

MOUNTAIN AIR

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Greetings once again from North Georgia RESA! It is always exciting as we come out of the doldrums of winter, see the first daffodils sprouting from the earth and hear the sounds of springtime all around us. Our year has really passed quickly and there is still so much to be done. What will we do! For this edition of the "*Mountain Air*" I want to talk with you about our profession and what it means to be a "teacher" in today's society.

Being a teacher came "home" to me recently when I had one of those "ah hah!" experiences. I realized that in December of this year, my daughter would be graduating with a teaching credential for high school social studies and Spanish. Oh, I knew she wanted to be a teacher and was taking all the classes at North Georgia College but for some reason it just now settled in my mind that she would be "one of us" in a few short months!

I have heard others in this profession comment that they were so glad their child(ren) never wanted to be a teacher. I not only never harbored such feelings, I was so proud when Emily told her mom and me she wanted to be a teacher. It was especially pleasing since she had grown up with both parents who served as teachers, assistant principals, principals and as a superintendent. As we talked, I realized that my little girl knew her own mind and what she wanted to do with her life.

I have watched hundreds of new teachers begin on that journey to conquer ignorance, stamp out laziness, motivate the unmotivated, well,

you know the rest! I have seen success

stories unsurpassed and I have seen dreams shattered and spirits broken; very seldom by students, but rather by the lack of preparation and the critical lack of support and training from the local school and system. We are getting better with our support mechanisms for new teachers; however, we are not there yet. Public education is the only profession where our first-day expectations are that the teacher be perfect. As a profession, we must continue to improve our induction and mentoring programs to assist these youngsters who will be the educational leadership of tomorrow. It is all of our responsibility, not just the administrators and central office personnel, but all of us. It takes a faculty to support a teacher. We must do it.

As I recall my first day in the classroom 33 years ago, I had in my possession the following items: A Georgia State Attendance Register; one grade book; one textbook for each of my four preparations (none were teacher's editions); one stapler; one black pen and one red pen; and the rosters for my five classes each with the following numbers: 36-32-37-35-38! Basically what I knew of classroom management I remembered from what happened to me in school. I had no mentor, only fellow departmental colleagues, who really did not want to be bothered by some wide-eyed, first-year teacher asking dozens of questions. I thought several times during that first year about quitting and doing something (anything) else. However, I survived, learned throughout the year, and vowed that I would do everything I could to see that

when the next first-year teacher came into our school, I would help with everything I had learned during my first year(s). I had an epiphany during finals week in May of that first year, and it became clear to me that I really wanted to make a difference and help everyone of those young people who came to my class everyday. I began by doing those things I should have done in college: read the literature on successful instruction strategies, Harry Wong's classroom management for procedures and management techniques, learning styles and anything that could improve my knowledge of my subject matter. It was the toughest challenge I have ever undertaken, yet I just thank God every day that he gave me the patience and desire to persevere.

Many of you, have "climbed the mountain!" Share those experiences with your young teachers. They need to know what you know, your successes and failures. Remind them regularly that ours is "The profession that makes all other professions possible." Remind them that what makes great days so good are the memories of those tough days. Go out of your way to make a young teacher feel a part of the "education community" that is your school. And in December, if a new, young, dark-haired girl joins your school and staff, help her, support her, and teach her; she could be some nervous parent's daughter! 🍎

Safe and Drug Free

by Lynn Weaver, Program Director

SCHOOL SAFETY SERVICES

SCHOOL TRAINING PROGRAMS

Training on the issues of school safety is provided through a series of statewide conferences, regional workshops, and presentations provided at the request of local communities. A local agency or school may request any of the following programs at no cost:

Building A Prevention Strategy

This three-hour program focuses on the components of a school crisis strategy. This program reviews applicable laws, environmental measures, and educational programs critical to a comprehensive school safety strategy.

Community's Role in School Safety

This one-hour program provides an overview of the issues of school safety, which impact the community. It examines the definition of the school community and each element's role in school safety.

Contemporary Issues in Georgia Schools

This one-hour program addresses the immediate needs in response to a school crisis. It examines the emotional as well as physical safety needs of the victims, witnesses and responders.

Crisis Response and Recovery

This three-hour program addresses the immediate needs in response to a school crisis. It examines the emotional as well as physical safety needs of the victims, witnesses and responders.

Emergency Operations Planning for Schools

This three-hour program examines the critical components of a school emergency operations plan. It describes how protocols flow into procedures, which allow for site-based safe school planning.

School Bomb Threat Management

This one to two-hour program focuses on the issues of school bomb threat management. This program examines the prevention, planning and response considerations of bomb threats in the school setting. Also, search team formations and common explosive devices used in the school setting are discussed.

Visual Screening in the School Setting

This one-hour program describes and demonstrates the "visual cues" that are commonly associated with pedestrian gun violators. Schools and school events are well suited for the application of these techniques.

Demonstration weapons are used by the presenter as training tools during this presentation.

School Bullying

This one-hour program examines four types of bullies as well as strategies developed by educators to deal with a bully. The program also identifies reasons why students are bullied and provides insight into bullying behavior. The information in this program can be utilized by the entire school community.

Gangs: The Basics

This one-hour program examines the reasons children become involved in a gang, the ways that children are initiated into a gang, basic signs and symbols, and provides suggestions that may help school administrators handle the growing problem of gangs in schools. The information in this program can be utilized during school hours as well as extracurricular activities.

School Exercise Design and Development

This three-hour program illustrates how to develop realistic school exercises to prepare schools and their communities for a variety of emergencies and disasters. Along with class lecture and hands-on training, an exercise development guide is included which compliments the model school safety plan. The information in this program will provide personnel the necessary tools to effectively understand the exercise planning and development process.

Other Courses Conducted by School Safety Personnel:

1. School Bus Terrorism
2. School Bus Incidents
3. Implications of Terrorism on Schools
4. Disguised Weapons and Areas of Concealment Overview
5. How to Conduct a Site Survey
6. School Safety for New Staff/Teachers
7. Home Visit Safety for Social Workers

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The School Safety Project staff provides technical assistance in a variety of ways:

Site Surveys

School Safety Coordinators facilitate site surveys of schools buildings and grounds in conjunction with local emergency

management and public safety agencies to identify planning response considerations for a specific school site. The School Safety Coordinator will generate a comprehensive, non-binding report based on best practices as well as suggestions stemming from the input provided by local responders.

Other technical assistance is provided through numerous publication materials, articles, resource identification, emergency evacuation route and shelter area identification, research of technical and grant information, and other specific problem solving meetings.

School Safety Plans

GEMA School Safety Unit staff works with local education, emergency management, and emergency response personnel to develop school safety plans under the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185 (Senate Bill 74). This statute mandates that all public schools have a comprehensive safety plan that involves students, parents, teachers, community leaders, school employees, district employees, law enforcement, fire, public safety and emergency management.

Exercise Information

An important step in the school safety planning process is testing plans through exercises and drills. School Safety Project personnel are available to assist local schools and emergency agencies in developing exercise scenarios, executing drills, and evaluating these events.

INCIDENT RESPONSE

GEMA School Safety personnel provide support to local communities during incidents involving schools and school related events. This support includes assistance with access to assets and resources needed in response to a crisis.

Threat Reporting Website and Resources

GEMA and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation have developed a statewide threat reporting website. Students can log on at: www.gema.state.ga.us, and click on the "School Safety" icon to anonymously report a threat or provide a tip that might prevent violent or malicious activities from occurring at their school. In addition, there are many useful technical safety and security assistance handouts and other resource information that can be easily downloaded from the GEMA website at the address listed above.👉

**TO REQUEST WORKSHOPS CALL THE
SCHOOL SAFETY UNIT
AT 1-800-TRY-GEMA**

**THE FOLLOWING ARE WEBSITE LINKS FOR
OUR RESA DISTRICT. CHECK THEM OUT!**

www.cherokee.k12.ga.us

www.dalton.k12.ga.us

www.fannin.k12.ga.us

www.gilmerschools.com

www.murray.k12.ga.us

www.pickens.k12.ga.us

www.whitfield.k12.ga.us

www.ngresa.org

www.northcentralglrs.org



North Georgia Summer Honors Program

Pam Glasgow, Coordinator

The fifteenth annual North Georgia Summer Honors Program will be held on the campus of North Georgia College and State University in Dahlonega from June 20th through July 2nd. This Honors Program is a cooperative effort on behalf of your local school system, North Georgia RESA (Regional Educational Service Agency), and North Georgia College and State University emphasizing academic excellence, interpersonal skills, physical fitness, and preparation for full-time college studies. Students eligible for consideration are 11th and 12th graders who have above average academic grades. The selection of participants will be determined by local high school counselors and academic advisors.

For additional information please contact your local high school counselors or email Dr. Catherine Chastain at cchastain@ngcsu.edu. You may also visit the website at www.ngcu.edu, click on "Academics" and scroll down to Summer Honors.👉

North Georgia RESA Youth Apprenticeship Consortium by Gary Hyde

The Youth Apprenticeship Program (YAP) in the North Georgia RESA Consortium serves the high schools of Fannin, Gilmer, and Pickens Counties. Since stepping into the coordinator's position for YAP, I take every opportunity to praise the advantages and positive impact the program has on its students and employers. I think it is appropriate to share with you how the employers feel about the program.

Each year, the Georgia Department of Education sends surveys to employers participating in the Youth Apprenticeship Program. This year, 919 employers across the state responded to the survey. Thirty-one of those employers were from the Fannin, Gilmer and Pickens Consortium. Listed below are the results of the survey:

- 97.5% of state employers agreed that students perform at the level expected; 100% agreed locally.
- 98.8% of state employers agreed that students in the program understand written instruction or materials at the level expected; 96.2% agreed locally.
- 97.6% of state employers agreed that students in

the program exhibit satisfactory communication

- (written/verbal) skills; 96.2% agreed locally. 86.6% of state employers agreed that students in the program use math at the level expected; 92.3% agreed locally.
- 78.9% of the state employers agreed that

Attitudes are contagious!
Is yours worth catching?

- 91.7% of state employers agreed that students who participate in the program exhibit satisfactory problem-solving skills; 96.2% agreed locally.
- 87.6% of state employers agreed that students who participate in the program identify alternate solutions

to problems; 88.5% agreed locally.

- 90.1% of state employers rated the program above average; 88.5% agreed locally.
- 94.5% of state employers agreed that the program has been beneficial to their company; 96.2% agreed locally.
- 99.5% of state employers stated they would recommend the program to other companies; 100% agreed locally.

Our high schools should be proud of the good work they are doing in preparing our students for the workplace. Likewise, the students should be commended for their skills and work ethics while on the job. Many thanks to the participating employers of Gilmer, Fannin, and Pickens Counties for the valuable opportunities and job training they are providing to our upcoming workforce.

If you would like to learn more about our Youth Apprenticeship Program, contact Gary Hyde, YAP Coordinator at North

Georgia RESA (706) 276-1111,
or one of our YAP facilitators: T.
C. Dillard - Fannin High School, J.
H. Smith - Gilmer High School,
Shannon Gable - Pickens High
School. Or you can visit our web
site at www.ngresa.org and follow
the links to Youth Apprenticeship.



YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP . . .

Focus On The Future

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Georgia's Performance Goals for Students with Disabilities Reflected In District Special Education Improvement Plans

by Pam Glasgow

Director of Georgia Learning Resource Systems

The overall goal for students with disabilities is to ensure they have available to them a "free appropriate education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepares them for employment and independent living."

The State of Georgia has identified ten performance goals to support the above overall goal:

- ▶ Decrease the gap in performance of students with and without disabilities on statewide achievement tests.
- ▶ Increase the percentage of time students with disabilities receive instruction in the general education setting with appropriate supports and accommodations.

▶ Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who earn a regular education diploma.



▶ Decrease the percentage of students with disabilities who drop out of school.

▶ Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who transition to their desired post school outcome.

▶ Decrease the percentage of students with disabilities who are removed from school for disciplinary reasons.

▶ Increase the percentage of "highly qualified" personnel who teach

students with disabilities.

▶ Increase the percentage of young children who are receiving intervention services.

▶ Decrease the proportionate representation of students with disabilities to reflect the demographics of the general population.

▶ Increase the percentage of parents of students with disabilities who are active

▶ and satisfied participants in their child's education.

This year, each school district submitted to the Georgia Office

of Exceptional Children, a District Improvement Plan that was developed by local stakeholder committees. Each committee, comprised of the system's special education director, teachers, community members and parents, met periodically to monitor progress on goals, and to offer suggestions for improvement.

Each District Improvement Plan was to be developed by choosing to focus on three of the ten state performance goals. All of our GLRS/RESA systems chose increasing the percentage of time students with disabilities receiving instruction in the general educational setting with appropriate supports and accommodations as one of their performance goals; four of our seven districts chose decreasing the gap in performance of students with and without disabilities on statewide achievement tests; three of the seven chose increasing the percentage of students with disabilities who transition to their desired post school outcome; three of the seven chose decreasing the percentage of students with disabilities who drop out of school; one district chose increasing the percentage of students with disabilities who earn a regular education diploma; and one district chose increasing the number of young children who are receiving intervention services.

Even though each system chose three goals on which to focus, each is engaged in strategies to incorporate all ten goals. Every year the number of goals to be addressed in each system plan will increase to eventually include all of the ten performance goals.

For updated Professional Learning Opportunities visit our web sites at

www.ngresa.org

or

www.northcentralglrs.org

What's Next. . .When Test Results Return

by Lisa Smith, School Improvement Specialist

Believing that test results will be in your hands prior to the end of school, it is time to begin planning how to communicate the implications of those tests with students and parents. Having implemented a process for disseminating this information, I believe individual conferences are an effective avenue for conveying student strengths and areas needing improvement. Given the opportunity to see and to understand their performance, students may utilize feedback to set personal academic goals for the upcoming school year. For parents, after meeting with their child's teacher, they will be enabled not only to understand, but to interpret, their child's scores.

An effective way to involve students in understanding the purpose and benefits of testing comes with the communication of their personal scores. Students need to be told, before testing, that they will have an opportunity to see their results and to learn about their strengths and weaknesses as soon as scores are received by the school. If they are given very little

feedback on their performance, unfortunately, some students may have no interest in doing a good job. Promoting the idea that individual results will be discussed with them before the year ends may encourage additional effort from your students. Additionally, conducting these individual student conferences will provide students with the opportunity to see, understand, and appreciate the time

they spent testing. Spending 3-5 minutes with each student, explaining the test domains, and reviewing individual strengths and weaknesses give students the feedback they need to set personal goals for the next school year. These documented goals, along with yearly test scores, could be kept in individual Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) folders and moved from grade to grade, then used each fall for an additional AIP conference. The fall conference would serve to remind students of the goals they set, and also as an accountability measure knowing that someone is actually

reviewing the goals that were set at the end of the previous year. These conferences will also provide important insight for the current teacher(s).

Scheduling AIP conferences may require setting aside a school-wide block of time or perhaps extending the homeroom period for a few days. Regardless of when the conferences are set, the definite need and benefits of the conferences exist. Students who sit for hours to take the tests, and who are expected to do their best to concentrate for the entire time, should be given an opportunity to discuss the results so they can

understand them and set personal goals for improvement.

Parental involvement is also a crucial area for promoting understanding of the implications of

testing. Sending test results home in report cards does little for assisting parents with understanding their child's strengths and weaknesses. In order to involve parents in the importance of testing, they too must be given an opportunity to review and understand the scores. An effective way to include parents is to plan a "Testing Information Night" for them at your school. If you begin now to announce the date and promote this evening as an information session to receive and understand each student's scores, parents can make plans and look forward to a valuable meeting planned just for them. An overview of school-wide results and yearly trends, an explanation of each tested area, "decoding" the educational terminology, and a private review of individual student scores will be helpful for parents. After being taught to understand and interpret test results, the emphasis parents place on testing importance may make an impact on the results you get at the school level.

I encourage you to plan opportunities to share testing information with your students and parents. Your school may see positive results by keeping these stakeholders involved in understanding the specific areas **and outcomes of testing.**

Phase in Plan for Georgia Performance Standards (GPS)
(to replace the QCCs)

YEAR	Implement Year I ELA	Implement Year II ELA	Implement Year I MATH	Implement Year II MATH	Implement Year I SCIENCE	Implement Year II SCIENCE	Imple Year SOC STU
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K	04-05	05-06	05-06	06-07	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07
1	04-05	05-06	05-06	06-07	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07
2	04-05	05-06	05-06	06-07	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07
3	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07	05-06	06-07
4	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07	05-06	06-07
5	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07	05-06	06-07
6	04-05	05-06	04-05	05-06	04-05	05-06	05-06	06-07
7	04-05	05-06	05-06	06-07	04-05	05-06	05-06	06-07
8	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07
9	04-05	05-06	07-08	08-09	04-05	05-06	05-06	06-07
10	04-05	05-06	07-08	08-09	04-05	05-06	05-06	06-07
11	04-05	05-06	07-08	08-09	04-05	05-06	05-06	06-07
12	04-05	05-06	07-08	08-09	04-05	05-06	05-06	06-07

IN SUMMARY:

2004-2006

ELA K-12
Math 6
Science 6-7 and 9-12

2005-2007

Math K-2 and 7
Science 3-5
Social Studies K-12

2006-2008

Math 3-5 and 8
Science K-2 and 8

2007-2009

Math 9-12

*Visit www.georgiastandards.org to view the draft GPS for each subject and grade. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about the GPS are also answered on this website.

TEST ALIGNMENT

Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) Test alignment is completed during Year II implementation for each content area and grade level.

End of Course Test (EOCT) Test alignment is completed during Year II implementation for each content area and grade level.

High School Graduation Test (GHS GT) Test alignment is completed during the third year (following Year II implementation) for each content area and grade level.

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Are you aware of the Georgia Parent Mentor Program?

by Pam Glasgow

In an effort to build communication links between home and school, this unique parent-driven initiative is placing parents of children with special needs next to local administrators and teachers. The goal of the

Parent Mentor Program is to nurture communication among parents and educators, ultimately leading to greater success for students with disabilities. Parent Mentors are parents of children with disabilities who are employed typically on a part-time basis by their

local school systems. A few examples of how Parent Mentors can assist you include:

- ◆ Locating information and resources for families and educators
- ◆ Providing workshops and individual education for families
- ◆ Providing support for parental concerns
- ◆ Providing a parent's perspective to educators
- ◆ Assisting parents of newly identified students in how to negotiate the special education process

Five school systems piloted this program beginning in January, 2002; this has now grown to thirty-eight systems participating. It is the plan of this organization to add more systems in subsequent years until Parent Mentors are in place in school systems statewide.

LOCAL SERVICE AREA MENTORS

Cherokee

Ms. Sharon Jones

Cherokee Co. School System
Educational Service Center
250 Barrett Road
Canton, GA 30115

PH: (770) 720-4068

FAX: (770) 720-2844

sharon.jones@cherokee.k12.ga.us

Dalton City

Ms. Lisa Touchet

Dalton City School System
100 South Hamilton Street
Dalton, GA 30720

PH: (706) 876-4014

Murray

Ms. Deliz Perez

Murray Co. School System
P. O. Box 40
Chatsworth, GA 30705

PH: (706) 695-2252

FAX: (706) 695-3289

cookie.perez@murray.k12.ga.us

Whitfield

Ms. Erin Kenemer

Whitfield County School System
P. O. Box 2167
Dalton, GA 30721

PH: (706) 876-3929

erinkenemer@whitfield.k12.ga.us

For additional information contact Patti Solomon, Parent Liaison, Georgia Department of Exceptional Children or log on to www.parentmentors.org.

Great Resource for Teachers

by Pam Glasgow

Director of Georgia Learning Resource System

Recently I had the opportunity to attend the Dimensions of Dyslexia 14th Annual Conference in Atlanta, where I was introduced to the research of Drs. Sally and Bennett Shaywitz. They have focused their distinguished medical and scientific careers on children and the area of learning disabilities, particularly dyslexia. Dr. Sally Shaywitz is Professor of Pediatrics at the Yale University School of Medicine, and the founding Director of the Learning Disorders Unit. Dr. Bennett Shaywitz is Chief of Pediatric Neurology at the Yale University School of Medicine. The Shaywitzes are co-directors of the world's premier laboratory committed to researching the neurophysiology of learning disabilities.

Dr. Sally Shaywitz has become well known to parents and educators in particular due to the release of her new book, *Overcoming Dyslexia*. Her book makes clear how the latest research, including new brain imaging studies, is uncovering the mechanisms underlying dyslexia. I highly recommend this book as a useful resource for teachers and parents of children with reading deficits.



Currently I am writing a course for professional learning units that will be offered in late summer or early fall on the topic of reading disorders; the reading of this book will be a large portion of the course. Information will be posted on our website (www.northcentralglrs.org or www.ngresa.org.) once the course design is complete.♥
