUCTION (GRADES PREK-3)

Research has shown that high-quality preschool language and early literacy experiences are highly correlated with later academic success (Neuman & Dickerson, 2002; Strickland & Ayers, 2006). Additionally, the National Early Literacy Panel (NELP, 2008) has identified the following four components of an early literacy curriculum as key elements significant to later academic success:

1. Oral Language: the ability to produce or comprehend spoken language or listening comprehension, verbal expression, and vocabulary development

2. Phonological Awareness: the ability to detect, manipulate, or analyze the auditory aspects of spoken language (including the ability to distinguish or segment words, syllables, or phonemes), independent of meaning

3. Alphabetic Knowledge: the knowledge of the names and sounds associated with printed letters

4. Print Awareness: the knowledge of print conventions (e.g., directionality of print, title, author, illustrator, book handling, words, phrases, letters, capitalization, punctuation)

Generally, quality instruction at an early age may decrease incidents of reading difficulties (Juel, 1988; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). In grades K-3, early literacy instruction provides instructional anchors that, when mastered, provide beginning readers with an enormous capacity to identify words and translate the alphabetic code into meaningful language. According to the *Report of the National Reading Panel* (2000), the definitive document in early reading, there are five essential components of effective early reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

1. Phonemic Awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken language.

2. Phonics is the relationship between printed letters (graphemes) of written language and the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language. It leads to an understanding of the alphabetic principle –the systematic and predictable relationship between written letters and spoken sounds.
3. Fluency is the ability to read text quickly and accurately, and with proper expression, providing a bridge between word recognition and comprehension.
4. Vocabulary refers to the words one must know to communicate effectively. It includes the words necessary to understand what is heard, spoken, read, and used in writing.
5. Comprehension is the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with text.
   http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/readingcomp_pg_092810.pdf

The first three of these, phonemic awareness, phonics and fluency, are addressed in a separate section of the CCGPS called Foundational Skills. These skills are designed for kindergarten through grade five in the CCGPS. Though the focus for the last eight years has been on grades K-3 for these skills, the CCGPS has wisely expanded the range through fifth grade acknowledging that students in those higher elementary grades continue to need support in decoding and fluency for increasingly more complex vocabulary and text.

At the same time, teachers must be aware that early literacy is an active, complex, long-term developmental and cognitive process. Acquiring knowledge, enhancing understanding, and constructing meaning are essential to this process. Early, high quality instruction can prevent reading difficulties. Explicit and systematic instruction in the five essential components must be provided.

3.C.. ADOLESCENT LITERACY (GRADES 4–12)

As students move beyond the primary grades, their reading comprehension skills must beome more sophisticated in order for them to comprehend challenging material. To meet new, rigorous content area standards successfully, students must be able to comprehend well. If they do not comprehend well, student performance declines. This conclusion is supported by the following studies:

- One in four students in grades four through twelve was a struggling reader in 2005, and fewer than one-third of public school 8th graders read at or above grade level (Perie, Grigg, & Donahue, 2005).

- Sixty-nine percent of 8th grade students fall below the proficient level in their ability to comprehend the meaning of text at grade level (Lee, Griggs, & Donahue, 2007; NAEP, 2007).

- Twenty-five percent of students read below the basic level, which means they do not have sufficient reading ability to understand and learn from text at their grade level (Kamil et al., 2008).

Reading comprehension and literacy proficiency are also a concern for the majority of adolescent learners in the state of Georgia. A disproportionate number of students of color, English Language Learners (ELL), and economically disadvantaged are represented among the struggling readers identified by low performance on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCTs), Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGTs), and End-of-Course Tests (EOCTs). Without academic skills to be successful in school, these students are at high-risk of dropping out of school.

The following components of reading are associated with improved outcomes for adolescents: advanced word study, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and motivation. Phonemic awareness is absent from this list. For older adolescents, instruction in advanced word study, or decoding multisyllabic words, is still necessary for struggling students. (See

Section 5.A.5.c.) While motivation is an important facilitator of learning for students of all ages, its role must be highlighted in the learning process of secondary students. Overall, older students will need varying degrees of instruction in reading in order to improve their reading abilities. It is the teacher's responsibility to assess the reading ability and to focus instruction on the instructional needs of each student despite the chronological age of the student.

3.C.1. Reading Next

Reading Next (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004) has identified fifteen research-based program elements that improve literacy achievement of adolescent learners:

1. Direct, explicit comprehension instruction, which is instruction in the strategies and processes that proficient readers use to understand what they read, including summarizing, keeping track of one's own understanding, and a host of other practices.

2. Effective instructional principles embedded in content, including language arts teachers using content-area texts and content-area teachers providing instruction and practice in reading and writing skills specific to their subject area.

3. Motivation and self-directed learning, which includes building motivation to read and learn and providing students with the instruction and supports needed for independent learning tasks they will face after graduation.

4. Text-based collaborative learning, which involves students interacting with one another around a variety of texts.

5. Strategic tutoring, which provides students with intense individualized reading, writing, and content instruction as needed.

6. Diverse texts, which are texts at a variety of difficulty levels and on a variety of topics.

7. Intensive writing, including instruction connected to the kinds of writing tasks students will have to perform well in high school and beyond.

8. A technology component, which includes technology as a tool for and a topic of literacy instruction.

9. Ongoing formative assessment of students, which is informal, often daily assessment of how students are progressing under current instructional practices.

10. Extended time for literacy, which includes approximately two to four hours of literacy instruction and practice that takes place in language arts and content-area classes.

11. Professional learning that is both long term and ongoing.

12. Ongoing summative assessment of students and programs, which is more formal and provides data that are reported for accountability and research purposes.

13. Teacher teams, which are interdisciplinary teams that meet regularly to discuss students and align instruction.

14. Leadership, which can come from principals and teachers who have a solid understanding of how to teach reading and writing to the full array of students present in schools.

15. A comprehensive and coordinated literacy program, which is interdisciplinary and interdepartmental and may even coordinate with out-of-school organizations and the local community.

3.C.2. The Seven Principles to Ensure Success for Adolescent Literacy

In recent years there has been a growing concern about literacy in general, but adolescent literacy in particular. Providing students with a quality learning environment is the key to a successful adolescent literacy program (IRA, 1999; NCTE, 2007; Meltzer, 2001). In a position statement on adolescent literacy, the International Reading Association (IRA, 1999) outlined seven principles that ensure the growth of literacy for adolescent students.

Students need:

1. To have access to a variety of reading materials, such as books, magazines, the Internet, online databases, and other text sources in their classrooms and library media centers.
2. Time to read daily and participate in making choices about reading selections.
3. To have opportunities to discuss what they are reading with other students and their teachers.

Teachers need:

4. To use of research-based strategies to promote adolescent literacy in classrooms and library media centers.
5. To provide instruction in literacy strategies, such as comprehension, vocabulary, text structures, and discourse analysis increases academic skills.
6. To provide literacy rich content-area reading and writing strategies enable the students to access information and complex text.
7. To integrate these and other research-based strategies through daily modeling and explicit teaching.
8. To provide frequent assessment to determine students' strengths and needs will impact instruction across the curriculum.
9. To provide continuous support for adolescents by providing them with highly qualified teachers, media specialists, and reading/literacy specialists who understand and are able to meet the needs and interests of adolescent learners. *Adolescent Literacy*, a policy brief from the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE, 2007), states that teachers meet the needs of students by recognizing the multiple social and cultural literacies in our society. In conclusion, adolescents are more likely to acquire literacy skills if there is an environment that encourages daily reading in a variety of texts/genres, use of research-based literacy strategies across the curriculum, and quality instruction and support from all teachers and staff.

3.C.3. Tasks: Student Performances Resulting from Literacy Instruction

Within the conceptual framework, tasks refer to the rigorous work involved in both teaching and learning. In Georgia, instructional tasks are used as a means of addressing the Georgia Performance Standards and the elements. Instructional tasks include sample assessments and suggestions for differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all

students.

Performance tasks target K-12 learners and provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their acquisition of knowledge and understanding related to specific standards or elements. These tasks involve the application of knowledge and skills rather than recall, and they result in tangible products or observable performances. Performance tasks permit students to make meaning of texts, encourage complete self-assessments, and allow for modification of ideas. Teachers may evaluate performances using rubrics.

Currently using the Georgia Performance Standards, frequent assessments of students' performances monitor student understanding or misunderstanding and/or progress toward the standards/learning goals at different points during a unit of instruction. Culminating performance tasks require students to apply several concepts learned during the unit(s) in order to respond or apply concepts to new or unique situations. Such tasks permit students to gauge their own understanding of specific Georgia Performance Standards.

The Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (to be fully implemented by 2014) provide teachers with sample tasks accompanying the exemplars of text complexity in order to further clarify the meaning of the standards. These tasks show teachers how to apply the Standards to texts at the level of complexity required for their grade level. Each task is designed to reflect the wording of a standard within those grade level bands.

3.D. English Language Learners

The issue of how to provide the best instruction for English Language Learners (ELLs) has become increasingly critical in Georgia in the last decade as the number of these students has continued to grow. This year the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium anticipates serving over 78,000 students in Georgia schools, over five percent of the more than 1,500,000 students statewide (http://georgia.educationbug.org/public-schools/). Teachers need support in knowing how to teach these students who arrive in their classrooms with a broad range of language competencies, backgrounds and needs. The complexity of the challenges which confront policy makers is highlighted in the following list of questions:

- How long have students lived in the U.S. (e. g., are they recent immigrants, second-generation, etc.)?
- What kinds of language resources are available to the students at home or in their community?
- What print materials are available (both in school and out) and in what languages?
- What type of prior schooling have students received, and in what languages?
- What is the students' level of background knowledge in the content area of interest?
- What assessments are available, and in what languages?
- What instructional resources (e.g., bilingual teachers, bilingual aids, English as a Second Language pull-out programs, etc.) are available in the school?
- What are the experience levels of teachers? How much experience do the teachers have working with ELL students?
- What are the school and community attitudes regarding bilingualism? Is this instructional program, method, or strategy research-based2? Has more than one study demonstrated its effectiveness? Was research conducted on the particular, population of ELLs in our school? (Moughamian, Rivera, & Francis (2009)

The answers to each of these questions impact decisions about the best strategy or model to be adopted by districts for their ELL students. Layered over these questions are concerns presented by the context of the child's instruction and background (e.g., the political and cultural climate, the school's resources for instructing ELLs, the student's family as a resource). And yet another set of challenges may be presented when a student's home language that does not share the English alphabet, directionality, symbol-sound system or any cognates.

Instructional Models and Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners (2009), developed for the Center on Instruction (COI), summarizes the research on a variety of models and strategies being employed nationally. While each of these models has been the subject of some research, the findings on the best way forward are certainly not conclusive. This document divides the models into two categories: English only and bilingual. Because Georgia is an English-only state, only information about those models is provided here. They are Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA), Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), and Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE):

Graphic 4: Instructional Methods and Strategies

Method	Age Group Preference	English Knowledge Required	Native Language Use	Purpose	Program Elements	Instructional Strategies
CALLA	Upper Elementary, Secondary		Limited: Focus is on developing students' use of English	Engage students in self-reflection on learning processes to become more effective learners	Important content topics; academic language developed within content areas; explicit instruction in learning strategies for language development and content knowledge Stages: 1.Preparation 2.Presentation 3.Practice 4.Evaluation 5.Expansion	Learner-centered instruction; teacher as facilitator: students build on existing knowledge and make new connections; opportunities to make meaningful connections to material; opportunities to develop language through peer interaction; student responsibility for learning; questioning, positive self-talk

Method	Age Group Preference	Knowledge of English Required	Native Language Use	Purpose	Program Elements	Instructional Strategies
SIOP	Upper Elementary and Secondary	Students need intermediate knowledge of English to truly benefit	Limited: focus is on developing students' use of English	Make content Compre-hensible to students; promote English language development; instruct-ion in academic English skills in reading, writing, listening, speaking	Stages: 1.Prepara-tion 2.Building background 3.Compre-hensible input 4.Strategies (explicit teaching, scaffolding, learning strategies) 5.Interaction 6.Practice/ application 7.Lesson delivery 8.Review/ assessment	Cooperative learning; reading comprehension strategies; differentiated instruction; language objectives in content-area classes; using background knowledge; content-related vocabulary; academic literacy practice
SDAIE	All grades	Students need intermediate knowledge of English to truly benefit	Limited: Focus is on developing students' use of English; primarily used in English-only classrooms	Similar to sheltered instruction: provides ELLs with grade-appropriate academic content while promoting English language development	1.Cooperative and collaborative learning groups 2.Scaffolding learning in small groups 3.Teacher as facilitator as students learn to use strategies	Use of realia, manipulatives, visuals, graphic organizers; opportunities for interaction

(Moughamian, Rivera, & Francis, 2009, Appendix A., p. 29)

Another document developed for COI summarized interviews with principals of five schools with exemplary programs for English language learners. Those researchers identified three commonalities in those programs:

- Instruction is driven by research-based practices, such as direct and sheltered instruction, that have been found effective with all students.
- High-quality teacher professional development is considered a key factor in effective instruction and student success.
- As ELLs progress through higher grades they benefit from both English and first-language (L1) support to help them master academic language. (Rivera, Francis, Fernandez, Moughamian, 2010, p. 26.)

In an earlier COI document on interventions in reading for ELL students, the following recommendations were proposed:

- ELLs need early, explicit, and intensive instruction in phonological awareness and phonics in order to build decoding skills.
- K-12 classrooms across the nation must increase opportunities for ELLs to develop sophisticated vocabulary knowledge.
- Reading instruction in K-12 classrooms must equip ELLs with strategies and knowledge to comprehend and analyze challenging narrative and expository texts.
- Instruction and intervention to promote ELLs' reading fluency must focus on vocabulary and increased exposure to print.
- In all K-12 classrooms across the U.S., ELLs need significant opportunities to engage in structured, academic talk.
- Independent reading is only beneficial when it is structured and purposeful, and there is a good reader-text match. (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006):

Anyone familiar with the recommendations for instruction in reading for students whose first language is English will recognize that none of these recommendations is unique to the ELL student. This confirms the finding by Goldenberg (2008) that instructional strategies that have proven effective for monolingual English speakers also appear to be effective for ELLs. The principles of good instruction are not different for ELLs, but the necessity for them is intensified by the challenges that these students face.

Section 4. BIRTH-TO-GRADE-TWELVE STANDARDS

4.A. READINESS INDICA TORS FOR LITERACY: A PATH TO SUCCESS*

4.A.1 Sixth-Grade Readiness Indicators

Literacy is the ability to access, use, and produce multiple forms of media, information, and knowledge in all content areas.

The student
Demonstrates competence in writing in all content areas to show support for argument, inform or explain, create narratives that are either real or imagined
Reads, understands and learns from ALL texts by applying content-appropriate reading and writing strategies;
Demonstrates the ability to adapt language, spoken and written, to be consistent with topic, audience, and purpose at an age-appropriate level
Applies basic grammar, usage, and mechanics to communicate clearly in speaking and writing;
Distinguishes original ideas from information gathered through research and integrates the two to achieve a clear purpose;
Acquires information from print and non-print sources to achieve a specific purpose;
Uses the organizational structure of text to help extract information;
Compares and contrasts information contained in more than a single source;
Uses some electronic sources to gather and share information and to convince others of your argument;
Uses technology to accomplish grade-appropriate tasks;
Presents information orally, demonstrating clear purpose and appropriate organization;
Uses grade-appropriate software to learn in core content subjects.

*These Indicators are consistent with the Georgia Performance Standards and Common Core Georgia Performance Standards for the end of 5th grade.

4.A.2 Ninth-Grade Readiness Indicators for Literacy:

Literacy is the ability to access, use, and produce multiple forms of media, information, and knowledge in ALL content areas.

The student
Demonstrates competence in authentic, real world writing for a variety of audiences and purposes in ALL content areas;
Reads and understands ALL texts by applying content- appropriate reading and writing strategies demonstrating proficiency in applying appropriate strategies based on the organizational patterns and features of text;
Demonstrates the ability to use age-appropriate formal, informal, literary, or technical language that addresses topic, audience, and purpose;
Applies the fundamental components of the rules of the English language and communicates with clarity in both the oral and written formats;
Achieves an effective balance between researched information and original ideas and communicates the purpose of the research;
Reads information from a wide range of print and non-print text with fluency and purpose;
Synthesizes information across multiple informational texts and technical sources;
Explores a range of texts in all content areas and applies reading strategies to understand the texts;
Uses a variety of technology and information resources (e.g., television, electronic media, image makers, etc.) to gather and share information, to convince others of their argument, to examine propaganda and biases, and to present a clearly explicit message;
Selects and uses appropriate tools and technology resources to accomplish a variety of tasks and to solve problems;
Uses content-specific tools, software, and simulations to support learning and research.

*These Indicators are consistent with the Georgia Performance Standards and Common Core Georgia Performance Standards for the end of 8th grade.

4.A.3. High-School-Graduate Indicators for Literacy

Literacy is the ability to access, use, and produce multiple forms of media, information, and knowledge in all content areas.

The student
Demonstrates competence in authentic, real world writing in ALL content areas, using formal, informal, literary, or technical language appropriate for the purpose, audience, and context of the communication in a variety of genres.
Demonstrates the ability to approach and understand ALL content area texts by applying critical reading skills.
Applies the fundamental components of standard English language to communicate or exchange ideas or information to specific audiences and purposes within contexts.
Synthesizes and evaluates a wide range of reference materials in order to communicate the perspective that reflects the specific audience, purpose, and formality within contexts.
Collaborates with peers, experts, and others using telecommunications and collaborative tools to investigate curriculum-related problems and to develop solutions for all audiences.
Evaluates and deconstructs the strategies, propaganda, biases, and messages delivered by a variety of sources, print and digital media, to inform, persuade, entertain, transmit messages, and influence culture.
Explores and understands text organizational structures from different content.
Demonstrates knowledge and application of current changes in information technologies and the effect those changes have on the workplace and society.
Presents and delivers information orally, demonstrating clear purpose, appropriate organization, sound reasoning, precise diction, visual aids, and elements of narration, exposition, argument, and/or literary analysis.

> Participates as a critical member of literacy communities and understands and advances his/her role in these communities.

**These Indicators are consistent with the Georgia Performance Standards and Common Core Georgia Performance Standards for the end of 12th grade.

All three sets of these indicators were compiled by the 2009 Literacy Task Force under the direction of Dr. Michael McKenna, University of Virginia.

In order to ensure consistent progress toward achievement of these indicators, Georgia educators and caregivers are guided by a series of standards from birth through grade 12. Parents and caregivers of children from birth through age 3-years-11-months of age are guided by the benchmarks set forth in the Georgia Early Literacy Standards (GELS). The standards for children ages 3-5 being served through Head Start are the Child Outcomes Framework Standards for Literacy. Teachers of children in Georgia's PreK classes are guided by the Georgia PreK Standards. And teachers of students in grades kindergarten through grade 12 will be transitioning from the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) to the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) over the next three years.

4.B. Standards for Birth to Five Population in Georgia

Parents and caregivers of children from birth up to age four are supported by the Georgia Early Learning Standards (GELS) in answer to the question, "What should children from birth through age three know and be able to do?" GELS provide a clear set of indicators for infants, one year, two year, and three year olds along with helpful sample behaviors to explain each indicator. (See Section 4.B.1)

Georgia's Pre-K Program uses the Georgia Pre-K Content Standards for four year olds enrolled in the program. (See Section 4.B.3.)
<http://www.decal.ga.gov/Prek/ContentStandards.aspx> The GELS have been aligned with the Pre-K Content Standards which have been aligned with GaDOE's Kindergarten Performance Standards. This alignment is illustrated in a graphic on the DECAL website at http://decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/GELSSection9.pdf

A third set of preschool standards, the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework, is used by the Head Start community. (See Section 4.B.2.)That alignment is illustrated in a graphic at http://decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/GELSSection11.pdf.

Bright from the Start is currently conducting an alignment study that will soon be utilized to implement recommendations for changes to better align all standards in Georgia for children birth to third grade. Until that alignment is complete, Georgia is well served by carefully crafted and articulated sets of standards for its youngest citizens.

A word of caution: Dividing children by age groups and ascribing characteristics/attributes to children by age groups can be problematic because of children's individual rates of development, approaches to learning, and cultural contexts. The GELS are divided into age groups for the user's convenience and provide a set of appropriate, attainable, standards for Georgia's youngest learners while being flexible enough to allow for children's individuality and other factors.

4.B.1. GEORGIA EARLY LITERACY STANDARDS (GELS) FOR BIRTH THROUGH THE THIRD YEAR OF LIFE

I. Physical Development

A. The child will begin to develop gross motor skills.
B. The child will begin to develop fine motor skills.
C. The child will begin to acquire self-help skills.
D. The child will begin to practice healthy and safe habits.

II. Emotional and Social Development

A. The child will begin to develop personal relationships with adults.
B. The child will begin to develop personal relationships with peers.
C. The child will begin to acquire self-awareness.
D. The child will begin to demonstrate self-control.
E. The child will begin to engage in self-expression.

III. Language and Literacy Development

A. The child will begin to acquire learning approaches that support development and school success.
B. The child will begin to construct meaning from spoken words.
C. The child will begin to express thoughts with sounds, words, and gestures.
D. The child will begin to develop the foundations for reading.
E. The child will begin to develop the foundations for writing.

IV. Cognitive Development

A. The child will begin to develop the foundations for mathematical reasoning and logical thinking.
B. The child will begin to demonstrate early scientific inquiry skills.

C. The child will begin to develop the foundations for social studies.

4.B.2. HEAD START CHILD OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK STANDARDS FOR LITERACY FOR CHILDREN 3-5 YEARS OF AGE

✮ Starred Domains and Elements are legislatively mandated.

I. Language Development

A. Listening and Understanding
1. Demonstrates increasing ability to attend to and understand conversations, stories, songs, and poems.
2. Shows progress in understanding and following simple and multiple-step directions.
3. Understands an increasingly complex and varied vocabulary. ✮
4. For non-English-speaking children, progresses in listening to and understanding English. ✮

B. Speaking and Communicating
1. Develops increasing abilities to understand and use language to communicate information, experiences, ideas, feelings, opinions, needs, questions and for other varied purposes. ✮
2. Progresses in abilities to initiate and respond appropriately in conversation and discussions with peers and adults.
3. Uses an increasingly complex and varied spoken vocabulary. ✮
4. Progresses in clarity of pronunciation and towards speaking in sentences of increasing length and grammatical complexity.
5. For non-English-speaking children, progresses in speaking English. ✮

II. Literacy

A. Phonological Awareness ✮
1. Shows increasing ability to discriminate and identify sounds in spoken language.
2. Shows growing awareness of beginning and ending sounds of words.
3. Progresses in recognizing matching sounds and rhymes in familiar words, games, songs, stories and poems.
4. Shows growing ability to hear and discriminate separate syllables in words.

5. Associates sounds with written words, such as awareness that different words begin with the same sound. ✮

B. Book Knowledge and Appreciation ✮

1. Shows growing interest and involvement in listening to and discussing a variety of fiction and non-fiction books and poetry.

2. Shows growing interest in reading-related activities, such as asking to have a favorite book read; choosing to look at books; drawing pictures based on stories; asking to take books home; going to the library; and engaging in pretend-reading with other children.

3. Demonstrates progress in abilities to retell and dictate stories from books and experiences; to act out stories in dramatic play; and to predict what will happen next in a story.

4. Progresses in learning how to handle and care for books; knowing to view one page at a time in sequence from front to back; and understanding that a book has a title, author and illustrator.

C. Print Awareness and Concepts ✮

1. Shows increasing awareness of print in classroom, home and community settings.

2. Develops growing understanding of the different functions of forms of print such as signs, letters, newspapers, lists, messages, and menus.

3. Demonstrates increasing awareness of concepts of print, such as that reading in English moves from top to bottom and from left to right, that speech can be written down, and that print conveys a message.

4. Shows progress in recognizing the association between spoken and written words by following print as it is read aloud.

5. Recognizes a word as a unit of print, or awareness that letters are grouped to form words, and that words are separated by spaces. ✮

D. Early Writing

1. Develops understanding that writing is a way of communicating for a variety of purposes.

2. Begins to represent stories and experiences through pictures, dictation, and in play.

3. Experiments with a growing variety of writing tools and materials, such as pencils, crayons, and computers.

4. Progresses from using scribbles, shapes, or pictures to represent ideas, to using letter-like symbols, to copying or writing familiar words such as their own name.

E. Alphabet Knowledge
1. Shows progress in associating the names of letters with their shapes and sounds.
2. Increases in ability to notice the beginning letters in familiar words.
3. Identifies at least 10 letters of the alphabet, especially those in their own name. ☆
4. Knows that letters of the alphabet are a special category of visual graphics that can be individually named. ☆

A correlation between Georgia Early Learning Standards and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework a posted at:

http://decal.ga.gov/documents/attachments/GELSSection11.pdf

4.B.3. GEORGIA PREK STANDARDS FOR CHILDREN FOUR YEARS OF AGE

I. Language and Literacy Development
   A. Children will develop skills for the purpose of comprehension.
   B. Children will learn to discriminate the sounds of language (phonological awareness)
   C. Children will develop an understanding of new vocabulary introduced in conversations, activities, stories, or books.
   D. Children will develop and expand expressive language skills (speaking).
   E. Children will begin to develop age-appropriate strategies that will assist in reading.
   F. Children will begin to develop age-appropriate writing skills.

II. Mathematical Development
   A. Children will begin to develop and understanding of numbers.
   B. Children will create and duplicate simple patterns.
   C. Children will sort and classify objects.
   D. Children will develop a sense of space and an understanding of basic geometric shapes.
   E. Children will learn how to use a variety of non-standard and standard means fo measurement.

III. Scientific Development

A. Children will use processes of science to actively explore and increase understanding of the environment.
B. Children will acquire scientific knowledge related to life science.
C. Children will acquire scientific knowledge related to physical science.
D. Children will acquire scientific knowledge related to earth science.

IV. Social Studies Development

A. Children will develop- an appreciation of his/her role as a member of a family, the classroom, and the community.
B. Children will develop a respect for differences in people.
C. Children will express beginning geographic thinking.

V. Creative Development

A. Children will explore and use a variety of materials to develop artistic expression.
B. Children will participate in music and movement activities.
C. Children will use drama and express individuality.

VI. Social and Emotional Development

A. Children will develop confidence and positive self-awareness.
B. Children will develop curiosity, initiative, self-direction and persistence.
C. Children will increase the capacity for self-control.
D. Children will develop interpersonal and social skills for relating with other members of the learning community.

VII. Health and Physical Development

A. Children will participate in a variety of gross-motor activities to develop control, balance, strength, and coordination.
B. Children will participate in activities that foster fine motor development.
C. Children understand healthy and safe living practices.

4.C. GEORGIA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The Georgia Performance Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) were implemented in the 2004-05 school year. The English Language Arts standards are developed within strands that consist of reading, writing, conventions and listening/speaking/viewing. In grades K-8, the standards are presented by grade level, and there is a description of what a student should know and be able to do at that particular grade level. In grades 9-12, there is a progression of standards in each grade level for the strands of writing, conventions, and listening/speaking/viewing. The literature standards are written for certain courses

only. Although there are numerous current, state funded English courses, standards exist only for the following English courses: Ninth Grade Literature and Composition, Tenth Grade Literature and Composition, Eleventh Grade English, Twelfth Grade English, American Literature, British Literature, World Literature, Multicultural Literature, Advanced Placement Language with an American Literature focus, and Old and New Testament as Literature.

The English Language Arts Standards are designed to introduce students to core concepts that are continually developed and expanded as students progress through each grade level. This process allows students to develop the skills necessary to: 1) comprehend and interpret texts, including written as well as audio and visual texts; 2) compose a variety of types of texts, including those critical to the workplace; 3) effectively communicate and interact with others in group situations; and 4) communicate information through different modes of presentation. The English Language Arts curriculum integrates the processes of reading, writing, and listening/speaking/viewing in order to help students communicate and interpret information in a variety of modes.

Finally, the Georgia Performance Standards offer a "Reading across the Curriculum" strand to support content-area instruction. Because reading is a priority in the state of Georgia, it is a goal of the Georgia Department of Education to ensure that the overwhelming majority of students are proficient in reading. Therefore, collaboration has been established with other agencies and teams within the Department to ensure that all of our students' needs are being met through a tiered learning process.

4.D. COMMON CORE GEORGIA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

4.D.1. CURRENT STATUS

In July 2010, The Georgia State Board of Education adopted the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). Training for the transition from the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) will begin for administrators in the 2010-11 school year. Teachers will be trained during the 2011-12 school year and implementation will begin in 2012-13. It is projected that a common assessment will be available for 2013-14 for field testing. Administrators are currently being made aware of the crosswalks that have been developed to provide guidance about the alignment between the GPS and the CCGPS as well as of the areas in which teachers will need to make adjustments in their instruction.

Beginning in 2012-13, teachers will begin using the CCGPS. Students will be assessed by the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) that has been adjusted for two years until 2015 when the Common Core Assessments are fully implemented. The CCGPS will be supported by a nearly nationwide cadre of experts in the field of literacy working in universities as well as for publishers. That support will dwarf any previously possible when states were working alone. In theory, many of the curricular alignment issues that have plagued districts will be mitigated by anchor standards that provide coherence from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Publishers will finally be able to match their texts to a large, consistent audience, thus permitting much greater alignment of texts to standards. Common assessments, currently under development, will ensure that Georgia students' are operating on a level footing with the rest of the nation. While the transition may be somewhat painful, the payoff will be well worth the effort.

4.D.2. ORGANIZATION OF THE STANDARDS

In a discussion of the way in which the standards have been designed, the following explanation appears in the introductory materials of the CCSS:

> "The CCR [College and Career Readiness] standards anchor the document and define general, cross-disciplinary literacy expectations that must be met for students to be prepared to enter college and workforce training programs ready to succeed.

The CCR standards presented below are in essence the end of 12th grade standards. As such, they represent the goal or the target that all the subsequent grade levels are aiming toward. Thus, they are the anchor for each of the grade level standards. Beginning in

kindergarten, the CCGPS begins moving students up the first step toward the goal of graduating from high school ready for college or a career.

I. Reading: College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards

A. Key Ideas and Details
1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

3. Analyze how and why individual, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

B. Craft
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.)

6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

C. Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

D. Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

II. Writing: College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards

A. Types of Texts and Purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and covey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

B. Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

C. Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

D. Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

III. Speaking and Listening: College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards

A. Comprehension and Collaboration

    1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

    2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

    3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning and use of evidence and rhetoric.

B. Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

    4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

    5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

    6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

IV. Language: College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards
  A. Conventions of Standard English
    1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
    2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
  B. Knowledge of Language
    3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
  C. Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials as appropriate.

5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

4.E. WORLD–CLASS INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN AND ASSESSMENT

WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) is a consortium of states dedicated to the design and implementation of high standards and equitable educational opportunities for English Language Learners (ELL). Originally established through a federal grant, the WIDA Consortium consists of nineteen partner states of which Georgia is a member. To this end, the WIDA Consortium has developed English language proficiency standards. The standards and their integration into the Georgia Performance Standards (Common Core Georgia Performance Standards by 2014) help to facilitate students' acquisition of the academic language necessary for ELL achievement.

Although the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards were developed by WIDA in conjunction with the Center for Applied Linguistics to target ELL achievement, the instructional use of the standards will support the academic achievement of all populations of at-risk learners.

There are five WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards comprised of social and instructional language and the language of the four core content areas. The Model Performance Indicators (MPIs) are divided into four domains, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The MPIs are composed of three parts: the language function (what the student is expected to do); the content stem (the GPS or an element of the standard); and the support (graphic, sensory, or interactive). Sensory supports are manipulatives, photographs, realia, films, models, etc.; graphic supports may be charts, graphs, graphic organizers, timelines, etc.; and interactive supports are cooperative learning activities as well as a growing list of commercial software products that students may use independently to acquire English vocabulary and syntactical skills.

Below are a sampling of literacy skills that are required for success for English language learners. The key to understanding the literacy component is to examine what the student must do in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in order to master the standards and elements.

English Language Learners (Literacy Demands Based on WIDA Standards)

- communicate for social and instructional purposes within the school setting

- communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of English/Language Arts

- communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of math

- communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of science

- communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of social studies

4.F. ENSURING ALIGNMENT AND IMPROVING TRANSITIONS

In addition to making sense intuitively, ensuring alignment has been proven through research and practice to reap significant improvement in student achievement. Alignment can mean aligning the curriculum with standards and assessments. It may also include improving the alignment of the efforts of all the personnel working with in a school, district, or state. The comparatively simple task of aligning the instruction for students in support classes, such as special education, ELL, gifted, Title I, Early Intervention Programs (EIP), can present significant challenges given the time constraints and manpower shortages that teachers face every day. The natural progression of students moving from one grade or school to another creates an additional layer of complexity to the problem. It is clear from the following that aligning all the educational resources, including personnel, materials, time, and curricula, is a topic that merits deliberate planning and intention. It will take commitment from leaders at all levels of education to ensure that time, energy and manpower is not squandered on duplication or oversight. This document is a first step toward helping Georgia align its own efforts.

4.F.1. Research on Alignment

In 2004, the U.S. Department of Education commissioned the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) to help low-performing districts and schools improve student achievement in reading or mathematics. In that effort, they developed the *Working Systemically Model* around the idea that student achievement improves as schools and districts learn to work together using district-wide instructional and organizational strategies to attain common goals. This model seeks to improve the alignment of the efforts of teachers, school building administrators and district personnel in working toward

improving student learning. That report defines alignment as the ability to "use curriculum, instruction, and assessments coherently to address state learning standards". The preliminary findings of positive impact on student achievement from this effort are encouraging, (SEDL, 2004)

In a 2005 research brief, Squires compiled the research then available on the effect of aligning curriculum with standards and assessments on student achievement. They cited numerous studies addressing the efficacy of the following types of alignment efforts:

- Textbook alignment
- Instructional alignment
- Alignment between state standards and the enacted curriculum
- Curriculum alignment through professional learning
- International alignment studies

He summarized his conclusions with this statement:

> Curriculum alignment includes alignment between and among several education variables, including state standards, state-mandated assessments, resources such as textbooks, content of instruction, and instructional strategies. The studies reported in this review provide strong evidence from scientifically based research that aligning the various components can have positive and significant effects. (Squires, 2005, p. 5.)

4.F.2 Procedural Steps to Address Alignment and Transitions

In addition to these more large scale kinds of alignment efforts, establishing procedures at the school level is vital. The Literacy Task Force recommends the following to administrators:

- Schedule times for meeting for teachers with auxiliary teachers and personnel
- Establish a procedure to ensure that those meetings occur and produce the intended alignment
- Establish district policies that provide clear guidance for information that is to be provided to the receiving teacher at the next grade level
- Establish a procedure to ensure that those policies are carried out

- Schedule times for teachers in both outgoing and receiving classrooms and/or schools to meet and discuss shared students
- Designate a person(s) on the faculty to provide guidance to new teachers or any teachers needing help with the scheduling or the procedures
- Ensure that teachers are able to interpret data from their students former grade or school

4.F.3. PreK Transition Coaches

Beginning in the 2010-2011 school year, Georgia's Pre-K division at Bright from the Start began awarding funding for Transition Coach positions to 112 Georgia's Pre-K programs. Transition is defined by that agency, "as a process that prepares all partners – students, families, schools and communities – to develop the knowledge, skills and relationships that help students move from one educational setting to another." Appropriate language and literacy development is an important component for effective transition.

While language and literacy are important components, the role of these coaches is to ensure that activities associated with age-appropriate social, emotional and physical development, and preparation for new educational settings are in place. They will also provide support for families, and effective community collaboration. Transition services will also include provisions for students entering Georgia's Pre-K or a similar type program, transferring during the Pre-K year, and movements between private and public school settings.

4.F.4 Common Core and Alignment

Arguably the most radical force for alignment in K-12 will be implementation of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards and its assessment. The Common Core provides a seamless continuum of standards leading to College and Career Readiness at the end of grade twelve. Their assessments will allow states, districts, and schools to gauge exactly where students fall on that continuum at five different times of the year. Teachers in Georgia will be able to compare their students to students at the same grade level in twenty-four other states throughout the year. The Through-Course test points will assess students after 25%, 50%, 75%, and 90% of the school year on material taught up to that point in the year. Teachers and administrators will be able to see throughout the year exactly where their students are relative to students all over the nation. That kind of real-time information should have a transformative effect on classroom instruction.

In addition to effect of the Common Core assessment on alignment, teachers will have access to a nearly nationwide network of teachers and literacy experts who will undoubtedly be developing support materials that will make instruction more effective. Publishers will be able to tailor their textbooks to the standards. And already the *Common Core's Curriculum Maps in English Language Arts* have been developed by teachers for teachers. They "translate the new Common Core State Standards for Kindergarten through 12th grade into unit maps that teachers can use to plan their year, craft their own more detailed curriculum, and create lesson plans." The final version will be released early in 2011. (http://commoncore.org/maps/)

(See Section 5.K. in this document for a more in-depth discussion the assessment design.)

4.G. Recommendation From the Georgia Literacy Task Force, 2010-2011

The Task Force recommends that:

- Teachers need to be provided professional learning in interpretation of the assessment data that they receive from their students' former grade and/or school.

Section 5. ASSESSMENT

Introduction

In an increasingly global society, the definition of literacy expands to encompass all means of communication and must be applicable in all settings and across all content areas. Literacy is no longer simply the ability to read or write but also includes the ability to communicate through speaking and listening and to produce and retrieve information through technology-based source. The Georgia definition for literacy encompasses the ability to access, use, and produce multiple forms of media, information, and knowledge in all content areas. The Georgia goal is for the student to become a self-sustaining, lifelong learner and contributor to his or her community. The Georgia Literacy Indicators emphasize the literacy skills that will enable a Georgia graduate to be college and work ready.

The Georgia Literacy Plan includes a deliberate and comprehensive plan for assessment. The plan promotes the use of ongoing, frequent, and multiple measures that will be used as

diagnostic and monitoring tools to plan for instruction. It is necessary to examine both summative and formative assessments, to determine how that data positively affects instruction, and to see how formative assessments enhance the overall picture of assessment. Many of these steps have been outlined in recent documents available on the Internet. Five of the most widely disseminated are:

- *From State Policy to Classroom Practice: Improving Literacy Instruction for All Students.* National Association of State Boards of Education (2007)

- *Reading at Risk: How States Can Respond to the Crisis in Adolescent Literacy.* National Associaton of State Boards of Education (2006)

- *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy.* Alliance for Excellent Education (2006)

- *Reading to Achieve: A Governor's Guide to Adolescent Literacy.* National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (2005)

All four documents emphasize the need for improvements in the use of various forms of assessments for learning. In light of the consistency of these recommendations, recent comments by Dr. Richard Stiggins, an expert in classroom-based formative assessments, are sobering. In a chapter titled "Conquering the Formative Assessment Frontier," Stiggins (2007) acknowledges recent accomplishments in developing high-quality summative assessments, but adds, "…behind these considerable accomplishments there is almost complete neglect of assessment where it exerts the greatest influence on pupils' academic lives: day to day in the classroom, where it can be used to help them learn more." He also suggests, "The principle assessment challenge that we face in schools today is to ensure that sound assessment practices permeate every classroom—that assessments are used to benefit pupils….This challenge has remained unmet for decades, and the time has come to conquer this final assessment frontier: the effective use of formative assessment to support learning." The Georgia Literacy Plan recognizes the importance of identifying the literacy needs of students, the instructional approaches needed to achieve literacy, and the assessment components necessary to improve student growth and success.

5.A. ASSESSMENT PLAN FOR LITERACY

5.A.1 Purpose of Assessment

Educators must be able to do the following:

- identify students' strengths and weaknesses

- determine if fundamental content-based literacy skills are lacking

- establish learning goals for students based on the Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS by 2014)

- match instruction to learning through effective instructional design supporting literacy performance standards

- evaluate effectiveness of the instruction in meeting the goals for the student

- monitor student progress toward goals and set new goals

The assessment plan will assist educators in

- identifying how to use existing assessment data

- identifying other assessment tools for further diagnostic and/or progress monitoring feedback

- designing and using daily classroom instruction as a means of ongoing formative assessment

- learning how to interpret and analyze results from multiple sources to set goals for students and to identify appropriate instructional strategies

Having the "right" assessments in place is only one element of an effective literacy assessment plan (McEwan, 2007; Phillips, 2005; Torgesen, Houston, Rissman, Decker, Roberts, Vaughn, Wexler, Francis, & Rivera et al., 2007). Data must be easily accessible to school personnel in order for it to drive decision making. Educators and instructional support personnel must be able to sort, aggregate, and/or scan in sufficient time for data analysis and collaborative decision-making to occur. The Georgia Department of Education recommends the formation of a data team at each school. This team should be responsible for analyzing achievement and discipline data from all formative and summative measures in use. This team leads the work of using district and school performance norms to set criteria for expected growth and the identification of scientifically based interventions needed to support the learner. School level participants include the principal, grade level/content area representatives, counselors, and school psychologist.

5.A.2 Scheduling Assessments

Effective reading and writing instruction requires both summative and formative assessments. The key to a comprehensive assessment plan is conducive to the timing. According to the Center on Instruction 2009, three crucial timing categorizations exist:

- **Beginning of the year**: First, a screening helps determine the level of intervention needed to assist individual students; second, an informal diagnostic assessment helps the educator plan and focus on various interventions.
- **Throughout the year**: This process allows the educator to adjust the instruction. Because of new information with each assessment, the educator is able to provide a continual cycle for student improvement. Another benefit is the connection to targeted professional learning regarding the data driven information derived from the assessments.
- **End of the year**: The summative assessment component provides the information regarding grade level expectations. In Georgia, the CRCT, the GHSGT, and the EOCT assess the Georgia Performance Standards of certain content areas. (Torgesen & Miller, 2009, p. 16)

5.A.3 Formative versus Summative Assessments

For a variety of reasons, there is some confusion about the definition of formative assessment. In order to clarify the difference between summative and formative assessments, several clarifying characteristics are provided here:

Graphic 5: Formative vs. Summative Assessments

Formative Assessments	**Summative Assessments**
Occurs during the learning	Occurs at the end of learning an academic year or a learning segment
Assesses progress toward the learning targets	Assesses mastery of the content or skill
Used to make or modify instructional decisions during the lesson or unit	Used to make summary judgments about learning or instruction
Generally small scale in that it measures incremental steps toward a learning target	Generally measures whether the learning target has been attained

May be formal or informal: conferencing, ungraded quizzes or skill checks, questioning, drafts, etc.	May be formal or informal: end of unit tests, any assessment to which a grade is tied, end-of-course test, high-stakes criterion-referenced or norm-referenced test
Includes feedback to students that allows them to adjust their learning processes	Generally designed measure the degree of mastery of content for a grade
Should occur frequently	May occur frequently, but may not

 (Information for this chart has been derived primarily from "Using Formative Assessment to Increase Learning," (Wren, 2008)

The assessments themselves indicate an area in which additional instruction is needed, not how to instruct. Formative assessments are only effective if they are followed by effective instructional responses or appropriate types of feedback." (Torgesen & Miller, 2009, p. 24) The "how to instruct" must be embedded in sound professional learning opportunities and training. In the Georgia Literacy Plan, ongoing professional learning expectations center around the marriage of effective instructional strategies based on assessments and the alignment of instruction currently to the Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS by 2014). The focus is to ensure the following:

- High quality formative assessment practices that focus on a sound understanding of grade level academic standards. This can help alleviate some 'information' consequences of 'high stakes' test.
- A good formative assessment program that has 'unpacked' the state standards and identified the specific learning goals they contain can help focus classroom activities on real learning rather than on test preparation. (Abrams, 2007)

Therefore, consultation and collaboration between the Georgia Department of Education's Academic Standards Division and the Assessment Division are necessary in providing understanding to Georgia educators regarding both formative and summative assessments and how to use the data effectively to ensure sound instructional practices.

5.A.4 Assessment Framework

The ability to read is the bedrock of all types of literacy. Prior to any instruction, all educators are responsible for the review of students' general reading and writing

competencies. The educator should consider students' ability to access the content area text using on-going measures, formal and informal, formative and summative in nature. Of the formal, summative assessments, the state-mandated measures include the following: Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills, Criterion Referenced Competency Tests, Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, End-of-Course Tests, Georgia High School Writing Test, and Georgia High School Graduation Tests, and other district-specific measures. These offer a cumulative body of evidence to support students' current reading skills status. Teachers should actively seek critical data and continually review and update students' profiles to adapt their instruction to meet individual needs. These summative, high-profile assessments need to be complemented by a coordinated system of assessments that are ongoing and of smaller scale to direct instructional decision making. This system should include: **universal screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic assessments**.

5.A.5. Universal Screening

A universal screener is a <u>general</u> outcome measure used to identify underperforming students and to determine the rate of increase for the district, school, classroom, and student in reading and math. A universal screening will not identify why students are underperforming; that is, it will not identify specific skill weaknesses. Rather it will identify which students are not at the expected performance criteria for a given grade level in reading and mathematics.

According to Jenkins (2007), the key feature in a screening measure is the accuracy in classifying a student as "at risk" or "not at risk." Additionally, a strong screener will address the issue of false negatives (students not identified as at risk who truly are at risk) and false positives (students identified as at risk who are not). A district can risk wasting intervention resources if attention is not given to false positives and false negatives. In a 2009 Practice Guide for implementation of RTI, Gersten, et al advised caution with screeners stating that these, "measures tend to consistently over-identify students as needing assistance". In spite of that, Gersten's panel strongly recommended screening as an important and necessary step for identifying students in need of help.

The one consistent and urgent theme coming from all three 2011 Literacy Committees (birth-to five, elementary, and middle-and-high-school committees) is the need to identify or develop a set of grade-specific screeners to assist educators for students of all ages. The RTI Network is an excellent resource for information and even provides a listing of the various instruments currently available for students from preschool through grade twelve.

(See http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/assessment/screening) Citing J.R. Jenkins (2003), the following are identified as three criteria that should be found in screening approaches:

- Accurately identifies students at risk or not at risk for reading failure
- Must not be expensive, time-consuming or cumbersome to implement
- Must result in equitable, timely and effective intervention, thus having good outcomes for all students

One less frequently mentioned reason for the use of universal screeners is that they may allow administrators to detect patterns of achievement during the school year to provide additional support to particular teachers or classrooms. (NASDE, 2005)

5.A.5.a. Universal Screeners for Birth to Age Five

Because screening takes on different characteristics and purposes based on the age of the child or student, two types of screening are proposed. For the birth to age five population, Bright from the Start proposes a two-fold screening approach. First, a system of hearing and vision screening for children in child care programs is critical. Currently, only children in Georgia's Pre-K Program and Early Head Start/Head Start are required to have hearing, vision, and dental screening (DHS Form 3300). Vision disorders are the fourth most common disability among children in the United States and the leading cause of impaired conditions in childhood. Recent studies estimate that only 21% of all preschool children are screened for vision problems, and only 14% receive a comprehensive vision exam. Hearing loss is the most common congenital condition in the United States. Every day, 33 infants are born with some degree of hearing loss. Hearing and vision loss are often described as "invisible handicaps," causing problems that are not easily detected but can be devastating to children as they develop language. When a screening identifies concerns, appropriate follow-up, referral, or other intervention will be used.

Second, Bright from the Start states that it will include strategies to make appropriate, valid, and reliable assessment a central part of early childhood programs. The purpose of the preschool assessment will support the identification of young children's strengths and progress. Our plan will strive to identify and promote assessment methods that are developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, tied to children's daily activities, supported by professional learning, inclusive of families, and connected to specific, beneficial purposes. (See Section 1.D, Recommendation 7. for greater specificity.)

5.A.5.b. Universal Screeners for Kindergarten

Screening for future problems in literacy presents a unique set of obstacles that need to be considered before any discussion of the screening itself is addressed. Because of the very young age of these students, the results of any assessment need to be approached with caution. Children at this age vary considerably in their levels of maturity, understanding of language, and prior experience with school. Any of these can have a negative effect on a young child's performance on any or all of the following: an unfamiliar task, with an unfamiliar person, in a new situation. As the school year progresses, their performance may alter dramatically as many of them rapidly acquire skills as a result of instruction and familiarity with their surroundings. Therefore, the predictive values of screenings performed early in the school year may be uniquely compromised. (Pool & Johnson, accessed Jan. 2011; Gersten, et al., 2008)

On the other hand, failing to screen young children can prove even more risky. Research has clearly established the difficulties of remediating children's reading skills after grade three. Catching problems early has been shown over and over that prevention is by far the better alternative. (National Reading Panel, 2000) Detecting potential problems screening, keeping the complications in mind, is essential to ensuring that all Georgia's children will get the support that they need.

There are four essential core skills that research has shown to establish a positive trajectory for literacy acquisition. Those are: phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, concept of word, and letter-sound correspondence. A screening of these skills is vital for children at this age. However, they must be screened multiple times throughout the year with a valid and reliable instrument in order to track progress or lack of it. Any programmatic decisions need to be delayed until the issues of maturity and familiarity have been lessened. (Pool & Johnson, accessed Jan. 2011) However, teachers may use the results immediately to provide instruction and support where it is indicated. (A listing of instruments currently in wide use, their predictive validities, and a brief review of the benefits and limitations of each may be accessed on the RTI Network website: <http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/assessment/screening/screening-for-reading-problems-in-preschool-and-kindergarten> Note that the predictive validity of most these studies was calculated on kindergarten scores only. (See Section 5.A.5.)

5.A.5.c. Universal Screeners for Grades 1-3

In a discussion on the RTI Network of universal screeners for grades K-3 website, Johnson, et al, made the following recommendations:

Grade 1 - WIF has been found to be one of the strongest predictors of reading outcomes for 1st grade students. Therefore, we suggest at a minimum that a universal screen for 1st graders include measures of WIF [Word Identification Fluency]. To enhance the accuracy of the screening results, students initially identified by the screen should have their progress monitored for several weeks (the research-based recommendation is 5 weeks) following the initial screen (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006). Once a pool of students is identified as at risk, continued progress monitoring in WIF can improve the accuracy of the initial screening results.

Grade 2 - In the beginning of the year, assessments of ORF and WIF should be used as screening tools. As with Grade 1, a system for progress monitoring should be in place to help "catch" students who respond adequately to instruction and do not require more intense intervention.

Grade 3 - ORF measures are one of the only screening tools currently described in the literature for this grade level. However, as with Grade 2, classification accuracy is not adequate to warrant its use as a sole criterion for intervention decisions. Additionally, schools will need to examine decision rules for a variety of subpopulations, as research has indicated that higher levels of accuracy can be reached when cut-scores are adjusted for various populations, such as ELLs.

For All Grades - Screening is Step 1 of the process and does not provide a comprehensive assessment of a student's specific problems. Similarly, focusing on improving the skill targeted by a screening tool (e.g., WIF measures or reading rate) is not by itself an effective intervention. Once the pool of at-risk students is identified, more comprehensive assessments of their reading ability should be conducted to inform appropriate intervention placements. A student whose performance on a screening instrument is extremely low may require a different type and/or intensity of intervention than a student whose screening score is close to the cut-score. (Johnson, et al, 2011).

While there are inexpensive valid and reliable screeners available at the elementary level in reading to measure reading skills like phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, fluency

and, to a lesser degree, comprehension, the caveats noted above indicate the need for further research on the development of more efficient and comprehensive instruments.

5.A.5.d. Universal Screeners for 4-12

At grade levels above third grade, schools and teachers routinely use the information from the previous year's summative assessments to identify the initial pool of students needing further assessment. Currently, some students are assessed on fluency (ORF) at this next step. The recommendation coming from the RTI Network is that they also be assessed in word level skills and in comprehension. In an article titled "Screening for Reading Problems in Grades 4 through 12: An Overview of Select Measures", Johnson, et al, cite evidence that it is commonly thought that the primary obstacles faced by these older strugglers is lack of vocabulary and comprehension skills. However, there is evidence to suggest that they may actually be dealing with issues in decoding and fluency as well as in comprehension. (Johnson, Pool, & Carter, 2011) In that same article, the authors offer a flowchart which may serve as a decision-making protocol for adolescent students. (See Graphic 6.)

Graphic 6. Flow Chart of Suggested Screening Process
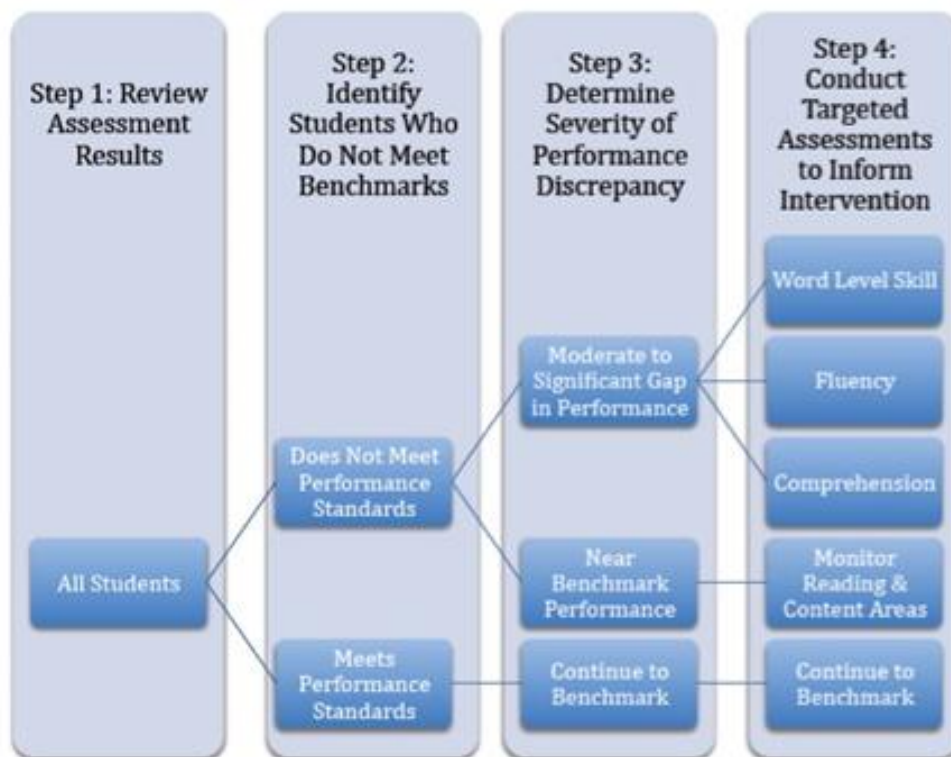
At the secondary level, the correct approach to this type of screening process will be important. While this assessment is not a grade, it is important to ensure that students understand that their performance on this screener will identify classes that will be a part of their course of study during their high school years.

School administrators routinely review assessment data. The use of Georgia's summative assessments (EOCT, CRCT, and GHSGT) can be a part of the universal screening process. However, the use of additional screeners ensures appropriate identification of individuals needing support. For example, the 8th grade CRCT should be reviewed by high schools and their feeder middle schools collaboratively. This process will help create an initial list of potential students requiring additional screening assessments immediately upon entering 9th grade. The 9th grade teachers and administrators should use a reading and/or mathematics screening tool designed to identify missing essential learning skills needed for success at the high school level (Georgia Department of Education, RTI Guidance Document, 2008).

The Lexile scores of both texts and students' reading levels provide assistance to teachers and parents in matching content material to students. The Georgia Education Lexile Plan and support materials are available on the gadoe.org website. Lexile information and support are also provided through the public school library and the public community libraries.

5.B. PROGRESS MONITORING

In an article for the RTI Network, Lynn Fuchs of Vanderbilt University provides the following as necessary elements of progress monitoring:

- Data collected frequently, often weekly, but at least once a month
- Scores are plotted on a graph with a trend line drawn to show rate of improvement
- Data provided on the rate at which students are progressing toward competence in a skill necessary to grade-level curriculum
- May be used as a supplement to screening to determine the efficacy of an intervention

The role of progress monitoring in RTI is to:

- Determine whether primary prevention (i.e., the core instructional program) is working for a given student.

- Distinguish adequate from inadequate response to the secondary prevention and thereby identify students likely to have a learning disability.
- Inductively design individualized instruction programs to optimize learning at the tertiary prevention in students who likely have learning disabilities.
- Determine when the student's response to tertiary prevention indicates that a return to primary or secondary prevention is possible. (Fuchs, Retrieved Jan, 2011)

5.C. ACCOUNTABILITY ASSESSMENT

Accountability is a cornerstone of the Georgia Literacy Plan. Assessment accountability, both formative and summative, serves as the foundation for PreK-12 literacy. Schools in Georgia already construct and implement School Improvement Plans, using data to analyze areas of strengths and weaknesses as well as making decisions about improvement. The process for change and improvement has been an important component in a school's plan.

5.D. GEORGIA TEST LITERACY DATA

Reading is a critical skill which is highly predictive of a student's future success in school. For this reason, the Georgia Department of Education has taken bold steps to ensure that every student in Georgia has the opportunity to become a good reader. The Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) focus on developing good readers in the English Language Arts curriculum. To develop good readers, GPS stresses reading across the curriculum and has set a goal that every student reads one million words. The full transition into the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards by 2014 will add a new level of consistency. Each grade will move its students along the continuum articulated in the College and Career Anchor Standards. The reading standards for informational text in grades K-5 and the reading standards for social studies, science and technical writing will provide teachers with more specific guidance than was available before. (See section 5.K. for a discussion of the assessments for CCCGPS).

Data showing student performance in literacy from several sources that point to the ongoing need to improve the reading ability of Georgia students. In 2006 as part of the state's mission to lead the nation in raising student achievement, the department began incorporating The Lexile Framework for Reading into the assessment program. Using these new data, the Georgia Department of Education has launched a literacy initiative that focuses on building strong readers and reinforces that reading is an important component of all content areas.

5.E. GEORGIA'S NAEP DATA IN READING

In the introduction, the high level results of Georgia's performance on the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) were presented. To recap, the performance of all students include the following highlights:

In 2009, the average reading score for fourth-grade students in Georgia was 218. This was not significantly different from that of the nation's public schools (220).

In 2009, the average reading score for eighth-grade students in Georgia was 260. This was not significantly different from that of the nation's public schools (262).

In 2009, the percentage of fourth-grade students in Georgia who performed at or above Proficient in reading was 29 percent. This was not significantly different from that for the nation's public schools (32 percent).

In 2009, the percentage of eighth-grade students in Georgia who performed at or above Proficient in reading was 27 percent. This was significantly smaller than that for the nation's public schools (30 percent).

Delving into more depth on Georgia's results from the 2009 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), the data show that students in Georgia have demonstrated small increases in the percentage of students at or above basic from 2002 to 2005. Graphics 7 and 9 show the percent of students at or above Basic on NAEP reading test for 4th grader and 8th graders respectively. While there have been increases in the percent of students at or above the Basic level for many student groups, this growth has not always been steady nor is it significant in a majority of the groups. It should also be noted that the Basic level on NAEP does not translate into reading proficiency. It is more important to look at the results in Graphics 8 and 10 that show the results for proficiency.

Graphic 7: Trends in Georgia's 4th Grade NAEP Results: At or Above Basic

Grade 4 Reading At or Above Basic

	All Students	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Male	Female	FRL (NSL)	SD	ELL
2002	59%	72%	41%	45%	68%	56%	62%	44%	24%	23%
2003	59%	72%	42%	48%	77%	55%	63%	43%	28%	28%
2005	58%	73%	40%	46%	84%	53%	63%	43%	37%	20%
2007	66%	79%	48%	58%	78%	62%	69%	51%	48%	24%
2009	63%	76%	47%	52%	83%	59%	66%	50%	30%	22%
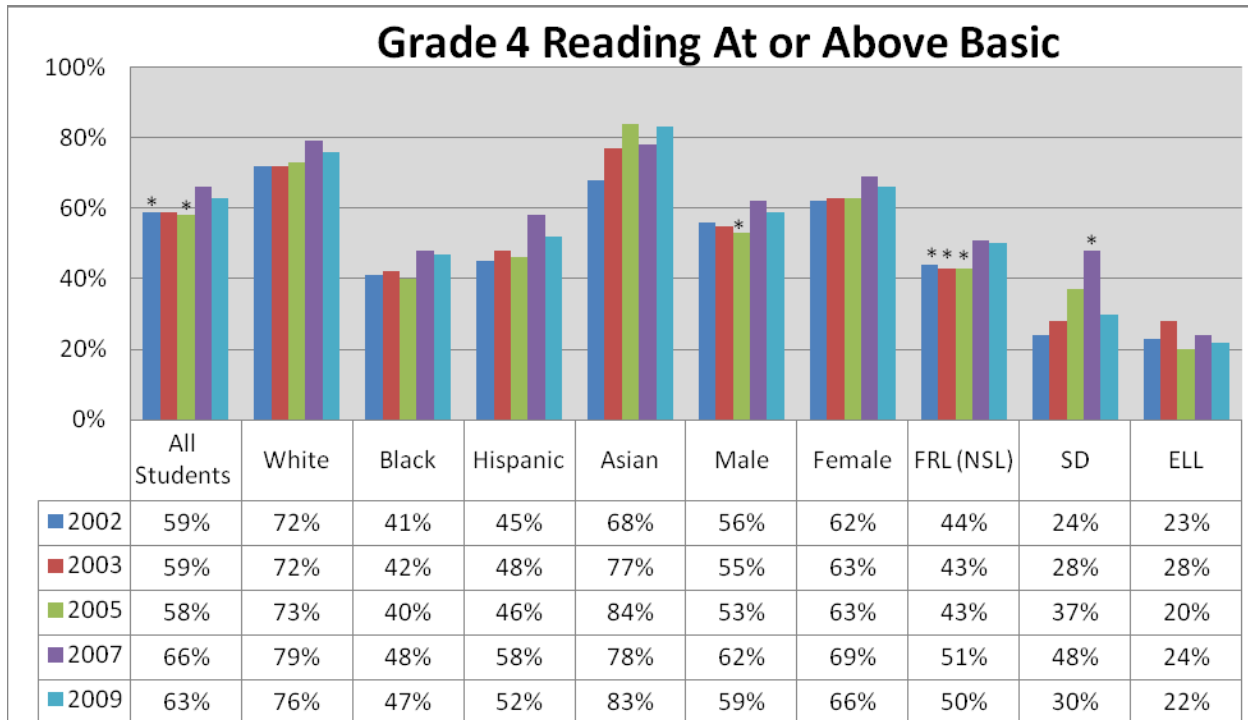
*Value is significantly different from the 2009 value.

Graphic 8: Trends in Georgia's 4th Grade Reading NAEP: At or Above Proficient

Grade 4 Reading At or Above Proficient

	All Students	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Male	Female	FRL (NSL)	SD	ELL
2002	28%	39%	13%	15%	42%	25%	31%	16%	9%	4%
2003	27%	38%	12%	17%	43%	24%	30%	13%	10%	9%
2005	26%	37%	12%	14%	57%	22%	30%	13%	15%	4%
2007	28%	40%	14%	21%	49%	25%	31%	15%	17%	4%
2009	29%	40%	15%	20%	53%	26%	33%	18%	14%	6%
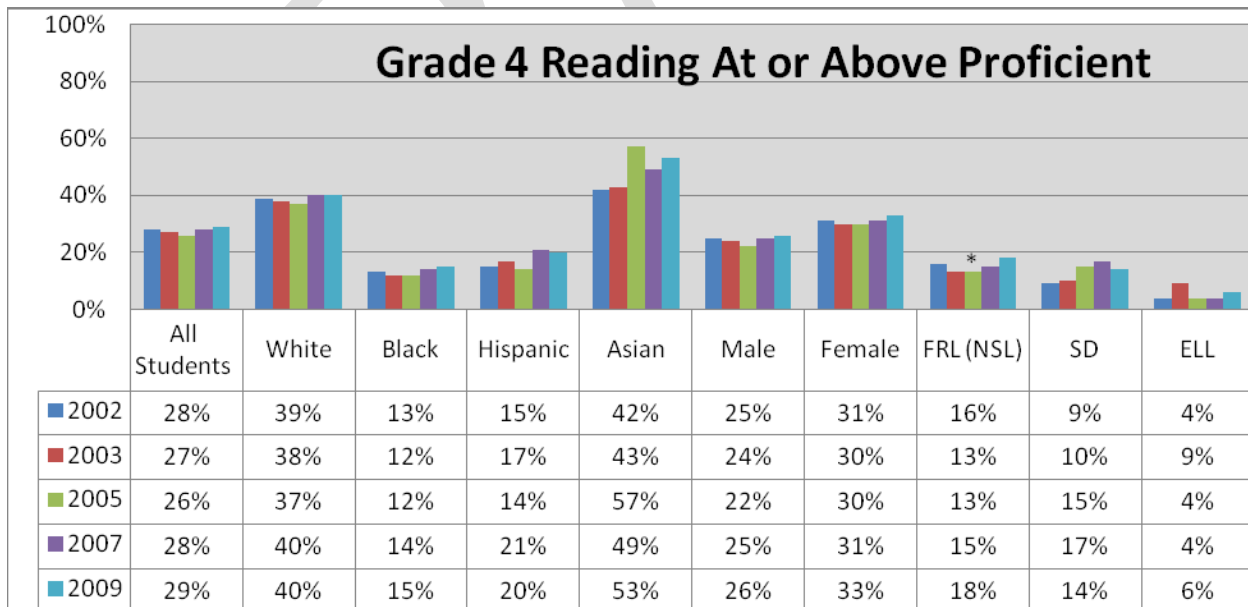
*Value is significantly different from the 2009 value

Graphic 9: Trends in Georgia's 4th Grade Reading Achievement Levels on NAEP

Grade 8 Reading At or Above Basic

	All Students	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Male	Female	FRL (NSL)	SD	ELL
2002	70%	80%	56%	51%	77%	64%	75%	56%	26%	
2003	69%	81%	54%	55%	70%	63%	76%	54%	22%	
2005	67%	79%	49%	59%	79%	61%	73%	52%	32%	
2007	70%	84%	56%	62%		65%	75%	57%	41%	
2009	72%	81%	60%	67%	90%	66%	78%	60%	32%	
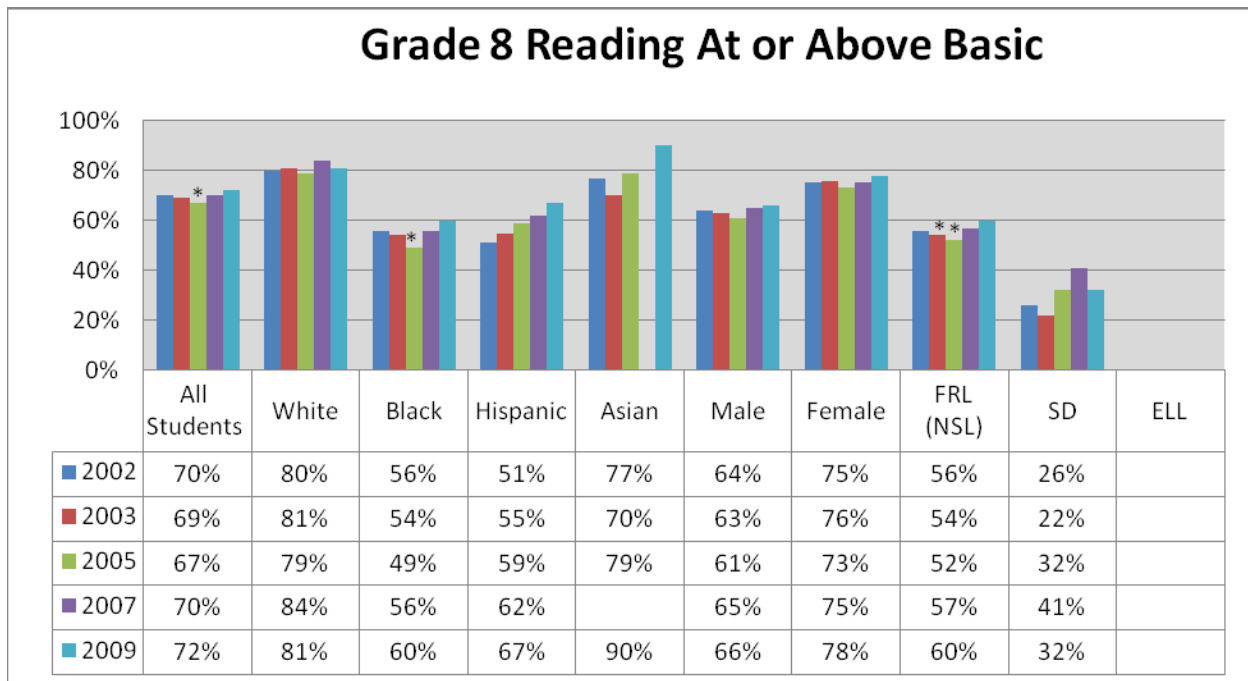
*Value is significantly different from the 2009 value.

Graphic 10: Trends in Georgia's 4th Grade Reading Achievement Levels on NAEP

Grade 8 Reading At or Above Proficient

	All Students	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Male	Female	FRL (NSL)	SD	ELL
2002	26%	35%	14%	14%	27%	22%	30%	14%	6%	
2003	26%	36%	12%	16%	39%	22%	30%	12%	2%	
2005	25%	35%	10%	14%	47%	20%	30%	12%	5%	
2007	26%	38%	13%	17%		20%	31%	14%	6%	
2009	27%	35%	15%	20%	61%	22%	32%	14%	4%	
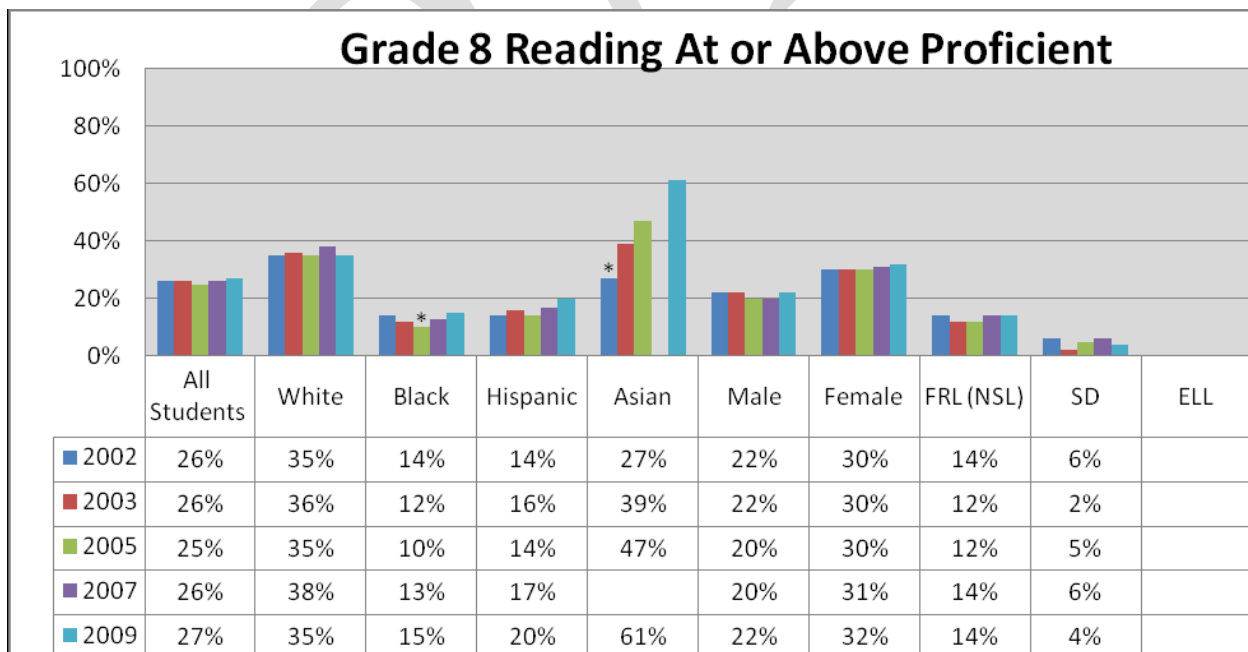
*Value is significantly different from the 2009 value.

While the 2009 results for Georgia show a decrease in the percent of students performing at the Below Basic level in grades since 2002, it is clear that with 71% of 4th graders and 73% of 8th graders classified as "not proficient" readers in 2009, Georgia has much to accomplish in making improvements in reading.

5.F. GEORGIA'S NAEP DATA IN WRITING

Over all, writing for Georgia's 8th grade students appears to be keeping pace with the rest of the nation and is generally showing improvement from 1998 and 2002. The percentage of those performing better than basic is 88% which was a significant improvement over the earlier assessments. However, the percentage of students performing at or above proficient, while showing improvement over the last assessment years, is still only 29 percent.

These results of Georgia's 8th grade students on the writing assessment in 2007 are taken from the NCES website:

- In 2007, the average scale score for eighth-grade students in Georgia was 153. This was higher than their average score in 2002 (147) and was higher than their average score in 1998 (146).[1]
- Georgia's average score (153) in 2007 was not significantly different from that of the nation's public schools (154).
- Of the 45 states and one other jurisdiction that participated in the 2007 eighth-grade assessment, students' average scale score in Georgia was higher than those in 10 jurisdictions, not significantly different from those in 20 jurisdictions, and lower than those in 15 jurisdictions.[2]
- The percentage of students in Georgia who performed at or above the NAEP P*roficient* level was 29 percent in 2007. This percentage was greater than that in 2002 (25 percent) and was greater than that in 1998 (23 percent).
- The percentage of students in Georgia who performed at or above the NAEP *Basic* level was 88 percent in 2007. This percentage was greater than that in 2002 (82 percent) and was greater than that in 1998 (83 percent).

http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/stt2007/2008470GA8.pdf

5.G. GEORGIA'S DATA FROM ACT AND SAT

In addition to the NAEP, Georgia students participate in other assessments that compare their performance with the nation. ACT and SAT scores of the graduating Class of 2010 reflect the most recent results.

Forty-four percent (or 39,436 students) of students in the graduating Class of 2010 took the ACT. The average composite score in Reading was 20.9 compared to the nation's average composite score of 21.3. To meet the ACT College Readiness Benchmark, a score or 21 or more is required. Forty-nine percent of Georgia students met that Benchmark. Although Georgia's average reading score has remained unchanged at 20.9 since 2008, students lag behind the nation's 52% of students that met the College Readiness Benchmark..

Seventy-four percent (66,019 students) students in the Class of 2010 took the SAT. The mean score in Critical Reading was 488 compared to the nation's mean score of 501. The mean score for Writing was 475 compared to the nation's mean score of 492.

5.H. STATE ASSESSMENT DATA FOR READING

What do Georgia's state assessments indicate about student reading ability? The following results were derived from test files for the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests in Reading for grades 1-8 and the Georgia High School Graduation Test in English Language Arts for grade 11. Results are shown for 2006 to 2010, the years in which the tests have been administered based on the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS).

Graphic 11: Percentage of Students Scoring in Does Not Meet Performance Level on State Assessments for Reading

Test Program	Grade	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
CRCT	1	12	10	10	9	8
CRCT	2	11	9	8	13	15
CRCT	3	17	15	13	12	10
CRCT	4	19	15	13	13	11

CRCT	5	19	14	12	12	10
CRCT	6	14	11	9	10	9
CRCT	7	20	15	12	11	11
CRCT	8	11	12	9	7	5
GHSGT	11	4*	4*	10	10	10

> * AYP results show 9% and 7.9% not proficient on GHSGT in English Language Arts in 2006 and 2007 respectively. These school accountability standards require students to obtain a higher scale score to be classified proficient than what is required to pass the test and meet diploma eligibility.

Since the start of the GPS-based CRCT, there have been steady decreases in the percentage of students not meeting standards in reading each grade. The "Does Not Meet" classification on the CRCT corresponds to "not proficient" for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). For the GHSGT in 2006 and 2007, there still existed the student accountability standards (eligibility for diploma) and separate school accountability standards (AYP). As of 2008, one set of standards serves both purposes now that the GHSGT is fully aligned to the more rigorous GPS curriculum. State test results reveal fewer students as "not proficient" than what the NAEP state-level results have indicated. Of course, NAEP and state tests differ in purpose, but essentially all these tests tap into students' reading ability. Although the percentages of students being classified as "not proficient" on the Georgia tests are less than what is indicated by NAEP, Georgia will continue to strive to ensure students' success in even the most rigorous challenges.

5.H.1 Using Lexiles in Reading

The state assessments produce another measure of reading that indicates that there is still much to do in improving the reading achievement of Georgia students. Part of the literacy initiative is to provide educators and parents with a reading indicator that permits parents and educators to have a direct link to reading material that is matched to the student's reading ability. A Lexile measure of reading ability is produced for every student who receives a Reading scale score on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) or an English Language Arts scale score on the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT). The state is able to provide the Lexile as a result of studies that the Georgia Department of

Education and MetaMetrics conducted in 2006 for GPS-CRCT and QCC-GHSGT and in 2008 for GPS-GHSGT. A sampling of students in selected districts took a Lexile Linking Test (LLT) a few weeks prior to the regular administration of the GHSGT in English/Language Arts or the CRCT in Reading. By examining both scores -- LLT with either the GHSGT or CRCT – a set of Lexile to GHSGT or CRCT look-up tables were produced. These look-up tables allow students to get a Lexile score along with their CRCT or GHSGT score without having to take an additional assessment. It is important to note that the test performance standards on the CRCT and GHSGT were set prior to linking the tests to the Lexile Framework for Reading. This means the Lexiles were not available to influence where the test performance standards were set.

For the 2009-10 school year, the Georgia Department of Education continued to focus on improving students' reading. Part of this initiative is to provide educators and parents with a reading indicator that permits parents and educators a direct link to reading material that is matched to the student's reading ability. A Lexile measure of reading ability was produced for every student who received a Reading scale score on the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) or an English Language Arts scale score on the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT). The spring 2010 results show that 1,115,582 students received a Lexile measure. Graphic 12 shows several descriptive statistics for the Lexile measures.

Graphic 12: Descriptive Statistics on the Lexile Measures by Grade

Grade Level	N Count w/ Lexiles	Mean	Range		Distribution			Lexile Associated with Cut Scores	
			Minimum Lexile	Maximum Lexile	25th Percentile	50th Percentile (Median)	75th Percentile	Lexile at Meets	Lexile at Exceeds
1	127,596	159.82	BR*	550	BR*	85	275	BR*	205
2	127,234	425.24	BR*	780	275	405	590	130	510
3	131,035	659.50	BR*	890	530	685	820	410	790
4	128,856	779.80	BR*	990	670	810	915	570	915
5	127,011	865.24	90	1085	745	885	1010	650	1040
6	124,553	955.87	190	1155	825	980	1130	685	1120
7	120,751	1008.41	260	1210	890	1020	1145	800	1210
8	121,782	1106.40	295	1265	1000	1150	1265	805	1265
11	106,764	1191.79	465	1545	1045	1200	1330	960**	1200

BR = Beginning Reader. BR is reported on score reports. The actual value associated with BR is either a 0 or a negative number. For purposes of this analysis, all BR scores were treated as 0.

*** The associated Lexiles on GHSGT reflect the scale scores for the GPS form (i.e., Basic Proficiency cut score of 200 and the Advanced Proficiency cut score of 235).*

To provide a context for understanding the relationship between Lexiles and the state's tests, the Georgia Department of Education's Assessment Research and Development Division compared the Lexile measures associated with the CRCT and GHSGT cut scores with information on typical reader ability by grade level and with typical text demands for each grade. MetaMetrics, the developers of the Lexile Framework, has conducted numerous studies with large student samples to determine the typical range of reader ability at various grade levels. Table 2 shows the typical reading levels in Lexiles (see Reader–Lower and Reader–Upper) for each grade level; these reading levels represent the interquartile range, or about the middle 50 percent of students. Remember, about 25 percent of the students read above this range and about 25 percent read below this range. Similarly, MetaMetrics has examined the text demands of instructional material at each grade level. Table 2 shows the interquartile range (or middle 50 percent) of texts by grade level (see Text-Lower and Text-Upper). In addition, Table 2 includes the Lexiles associated

with the Meets for the CRCT (or Pass for the GHSGT) cut score and the Exceeds (or Pass Plus for the GHSGT) cut score as well as the 2009 median Lexile for each grade level.

Graphic 13: Lexile Measures and Their Relationship to Grade Levels, the CRCT and the GHSGT

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11
Text - Lower	200	300	500	650	750	850	950	1000	1100
Text - Upper	400	500	700	850	950	1050	1075	1100	1300
Meets	0	130	410	570	650	685	800	805	960
Exceeds	205	510	790	915	1040	1120	1210	1265	1200
Reader - Lower	0	140	330	445	595	665	735	805	940
Reader Upper	300	500	700	810	910	1000	1065	1100	1210
2010 Median	85	405	685	810	885	980	1020	1150	1200

To better demonstrate these relationships, Graphic 14 graphs the information from Graphic 13. Graphic 15 illustrates the relationship of reader ability, text difficulty, and Lexile information associated with the CRCT and GHSGT. One can see that the span of reader ability (red lines) is greater than the span of text difficulty (blue lines). Students that fall towards the lower band of reader ability and outside of the text difficulty will probably experience some difficulty comprehending the text materials typical of that grade level. In most cases the Lexile associated with the "Meets" cut scores on the CRCT and the "Pass" on the GHSGT (the green line with diamonds) fall on or above the lower band of reader ability but below the lower bound of text difficulty (the red line with stars). However, the Lexiles associated with the "Exceeds" cut scores on the CRCT (the green line with boxes) are typically above the upper limit of the text difficulty (the blue line with boxes) and the upper bound of reader ability (the red line with circles). With the exception of Grade 1, the median Lexiles (the gold line) from the CRCT or GHSGT fall in the middle area of both the reader ability range (red lines) and text difficulty range (blue lines).

Graphic 14: Grade Level Text and Reader Boundaries with 2010 Median Lexiles and Lexiles at Cut Scores
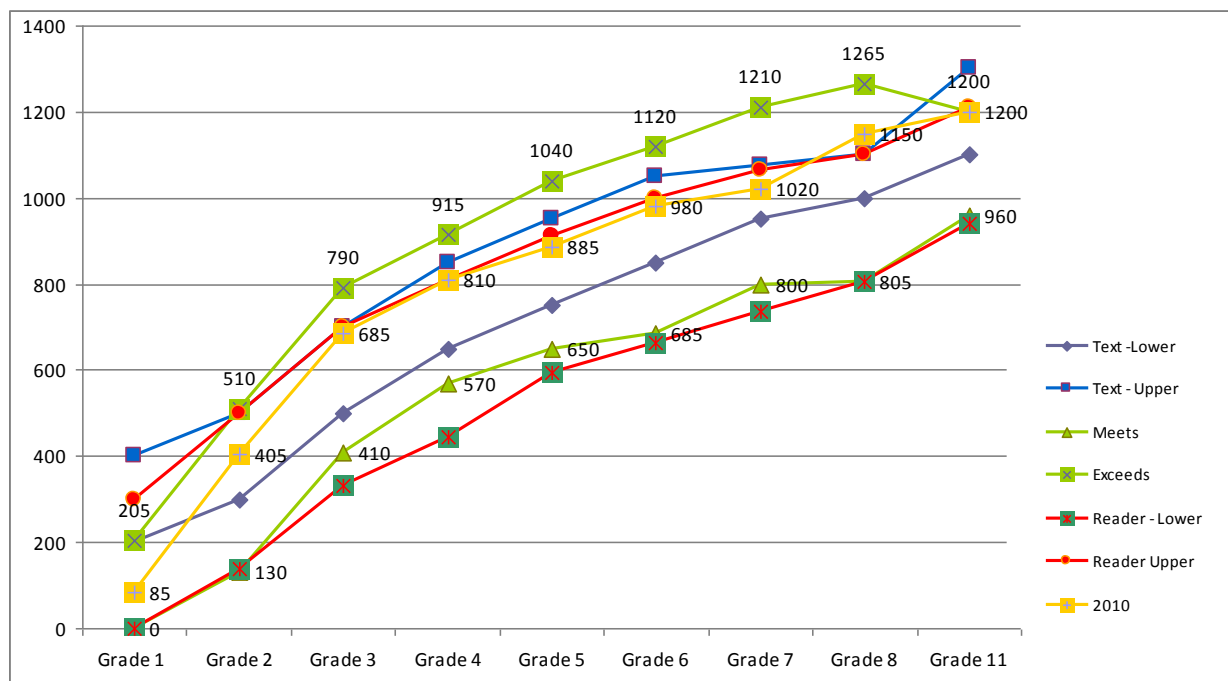
Lexiles have been generated with the CRCT and GHSGT since 2006. With five years of data (2006 – 2010), a change over time using the median Lexile score for each grade can be examined. Again to provide text for these median Lexile scores, the table and graph include the interquartile range for instructional material for each grade level.

Graphic 15: Median Lexiles with Text Demands by Grade

Grade	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Text Demand- Lower Limit	Text Demand - Upper Limit
1	60	85	80	80	85	200	400
2	405	405	395	410	405	300	500
3	610	610	670	645	685	500	700
4	740	740	770	790	810	650	850
5	825	825	870	840	885	750	950
6	910	910	955	980	980	850	1050
7	965	965	995	1020	1020	950	1075
8	1060	1060	1080	1110	1150	1000	1100
11*	1160	1160	1200	1200	1200	1100	1300

* Lexiles for 2006 and 2007 are derived from the QCC-based GHSGT; Lexiles for 2008 - 2010 are associated with the GPS-based GHSGT.

Graphic 16: Plot of Median Lexiles by Grade

**Median Lexile by Grade
from 2006 to 2010**

Legend:
- 2006
- 2007
- 2008
- 2009
- 2010
- Text Demand-Lower Limit
- Text Demand - Upper Limit

X-axis: Grade (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11)
Y-axis: Lexile (0 to 1200)
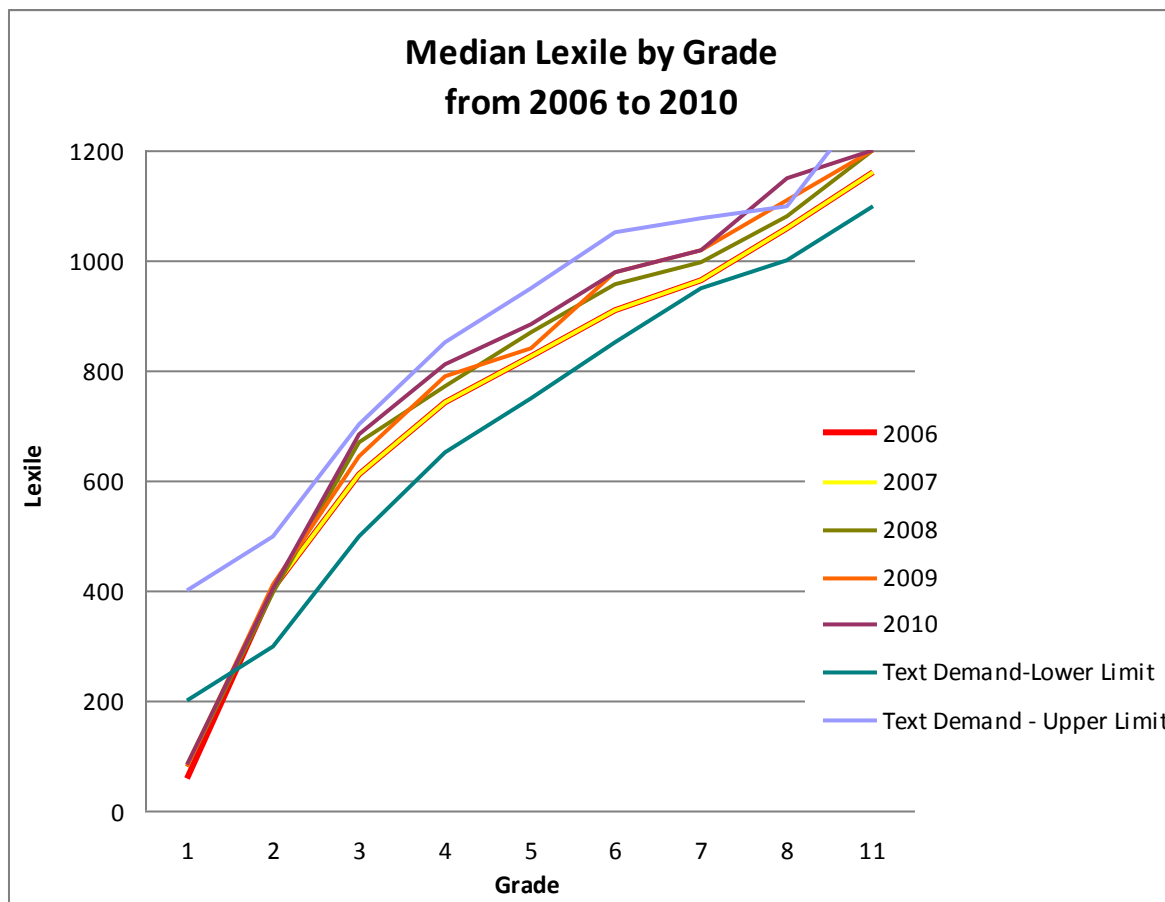
Graphic 16 shows that over the five years there has been a slight increase in the median Lexile in grades 3, 4, 5, and 8.

One can see that the span of reader ability (red lines) is greater than the span of text difficulty (blue lines). Students that fall towards the lower band of reader ability and outside of the text difficulty will probably experience some difficulty comprehending the text materials typical of that grade level. In most cases the Lexile associated with the "Meets" cut scores on the CRCT and the "Pass" on the GHSGT (the green line with diamonds) fall on or above the lower band of reader ability but below the lower bound of text difficulty (the red line with stars). This means that students scoring at the "Meets" or "Pass" cut scores will need support in reading because their reading ability falls short of typical instructional materials found in the grade level in which they tested and in the

grade level for which they are bound the following year. However, the Lexiles associated with the "Exceeds" cut scores on the CRCT (the green line with boxes) are typically above the upper limit of the text difficulty (the blue line with boxes) and the upper bound of reader ability (the red line with circles). With the exception of Grade 1, the median Lexiles (the gold line) from the CRCT or GHSGT fall in the middle area of both the reader ability range (red lines) and text difficulty range (blue lines).

5.I. STATE ASSESSMENT DATA FOR WRITING

In addition to reading, Georgia also assesses another aspect of a student's literacy – writing ability. Georgia's performance-based writing assessments are administered to students in grades three, five, eight, and eleven. All writing assessments became GPS-based in 2007. Student writing samples are evaluated using an analytic scoring system in all grades to provide diagnostic feedback to teachers, students, and parents about individual performance. The writing assessments provide information to students about their writing performance and areas of strength and challenge. Grade 3 is a teacher-based evaluation of student writing using state-provided rubrics for multiple genres of writing; the results from this test are for instructional use primarily and not aggregated and reported at the state level.

Currently, in Grade 5 students are assigned a topic from a prompt bank representing three genres: narrative, informational, and persuasive. (Note: These genres will be changed to reflect the CCGPS by 2014. Those genres are: argument, informative, explanatory, and narrative.) The Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment is a test of expository and persuasive writing, and student responses are scored by trained raters. Students in the eleventh grade participate in the Georgia High School Writing Test and must pass this test to earn a regular education diploma. Students are asked to produce a response to one on-demand persuasive writing prompt. Again trained raters score these 11th grade papers.

Graphic 17: Percentage of Students NOT Meeting (Failing) Writing Assessments

Test	2007	2008	2009	2010
5th Grade	30	23	22	27
8th Grade	33	22	25	21
GHSWT – 11th grade	12	11	11	6

Graphic 17 shows that in spite of the improvement from 2007 when the GPS-based test was initiated, there is still much work to be done, particularly in 5th and 8th grades. The 11th grade scores have shown significant improvement since 2007 and provide a real bright spot in an otherwise discouraging picture.

Conclusions on State Assessments of Literacy

In conclusion, Georgia will continue its focus on increasing student achievement in the areas of reading and writing. National and state results from NAEP indicate that too many students are lacking proficiency in reading. Spring test results from the CRCT and GHSGT, when coupled with the Lexile Framework, indicate that too many Georgia students only minimally meet state standards; thus they are not equipped with sufficient reading comprehension skills to handle much of the grade-level instructional material. Consequently, Georgia's students need support and intervention in the next grade the following fall. In today's world, literacy extends well beyond the basics of reading (phonics and decoding skills).

Georgia students are tested not only on how well they comprehend, but also on how well they write. Writing tests show nearly a quarter of students failing to demonstrate proficiency in grades five and eight. Literacy is the gate-keeper for the ability to become a lifelong learner and contributor to society. Today's global citizens must be able to retrieve and understand information and then to disperse this learning through writing and a growing array of other delivery modes (e.g., speech, visual presentations, video). Georgia's mission is to enhance students' productivity by enhancing their skills in reading strategically, writing for a variety of audiences, speaking, viewing, and listening.

5.J. ASSESSING THE COMMON CORE GEORGIA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Currently, there are two consortia of states participating in a competition to design the most effective assessment for Common Core. The consortium of which Georgia is a governing member is the Partnership for Assessment of College and Career Readiness (PACCR). The following information has been taken from the website for PACCR:

5.J.1. Test Design

- The new assessments to will be field tested in the spring of 2012 and 2013 and then will be fully administered in 2014.
- The design of the assessment in which Georgia will participate provides Through-Course testing four times before the end-of-year assessment.
- Each of these assessments is designed to measure 25%, 50%, 75%, and 90%, respectively, of the course work covered thus far in the year.
- Because they will contribute to the overall assessment of a student's performance, these measures are considered summative rather than formative (See Section 5.A.3. of this document for further explanation).
- For Through-Course assessments 1 & 2, students will respond to one or two tasks that involve reading texts, drawing conclusions, and presenting analysis in writing.
- Through-Course 3 for ELA will be a designed as performance task(s) that require evaluating information from within a set of digital resources, evaluating their quality, selecting sources, and composing an essay or research paper.
- Through-Course 4 for ELA will assess speaking and listening. Students will present their work from ELA-3 to classmates and respond to questions. Teachers will score, using a standardized rubric, and can use results in determining students' class grades.

5.J.2. Administration and Scoring

- The assessment system will include a combination of constructed response items, performance tasks, and computer-enhanced, computer-scored items.
- The assessments for grades 6-12 will be administered using computers, while 3-5 will be administered using paper and pencil (in the short term).
- To score, a combination of artificial intelligence (AI) and human scoring will be used; each state will decide the extent to which teachers will be involved in scoring.

5.J.3. Formative Tools

- There will be a Partnership Resource Center (PRC) that will provide released items with student work and rubrics.
- A text complexity diagnostic tool will allow teachers to determine their students' proximal zone of development and provide suggested texts that would be appropriate to that level.
- There will also be assessments provided for students in K-2.

5.J.4. Ensuring Alignment of Assessment with College and Career Readiness

- The Partnership will conduct concurrent validity studies that compare performance on PARCC assessments with SAT, ACT, Compass, Accuplacer and other similar assessments in addition to developing data on students' performance in first year courses.
- PARRC will conduct qualitative studies with professors' and instructors' of postsecondary classes. Ratings will be collected to determine what they consider the relative importance of specific standards and test items for success in first year courses they teach.
- Alignment studies be conducted that examine the relationship between content and student work in first year courses and what PARCC assessments measure. (PARRC, 2010)

This information has been retrieved from: http://www.achieve.org/PARCC (cited)

5.K. USE OF DATA

In a 2009 practice guide prepared for the National Center on Educational Excellence titled *Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making*, Hamilton, et al, posited five recommendations to schools and districts seeking to maximize the use of data to improve teaching and learning. Two of the recommendations address actions that teachers can take; the other three concern developing the infrastructure necessary to make the first two possible.

Classroom-level recommendations:

1. Make data part of an ongoing cycle of instructional improvement
2. Teach students to examine their own data and set learning goals

Administrative recommendations:

3. Establish a clear vision for school-wide data use
4. Provide supports that foster a data-driven culture within the school

5. Develop and maintain a district-wide data system

This practice guide provides detailed guidance for both teachers and administrators on how they can improve instructional practice by implementing an ongoing cycle of instruction. (See Graphic 19). In addition to recommendations, this guide provides teachers with: hypothetical situations for data interpretation; sample rubrics with suggestions for their implementation with in the cycle of instruction; how to bring students into the decision-making process; and outlines of specific steps for administrators, both school and district, to provide the infrastructure and leadership needed to make the use of data viable in their districts. The 2010-2011Georgia Literacy Task Force commends this guide to schools and districts that are interested in improving their use of data.

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/dddm_pg_092909.pdf p.34

Graphic 18: Data-use Cycle
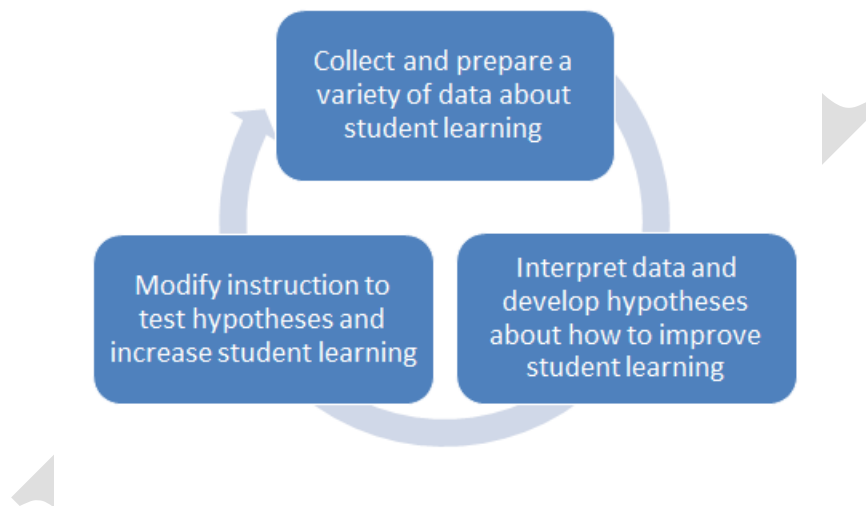
5.L. STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM

The federal government first endorsed longitudinal student system (LDS) development in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and has since provided grants to help states "(build) data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction." (Title I, Part A, Section 1111(b), subsection 3(B)) This was an eligibility requirement for Race to the Top funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

One of the cornerstones of any LDS is the ability to uniquely identify the students over time. To accomplish this, each student must have a unique identifier. Since 2005, Georgia has utilized a unique student identifier referred to as the Georgia Testing Identifier, or GTID. The SLDS Data Collections & Cleansing Project will streamline data exchange between the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and school districts within the state. The Data Hub & Portal project will build access to statewide, longitudinal student data for educators, parents, the public, and other stakeholder groups.

Commercial vendors have begun offering a variety of products and services to facilitate the collection, storage, and use of longitudinal data. A number of national organizations are providing support as well for LDS development efforts. By facilitating the collection and use of high quality student-level information, these systems potentially provide both a way to use data to more effectively and to improve the way schools function from the policy level to that of the classroom. (This information was retrieved from <http://slds.doe.k12.ga.us/Pages/SLDS.aspx>

5.M. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE GEORGIA LITERACY TASK FORCE, 2010-2011, CONCERNING ASSSESSMENT

The 2010-2011 Georgia Literacy Task Force strongly recommends the identification of or development of a universal screener at all age and grade levels. As stated earlier in this document,

> The one consistent and urgent theme coming from all three 2011 Literacy Committees (birth-to five, elementary, and middle-and-high-school committees) is the need to identify or develop a set of grade or age-specific screeners to assist educators for students of all ages. The RTI Network is an excellent resource for information and even provides a listing of the various instruments currently in wide use for students from preschool through grade twelve. (See Section 5.A.5. for a more thorough discussion of this topic.)

A necessary component of this recommendation is the need for teachers to be trained in administration and use of the assessments used at their grade level. An additional complementary need is that they become conversant with the assessments at the grade or age-level below them. The committee identified this as a serious disconnect, particularly between PreK and Kindergarten. The PreK teachers maintain a work-sampling system, carefully documenting the progress of each of their students in their classrooms. However, it was pointed out that most of the receiving kindergarten teachers do not know how to

interpret these records and therefore much of that valuable effort is negated. (See Section 4.F. for a more thorough discussion of this topic.)

In the area of birth-to-three, the Task Force identified needs in the following areas:

- Developmentally appropriate assessment/screener/benchmarking Tool for language and literacy that is easy to administer and interpret

The middle and high school committee of the Task Force recommends that:

- Assessments should be followed up by student interview in order to allow both student and teacher to understand why certain items were missed.

- Teachers need to routinely use the information provided by teachers in earlier grades. In order to do that, they need to have access to that information readily available to them. Part of the mission of the SLDS is "to inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction" (see section 5 M. of this document). Procedures for allowing teachers to access the pertinent data on their students need to be established.

- Finally, the committee recommends that, as part of their <u>formative</u> assessment of students, teachers present students with passages that students have not seen before in order to assess their ability to apply strategies on a "cold read". Currently, students are being assessed only on material that they have reviewed for several days.

Section 6. RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

Introduction

Intervention refers to strategic techniques that are based on student needs and usually supplements the general education curriculum. Intervention strategies are systematic compilations or well-researched, evidence-based specific instructional techniques. Schools have the responsibility of implementing scientifically validated intervention methods that efficiently and effectively offer students opportunities to be successful (Wright, 2007).

According to Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast (REL), "interventions designed to provide support to teachers can have impacts at two levels: teacher practices and student

outcomes" (Lewis et al., 2007). Thus, professional learning in intervention strategies must be aligned with the needs of the students and the goals of the school's leadership team. Interventions may include supplemental materials that embed literacy skills in all content areas. Supplemental materials may be used to increase students' opportunities for academic success. Materials that engage students in learning are viable intervention tools that increase the numbers of Georgia students who successfully perform in all content areas.

Assisting content teachers to embed cognitive and motivational strategies into their instruction also enables them "to support deeper student literacy and understanding in the content-area reading" (Lewis et al., 2007). Professional learning in intervention techniques permits teachers to incorporate strategies that allow students to access texts, to practice communication skills, and to use information. Professional learning centered on cognitive strategies may include paraphrasing, summarizing, synthesizing, predicting, and drawing conclusions. These skills are consistent with focus of the Georgia Performance Standards and the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards.

Scientifically proven research-based and evidence-based interventions are specialized strategies for individual students or groups of students with varying types of academic and behavioral problems. Implementation of these strategies has become imperative as schools strive to comply with the imperatives of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2005). The effectiveness of interventions requires an analysis of previously conducted research that supports the design of the intervention and a review of current research.

Three components of these bills mandate the use of research- and evidence-based interventions:
1. Requirement for the use of scientifically based instructional/intervention practices

2. Evaluation and documentation of how a student responds to intervention

3. Emphasis on the use of data for decision making at each step (Brown-Chidesy & Steege, 2005)

Interventions can be categorized into three groups: scientifically proven, research-based, and evidence-based. "Scientifically proven" means that research results have been published in peer-reviewed journals using the scientific rigor described in the definition from NCLB. Scientifically proven interventions are those that have been subjected to the most rigorous trials of effectiveness. The experimental design (random controlled trial) is

widely considered to be the most rigorous type of research study for determining "what works." A sound experimental design would include:

- Clearly defined dependent variable/intervention and data(s)
- Set of procedures to consistently implement the independent variable (highly specific, replicable directions, steps and procedures)
- A design that controls for threats to internal validity (Brown-Chidsey & Steege, 2005)

Research-based interventions are the methods, content, and materials developed in guidance from collective research and the scientific community.

Evidence-based interventions focus on specific data that supports the implementation of interventions and the improved student outcomes (Georgia Department of Education, RTI Document, 2008). This data has been gathered as part of a rigorous research study (as for scientifically proven interventions), but it can also include informally gathered school and district formative and summative student assessment data.

The Response to Intervention (RTI) is a protocol of academic and behavioral interventions designed to provide early, effective assistance for ALL underperforming students. Research-based interventions are implemented, and frequent progress monitoring is conducted to assess student response and progress. When students do not make progress, increasingly more intense interventions are introduced.

6.A. RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a technique of tiered layers of interventions for students needing support. Implementation of RTI requires a school-wide common understanding of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (GPS), assessment practices, and instructional pedagogy. Data-driven decision making must be available at the classroom level.

Georgia's RTI process includes several key components:

- A 4-Tier delivery model designed to provide support matched to student need through the implementation of standards-based classrooms
- Evidence-based instruction as the core of classroom pedagogy
- Evidence-based interventions utilized with increasing levels of intensity based on progress monitoring
- The use of a variety of ongoing assessment data to determine which students are not meeting success academically and/or behaviorally

- Data Teams comprised of teachers, administrators, parents, and business/community leaders in each school or school district who serve as the driving force for instructional decision making in the building
- Purposeful allocation of instructional resources based on student assessment data

6.B. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT PYRAMID OF INTERVENTIONS

Interventions at Tier 1 include the instructional practices in use in the general education classroom. Teachers routinely address student needs and environmental factors to create the optimal learning environment. Tier 1 interventions include seating arrangements, fluid and flexible grouping, lesson pacing, collaborative work, demonstrations of learning, differentiation of instruction, and student feedback. Responding to student performance is a critical element of all classroom learning environments. The teacher's ability to identify areas of focus, scaffold the learning for the individual to reach the expectation, and support the solidification of new learning behaviors is vital to student success. For more information: http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/research/response-to-intervention-research-is-the-sum-of-the-parts-as-great-as-the-whole

Interventions at Tier 2 are typically standard protocols employed by the school to address the learning and/or behavioral needs of identified students. These protocols are typically implemented in a specific sequence based on the resources available in the school. For example, at Georgia Middle School, students who are identified as needing additional reading support will go to a reading intervention during Connections. During the intervention, the teacher uses specific research-based practices to address the group's reading needs while keeping a clear focus on the GPS, grade level expectations in the content areas, and transfer of learning to the general classroom. Collaboration between the intervention teacher and the general teacher team is required. During the intervention, progress monitoring is used to determine the student's response to the intervention. The progress monitoring tool and frequency of implementation are collaboratively determined by the teaching team and the intervention teacher. Based on the progress monitoring data, the school standard protocol process may require individual students to continue in the intervention, move to another Tier 2 intervention, or move to Tier 1 interventions. For a few students, the data team may consider the need for Tier 3 interventions based on individual responses to Tier 2 interventions.

Interventions at Tier 3 are tailored to the individual and in some cases small group. The Student Support Team should choose interventions based on evidence-based protocols and aggressively monitor the student's response to the intervention and the transfer of learning to the general classroom.

Interventions at Tier 4 are specially designed to meet the learning needs of the individual. These specially designed interventions are based on the GPS and the individual learning and/or behavioral needs of the individual.

Graphic 19.

Response to Intervention: The Georgia Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions

Tier 4 – Specially-Designed Learning:
In addition to Tiers 1 through 3, targeted students participate in :
• Specialized programs, methodologies, or instructional deliveries. • Greater frequency of progress monitoring of student response to intervention(s).

Tier 3 – SST-Driven Learning:
In addition to Tier 1 and Tier 2, targeted students participate in learning that is different by including:
• Intensive, formalized problem solving to identify individual student needs. • Targeted research based interventions tailored to individual needs. • Frequent progress monitoring and analysis of student response to intervention(s).

Tier 2 – Needs-Based Learning:
In addition to Tier 1, targeted students participate in learning that is different by including: • Standard intervention protocol process for identifying and providing research based interventions based on need and resources. • On-going progress monitoring to measure student response to intervention and guide decision-making.

Tier 1 – Standards-Based Classroom Learning:
All students participate in general education learning that includes:
• Universal screenings to target groups in need of specific instructional and/or behavioral support.
• Implementation of the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) through a standards-based classroom structure.
• Differentiation of instruction including fluid, flexible grouping, multiple means of learning, and demonstration of learning. • Progress monitoring of learning through multiple formative assessments.
• Positive behavior supports.

"We will lead the nation in improving student achievement."
Kathy Cox, State Superintendent of Schools

(Georgia Department of Education, RTI Guidance Document 2008)

6.C. DECISION-MAKING CYCLE

The Georgia Department of Education encourages systems and schools to use these protocols to provide a common framework for choosing evidence-based interventions:

- Evidence-Based Decision-Making Cycle: Shows the process that teams can utilize to integrate the use of data and research into the decision-making cycle.

- Types of Research Methods: Provides an overview of the types of research methods used in research on interventions and compares the level of rigor in determining "what works."

- Critical Reading Protocol for Studies about Interventions: Provides a framework (in conjunction with the Types of Research Methods tool) for assessing the quality and rigor of a research study on an intervention.

- Intervention Review Protocol: Provides a framework (in conjunction with the Types of Research Methods and Critical Reading Protocol tools) for the review of all available information on an intervention, including research studies, to support decisions about the selection of interventions.

These are posted at this link:

http://www.gadoe.org/ci_services.aspx?PageReq=CIServRTI

Graphic 20. Evidence-Based Decision-Making Cycle

Did the plan work?
What does the data show?

What is the problem?
What does the data show?

Why is this happening?
Curriculum Issue?
Instructional Issue?
Student Issue?

Implement the plan
Who will do what, where, when, and how often?

How will fidelity of implementation be determined?

What is our plan?
What are we going to do?

What interventions are needed?

How will we measure success?
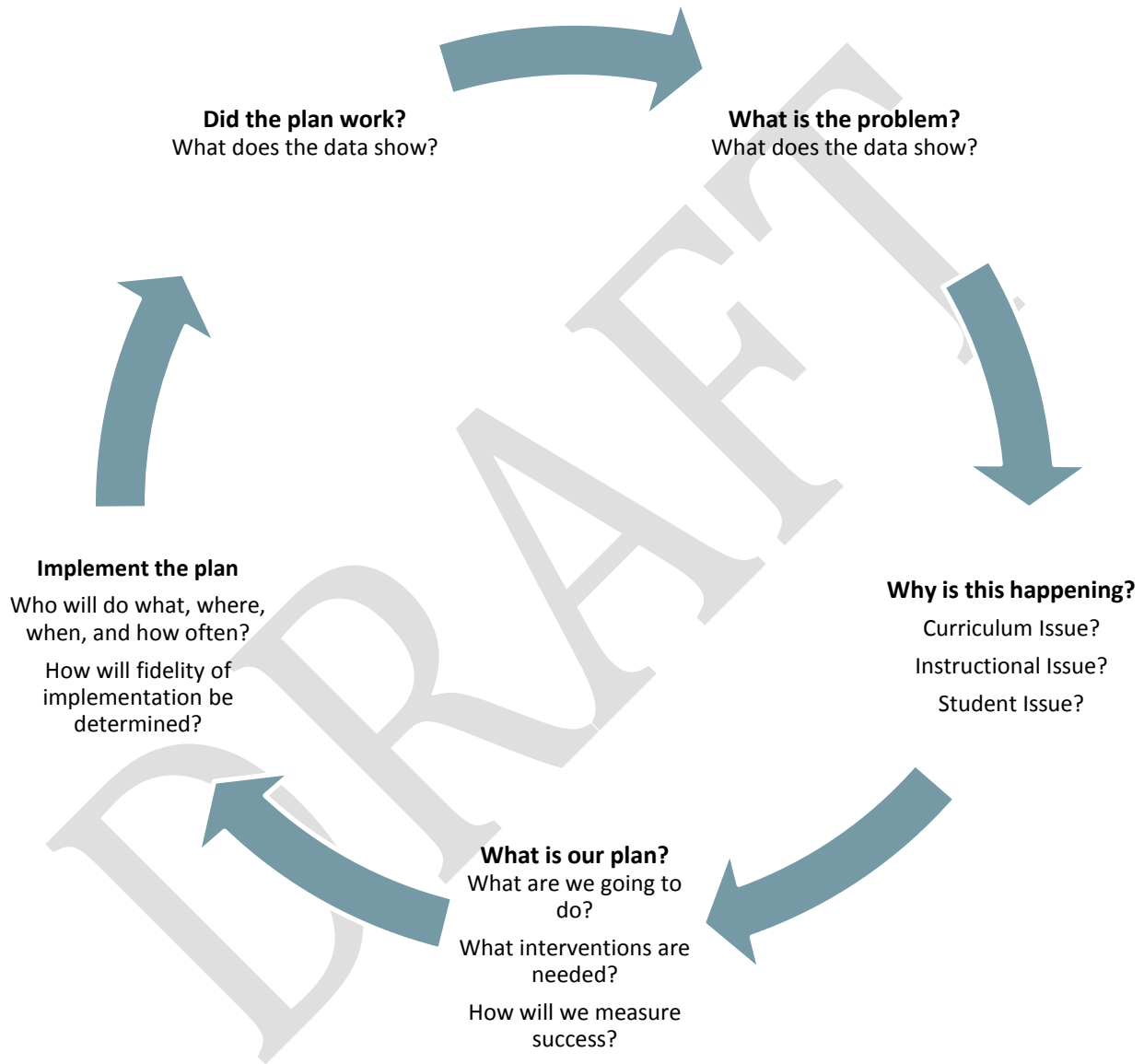
6.D. TEACHERS' PRACTICES

Local school leaders and school improvement teams may examine the quality of teachers' practices in implementing literacy initiatives in the classroom by observing the following:

- Direct instruction, modeling, and practice in reading comprehension strategies

- Structuring of content area instruction and reading assignments to make them more accessible to students

- Selection of texts for students to read in a way that builds motivation and persistence

- Structuring of group work and rigorous peer discussions to reinforce the notion of reading for a purpose and to encourage a classroom social environment that values reading to learn

- Use and availability of diverse texts

- Use of writing to extend and reinforce reading

- Use of technology to reinforce skills and keep students motivated

- Use of appropriate formative and summative assessments that reinforce goals for reading

- Use of tutoring as needed to assist individual students (Lewis et al., 2007)

Teachers implementing best practices support the RTI pyramid tiers 1 and 2 because the focus is on all students accessing the Georgia Performance Standard and the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards by 2014. The standards are essential to Georgia's literacy initiatives and support the state's definition of literacy.

Effective adolescent instruction and intervention practices include explicit vocabulary instruction, implementation of strategies that develop independent vocabulary learners, opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation, students' motivation and engagement in literacy learning, and intensive individualized interventions for struggling readers. Thus, highly qualified specialists are recommended for struggling readers (Kamil et al., 2008).

Applying best practices strategies will impact all students. For ELL students in elementary grades, these strategies supplemented with more extensive recommendations will enhance the intervention efforts. Screening for reading problems, monitoring progress, using intervention strategies for intensive small reading groups, varying extensive vocabulary instruction, developing academic language, and providing regular peer-assisted learning opportunities are valuable intervention tools. Providing ongoing support for teachers and interventionists (Title I personnel, reading coaches, literacy coaches, etc.) is critical for the intervention strategies to work (Gersten et al., 2007).

6.D.1. Tier I: Standards-Based Classroom Learning

All students participate in general education learning that includes:

- Universal screenings to target groups in need of specific instructional support

- Implementation of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards by 2014 in a standards-based classroom

- Differentiation of instruction including fluid, flexible grouping, multiple means of learning, and demonstration of learning

- Progress monitoring of learning through multiple formative assessments

Standards-based classroom learning describes effective instruction that should be happening in all classrooms for all students.

- As Georgia moves towards full implementation of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS), the standards are the foundation for the learning that occurs in each classroom for all students.
- Standards-based learning environments which are implemented with fidelity are necessary to ensure all students have access to quality instruction. This fidelity of implementation ensures that 80-100% of students are successful in the general education classroom.
- Instruction and learning which focus on the GPS and include differentiated, evidence-based instruction based on the student's needs are paramount.
- Tier 1 is limited not only to instruction in the academic content areas but also to the developmental domains such as behavioral and social development.

- Schools should identify common formative assessments and a common protocol for analyzing and recording student progress.
- Teachers utilize common formative assessment results and analysis of student work to guide and adjust instruction
- Data from formative assessments should guide immediate decision making on instructional next steps.
- Tier 1 represents effective, strategic, and expert instruction that is available in all classrooms. The use of effective questioning skills is critical in responding to student performance. Bloom's Taxonomy can be a guide to the types of questions asked by teachers for student feedback.
- Focused attention to content knowledge of teachers is required to support appropriate teacher questioning and feedback skills.
- Rigorous instruction based on the CCGPS is required. Vertical (across grade level) instructional conversations encourage teachers as they seek to support struggling readers and to challenge all students to demonstrate depth of understanding. Instruction should include such cognitive processes as explanation, interpretation, application, analysis of perspectives, empathy, and self-knowledge. Alignment of instruction and assessment based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the CCGPS will ensure student access to an appropriate and rigorous instructional program.

6.D.2. Student Movement to Tier 2

- District and/or school benchmark assessments are used to determine student progress toward grade level mastery of the GPS and (the CCGPS by 2014).
- A universal screening process is used to identify students requiring additional assessments in reading, math, and/or behavior. These additional assessments ensure accurate identification of struggling students or students not performing at expected levels.
- Students identified are placed in Tier 2 interventions that supplement the Tier 1 classroom.
- During the instructional year, Tier 1 progress monitoring is used in the classroom as a part of standards-based instruction. As student assessment data indicates a need for Tier 2 support, the data team will follow school-

created procedures for decision making. Three important questions must be addressed to determine the reason for the need for additional support.

- Movement between Tier 1 and Tier 2 is fluid and flexible. Adequate time should be given for the Tier 1 instructional program to be implemented before determining Tier 2 support is needed.

6.D.3. Student Movement to Tier 3

- The data team will confirm the fidelity of implementation of the intervention through frequent contact and observation during instruction.
- Additional Tier 2 interventions may be required if little or no progress is documented.   The data team will follow previously established protocols to determine if additional Tier 2 interventions should be implemented.
- After the appropriate amount of time (time in weeks dependent on the intervention), the data team should assess student progress and determine if continued support through Tier 2 is required, if additional Tier 2 interventions are required, or if Tier 3 support, in addition to Tier 1 and Tier 2, is required.

6.D.4. Student Movement to Tier 4

In addition to Tiers 1 through 3, targeted students participate in specialized programs, methodologies, or instructional deliveries. This provides a greater frequency of progress monitoring of student response to intervention(s).   Tier 4 is developed for students who need additional support and who meet eligibility criteria for special program placement, including gifted education and special education.

With three effective tiers in place prior to specialized services, more struggling students will be successful and will not require this degree of intervention. Tier 4 does not represent a location for services but indicates a layer of interventions that may be provided in the general education class or in a separate setting. For students with disabilities needing special education and related services, Tier 4 provides instruction that is targeted and specialized to meet students' needs. If a student has already been determined as having a disability, then the school district should not require additional documentation of prior interventions in the effect the child demonstrates additional delays. The special education instruction and documentation of progress in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) will constitute prior interventions and appropriate instruction. In some

cases, the student may require a comprehensive evaluation to determine eligibility of additional disability areas.

6.E. DIVISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

The Division for Special Education Services and Supports has multiple initiatives addressing the specific needs of students with disabilities in literacy skills development. Numerous projects focus on research-based best practices centered on the improvement of literacy instruction at all school levels.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) is a series of trainings that provide practical guidance to preschool special educators on how to improve outcomes of children with disabilities (3-6) by implementing developmentally appropriate practices that support state standards in the areas of social-emotional; acquisition of knowledge (early literacy, communication, and language); and adaptive skills.

Get Ready to Read! (GRTR!) is a national initiative to build the early literacy skills of preschool-age children. The initiative provides an easy-to-administer, research-based screening tool to early childhood educators, child care providers, and parents in order to help them prepare all children to learn to read and write.

GraduateFIRST focuses on improving graduation rates and decreasing dropout rates for students with disabilities. Content Enhancement Routines were taught to teachers to teach curriculum content to academically diverse classes in ways that all students can understand and remember key information. One component of GraduateFIRST, "Get Ready to Succeed in GPS Mathematics," assists teachers in vocabulary strategies in conjunction with math literacy strategies in order to promote the use of literacy skills in the teaching of math to students at risk and students with disabilities.

The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Project assists districts in educating students with disabilities in the general education setting.   In addition, the Teacher Resource Board for Access to the GPS provides literacy strategies and ideas for teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities.

For many students with disabilities, literacy begins with speech-language pathology services. The knowledge and skills of Speech-Language Pathologists in language provides the rationale for their involvement in assisting teachers with "reading readiness." Collaboration between the SLP and the regular education teacher is an integral part of the

success for special needs and "at-risk" students with language weaknesses. Language services integrated into the educational setting have resulted in significant gains in literacy skills for elementary school children. This improves students' academic performance, enhances student's language/literacy skills, provides compensatory strategies for students, and addresses the nationwide focus on providing inclusive speech-language therapy services in schools.

The Division for Special Education Services and Supports also provides the Strategies Can Work Project to instruct teachers in the reading strand of the Learning Strategies Curriculum, a curriculum developed by the Center for Research on Learning at the University of Kansas that provides an integrated, research-based model to address the literacy needs of diverse learners.   Specifically the GaDOE works to help districts implement the following literacy strategies: LINCS – A Vocabulary Strategy, Word Identification, Fundamentals of Paraphrasing and Summarizing, Inference, and Visual Imagery.

For many students with disabilities, literacy development requires assess to materials or processes through assistive technology. The Georgia Project for Assistive Technology (GPAT) provides support to local districts' assistive technology teams through professional learning, access to nationally recognized educational opportunities, and grant management. The GPAT statewide assistive technology consortium has provided nearly 300 Georgia professionals access to quality professional learning on topics such as Data Collection, Support for Students with Moderate to Profound Cognitive Impairments and Implementation of Academic Tools for Students with Learning Disabilities. GPAT has provided access to national assistive technology education by providing access to the ATSTAR program. Additionally, GPAT is partnering with the United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Chicago's Infinitec program to manage a McDonald's Corporation grant to provide every staff member in 23 Georgia Counties direct access to training and resource materials related to all aspects of educationally-based assistive technology.

For students with physical impairments, many initiatives exist to promote literacy by providing enhanced access to materials and the GPS. Examples of these activities include the Training and Assessment System for K-12 Educational Interpreters (TASK-12) and the Georgia Regional Braille competition.

6.F. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Although the nature of the RTI Pyramid indicates all students begin at Tier 1 and progress only if the previous interventions are not successful, Title III under NCLB does not permit delayed eligibility testing for language minority students. Language assistance should not be delayed in order to allow students to progress "normally" through the tiers.

Since 1985, Georgia has provided funding for English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL. It is a state funded instructional program for eligible English Language Learners (ELLs) in grades K-12. A description of this program may be found on the GADOE website:

> The ESOL Program is a standards-based curriculum emphasizing social and academic language proficiency. The curriculum is based on the integration of the WIDA Consortium English Language Proficiency Standards with the Georgia Performance Standards and will be adjusted to reflect the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards by 2014. This integration will enable English Language Learners (ELLs) to use English to communicate and demonstrate academic, social, and cultural proficiency. It is critical that instructional approaches, both in ESOL and general education classes, accommodate the needs of Georgia's ELLs. To the extent practicable, it is appropriate to use the home language as a means of facilitating instruction for English language learners and parental notification.
> http://www.GaDOE.org/ci_iap_esol.aspx

Eligibility for ESOL services should automatically be considered a Tier 4 Intervention. For the purposes of serving the student effectively and efficiently, the language minority student enters the Pyramid at Tier 4, and as the student progresses with language development and academic proficiency, the level of interventions needed to support the student will decrease accordingly.

6.G. SPECIAL EDUCATION

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For students with physical impairments, many initiatives exist to promote literacy by providing enhanced access to materials and the GPS. Examples of these activities include the Training and Assessment System for K-12 Educational Interpreters (TASK-12) and the Georgia Regional Braille competition.

6.H. EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM (EIP) AND REMEDIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (REP)

As Georgia students become more diverse in home background, ethnicity and cultures, the effective intervention strategies used by educators must also become just as varied. These strategies must be based on student data, both summative and formative, in order to guarantee intervention that is targeted at the specific need. Georgia's Performance Standards set the bar; effective strategies and targeted interventions guarantee the bar will be met. A clear purpose and plan must exist for the student to grow as a learner. Children start school at a designated chronological age but differ greatly in their individual development and experiences. The Early Intervention Program (EIP) is designed to serve students who are at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level. The purpose of the Early Intervention Program is to provide additional instructional resources to help students who are performing below grade level obtain the necessary academic skills to reach grade level performance in the shortest possible time.

The Remedial Education Program (REP) is an instructional program designed for students in grades 6-12 who have identified deficiencies in reading, writing, and math. This program provides individualized basic skills instruction as mandated by Georgia Law in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics.

The instruction that is occurring in the EIP and REP classrooms needs to be at the center of the school's attention. The use of these resources to support students within the Georgia Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions should be a part of the school wide instructional plan. For EIP or REP services to be considered, the instruction is in addition to Tier 1 and is evidence-based.

Currently, the Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS by 2014) set the bar; effective strategies and targeted interventions guarantee the bar will be met. The RTI Georgia initiative supports and complements the recommendations of the Literacy Task Force.

6.I. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2010-2011GEORGIA LITERACY TASK FORCE

The 2010-2011 Georgia Literacy Task Force recommends the following for interventions in general and for RTI in particular:

- Schools and districts should establish entrance and exit criteria for tiers
- The state should:
    - Provide funding for an interventionist
    - Develop certification requirements for interventionists
    - Provide funding for materials for interventions
- Administrators need to provide scheduling for intervention and/or differentiation
- Efforts should be made to extend the RTI process to 4-year-olds as is being done in some charter schools in Georgia.

Section 7. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Introduction

In an increasingly competitive global economy, the need for students to have the strong literacy skills of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing is critical for college-and-career-ready opportunities. This requires teachers to learn to teach in ways that promote critical thinking and higher order performance. According to Darling-Hammond (2005), professional learning opportunities must focus on ensuring that teachers understand

learning as well as teaching. They must be able to connect curriculum goals to students' experience.

The goal of professional learning is to support viable, sustainable professional learning, improve teacher instruction, and ultimately promote student achievement. Professional learning is organized to engage all teachers in ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded, sustained, collaborative learning. Effective professional learning is linked to higher student achievement. In a policy brief on reform in adolescent literacy, the authors cite Greenwald, Hedges & Lane, 1996, (NCTE Policy Brief, *Adolescent Literacy Reform,* 2006, p. 7) stated:

> Teachers possess the greatest capacity to positively affect student achievement, and a growing body of research shows that the professional development of teachers holds the greatest potential to improve adolescent literacy achievement. In fact, research indicates that for every $500 directed toward various school improvement initiatives, those funds directed toward professional development resulted in the greatest student gains on standardized achievement tests (Greenwald et al., 1996).
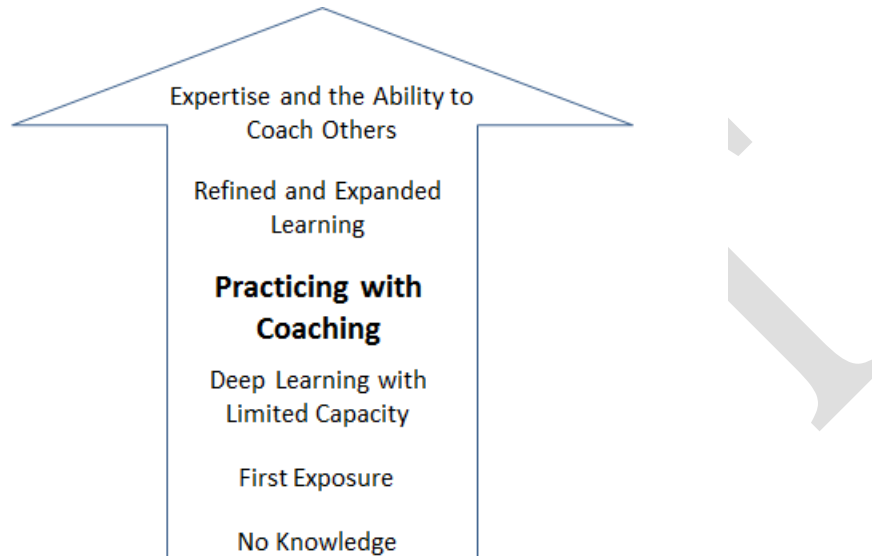
Because effective professional learning enhances teacher knowledge and skills, improves classroom teaching, and increases student achievement, the crucial role of the Georgia Department of Education is to develop a comprehensive, professional learning system for educators.   The recommendations outlined in this document are dependent on supporting the professional learning network currently in place through the Regional Education Support Agencies with increased manpower and consistent access to information and learning, The state needs to ensure that that support (1) spans the state geographically, (2) enables professional learning that differentiates based on teacher expertise and curriculum mandates,   and (3) provides credible data to track its efficacy.

7. A. STAGES OF LEARNING THROUGH PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Many policy makers and administrators are anxious to improve student outcomes and are looking, correctly, to professional learning for solutions. However, as stated in the NCTE policy brief for Adolescent Literacy Reform, the expectations for change need to be tempered with the recognition that change is difficult and takes time. The danger of unrealistic expectations is that policy makers may become impatient with the slow pace of progress and abandon their reform before it has had time to mature. The protracted nature

of the change process is shown in this schematic which the authors used to illustrate what is involved in the issue of teacher learning: (NCTE, 2006, p. 9)

Graphic 21: Multiple Stages of Professional Development Learning

Expertise and the Ability to Coach Others

Refined and Expanded Learning

Practicing with Coaching

Deep Learning with Limited Capacity

First Exposure

No Knowledge

7. B. NATIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL STANDARDS

The Literacy Task Force recommends an ongoing professional learning literacy network in order to ensure the effectiveness of the Georgia Literacy Initiative. In *Lessons and Recommendations from the Alabama Reading Initiative* (Salinger & Bacevich, 2006), the authors conclude that adequate and consistent human resources (school and regional coaches, professional learning providers, and administrators at the state level) are more influential than material resources. Furthermore, human resources are most effective when there is an understanding of the particular needs of learners and teachers, as well as of the specialized content area subject matter. Further, in the Rand research brief (Marsh et al., 2008) on Florida's reading coaches, the researchers recommended continuous professional learning of coaches, particularly in the areas of adult learning, content literacy, and data analysis.

According to the National Staff Development Council (NSDC, 2001), substantiated academic growth will occur only when professionals receive ongoing, targeted professional learning. The NSDC (2001, n.p.) established the following standards for professional learning:

7.B.1. Context Standards

Staff development that improves the learning of all students:

- Organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.
- Requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement.
- Requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration.

7.B.2. Process Standards

Staff development that improves the learning of all students:

- Uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.
- Uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.
- Prepares educators to apply research to decision making.
- Uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.
- Applies knowledge about human learning and change.
- Provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.

7.B.3. Content Standards

Staff development that improves the learning of all students:

- Prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, to create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments, and to hold high expectations for their academic achievement.
- Deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.
- Provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately.

A strong, highly-trained Literacy Leadership Team comprises the core of this professional learning network. According to the NSDC (2001, para.1), "staff development that improves the learning of all students requires skillful school and district leaders who guide

continuous instructional improvement." The Council further provides the following rationale:

> Quality teaching in all classrooms necessitates skillful leadership at the community, district, school, and classroom levels. Ambitious learning goals for students and educators require significant changes in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and leadership practices. Leaders at all levels recognize quality professional development as the key strategy for supporting significant improvements. They are able to articulate the critical link between improved student learning and the professional learning of teachers. They ensure that all stakeholders – including the school board, parent teacher organizations, and the business community – understand the link and develop the knowledge necessary to serve as advocates for high quality professional development for all staff.
> (NSDC 2001, para. 2)

7.C. LITERACY COACHES

In the last ten years, literacy coaches have become increasingly common, first in elementary and now in many middle and high schools. There is a growing national consensus that literacy coaches are invaluable in assisting teachers to provide effective instruction. Often, teachers receive professional learning that lacks continuity because of limited time frames and disconnects to actual classroom instruction. Consequently, instruction is rarely impacted because there is little or no follow-up training or assessment (Wei et al., 2009). The primary role of a literacy coach is to provide continuous, embedded professional learning by implementing school-based opportunities. They are then available to provide follow-up, to promote in-class modeling, and to foster professional learning communities (Bean & Isler, 2008).

Because literacy coaching was novel in the late 1990s, many coaches found themselves in the position of creating their own job descriptions with little or no direction (Frost & Bean, 2006). Since that time, supporting literature has evolved to provide literacy coaches with guidance in their many roles. The definition of a literacy coach is found on the Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse (2006, para.1) website:

The International Reading Association (IRA) defines a literacy coach or a reading coach as a reading specialist who focuses on providing professional development for teachers by giving them the additional support needed to implement various instructional programs and practices. They provide essential leadership for a school's entire literacy program by helping create and supervise long-term staff development processes that support both the development and implementation of literacy programs over months and years.

7.C.1. The Role and Qualifications of the Literacy Coach

The Role and Qualifications of the Reading Coach in the United States was published in June 2004 by the International Reading Association. Dr. Sharon Walpole and Dr. Mike McKenna (2004) identified six distinct roles that a literacy coach typically fills: learner, manager, planner, curriculum expert, researcher, and teacher. In order to help teachers and administrators understand the role of the literacy coach, Michael Kamil (2006) has outlined several competencies that literacy coaches must acquire: (1) knowledge of the content, (2) understanding of adult learners, (3) coaching skills which include the ability to listen, question, problem solve, reflect on practice, and develop trusting relationships.

Knowledge of Content: The most obvious need is to educate literacy coaches in the dimensions of reading and writing. For elementary coaches, the *Report of the National Reading Panel* (2000) provides a synthesis of the research. Beyond that, in Georgia, coaches need to be conversant in: the Georgia Performance Standards (and Common Core Georgia Performance Standards by 2014) and standards-based education; writing instruction; reading and writing within the content areas; assessment; interpretation of data as well as differentiating lessons based on data; Response to Intervention (RTI); and selecting and implementing appropriate interventions.

Coaching Skills: Much of a literacy coach's work is dependent upon the teachers' acceptance of the guidance. A coach who initiates the work with faculties without recognizing the differences between adult and student learning will risk compromising credibility (Bean & DeFord, 2005). In an article published in the professional journal *Voices from the Middle,* the skills needed that are listed in a literacy coach checklist are as follows: encouraging reflective dialogue, providing supportive feedback, demonstrating co-teaching, observing, creating trusting relationships, sharing knowledge, encouraging multiple viewpoints, being flexible, and facilitating discussion (Coskie et al., 2005).

The International Reading Association (IRA) has outlined the preparation needed for literacy coaches as part of their standards:

- Previous teaching experience
- Master's degree with concentration in reading education
- A minimum of 24 graduate semester hours in reading and language arts and related courses
- An additional 6-semester hours of supervised practicum experience.

http://www.literacycoachingonline.org/aboutus/literacy_coach.html

7.C.2. Standards for Middle and High School Coaches

A. STANDARD 1: SKILLFUL COLLABORATORS

Content area literacy coaches are skilled collaborators who function effectively in middle school and/or high school settings.

B. STANDARD 2: SKILLFUL JOB-EMBEDDED COACHES

Content area literacy coaches are skilled instructional coaches for secondary teachers in the core content areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

C. STANDARD 3: SKILLFUL EVALUATORS OF LITERACY NEEDS

Content area literacy coaches are skilled evaluators of literacy needs within various subject areas and are able to collaborate with secondary school leadership teams and teachers to interpret and use assessment data to inform instruction.

Content Area Standard

D. STANDARD 4: SKILLFUL INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGISTS

Content area literacy coaches are accomplished middle and high school teachers who are skilled in developing and implementing instructional strategies to improve academic literacy in the specific content area.

http://www.reading.org/downloads/resources/597coaching_standards.pdf

A concise statement of the skills needed may be found on the following chart which has been taken from an article by Frost and Bean (2006). Note that, though there is a column listing the qualifications for "Good Enough for Now", the NCTE and the IRA strongly

recommends against hiring a coach who is not ready for the position. Their position is that an ineffective coach may call the efficacy of coaching in general into question, thereby jeopardizing the position in the future.

Graphic 22: Levels of Qualifications for Literacy Coaches

The Gold Standard	The Great Choice	Good Enough for Now	Not Good Enough for Now
• Master's degree in literacy • Additional credential in coaching • Has had successful teaching experience, especially at the grade level to be coached • Has experience working with teachers • Is an excellent presenter • Has experience modeling lessons • Has experience observing in classrooms	• Master's degree in another area • Has had successful teaching experience, especially at the grade level to be coached • Has experience working with teachers • Is an excellent presenter • Has experience modeling lessons • Has experience observing in classrooms	• Bachelor's degree and some graduate level coursework • Is eager • Is hard-working • Is willing to learn • Has had successful collaboration experiences	• Placed in the coaching position for reasons other than qualifications to do the job

(Frost & Bean, 2006, p. 2)

http://www.literacycoachingonline.org/briefs/LiteracyCoaching.pdf

7.C.3. The Administrators' Role in Coaching

According to Shanklin (2007), administrative support is also needed to ensure that the strategies and suggestions that the literacy coach provided are seen by teachers as imperative.   Shanklin (2007, pp. 1-5) outlines six ways in which administrators can support literacy coaches:

> (1) develop a literacy leadership team and vision which includes the literacy coach;
>
> (2) provide assistance in building trust with the faculty;
>
> (3) provide assistance in using time, managing projects, and documenting their work;
>
> (4) provide access to instructional materials;
>
> (5) provide access to professional learning; and
>
> (6) provide feedback to the coach.

Administrators are further needed to support instruction through scheduling enough time for teachers and literacy coaches to meet. Without that support, many of the literacy coach's efforts are ineffective.

Literacy coaches are an integral part of the comprehensive professional learning system that the Literacy Task Force is recommending. A comprehensive professional learning system has proven to be successful in high achieving learning communities (Wei et al., 2009).

7.C.4. Models of Coaching:

In their book, The Literacy Coaching Challenge, Walpole & McKenna discuss five different coaching models in depth. For each model, they identify six different characteristics to allow their readers to select the model most appropriate to their particular setting and goals. Graphic 23 shows these various models and their respective characteristics.

Graphic 23: Coaching Models and Model-Specific Choices (Walpole & McKenna, 2008)

Coaching Characteristics	*Mentoring New Teachers*	*Cognitive Coaching*	*Peer Coaching*	*Subject-specific Coaching*	*Program-specific Coaching*	*Reform-oriented Coaching*
Coach's Role	Support/ Induction within a school or district	Help teachers achieve greater levels of under-standings	Peers coach each other/ Share strategies	Ensure effective implementation & student outcomes	Trainer	Director and/or mentor
Building Teacher Knowledge	Outside classroom	Consultation based on teacher's self-reported needs	Outside classroom with facilitator- Teachers observe each other	Deep under-standing of curric. and standards	How and why to implement program	SBRR 3-tiered model of instruction
Instructional Strategies	Implement chosen program/ practice	Collaboration on individual goals	Admin & Facilitator provide school-wide focus	Nested in discipline/vertically articulated	Program designed	School chosen materials & strategies
Instructional Planning	Co-planning	Collaboration on individual goals	Collaboration with each coaching team	Collabor-ative curric. Dev./Curric, mapping	Program-matic but adjusted to setting	Grade-level collaboration/Guided by coach
Reflecting on instructional quality	Observes & reflects on instruction	Reflection conference/ Coach listens	Personal reflection in private	Focused observation	Fidelity to program model	Walk-throughs/ Observations
Assessing student learning	Critically evaluates student achievement	Evidence chosen to match goals	Not specified	Teacher & State Assessment	Program & External	Valid & Reliable screenings and assess. & infor-mal to guide instruction

7.D. ONLINE RESOURCES

Because Georgia is the largest state east of the Mississippi, providing a viable way of accessing professional learning to teachers living in rural or urban areas of the state is imperative. Online resources help sustain teacher professional learning and practices when face-to-face or individualized training is not feasible. This technology offers statewide access through resources, such as interactive blogs and wikis, and provides teachers with access to references and models. It also gives teachers the opportunity to view authentic work of other teachers and students via videos, podcasts, and other types of media. These examples enable teachers to "see" the application of theory that can be sustained over time. Viewing other teachers practicing their craft allows teachers to decide if they can adapt any of what they see to their own content areas and grade levels.

7.E. Teacher Preparation and Certification

The key to reading achievement in schools is to provide a well prepared and knowledgeable teacher in every classroom (IRA, 2007). This statement reflects the importance of the role of the teacher in ensuring that students receive the quality instruction needed to progress in literacy. The International Reading Association's Five Star Policy Recognition concludes that all students should be taught reading by a certified teacher who has either taken courses in reading or has demonstrated proficiency in the teaching of reading.

The NABSE study group, who was responsible for the report *Reading at Risk: The State Response to the Crisis in Adolescent Literacy* (2006), stresses the importance of teaching literacy skills within the context of core academic content. This requires the revision of how teacher training is currently done at the college/university level. Content literacy strategies and reading instructional best practices need to be the focus in pre-service courses. Requiring teachers to demonstrate competency in theory and application ensures having a quality teacher in every classroom.

The International Reading Association (IRA) position statement from 2000 states that the reading specialist has three specific roles in a school: instruction, assessment, and leadership (Moore et al., 1999). The specialized knowledge and skill set of reading specialists are achieved through certification coursework. In the 2006 revised IRA standards, reading specialists need to have a more formalized role in schools, which includes collaborating with peers.

According to *The Report of the Committee to Improve Reading and Writing in Middle and High Schools* (SREB, 2009), "states need to ensure that teacher-preparation programs in colleges and universities help all *aspiring* middle grades and high school teachers and school leaders learn how to embed reading instruction into classrooms" (p.18). The Georgia Literacy Task Force, along with SREB, acknowledges that professional learning support in the teaching of reading is a priority for current middle school and high school teachers. By revising teacher certification and licensure, the state will ensure that all educators are more prepared to address, intervene, and improve reading skills. The reading training should align to the subject in which the teacher will be certified. All professional learning should focus on effective instructional strategies and best practices for literacy.

7.F. BEST PRACTICES INSTITUTE

Since 1996, Georgia State University's, Department of Early Childhood Education has designed and delivered a model of exceptional training to Georgia's Pre-K teachers. The Best Practices Training Initiative is sponsored by Bright from the Start (BFTS): Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). Best Practices offers a professional learning model based on the most current research and field tested methods. Using highly qualified trainers in conjunction with BFTS consultants in the field, teachers receive 20 hours of professional learning each year. Each course contains a syllabus outlining the specific requirements which comprise of face-to-face training, reflections, online courses, assessments and technical assistance. The face-to-face training is delivered by highly qualified early childhood professionals in a hands-on format with practical application to enable teachers to improve their practices. In addition to face-to-face training, 8 hours of online courses are implemented to support ongoing learning and sustain the excitement and optimal practice in the classroom. These courses are completed by the teachers, as well as the consultants. Follow-up is conducted to help teachers build the range of skills and capacities needed to use new techniques when they return to their schools. Pre-K consultants deliver technical assistance on site in classrooms while Best Practices trainers offer follow-up via the web using blogs and discussion boards. Currently, Best Practices is developing 30 online courses and podcasts for Georgia B-5 teachers. Examples include: Reading Aloud to Children; Early Literacy; Developing Language Skills; Stages of Writing; Working with Parents.

7.G. GEORGIA'S LEXILE PLAN PROPOSAL

http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/lexile.aspx

The Lexile Framework® for Reading is a scientific approach to measuring the complexity of text that enables educators to track student growth in reading across the curriculum. This tool enables teachers to provide differentiated classroom instruction and to measure student growth in reading across the curriculum. The Lexile Framework® for Reading connects students with reading materials using a common measure called a Lexile. It measures both reading ability and text difficulty on the same developmental scale. Together, Lexile reader measures and Lexile text measures enable educators, parents, and students to find books and other materials that meet and challenge a reader's unique ability and interests or school assignments. By reading a variety of texts, the student is exposed to different kinds of thinking and language which can then be incorporated into his or her own writing. The reading and writing connection becomes apparent and strengthens the student's opportunities to grow as a learner. (For a more in-depth discussion of Lexiles, see section 5.I.1. of this document.)

Georgia has implemented a three-phase plan to educate both parents and educators in the use of Lexiles to guide instruction. The components of the plan are as follows:

Lexile Education Plan: A Foundation for Understanding and Application

Three Phases

1. Understanding
2. Application
3. Continuity

Keys to Success

- Understanding of Lexiles use in all content areas
- Understanding for educators and parents
- Application of Lexiles in classroom to support and enhance literacy instruction
- Participation of media specialists and public libraries
- Availability of information and training resources using Lexiles (GALILEO, texts marked with Lexile levels, GaDOE Lexile Framework website, etc…)
- Understanding the role of the Lexile framework in Georgia assessment (CRCT, GHSGT)

7.G.1 Phase One: Understanding

GOAL: Every educator and parent knows what Lexiles are and how to utilize them to improve the literacy performance of Georgia students.

- GaDOE Lexile Framework Website (including audio message from State School Superintendent, John Barge)
- Understanding the Lexile Framework Webcast (embedded within website)-for parents and educators
- Educators' Training delivered via distance learning using ETCs
  - Navigating The GaDOE Lexile Framework website
  - Suggested timeline and approaches for on-going Lexile Training
- Materials available for training
  - PowerPoint and relevant information available on the GaDOE website
  - Accountability form (on website)-Trainers list training information and participants, with administrator signing off on the form before it is sent to school district/.
- Printable brochure for parents
- Assessment implications

7.G.2. Phase Two: Application

GOAL: Content area educators construct and differentiate lessons based on the role of Lexiles in the selection of materials for their students' literacy needs.

- Ensure educators have easy access to their students' Lexile measures, as well as access to the Lexile measures of their chosen texts (School/District Data Team to organize information for consistent access)
- Provide professional learning to demonstrate the benefit of designing instruction using the Lexile Framework in all content areas, to match students to a variety of appropriate content texts
- Define the support role of media specialists and public libraries in assisting parents and educators in selecting appropriate texts
- Define how Lexile use is supported through RTI
- Connect Lexile Framework to existing programs /initiatives to underscore relevance and universality of Lexile use (Reading First, Accelerated Reader, Secondary content frameworks, etc…)
- Assessment implications

7.G.3. Phase Three: Continuity (Ongoing)

- GOAL: All stakeholders recognize that Lexiles are not a separate component but merely one aspect of an overarching literacy initiative.

  - Funding
  - State wide Literacy Plan
  - District Literacy Initiatives
    - School Literacy Plans
  - Ongoing training for parents and educators
    - Collection of resources developed by grade level and/or content areas supporting Lexiles in instruction
    - Collaboration of educators (in teams) to implement a comprehensive literacy initiative using Lexiles
    - Creation of a support network within schools and districts (lesson/unit sharing, materials, texts, etc…)
    - Assessment implications

7.H. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE GEORGIA LITERACY TASK FORCE, 2010-2011, CONCERNING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The Georgia Literacy Task Force, 2010-2011, recommends on-going purposeful, differentiated professional learning for teachers by:

- Strengthening mentoring programs
- Providing online and face-to-face professional learning in literacy
- Providing direct teacher support through webinars, ETCs, and Video Conferencing
  - Consider providing a monthly "problem/solution" series from the Department in which issues that teachers identify as obstacles to teaching are addressed through modeling or a video sequence
  - Provide instruction in when to select specific strategies and how to implement those strategies effectively
- Maximizing the effect of excellent instruction by
  - Establishing a model classroom and providing opportunities for teacher to visit it
  - Videotaping classrooms implementing the CCGPS modules created through the Gates Grant (see Section 8. E.)
  - Videotaping instructional sequences to be posted online

- Developing a library of excellent instructional videos to be accessed through GSO.org
- Identifying instructional opportunities from evolving technologies
- Providing professional learning in the area of assessment:
  - How to administer grade-level assessments
  - How to organize the data
  - How to interpret the data
  - How to respond to data through instruction
  - How to interpret data from assessments given in the grade or setting from which the student has come
- Providing support to content area teachers in the area of literacy instruction within their discipline

In the area of birth-to-three, the Task Force identified needs in the following areas:
- Professional learning linked to licensing for child-care providers needs to include a language/literacy component.
- Provision of a program and/or a procedure for dealing with dual-language learners and special needs children.
- Courses need to be made accessible to caregivers interested in increasing their certification from Child Development Associate to a four-year degree.
- Childcare providers need access to a list of available instructional resources.
- Development of an online clearinghouse to address the needs of caregivers.

It further recommends that:

- Literacy coaches have a reading endorsement.
- The endorsement curriculum should be expanded to include coursework specific to coaching.
- In order to optimize the coach's effectiveness, administrators should attend joint training with their coaches in order:
  - To ensure that both the administrator and the coach have a shared understanding of the coach's role and responsibilities.
  - To receive support in knowing how best to support the literacy coach.

Finally, the 2010-11 Task Force acknowledges that meaningful professional development requires a commitment of funding, energy and patience.
- Changing teacher behaviors and attitudes is time-intensive (see Section 7.A of this document).

- Schools/districts should commit to dedicating sufficient professional learning in literacy days in the school calendar.

Section 8. THE ROLE OF THE LEADER IN LITERACY: THE LINCHPIN

The role of leadership in developing literacy in the nation, state, district, school and classroom cannot be overstated. It is a key piece in virtually every literacy initiative undertaken at any level in education. A quick perusal of the literature reaps calls for strengthened leadership at every level.

8.A. CALLS FOR LEADERSHIP AT EVERY LEVEL:

Reading Next (Biancorsa & Snow, 2004):

(Building Administrators)Leadership can come from principals and teachers who have a solid understanding of how to teach reading and writing to the full array of students present in schools.

Academic Literacy Instruction for Adolescents (Torgesen, et al., 2007):

(State and District Leaders)Because of the variety and complexity of issues that affect current levels of reading proficiency among adolescents, significant improvements will be achieved only through a comprehensive effort involving changes in state- and district-level policies, improved assessments, more efficient school organization, more involved and effective leadership, and extensive professional learning for all leaders and teachers.

(Teacher Leaders) Establish a literacy leadership group with the responsibility to read and discuss both research and research-into-practice articles on this topic in order to acquire local expertise.

(Student Leaders) In the process of asking more higher-level questions, at least two thirds of the [effective] teachers emphasized character interpretation and connections to experience, and they focused on thematic elements and student leadership in discussions more than did the [less effective] teachers. (Citing a study by Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2003 p. 22.)

Adolescent Literacy Reform (NCTE, 2006)

(Literacy Coaches) Qualifications include 1) a strong foundation in literacy, 2) leadership skills, and 3) familiarity with adult learning.

Effective Literacy Programs (National Governors Association, www.nga.org)

(Governors) The National Governors Association (NGA) is a bipartisan organization of the nation's governors that "promotes visionary state leadership, shares best practices, and speaks with a unified voice on national policy." It has developed Reading to Achieve: State Policies to Support Adolescent Literacy, a program dedicated to helping policymakers determine how they can raise adolescent literacy achievement in their states.

8.B. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE 2010-2011 LITERACY TASK FORCE

Throughout this document, leadership by administrators is cited no less than thirty times as being a key piece in any aspect of literacy reform. (See Sections 4.F.1., 4.F.2., 5.A.5.C, 5.L., 6.A., 6.G., 7.A., 7.B., 7.C.1., 7.G.1., 7.H., 7.C.3., 9.C., 9.J., 9.K in this document.) The Literacy Task Force strengthens that by stating that more than being *a* key piece—it is indeed *the* key component in all that we are seeking to do to improve education in Georgia. The Task Force calls on leaders in the nation, the state, districts, schools and classrooms to take the recommendations set forth here seriously. Our children deserve it and we deserve it as a state and a nation.

Section 9. RESOURCES, INITIATIVES, AND PARTNERSHIPS

9.A. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The divisions of School Improvement, Academic Standards, and Innovative Academic Programs are active in literacy initiatives. School Improvement focuses on teacher training in literacy in all of the state-directed schools. The content is as follows:

1. Deepening understanding of the GPS: The student demonstrates competency in a variety of genres. The training focuses on multi-paragraph expository essays. Participants engage in genre study to deepen understanding of effective strategies for expository writing.

2. Deepening understanding of the GPS: The student demonstrates comprehension and shows evidence of a warranted and responsible explanation of a variety of literary and informational texts.   Participants engage in study of the seven habits of

good readers to deepen understanding of strategies students use to meet the comprehension standard for informational and literary texts.

3. Utilizing a framework for instruction: Participants engage in a model of the instructional framework for reading and writing. The purpose is to provide a model for performance-based learning to provide students the opportunity to show evidence of mastery of the standards. Participants then use resources to plan for reading and writing lessons.

4. Read-Aloud/Think-Aloud: Participants learn to strategically and explicitly model comprehension for students.

9.B. WIDA

In support of Georgia's ELL growing population, Georgia is a member of the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. The WIDA Consortium is composed of some states dedicated to the design and implementation of high standards and equitable educational opportunities for English language learners (ELLs). The acquisition of social and academic English language proficiency is integral to development of literate individuals who will become confident and productive members of our society.

With these goals in mind, the WIDA Consortium has developed English language proficiency (ELP) standards as well as an English language proficiency test aligned with the ELP standards. The WIDA ELP Standards are designed to function as a curriculum and instructional planning tool to help educators determine the ELP levels of their ELLs and how to appropriately challenge them to reach higher levels of academic proficiency. The WIDA Standards are broad, overarching standards related to the core content areas and are easily integrated with the Georgia Performance Standards (Common Core Georgia Performance Standards by 2014) to provide the necessary supports for the development of language proficiency.

Originally established through a federal grant, the WIDA Consortium consists of nineteen partner states: Alabama, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, Virginia, and Wisconsin.

During the 2008-09 school year, WIDA expected to provide support for approximately 725,000 English language learners in kindergarten through 12th grade nationally. During

the 2009-2010 school year, Georgia schools served 78,538 English language learners with the expectation that that number will increase by 10% during the 2010-2011 school year.

9.C. GEORGIA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

Youth Services at Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) provides myriad services to improve the quality of children's and families' lives. GPLS plans and implements statewide family literacy programs like Early Child Ready to Read®, summer reading and PRIME TIME FAMILY READING TIME™. The latest research in family and early literacy is compiled and disseminated to libraries across the state. Children's services staff incorporate this research into storytimes and other library programming for all ages. These programs help build a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

Georgia had a statewide Summer Reading Program attendance of about 400,000 in 2010, and nearly 1.5 million children attended programs at their local public libraries during FY2010. Circulation of children's materials last year exceeded 18.7 million items. Studies have shown that participation in public library summer reading programs leads to academic success while summer reading participants outscoring their peers who did not participate on reading achievement tests given at the start of the new school year*. (From the Executive Summary of: Roman, S., Carran, D.T., & Fiore, C.D (2010). "The Dominican Study: Public Library Summer Reading Programs Close the Reading Gap." Dominican University Graduate School of Library & Information Science 1-103. Retrieved from http://www.dom.edu/academics/gslis/downloads/DOM_IMLS_research_in_brief_FINALweb.pdf).*

The benefits of youth services are numerous. From providing quality, literature based programs for children and families to assisting teens with their informational needs, Georgia's public libraries strive to develop lifelong readers and learners. Through the services offered across the state, a community of support and advocacy is created for library personnel working with children, families, and teens. Working in tandem, GPLS and library systems provide parents and caregivers with the best tools to help prepare their children for life and introduce them to a lifelong love of reading.

GPLS acts as a consultant for systems developing new youth services initiatives or for systems continuing service for parents and children. GPLS oversees several statewide training opportunities each year for professional learning. Training opportunities are also offered twice annually at the Spring and Fall Quadrant Meetings held at convenient

locations across the state on topics of interest to staff working with children, teens, and families. Library staff has the opportunity to meet colleagues, exchange information, discuss ideas, and discover new ways to reach parents and children. GPLS helps to promote other training initiatives available such as children's literature conferences, COMO/GLA conferences, and other training of interest to children's and teen services staff. GPLS also hosts the Children's Services listserv (CHLIB-l). This electronic listserv posts messages to and from people working in Georgia's public libraries with children, families, and teens.

Examples of Direct services provided by public libraries to public school systems

- Permanent & revolving collections to support curriculum
- Extended loan periods for school personnel
- Library hours when school is out—nights, weekends, summer
- Scheduled monthly visits to each school's media specialist and media center
- Work with PTOs to support family literacy. Present programs for various meetings, have information booths at school functions
- Provides access to self-selected materials year around
- Direct programs targeted to age groups in library branch locations
- Story times at school locations
- Vacation Reading Program for all ages during the summer months
- Home work support online or in person
- Purchase materials on Accelerated Reader and other reading lists
- Library Tours
- Select and deliver books for individual teachers at the elementary and middle schools in the county
- Overdue fine forgiveness for school personnel

Georgia Library Public Information Network for Electronic Services, or PINES, is Georgia's public library automation and lending network for 282 public libraries and affiliated service outlets in more than 140 counties. PINES serves patrons in all 159 Georgia counties. PINES is an initiative of the Georgia Public Library Service, a unit of the University System of Georgia. PINES creates a statewide "borderless library" that eliminates geographic and socio-economic barriers and provides equal access to information for all Georgians. Georgians with PINES cards have access to materials beyond what is available on their local shelves, and they enjoy the benefits of a shared collection of approximately 10 million

books and materials that can be delivered to their home library with no charge to them. If you are a resident of Georgia, you are eligible to receive a free PINES library card

The Georgia Public Library Service ensures that all Georgia public libraries and their users have access to GALILEO. GALILEO, an acronym for Georgia Library Learning Online, is an initiative of the University System of Georgia and serves as the state's virtual library. GALILEO provides access to multiple information resources such as scholarly journals, books, encyclopedias and business directories including secured access to licensed products. Public library users can access many of GALILEO's resources at home through remote password access.

9.D. GEORGIA PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Georgia Public Broadcasting has a longstanding, productive partnership with the Georgia Department of Education. Capitalizing on GPB's capacity to reach all educators in Georgia, the GaDOE has partnered with GPB to produce and distribute high quality content and programs for teachers, students and families that inform and engage stakeholders throughout the state.

Currently, GPB Education is Georgia's digital media content provider for the classroom offering locally produced, Georgia-specific content and digital streaming services across all subject areas to teachers and students. All GPB Education content is correlated to Georgia Performance Standards and aligned with Common Core Standards as adopted and implemented.

Working in partnership with GaDOE and other educational partners, GPB Education and the GPB Client Services Production Team provides a unique niche to create, produce, and distribute content and online professional learning for a broad, statewide education audience.

Two recent projects specific to literacy skill development and education include *Project AIM* and the *Georgia Read More* campaign. Project AIM (Adding Interactive Media to Early Education), a partnership between DECAL, GaDOE and GPB, resulted in the alignment of preK and Headstart standards with online resources for the classroom and home. Professional learning modules were created for a variety of face to face and online delivery methods to train teachers to use the Raising Readers website. This online tool for emergent readers allows teachers to track the progress of students' literacy skills such as letter and phonemic awareness. In addition to aligning the games and resources to Georgia

standards, Project AIM promoted the targeted and effective use of the digital asset. Georgia Read More is a successful literacy campaign targeted to young readers, parents, teachers, and media specialists who can view the modules in English or Spanish online at the GPB website http://www.gadoe.org/sia_as_library.aspx).

9.E. BILL AND MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION FUNDING

Georgia has received funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to develop training modules to ensure that teachers have the necessary instructional materials to implement the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards. These modules will utilize the template tasks developed by Literacy by Design (LBD), a partner of the Gates Foundation. Working with the statewide network of Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) as a key partner, the GaDOE will establish eight Literacy Collaborative Teams (LCTs) trained on LBD template tools (the other eight RESA teams will develop modules in mathematics). Teams comprised of eight respected ELA, history/social studies teachers, science and technical subjects from that RESA district will be trained in the implementation of these tasks. Once these teachers are trained to use the templates, they will begin to create tasks and modules aligned to the Common Core Literacy Standards. They will then be trained on how to integrate the use of these materials into coursework across the disciplines.

One hundred and twenty-eight tasks will be created for ELA. These will then be made available to teachers through a variety of online delivery systems. As the modules are developed, teachers will also develop CCGPS-aligned formative assessment tasks appropriate for inclusion in the Online Assessment System (OAS). The incorporation of these assessment tasks into OAS will ensure that benchmark assessments are available that adequately assess students' progress on the new standards. The inclusion of these items in the OAS will serve as models of classroom assessment tasks aligned to the CCGPS. (This information is taken from the state's application to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.)

9.F. RACE TO THE TOP

In August of 2010, Georgia was awarded $400 million dollars as part of the president's Race to the Top initiative. Those competitive grant monies are intended to fund the state's efforts in these areas:

- Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy; (the state adopted the CCGPS in July, 2010)

- Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction;

- Recruiting, preparing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and

- Turning around our lowest-achieving schools.

The recommendations focused on strengthening the traditional and alternative preparation programs for teachers and leaders; for supporting teachers more effectively in the classroom; evaluating teachers and leaders with consistent and objective criteria that inform instruction; and rewarding great teachers and leaders with performance-based salary increases. At least part of the Race to the Top funding will be used to train teachers in implementation of the Common Core GPS. (This information was retrieved from < http://gadoe.org/RT3.aspx>

9.G. BEST PRACTICES INSTITUTE

Since 1996, the Center for Best Practices, part of Georgia State University's Early Childhood Education Department, has received funding from Bright from the Start to develop and carry out training modules for all of Georgia's Pre-K teachers. Training encompasses content areas such as Math, Science, Literacy, Planning Instruction, and Classroom Management. The modules demonstrate how to implement Georgia's Pre-K Content Standards as well as Georgia's Pre-K Assessment, a Work Sampling System. Over more than a decade of partnership, Best Practices and DECAL collaboratively identify and address specific strengths and needs. Both DECAL and GSU trainers have been trained extensively in Work Sampling and the CLASS (Pianta, LaParo, & Hamre, 2008). As partners, they communicate a consistent message in training and the field about how best to ensure

high quality instruction. And as partners, they are pursuing new media and tools for improving and expanding opportunities for teacher learning.

9.H. DECAL: BIRTH-TO-FIVE INITIATIVES

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)

(*December 2010*)

Pre-K

- **Georgia's Pre-K Program** is a nationally recognized, voluntary, universal, lottery-funded program currently serving 84,000 four year olds. The program provides a full day (6 ½ hours of instructional services), five days per week, for 36 weeks (180 days) per year of appropriate educational/instructional services.
- **CLASS**: The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is a nationally recognized classroom observation being used to improve the quality of instruction in Pre-K classrooms. The Pre-K version of the CLASS links directly to K-3 and can be used to seamlessly assess key quality classroom aspects from PK-3.
- **Inclusion**: Pre-K inclusion classrooms provide an instruction model that integrates children with special needs into Georgia's Pre-K Program classrooms. The number of inclusion classrooms has substantially increased since 2007. Inclusion programs work with school districts to provide the most optimal learning environments for special needs and typically developing children.
- **Head Start Blended Classrooms**: Georgia's Pre-K Program partners with the federal Head Start program to blend funding for four-year-old classrooms, providing access for more children to enter a Pre-K instructional environment.
- **Pre-K Content Standards**: Newly revised content standards guide teachers in guaranteeing that all Georgia's Pre-K students enter kindergarten ready to learn.
- **Work Sampling System**: Georgia's Pre-K students are assessed with the nationally recognized Work Sampling System. DECAL continues to add programs to the online version of the system, which will allow direct transfer of student data from Pre-K to Kindergarten teachers. The target date for all programs to use the online system is 2013.
- **Professional learning Registry:** DECAL developed and maintains a Professional learning Registry for all teachers working with children birth to age five.
- **Summer Transition Program**: Pre-K's summer program provides a high quality, six-week educational experience to help children maintain and enhance gains made in Pre-K during the summer between Pre-K and Kindergarten.

Pre-K – 3rd Grade

- **Race to the Top**: DECAL is working with the state's Race to the Top team to support the use of the CLASS observation in K-3 classrooms.
- **Standards Alignment Project:** Spearheaded by DECAL and using ARRA funds provided through the Georgia Department of Human Services, this project is measuring the links between Georgia's standards and assessments for children from birth through third grade. The goal of this project is to ensure that all birth through third grade standards are seamlessly aligned. Two national standard experts, Catherine Scott Little and Sharon Lynn Kagan, are the principal investigators for this project.
- **Grade Level Reading Campaign**: DECAL is collaborating with the state's education agencies to work toward children reading on grade level by third grade. Specifically, DECAL has developed initiatives that will link preschool to Pre-K to K-3 classrooms and ensure that children conclude their third grade experience reading to learn. Third grade is crucial benchmark in children's learning.
- **GTID**: DECAL works with the Georgia Department of Education to assign a Georgia Testing ID (GTID) to all students at the Pre-K level, facilitating direct links with kindergarten programs and local school districts throughout the state. The online version of the Work Sampling System being implemented enables Kindergarten teachers to begin the school year individualizing instruction based on student needs.
- **Transition Coaches**: Pre-K providers may apply through a competitive grant process for funds to hire a Transition Coach to assist with the transition needs of children in the provider's service area. Transition coaches work directly with the Department of Education family caseworkers.

Birth to Age Four

- **Quality Improvement Program**: Noncompliant providers subsidized by the Georgia Department of Human Services receive intensive technical assistance, staff training, and funding to improve the quality of care they provide.
- **Quality Continuum**: The new continuum will provide a framework for improving, measuring, and supporting quality for all early care and education providers statewide.
- **FIRST Program**: The First-time Incentive to Raise Standards for Teachers (FIRST Program) rewards early childhood professionals who obtain their first credential in early childhood education.
- **Even Start**: DECAL administers the federal Even Start program, which provides family literacy services that integrate early childhood education, adult literacy, parenting education, and parent/child literacy activities.
- **Infant Toddler Specialist Network**: Using ARRA funds through the Georgia Department of Human Services, the Network provides high quality training and intensive technical assistance to child care professionals working with infants and toddlers.

9.I. GEORGIA REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES (RESAS)

The sixteen Regional Education Service Agencies located throughout the state serve all 180 school districts located throughout Georgia. Each RESA is governed by a Board of Control and is funded by state, local, federal and grant funds. A RESA may serve anywhere from five to fifteen districts each, depending on the size of the district and the geographic expanse of their counties.

RESAs collaborate with many of the other educational service providers, serving as fiscal agents for some, and hosting and/or managing 82 other agencies. This helps to reduce operational costs and provides for infrastructure needs. RESAs host over 600 meetings, trainngs and events for the GaDOE and other state agencies every year. Georgia schools add over 800 newly-certified teacher and administrators each year through RESA alternative certification. They offer over 2000 courses to Georgia educators to maintain their certification requirements. In a recent survey of 21,000 educators conducted by the Professional Standards Commission, RESAs were the highest rated provider of teacher support in Georgia.

For over ten years, RESAs have been offering teachers Reading Certification through a rigorous course of study. While some of the RESAs share the same coursework, others have developed their own. Since the beginning of Reading First in 2003, RESAs have partnered with the Reading First consultants to provide their schools with much of the professional learning that has come to the state through that initiative.

9.J. GEORGIA LEARNING RESOURCES SYSTEM

The Georgia Learning Resources System (GLRS) is a network of 17 regional programs that provide training and resources to school district personnel, parents of students with disabilities, and other interested individuals to support the achievement, graduation rate, and post-secondary success of students with disabilities. The programs are funded by the Georgia Department of Education, Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports, and are operated in collaboration with Regional Educational Service Agencies and local school districts that serve as fiscal agents for the programs. GLRS programs are funded entirely with federal discretionary funds made available through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA).

GLRS staff is specialized in providing professional learning, technical assistance and coaching for school districts on a variety of topics related to students with disabilities including:

- Providing Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) support to school districts.
- Assisting students with disabilities in making AYP.
- Analyzing data.
- Facilitating math and reading projects.
- Implementing drop-out prevention initiatives.
- Supporting transition planning.
- Developing other specialties based on student needs related to indicators in the State Performance Plan.

(This information taken from the GaDOE website.)

9.K. THE ROLLINS CENTER FOR LANGUAGE & LEARNING, A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OF THE ATLANTA SPEECH SCHOOL

The Atlanta Speech School's Rollins Center for Language & Learning is a leader in providing professional learning in language and literacy to schools, school systems, and teachers who work with students from age 3 through 8th grade. The Center focuses on students from low income families who are at the greatest risk for reading and academic failure. The Rollins Center is committed to ensuring that all children enter kindergarten *ready to learn* and on a path to *read to learn* by third grade. The Rollins Center focuses much of its work on aligning the work between pre-K and kindergarten through third grade. In grades 4-8 the Rollins Center provides professional learning opportunities for English Language Arts teachers and content teachers, emphasizing problem solving and critical thinking across the curriculum through reading and writing.

The Rollins Center uses evidence-based language and literacy strategies to train and coach literacy coaches, teachers, and school leaders. Through careful analysis of the student outcome data of teachers receiving Rollins professional learning, the Rollins Center has demonstrated that professional learning and teachers are the key to student success. During 2009-2010, the Rollins Center trained approximately 500 leaders and teachers, providing 5,520 students with positive outcomes.

9.L.. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE GEORGIA 2010-2011 LITERACY TASK FORCE, , CONCERNING RESOURCES

The 2010-2011 Literacy Task Force recommends that we continue to fund GALILEO for our K-12 schools. GALILEO (Georgia's Library Learning Online) is vital to all of our students from those in kindergarten to those in Advanced Placement classes in high school. It levels

the playing field across the state and gives access to information that our students would not normally have. By combining communities (K-12, public libraries, higher education, private schools) we are able to purchase databases and develop programs (New Georgia Encyclopedia, Vanishing Georgia, etc.) for our students, teachers, and administrators.

Section 10. STATUTES AND REGULATIONS: Georgia School Code and Rules Related to K-12 Literacy

Georgia education code includes requirements to support critical components of Georgia's PreK-12 comprehensive statewide literacy program. Critical literacy program components include requirements for a uniformly sequenced core curriculum in all core content areas which is captured through the Georgia Performance Standards (Common Core Georgia Performance Standards by 2014). State requirements for providing interventions, remediation, and a curriculum-based assessment system support all students, including special populations and low performing students. State requirements for ensuring that teachers and administrators are provided ongoing, high quality professional learning opportunities are tailored to specific needs revealed by student and school-level data.

Graphic 24: Georgia's literacy initiatives and programs, supported by Georgia school code and State Board of Education Rule, are included in the table below.

Georgia School Code Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.)	State Board of Education Rule (SBOE)	Literacy Descriptors/Program
20-2-140. State Board of Education to establish competencies and uniformly sequenced core curriculum.	160-4-2-.01. THE QUALITY CORE CURRICULUM AND STUDENT COMPETENCIES.	Ensures competencies that each student is expected to master
20-2-151. General and career education programs; purpose; authorized programs.	160-4-8-.08. CAREER EDUCATION.	Provides students in the general or career education programs with a quality opportunity to master the uniformly sequenced core curriculum
20-2-152. Special education services.	160-4-7-.05. ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION AND	Provides special education services for eligible students

	CATEGORIES OF ELIGIBILITY.	
20-2-153. Early intervention program for students at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level.	160-4-2-.17. EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM (EIP).	Serves students in grades K-5 who are at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level
0-2-154. Remedial education program.	160-4-5-.01. REMEDIAL EDUCATION.	Serves students in grades 6-12 to address reading, mathematics, or writing deficiencies
20-2-156. Program for limited-English proficient students.	160-4-5-.02. LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE: PROGRAM FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLs).	Assists students whose native language is not English to develop proficiency in the English language, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing
20-2-184.1. Funding for additional days of instruction; programs for low-performing students; transportation costs.	160-4-2-.14. INSTRUCTIONAL EXTENSION.	Provides funding for 20 days of additional instruction to address academic needs of low performing students

Graphic 25: Georgia School Code and Rules Related to K-12 Literacy

Georgia School Code Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.)	State Board of Education Rule (SBOE)	Literacy Initiative/Program
20-2-217. Professional and staff development stipends. 20-2-232. Development of plan by local school district.	160-3-3-.04. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING.	Provides professional and staff development stipends and plan for eligible licensed personnel and paraprofessionals to enable such employees to increase their education
20-2-281. Assessment of effectiveness of educational programs.	160-3-1-.07 TESTING PROGRAMS – STUDENT ASSESSMENT.	To provide a curriculum – based assessment instrument to measure student mastery of the curriculum in reading, English language arts, writing, social studies, and science

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Professional Resources.

Appendices

APPENDIX A. USEFUL WEBSITES FOR LITERACY: INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS AND PARENTS:

Early Childhood Links

- **Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (USHHS)**

  http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc

- **Center for Early Literacy Learning**

  http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/

- **Division for Early Childhood**

  http://www.dec-sped.org/

- **National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center**

  http://www.dec-sped.org/

- **Recognition and Response**

  www. recognitionandresponse.org

- **Early Learning Initiative (USDOE)**

  http://www.ed.gov/early-learning

- **Center for RTI in Early Childhood**

  http://www.crtiec.org/

- **Early Childhood Outcomes**

  http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~eco/pages/overview.cfm

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Developmentally Appropriate Practice http://www.naeyc.org/DAP

- ZERO TO THREE
  http://www.zerotothree.org/

K-12 Resources

- **Aligning Instruction**

  http://totalinstructionalalignment.wikispaces.com/Marzano+(Classroom+Instruction+That+Works)+Resources

- **Center on Instruction: Assessment**
  http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/Assessment%20Guide.pdf

  http://www.strategiesforchildren.org/0reading.html

- **Literacy Across the Curriculum,**

  http://publications.sreb.org/2003/03V63_literacy_guide_chapter_1.pdf

- **School Schedules**

  http://www.schoolschedulingassociates.com/notes/?p=10

- **The Importance of Summer Reading in Closing the Gap**

  http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/summer/research.htm

- Literacy Information Communication System, Publications

  http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/publications.html

- Institute of Educational Sciences, Practice Guide on Reading Comprehension

  http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practiceguides/readingcomp_pg_092810.pdf

- Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade, IES, 2010.

  http://centeroninstruction.org/files/Practice%20Brief-Struggling%20Readers.pdf

- Effective Instruction for Adolescent Struggling Readers, Center on Instruction Practice Brief, 2008

- International Reading Association (IRA)
  http://www.reading.org/General/Default.aspx

- TRAILS http://www.trails-9.org/ is a knowledge assessment with multiple-choice questions targeting a variety of information literacy skills based on 3rd, 6th, 9th, and 12th grade standards.

- Every Child Ready to Read the Public Library Association's early literacy program (currently used in a handful of public libraries in GA)

  http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/ecrr/index2.cfm

  http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alsc/ecrr/ecrrinpractice/storytimeapplications/bookmark handouts/bookmarks.pdf

- Family Literacy inter-generational program for elementary students: PRIME TIME Be sure to check out their recent study--awesome results! Can't say enough good about PRIME TIME.

  http://leh.org/html/primetime.html

- Adolescent Literacy Knowledge Base http://www.mc3edsupport.org/community/knowledgebases/Project-15.html.

APPENDIX B: USEFUL DOCUMENTS FROM SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS

- <u>KIPP Assessment Framework</u>

- <u>Atlanta Speech School, Assessment Flowchart</u>

- <u>Elementary School Assessment Framework Form</u>

- <u>Middle School Assessment Framework Form</u>

- <u>Table of Interventions, Rollins Center for Language and Learning</u>