

# 2023 Instructional Leadership Conference Plenary

March 1, 2023

# Welcome back to the 2023 Instructional Leadership Conference! #2023ILC

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Chief Turnaround Officer  
Office of School and District Improvement





# From Despair to Deliverance:

The School Improvement Journey of the Dooly County School System



# Who is the Dooly County School System?

- Located in southwest of the state on I-75 South- 2 hours from Atlanta
- Two schools; Dooly K-8 Academy and Dooly County High School
- Current enrollment is 1,110 students in grades K-12
- 70% African-American
- 22% Hispanic
- 100% Free-and-Reduced Lunch





## The Dooly School System Story (actual news headlines)

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- “Governor removes DCSS Board Members”
- “DCSS loses AdvancED accreditation”
- “DCSS is named on the Turnaround List”





# When it rains, it pours...

- Seven high school principals in a 10-year period.
- High leadership turnover – the Cabinet-level leadership has an average career lifespan of only **8 months** of service.
- Much of the community focus has been on varsity athletics as entertainment and not as a business.





# Reflections

- “So What... Now What?”
- “When you lose, mourn for a day, but after that, get back to work.”
- Do not subscribe to the damaging effects of communal low self-esteem.

# How do you Fix the Problems?

## Number One: It Starts with the People



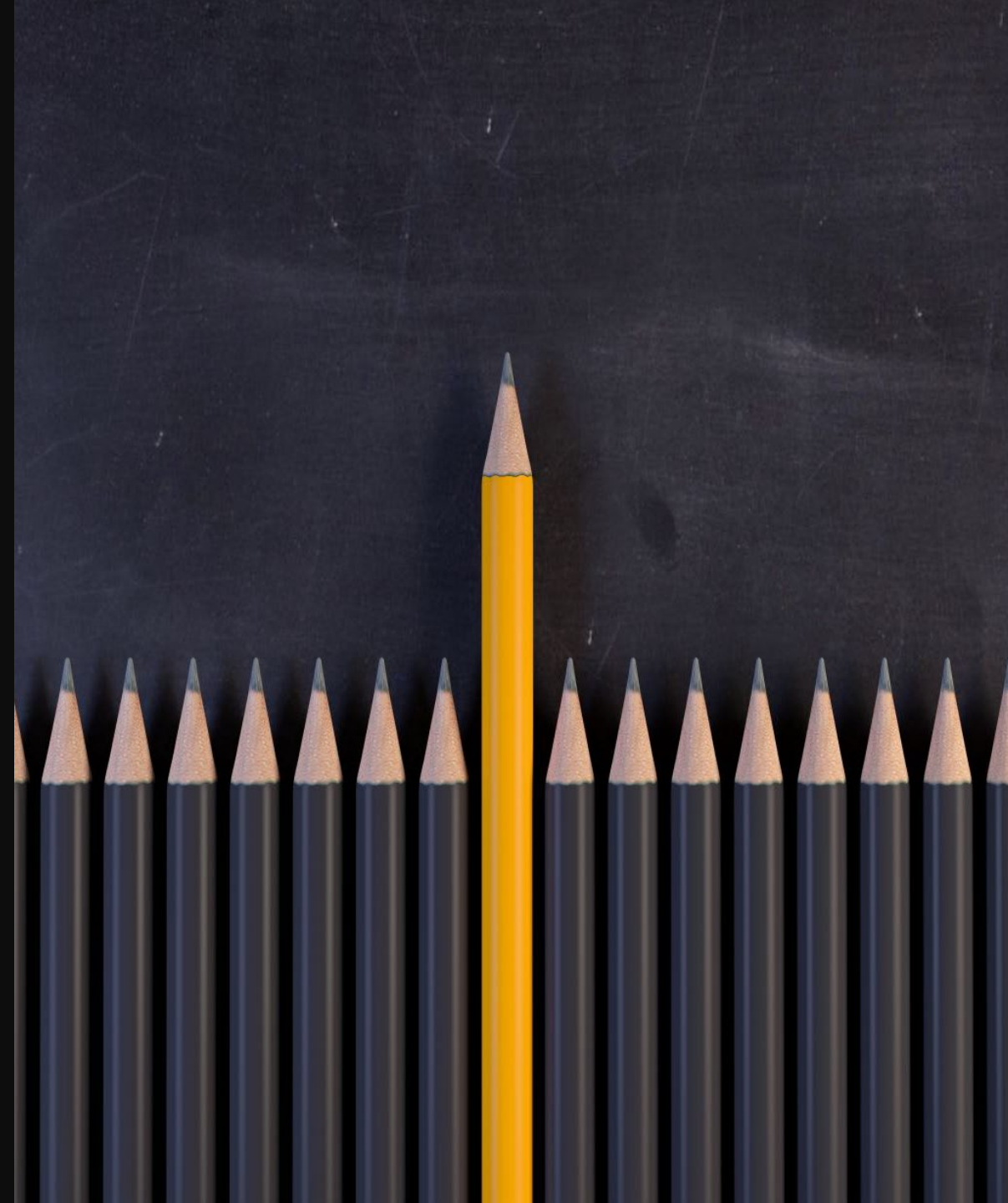
- The **Right People** must be placed in the Right Seats on the bus.
- The **Wrong People** must get off the bus at their bus stop.



# It Starts (and Ends) with Leader

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- The Leader must be the **Instructional Leader** of the School/System!!!
    - If for some reason that is not the case, then the second-in-command must do.
  - Key Attributes of a School Improvement Leader
    - High Emotional Intelligence- Needs Maturity, Wisdom, Discernment, Patience, Calmness, Reflective, Mentally Tough
    - Must be able to cast a Vision and set Common Expectations & Language
    - Must be a Relentless Seeker of Knowledge and Data
    - Must be both a Fixer and an Innovator
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- Must be Flexible and Open-Minded
  - Must be Solution-Oriented
  - And SO MUCH MORE...



# Teachers are the #1 Factor in Increasing Student Achievement

Leaders must observe for content knowledge and passion.



# Lockhart Lesson: How to Rate Teachers

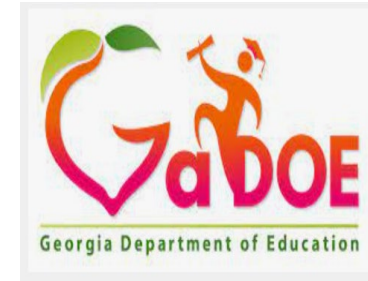
<p><b><u>Group One</u></b> <b>Good Teacher</b> <b>Good Attitude</b></p> <p>Action: Praise and Support</p>	<p><b><u>Group Two</u></b> <b>Good Teacher</b> <b>Bad Attitude</b></p> <p>Action: Progressive Discipline/Do Not Ignore because they are contagious.</p>
<p><b><u>Group Three</u></b> <b>Bad Teacher</b> <b>Good Attitude</b></p> <p>Action: Professional Learning Plan is needed to support instructional practices</p>	<p><b><u>Group Four</u></b> <b>Bad Teacher</b> <b>Bad Attitude</b></p> <p>Action: Exit off your bus. If you need time, reassign them where they can do the least damage.</p>



# External Service Providers: Partnership with GA Dept. of Education

Memorandum of Understanding between GaDOE School and District Improvement and Dooly County School System outlines the purpose and expectations of both parties.

- There is Teamwork and Partnership.
- There is a Framework of Continuous Improvement.
- We identify Needs and Develop Plans.
- We implement Action Plans and Create Interventions.
- Resources and Funding are provided to support Improvement Efforts.



# Final Thoughts on People...

- As leaders, we must manage our Egos.
- If you can afford **Academic Coaches**, hire them.
- *Programs are only as good as the People who implement them.*
- At a minimum, everyone on your Instructional Leadership Team must **take ownership** and **bring something to the table**.



# Number Two: Know Your Enemy

*Build the Infrastructure and Follow the Plan*



“Every battle is won  
**BEFORE**  
it is fought.”

Sun Tzu



A photograph of the White House Situation Room. The room features a large, dark wood conference table with black leather chairs. The back wall is dominated by a large screen displaying the White House seal and the text "THE WHITE HOUSE SITUATION ROOM". To the left and right of the central screen are smaller monitors showing various data visualizations, including maps and charts. Small signs on the wall read "Mic OFF" and "Top Secret/SCI".

# The Situation Room

- You must establish and maintain psychological safety.
- The Leader should be well-versed in CCRPI, but divide-and-conquer the Indicators.
- “Analyze the data until it confesses!” –Bobby Smith
- Data must be visible and updated at least monthly so you can determine progress.



# Establish the Leadership Team(s)



**WARNING:** This work will not get done in isolation.



Different teams have different functions, and that is okay.



The **PRINCIPAL** must be actively engaged in the process! Principals must treat their schools like small businesses; if the owner is not present, the business will likely fail.



Potential members include principals, APs, academic coaches, department chairs/lead teachers/ MTSS support, external support (GaDOE, RESA)



Calendarize a set date, time, and location for meetings focused on school improvement conversation. Weekly meetings are the best.

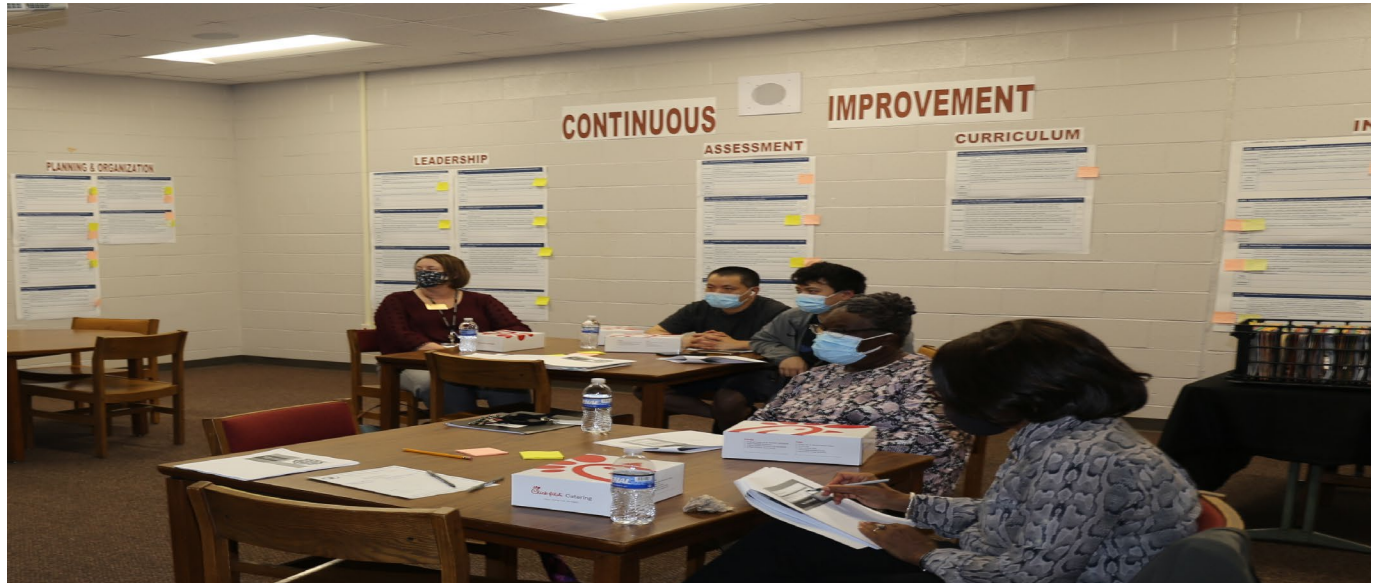
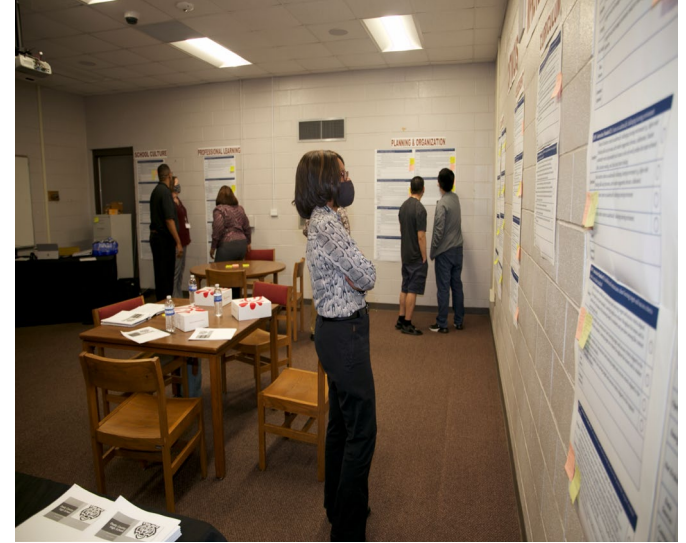
Team Size: You want a good representation, but not so many people that you are paralyzed into inaction. Everyone must be able to bring something to the table. The desire to get the right work done is the key criteria for admission to the group.

# District Plan of Support

Following the GaDOE framework, the District Effectiveness Specialist worked with district leaders to describe commitments and supports to underperforming schools.

The District Plan of Support included strategies, action steps, timelines, individuals responsible, and progress monitoring.

The plan was reviewed monthly in District Continuous Improvement (**CIT**) meetings.





# School Level Service & Support

There were regular communications, check ins, and weekly Continuous Improvement Team (CIT) Meetings with school level leadership.

## Continuous monitoring of school progress

- Monitor School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- Update on Evidence Based Interventions
- Support on Effective Scheduling
- Review of Current Data
- Action Plans
- Benchmark Assessments
- Support Collaborative Planning – Protocol
- Support/Attend Leadership Team Meetings – High Impact Rubrics



# FOLLOW THROUGH: Implementation and Impact

Most of us are good at implementing, but do we check for **IMPACT**?

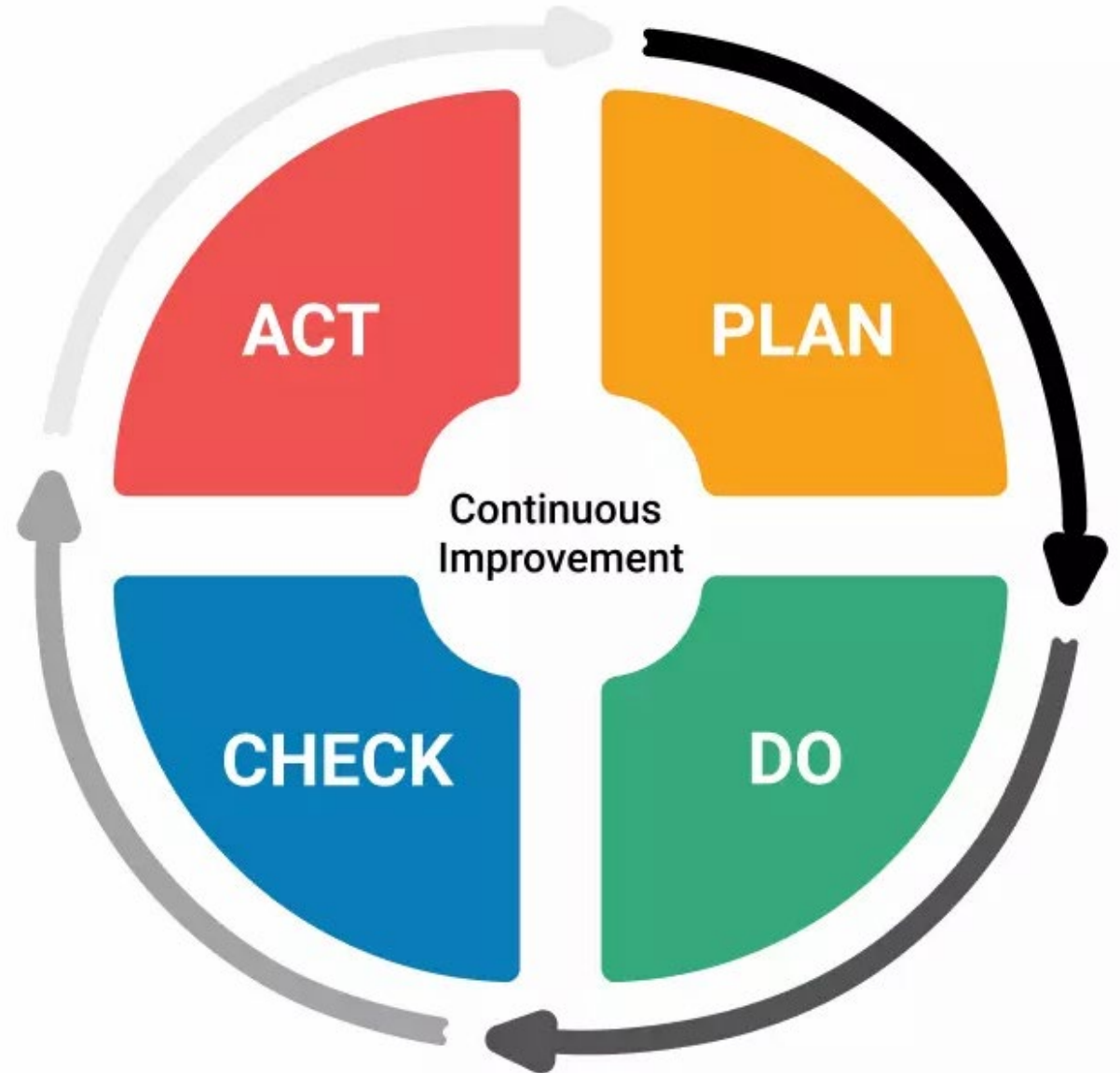
We must evaluate our programs and practices and make one of the following decisions:

**COMMEND** – Keep doing it.

**AMEND** – Continue but make necessary course corrections.

**END** – It is not working, it is no longer needed, or it can be replaced with something more efficient.

**DEPEND(s)** – We need more time to determine effectiveness.





# By sticking to the plan, we were able to see all of our schools removed from the GaDOE CSI List!



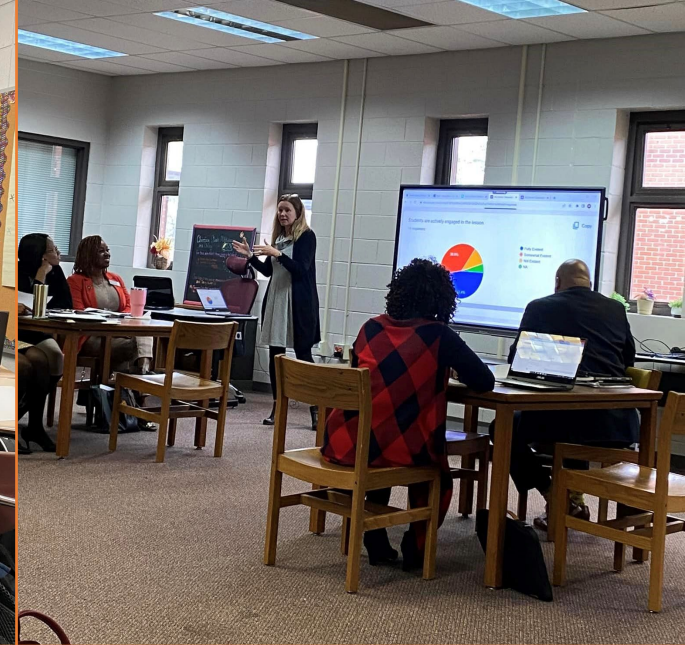
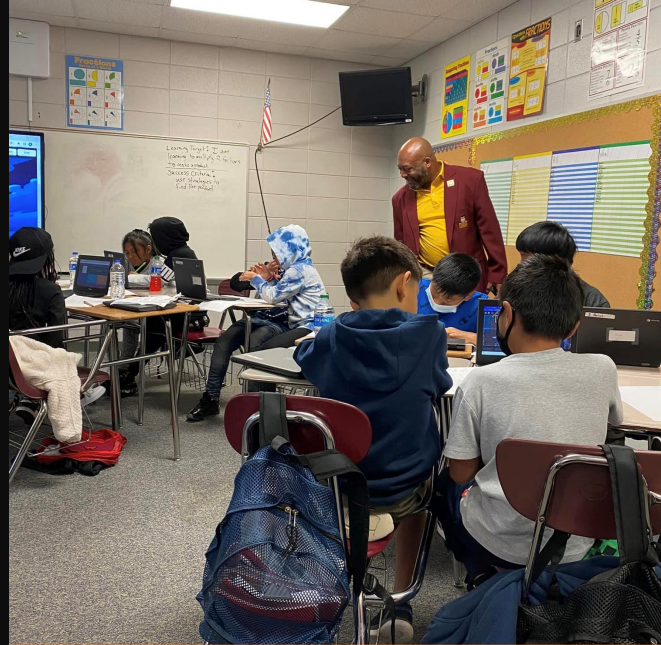


An illustration on a dark grey background. A person in a dark suit is balancing on a red line graph that has a peak and then a downward slope. A green arrow points upwards from the bottom right, crossing the red line. The person is holding a long thin stick horizontally and has a briefcase hanging from their left hand. The background has some faint clouds and vertical grid lines.

**GETTING off the list and  
STAYING off the list are  
two different things...**

# Reflective Practice and Next Steps

- “When you win, celebrate for a day, but after that, get back to work.”
- We must strengthen our MTSS practices.
- We must continue to evaluate programs and services for effectiveness.
- We must relentlessly improve our human talent and grow people who can meet the challenge.





# The Journey Continues...

Next Stop: Distinguished and Reward School Status!





**Thank you!**

**YOU are the BEST person  
to do this work! Go out there  
and save our students!**

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