

# MOUNTAIN AIR

[www.ngresa.org](http://www.ngresa.org)

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## Director's Message

Hello to everyone from North Georgia RESA! I hope you have had a very good and productive year working with our district's youngsters. At this point of the school year, everyone is stretched to the limit in so many ways and responsibilities. High stakes testing is rampant these days and the pressure is not just on students but also affects teachers, principals, central office personnel and superintendents. It seems no one is immune to the work effort and performance of students. However, some good news! Summer is just around the corner and some welcomed relaxation and vacation is coming your way. If you are not in graduate schools, teaching summer school, taking endorsement courses, participating in various grant-supported programs for at-risk students, having that long awaited surgery you have put off because of work, attending various workshops for school improvement, school safety, school as a community, school as a community provider, becoming "highly qualified" or simply doing private tutoring of students. Take some time, go to the beach, visit a new place, reintroduce yourself to your spouse and children (if applicable). And just remember, school starts back in July!!!

For this article I want to share a parable that I have used in talks, speeches and presentations for many years and I think it still has applications and provides an avenue

to examine what we do and how we do it. Read and enjoy:

Once upon a time the animals decided they must do something decisive to meet the increasing complexity of their society. They held a meeting in Macon and decided to reorganize and retool their schools and prepare for the future as demanded by someone from somewhere.

The duck proved to be excellent in swimming, better in fact than his teacher. He also did well in flying, but he proved to be very poor in running. Since he was poor in this subject he was placed in EIP class for running and made to stay after school to practice his running even though it meant he must drop swimming in order to get more time in which to practice running. He was kept at this poorest subject until his webbed feet were so badly damaged that he became only average at swimming. But average was acceptable in the school so nobody worried about that – except the duck.

The rabbit started at the top of his class in running, but finally had a nervous breakdown because of so much make-up time in swimming—a subject he hated.

The squirrel was excellent in climbing until he developed psychological blocking in flying class when the teacher insisted he start from the ground instead of from the tops of the trees. He was placed in LD class and kept at attempting to

fly until he became muscle-bound and received a C in climbing and a D in running.

The eagle was the school's worst discipline problem, in climbing class he beat all of the others to the top of the tree used for examination purposed in this subject, but he insisted on using his own method of getting there and was disciplined by having his wings clipped and this resulted in his failing climbing all together as well as almost drowning in swimming class.

At the end of the school year, an abnormal eel that could swim exceedingly well and also could run, climb and fly a little had the highest average and was named valedictorian.

The prairie dogs stayed out of school and fought the tax levy because the administration would not add digging and burrowing to the curriculum. They apprenticed their child to a badger and later joined the ground hogs and the gophers in order to start a successful private, charter school. The results of their class action suit for equity and adequacy remains pending!

To each of you, have a wonderful and relaxing summer break and thank you for what you do for the children of this district, your county and this state. I give you this thought:

**“As individuals, we are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but rather a habit.”**

# Lynn's Corner

by Lynn Weaver, School Improvement Specialist

## ARE YOU A MASTER TEACHER?

Master Teacher Certification will provide statewide recognition to school teachers with at least three years of experience in Georgia who demonstrate excellence in the classroom through gains in student achievement. Teachers who meet the criteria for Master Teacher Certification will create the pool from which academic coaches will be selected.

The Master website is [www.georgiamasterteacher.org](http://www.georgiamasterteacher.org) for teachers who are interested in applying.



## Alternative Certification One-Year Practicum

For those interested in the One-Year Practicum process for next year, see our website [www.ngresa.org](http://www.ngresa.org), click on certification, then click on one year practicum for an explanation of the process and the application. These can be submitted between June 1 and August 1, 2006 for the coming year. Acceptance letter will be mailed after August 1 and before September 1.



*I want to take this opportunity to let you know I will retire May 31 after thirty two years in education. In 1980 I came to North Georgia R&S&A just married and excited about being a Data Collector for the TPAI process. This has been a great place to work for the past twenty six years. I have had opportunities galore, to learn, to go to the best training sessions and work in your schools and systems. I have made and enjoyed many friends as a consultant in our R&S&A area. It has been my pleasure to have known and worked with you. I plan to go home and swim, sew, cook, travel and fiddle in the yard with the grandchildren this summer. Maybe a part time job will be in my future. See you soon and Happy Trails!*

Lynn Weaver

# Youth Apprenticeship

by Ben Arp, Coordinator

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The Youth Apprentice Program at Fannin, Gilmer, and Pickens High Schools has had 59 students learning by doing at various jobs throughout the towns and communities of their area. There has also been a novice as the YAP coordinator for these schools and students and that novice is me. The students have learned under some great mentors and so have I. In fact, this school year has flown by for me. I guess it's true that "time flies when you're having fun."

The YAP students have worked with teachers, dentists, mechanics, realtors, doctors, emergency management personnel, attorneys, interior designers, pharmacists, surveyors, office managers, bankers, veterinarians, physical therapists, retail management, customer service, home builders, woodworking, retail sales, farm management. There was even a student who was learning food preparation under a chef. I ate there often...I mean I visited the work site and observed the student at work especially the cheesecake. The employers were great to work with and I appreciate their willingness to work with our school systems in providing a most valuable learning experience for our students.

For many of our students the YAP job was their first "real job." It was made real due to the efforts of the employers involved. Once again, thank you for providing the opportunity.

The students have assisted me in so many ways to do my job. The fact that they went to work on a daily basis and did their best at the worksite made my job much easier. Were there no bumps in the road for our students? Certainly there were bumps; after all, this was a real life experience. We did what good employers and good employees do. We focused on the problem and came to a solution to

smooth the bump and avoid the same bump down the road. It was a learning experience for the student, the employer and me. Thank you students for performing in a mature, responsible manner while on the job. I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know you, working with you, and observing some of the best learning experiences in over 35 years in the field of education.

The people I came into contact with at Fannin, Gilmer, and Pickens High Schools went out of their way to assist me. The secretaries, administrative staff, and teachers were most helpful. The Apprentice Advisory Committee at each school gave me valuable assistance by providing insight into the YAP students. I could tell they want the best learning experience possible for their students. The YAP Facilitators are tremendous individuals. T. C. Dillard is at Fannin High School. Janet Davis is at Gilmer High School. Susan Taylor is at Pickens High School. Each one assisted me each and every time I was in need which was pretty often. Their contact with the YAP students made the program a success. I cannot express enough appreciation to T. C., Janet, and Susan.

As I write this YAP is having the end of year appreciation programs to end the 2005-2006 school year and interviewing students and getting geared up for the 2006-2007 school year. There are new students, new employers, and new opportunities on the horizon. I will still be doing what many of you think is my best if not only asset—I will continue yapping.

To learn more about the Youth Apprenticeship Program contact Ben Arp at North Georgia RESA at 706-276-1111 or one of the YAP facilitators: T. C. Dillard at Fannin High School, Janet Davis at Gilmer High School or Susan Taylor at Pickens High School. ♦

## ***School Improvement News from Lisa Smith. . .***

### **Georgia's Single Statewide Accountability System Recognizes Schools for Academic Performance**

The Governor's Office of Student Achievement in collaboration with the Governor's Office and the Georgia Department of Education have recognized 317 schools for improving and promoting excellence in student academic achievement. Thirteen of these schools are North Georgia RESA area schools. Georgia's Single Statewide Accountability System (SSAS) of awards includes recognition in the following two categories: (1) Greatest Gain in Meeting and Exceeding Academic Standards or (2) Highest Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding Academic Standards. The four school award levels are: Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze. Congratulations to the following schools for your student achievement successes:

#### **2005 Schools with Greatest Gain**

- Hill City Elementary (Pickens County) -Platinum
- New Hope Elementary (Whitfield County) -Platinum
- Woodstock Middle (Cherokee County) - Platinum
- Dalton High School (Dalton City) – Bronze

#### **2005 Schools with the Highest Percentage**

- Pleasant Grove Elementary (Whitfield County)-Bronze
- Ball Ground Elementary (Cherokee County) – Gold
- Bascomb Elementary (Cherokee County) – Platinum
- Boston Elementary (Cherokee County) – Silver
  
- Buffington Elementary (Cherokee County) – Bronze
- Liberty Elementary (Cherokee County) – Bronze
- Macedonia Elementary (Cherokee County) – Silver
- Sixes Elementary (Cherokee County) – Silver
- Woodstock Elementary (Cherokee County) – Bronze

#### **Performance Standards for Georgia Schools**

The Performance Standards for Georgia Schools have been designed and serve as a descriptor of *effective practice* for the schools in the State of Georgia. In identifying the Georgia Standards for

School Performance, the School Improvement Division of the Georgia Department of Education utilized research information from the research by Dr. Robert Marzano in the meta-analysis, *What Works in Schools* (2003), the National Survey of School Effectiveness (NSSE), the Kentucky Rubric of Effective Schools, and the Comprehensive School Reform components. The eleven factors identified by Dr. Marzano and similar terms and statements from the research documents were combined until eight broad strands were determined to encompass the research. The eight strands have been further developed and defined into performance standards, elements, and an implementation continuum to assist schools in the process of school improvement.

The eight strands include: Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Leadership, Planning and Organization, Professional Learning, Student, Family & Community Support and School Culture. To view the eight strands, standards and related elements visit:

[http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/tss\\_school\\_improve.aspx?PageReq=TSSSchoolImpGSSP](http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/tss_school_improve.aspx?PageReq=TSSSchoolImpGSSP)

#### **School Improvement Tools for Georgia Schools**

The School Improvement Division of the Georgia Department of Education has created a toolbox of support for schools as they concentrate on school improvement initiatives. Visit [www.public.doe.k12.ga.us/tss\\_school.aspx](http://www.public.doe.k12.ga.us/tss_school.aspx) for information on

- Georgia School Performance Standards (GSSP)
- Standards (GAPSS) Analysis
- Georgia Standards for School Performance
- Implementation Resource Guide
- Pyramids of Intervention (a framework of common language regarding instructional practices and interventions)
- Data Utilization Guide
- School Improvement Field Book with template for school improvement plan



# North Central Georgia Learning Resource Systems

*Pam Glasgow, Director*

## **Collaborative Effort— Georgia's Student Achievement**

Increasing the achievement level of *all* students has been the focus of Georgia educators to a heightened degree since introduction of *No Child Left Behind*. For the first time in Georgia history, the following departments: School Improvement, Reading First, Title 1, Exceptional Students, Gifted, English of Other Languages, Remedial Education, Early Intervention Programs, Curriculum and Instruction, at the Georgia Department of Education have in a collaborative effort produced a *conceptual framework*, (Georgia's Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions) that can assist local school systems in redesigning their student intervention process. The conceptual framework is in a graphic organizer format that illustrates layers of instructional interventions to be provided for students on an individual needs basis. This in turn, has the capability of recreating the Student Support Team process to be more efficient and effective.

By creating and implementing system level versions of the pyramid another issue could be resolved that Georgia, along with other states, have been cited by the federal government; that is, the over-identification of students with disabilities. In the early 1980's the Student Support Team concepts was established in Georgia specifically to the allegations in the *Ollie Marshall* (NAACP v. Georgia) case. Such allegations referred to black students being discriminately referred to and placed in special education programs as a result of their race. Today in 2006, Georgia continues to deal with this issue, but now data show the over-identification has crossed racial lines, now including several ethnic groups.

Since the introduction of SST numerous teachers, principals and central office personnel have been frustrated with the demands of this unfunded mandate but at the same time supportive of the need for identifying and assisting struggling students. However, clear procedures and strategies have not necessarily been in place in all school environments to effectively address these needs.

## ***Pyramid of Interventions***

By following this framework it is possible for systems to design standard intervention (treatment) protocols that provide teachers with strategies and procedures at each level of the *tier*, therefore, eliminating the guessing game which often occurs when teachers are searching for ways to assist students. The Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions represent the process of continually "progress monitoring" and then providing layers of more intensive interventions so that students can be successful and progress in their learning.

The Georgia DOE *Framework* is a Four Tiered *Pyramid* of Intervention:

*Tier 1*- Standards Based Classroom instruction/core instructional interventions

*Tier 2*- Needs Based Instruction/targeted group interventions

*Tier 3*- Student Support Team driven instruction/intensive instructions (response to intervention)

*Tier 4*- Specially designed instruction (gifted, ESL, special education)

To learn detailed information regarding the Four Tiered Pyramid of Intervention visit [www.doe.k12.ga.us](http://www.doe.k12.ga.us). Office of School Improvement, Secondary Redesign section.

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### **Website Resources for Progress Monitoring and Response to Intervention (RTI)**

<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/rti/chalcytle.htm>

[www.studentprogress.org](http://www.studentprogress.org)

[www.interventioncentral.org](http://www.interventioncentral.org)

[www.dibels.uoregon.edu/](http://www.dibels.uoregon.edu/)

[www.joewitt.org](http://www.joewitt.org)

## GLRS Professional Learning Opportunities

### STRUGGLING READER COURSES OFFERED

DESIGNED FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND CO-TEACHING TEAMS IN CHEROKEE, FANNIN, DALTON CITY, WHITFIELD AND PICKENS COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEMS. This thirty-hour (30) course is the special education component to the Reading First Grant, designed for middle, high school and elementary teachers. Sessions will include introduction to the teacher framework, reading comprehension, vocabulary, word identification, fluency, and assessment. Information regarding all topics will be presented along with strategies and teacher resources.

**COURSE NUMBER:** SDC0640 (middle and high)  
SDC0641 (elementary)

**DATE:** June 7, 8, 9, 2006

**LOCATION:** North Georgia RESA

**TIMES:** 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**FEE:** \$0

**PRESENTER:** Marcia Talkovich (middle and high)  
Pam Corn (elementary)

For more information on these courses contact Cindy Mulkey at North Georgia RESA, 706-276-1111 or email [cmulkey@ellijay.com](mailto:cmulkey@ellijay.com).

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### *Welcome Dr. Reeves*

North Georgia RESA is proud to announce the addition of a full-time Professional Learning Coordinator beginning July 1, 2006. Dr. Letty Reeves joins the North Georgia RESA staff after most recently serving the Georgia DOE as a leadership facilitator in the North Georgia area.

We welcome Dr. Reeves and look forward to working with her in providing exemplary service in professional learning opportunities for our seven school systems

**“Leadership to Support GPS Implementation” training continues next year. One-half day sessions for new administrators, principals and assistant principals led by the Leader Quality Division of the Georgia Department of Education School Improvement Department. Dates to be announced.**

### Free Online Translation Service

Georgia DOE has partnered with TRANSCACT to provide online translation assistance in every major language for parents and school staff. The website, free to Georgia schools is [www.transact.com](http://www.transact.com).

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### **Reading First**

*by Debbie Haney*

Gilmer and Murray Counties have had another very successful year in Reading First. The literacy program in the Reading First schools in these counties has been well-implemented, and the data is showing that students are making gains in their reading achievement. This is due to the high level of dedication of administrators and literacy coaches, and teachers in these schools have and the hard work they are doing to ensure that all children will have the best reading instruction possible. We are looking forward to the 2006-2007 school year with both systems, and the continuation of Gilmer County in the next round of Reading First participants. I have been blessed by my affiliation with both of these systems as I have tried to support them in their Reading First implementation. As of July 1, 2006, my job description will be changing. I will be working with Reading First, but my emphasis will be on Special Education and English Language Learners. I will continue my interest in Reading First in this RESA district, and will be glad to support any schools who would like to request training in the area of reading instruction.

**DIRECTOR'S NOTE:** On July 1, 2006 Debbie Haney will be leaving the North Georgia RESA office and will be assuming responsibilities with the statewide Reading First program. We will miss her here at North Georgia RESA and wish her much success.

# *Mountainbrook Minute*

*by: Dr. Paul W. Baker*  
Regional Program Director

## **Emotional Intelligence in the Educational Setting**

As a regional program that serves North Georgia area students with severe emotional disorders and autism, Mountainbrook deals with a number of “high-stress” incidents on a daily basis that test the resolve and strength of employees. Staff within the program’s various locations are taught to continuously view all crisis situations as opportunities for change. This can be a challenging task when presented with emotionally charged situations on a frequent basis. This becomes especially difficult in today’s educational arena where emphasis is too often placed solely upon the outcomes of state test scores and the academics components of learning, missing the human side of the very complex learning process.

One of the primary ways that people can reconnect with the emotional sides of learning is to focus on the development of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is quite different than other forms of intelligence in that it is a different form of intelligence. Quite simply, emotional intelligence is the intelligent use of emotions-intentionally making your emotions work for you by using them to guide your behavior and thinking. Being able to control your thinking and behavior enhances your ability to satisfy your basic needs and to obtain your wants.

Yale psychologist Peter Salovey and psychologist John Mayer of the University of New Hampshire pioneered the definition of emotional intelligence in the early 1990’s by framing emotional abilities as crossing five domains:

1. Knowing one’s emotions
2. Managing emotions
3. Motivating oneself
4. Recognizing emotions in others
5. Handling relationships

Emotional intelligence derives from basic elements that, if nurtured with experience, enable an individual to develop specific skills and abilities. These skills and abilities are the building blocks of emotional intelligence. Unlike elements of one’s intelligence quotient (IQ), these building blocks can be developed to allow an individual to dramatically increase emotional intelligence. These building blocks are hierarchical, with each level incorporating and building upon the capabilities of all previous levels.

Specifically, the building blocks are as follows:

1. The ability to accurately perceive, appraise, and express emotion
2. The ability to access or generate feelings on demand when they can facilitate understanding of self or another
3. The ability to understand emotions and the knowledge that derives from them
4. The ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth

Each of the domains of emotional intelligence has major implications for learning and thus for teaching. Emotions play an enormous role in what we do in school but they are so often overlooked and replaced with concerns over test scores. Research has shown that staff and students with high levels of those characteristics associated with emotional intelligence are more successful in their daily pursuits and appear more “enlightened” to others.

Listed below are some “habits” of emotionally intelligent people:

1. Label their feelings, rather than labeling people or situations.
2. Distinguish between thoughts and feelings.
3. Take responsibility for their feelings.
4. Use their feelings to help them make decisions.
5. Show respect for other people’s feelings.
6. Feel energized, not angry.
7. Validate other people’s feelings.
8. Practice getting a positive value from their negative emotions.
9. Don’t advise, command, control, criticize, judge or lecture to others.
10. Avoid people who invalidate them, or don’t respect their feelings.

# STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT PYRAMID OF INTERVENTIONS

## TIER 4

### SPECIALLY DESIGNED LEARNING

- Targeted students participate in:
  - Specialized programs
  - Adapted content, methodology, or instructional delivery
  - GPS access/extension

## TIER 3

### SST DRIVEN LEARNING

- Targeted students participate in:
  - Individualized assessment
  - Tailored interventions corresponding with their needs
  - Frequent formative assessments
- Consideration for specially designed instruction only when data indicates a need (e.g. gifted or special education services)

## TIER 2

### NEEDS BASED LEARNING: STANDARD INTERVENTION PROTOCOLS

- Targeted students participate in instruction that:
  - is different from Tier 1
  - Uses established intervention protocols
- Provides enhanced opportunities for extended learning
- Takes advantage of the flexibility of small groups
- Includes greater frequency in progress monitoring
- Addresses needs in all developmental domains (academic, communication/language, social etc.)

## TIER 1

### STANDARDS-BASED CLASSROOM LEARNING

- All students participate in instruction that is:
  - In the general education classroom
  - Standards-based
  - Differentiated
  - Evidenced-based
- Providing enhanced opportunities for extended learning
  - Utilizing the flexibility of small groups
- Includes greater frequency in progress monitoring
  - Planned to address all developmental domains (academic, communication/language, social etc.)