<div align="center">**Literacy Plan**</div>

**Building Block 1: Engaged Leadership**

Administrators at Pickens County Middle School demonstrate commitment to learn about and support evidence-based literacy instruction in his/her school. Based on "The Why" document there are 6 ways in which administration can help in successfully administrating the literacy plan: develop a literacy support team and vision which includes a literacy coach; provide assistance in building trust with the faculty; provide assistance in using time, managing projects and documenting their work; provide access to materials; provide access to professional learning; and provide feedback to the literacy coach (p. 148). Each of these is detailed below in regards to our school. With that being said, it is apparent when looking at our needs assessment that providing professional development in all areas of literacy instruction is essential to formulating and implementing a successful plan.

**Action: Demonstrate Commitment to Learn about and Support Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction in his/her School**

Based on the needs assessment, 60% of the teachers at Pickens County Middle School feel that administrators display commitment to literacy by:

- encouraging research-based guidelines, strategies, and resources for literacy instruction set forth in the "The Why" document.

- continuing to participate in state sponsored webinars and face-to-face sessions to ensure that adherence to the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards are smooth and easily translated to the teachers ("The What", p. 5).

- placing high regards on literacy by monitoring use of literacy strategies, student engagement and learning, and consistent use of effective instructional practices ("The What", p. 5).

- protecting time for literacy instruction and teacher collaboration is set forth in the daily schedule

Showing a commitment to ongoing literacy success:

Administration will:

- continue to provide professional learning based on student data, teacher needs, and the PCMS School Improvement Plan (SIP).

- serve as a model by enforcing best practices in literacy instruction, sharing professional resources among faculty, facilitating professional discussions, ensuring that technology is implemented across the grade levels improve literacy skills, and training team leaders as facilitators

- provide time and support for staff to participate in job-embedded professional learning on or off campus ("The What", p.5; "The Why" pp. 26 & 56-57).

**Action: Organizing a Literacy Leadership Team**

Based on the Georgia Literacy Needs Assessment, 64 % of the teachers feel that we are in the "not addressed" phase of literacy development. The administration will continue to align school literacy goals with the School Improvement Plan as well as the District Strategic Plan and identify stakeholders and partners to be part of the literacy leadership team such as faculty, representatives from feeder schools, community leaders, and parents alike so that we can reach a fully operational status (NSDC 2001, para 2).

In a common effort, the Literacy Leadership Team will:

- create a shared literacy vision for the school and community aligned with the School Improvement Plan as well as the District Strategic Plan ("The What", p. 5; "The Why," p. 156).

- will evaluate current practices in all classrooms by using observation or walkthrough tools such as a literacy instruction common checklist or TKES observation to determine strengths and weaknesses in literacy instruction.

- maintain student literacy data in order to make informed decisions about future literacy instructional paths.

- schedule time for the Literacy Leadership Team to meet and plan future needs based on collected data.

In order to implement a successful literacy plan, the administration with the help of the teachers will:

- identify and prioritize a list of students to be targeted for intervention or support using data obtained from AIMSweb, Study Island, Lexile levels from CRCT scores, Scholastic Reading Inventory, or the Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC).

- Provide consistent professional development and communication with community stakeholders to ensure that effective data analysis procedures and practices are understood and followed.

In order to sustain such growth in literacy, administration will:

- continue to analyze formative and summative student assessment results obtained from OAS benchmarking and AIMSweb.

- Refine literacy goals based on the data obtained ("The What," p. 120 & 156).

- ensure that goals and objectives are aligned with the School Improvement Plan

- ensure that staff stays motivated, productive, and centered on student achievement in literacy.

- define literacy priorities and allocate needed resources to sustain over time.

- share student achievement gains with District Literacy Leadership Team, School Board members, community members and parents through online media, newspapers, websites, Facebook, Twitter and other traditional outlets.

**Action: Maximize the use of Time and Personnel through Scheduling and Collaborative Planning**

Based on the Georgia Literacy Needs Assessment, 60% of teachers believe that time and personnel are used effectively through the following: administration provides protected, dedicated 70-minute block allocated for literacy instruction in all grades for all students, and ensures that students receive two to four hours of literacy (reading and writing) instruction across all content area classes using Writing to Win, Literacy Design Collaborative, Study Island, and adherence to the CCGPS by implementing reading and writing instruction across the curriculum ("The How," p. 23; "The Why," p. 68). Furthermore, researched based guidelines, strategies, and resources have been incorporated into all practices and instruction ("The What," p. 5; "The Why," pp. 43, 68), and teachers will utilize CARES time to include additional time for reading intervention or enrichment based on consistent professional development in research based instructional strategies.

Effective collaborative planning and examining of student data/work during scheduled times will be a protected part of the school-wide calendar and essential to the success of the literacy plan ("The What," p. 6).

Administration and the Literacy Team will:

- maximize the use of scheduled times for collaborative meetings by preparing agendas and action summaries for meetings

- use protocols to examine student work

- utilize available resources to assist teachers in identifying opportunities for maximizing use of time in the existing schedule

- maximize scheduled instructional time by identifying effective strategies for differentiating instruction, promoting active engagement, and recognizing the teaching of literacy and writing instruction using the Writing to Win Program in all content area classes

- continue to study formative student assessment results to drive future instruction ("The What," p. 6; "The Why," p.68).

**Action: Create a School Culture in which Teachers across the Curriculum are Responsible for Literacy Instruction as Articulated in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards**

Literacy across the curriculum is an important responsibility of the teachers as articulated in the College and Career Georgia Performance Standards is essential to the success of the literacy plan. Administration will continue to design and implement infrastructure to provide guidance and support for students and families ("The How," p. 24) and evaluate the school culture and current practices by surveying strengths and weaknesses regarding literacy

instruction.  In addition, administration along with the Literacy Support Team will analyze survey data to develop a list of prioritized recommendations and goals for improvement. Based on the survey, a plan for targeted, sustained professional learning for the staff on literacy strategies and deep content knowledge must be scheduled in order to become fully operational ("The How," p. 24; "The Why," p. 46-49; 154-155). In addition, all teachers must engage in professional learning with a focus on the facilitation of instructional technology and literacy, and walk-throughs and/or observations should note consistency of effective literacy practices observed such as disciplinary literacy, active student engagement across content areas ("The How," p. 25; "The Why," p. 156-157).

Going forward, administration will:

- continue to maintain an infrastructure that provides guidance and support for students and families such as school counselors, school psychologists, school nurse, social workers, attendance clerk, health educators, special education, after - school program staff (Boys and Girls Club leaders), ESL and Title I Coordinators, Certified Teachers, and Gifted Services.

- Ensure that staff development is a priority in order to utilize all staff to support literacy instruction.

- incorporate technologies to more creatively and effectively support stakeholder engagement through various avenues such as blogs, Twitter, electronic newsletters, Blackboard, and Facebook.

- develop an outreach literacy program among families of feeder schools

- develop and maintain infrastructure to support literacy enrichment

- enlist literacy learning in outside community organizations

- provide English language services that extend beyond the classroom and provide family-focused services that engage parents and family ("The Why," p. 26).

- strategic use of technology to assist in incorporating culturally and linguistically appropriate two-way communications with parents and stakeholders will be a common effort.

**Action: Optimize Literacy Instruction Across all Content Areas**

It is important that administration optimize literacy instruction across all content areas and continue to identify research-based strategies and appropriate resources to support student learning of the CCGPS. In addition, differentiated instruction through tiered tasks and incorporating academic vocabulary across content lines will further optimize cross curricular literacy instruction as articulated within CCGPS ("The Why," pp. 44,48; "The How," p. 26). Currently, PCMS integrates literacy in all content areas within the following: Writing to Win, Literacy Design Collaborative, Study Island, and Scholastic Reading, but we would like to incorporate more technology within the classroom that supports literacy instruction. Administration will continue to provide professional development to non-ELA content area teachers on incorporating the use of literature and writing in all content areas such as: writing instruction (narrative, opinion, and informational) and text complexity that is appropriate to grade level and adjusted to the needs of individual. In addition, teachers are guiding students to conduct short research projects that use several sources, teaching students to identify and navigate the text structures most common to a particular content area, and incorporating the middle school writing rubric in school-wide writing tasks that are aligned with the CCGPS ("The What," p. 6; "The Why," p. 87). However, a systematic approach to writing and reading

instruction and the acquisition of academic vocabulary will be necessary in order to be fully operational ("The How," p. 26; "The Why," p. 131).

It is very important to incorporate professional development in the areas of literacy and writing to identify teacher skills or knowledge that needs to be strengthened in the future for students to reach standards proficiency. In addition, monitoring literacy instruction across the curriculum through formal and informal observations, lesson plans, walkthroughs, and student work samples will ensure a systematic approach to the literacy and writing is cohesive throughout the grade levels and subject areas.

Teachers will:

- identify exemplary samples of student work to model features of quality writing

- recognize student effort

- create a digital forum to share creative ideas among the faculty to infuse literacy throughout the school community ("The How," p. 26; "The Why," pp. 41 & 65).

In order to sustain growth over time, teachers and administration will:

- collaboratively discuss alternative instructional strategies or modifications that may be better suited to promoting student learning of the CCGPS

- use online resources to stay well-informed of effective strategies for the development of disciplinary literacy within the content areas

- join online professional associations such as International Reading Association, Georgia Reading Association, National Council of Teachers of English, and Georgia Council of Teachers of English.

- collectively find meaningful opportunities for students to write, speak, and listen within writing contests, debates, speeches, student blogs, creating YouTube videos for instructional learning or debate topics, drama, and student centered assemblies.

- expand the types of writing across the subject areas (e.g., songs, manuals, wikis, blogs, captions, word problems, e-mails, ads, instructions, etc.)

- differentiate literacy assignments by offering student choice in topic, writing genre, and final product.

As a collective school body, we will celebrate and publish good student writing products in a variety of formats that promote exemplary writing technique within school or classroom blogs, websites, student blogs, local newspapers, literacy magazines, classroom and school libraries, school bulletin boards, or student publishing sites ("The Why," p. 51). Most of all, we will continue to celebrate cultural arts by hosting family nights that engage parents in activities that demonstrate the importance of proficiency in literacy.

**Action: Enlist the Community at Large to Support Schools and Teachers in the Development of College-and-Career-Ready Students as Articulated in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards**

Based on the Georgia Literacy Plan Needs Assessment, 70% of teachers believe the community supports the school and teachers through convening advisory board meetings. However, to create a shared vision for literacy for the school and community we must make the vision tangible and visible to community at large. The Literacy Leadership Team will identify key members of the community, governmental and civic leaders, business leaders, and parents to serve as members of a community advisory board and actively seek avenues to promote literacy within the school and community as articulated in the Common Core Georgia Performance

Standards ("The Why," p. 57). The Literacy Leadership Team will contact potential Members of the Community Advisory Board and schedule at least two meetings annually to identify learning supports in the community that target student improvement (e.g., tutoring, mentoring, afterschool programming) and publish a list of those resources for parents ("The Why," p. 51)..

To fully implement this targeted goal, the Literacy Leadership Team will:

- develop a reading incentive program that incorporates family nights with Book Talks by students

- establish a mentoring system from within and outside of the school for every student who needs additional literacy support

- support teachers who want to incorporate flipped classroom models and teacher instruction on video

- enlist members of the various participating community groups to provide leadership by: serving as student mentors, speaking to at-risk students, publicizing efforts within the community, and visiting classrooms to support teachers and students ('The Why," p. 57).

To sustain over a period of time, The Literacy Leadership Team along with administration and teachers will:

- continue to focus proactively on broad issues that may prevent students from learning: RTI tiers 1 and 2 as well as RTI tier 3 with help from Special Education Department

- pursue additional funding sources for specialized literacy staff (literacy coach) and necessary materials for successful implementation.

*Building Block 2: Continuity of Instruction*

Integration of literacy into the content area is explicit within the College and Career Georgia Performance Standards whereas you can see that a separate literacy and writing section have been designated for the social studies and science areas ("The Why," p. 48).  According to "The Why" document the CCGPS defines the skills that are unique to content area reading such as identifying main idea, using diagrams and text features to understand context of meaning, skimming for important information, and analyzing various text structures to determine author's purpose (p. 48).

**Action: Ensure a Consistent Literacy Focus Across-the-Curriculum through the use of Collaborative Teams**

Because 36% of our teachers and staff believe that we are at the emergent level of a literacy focus across-the-curriculum, the following need to be implemented: the Literacy Leadership Team along with administration will establish an expectation of shared responsibility for literacy across-the-curriculum and will design infrastructure for that purpose ("The Why," pp. 46-49). In addition, protocols for literacy team meetings will be established and a scheduled time for literacy teams to meet for regular collaboration and examination of student data/work will be organized. The team will research the components of the professional learning community model such as "All Things PLC" ([www.allthingsplc.info](www.allthingsplc.info)), a collaborative, objective resource for educators and administrators who are committed to enhancing student achievement, and identify specific, measurable student achievement goals aligned with grade-level expectations to be shared by teachers in all subjects ("The Why," pp. 154-155)..

One key component to this model will be to observe model lessons, organize materials, and practice effective instructional strategies using videos when possible. Therefore, administration will:

- be diligent in providing professional development for teaching/administering effective literacy strategies through various outlets such as:

    http://www.comprehensivereadingsolutions.com/

- Research effective strategies for differentiating instruction, promoting active engagement, and teaching key areas of literacy and writing instruction.

- Collaborate with other team members to conduct peer observations and analyze lessons to improve disciplinary literacy.

- Study formative student assessment results and use the results to continue to adjust instruction.

- Assess effectiveness of team actions on student learning.

Most importantly, the Literacy Leadership Team will:

- utilize online options to provide ongoing professional learning to new and continuing teachers

- collaborate with other teachers using videotaping and online sharing options (i.e., YouTube) to conduct peer observations and share literacy expertise.

In addition, teachers will:

- showcase evidence of student learning success on the school or class websites and through blogs, newsletters, and Blackboard.

**Action: Support Teachers in Providing Literacy Instruction Across-the-Curriculum**

Based on the Georgia Literacy Plan Needs Assessment 60 % of teachers believe that literacy instruction is provided across-the-curriculum. It is essential that teachers identify the

concepts and skills students needed to meet expectations in CCGPS, and administer research-based strategies and resources, particularly those found in "The Why" document of the Georgia Literacy Plan to enhance the learning process (p. 51). Furthermore, the Literacy Leadership Team will research and implement English language proficiency standards, resources, strategies, technologies, and accommodations for English learners so that access to the curriculum is attainable.

An important element of implementing literacy across-the-curriculum is teaching academic vocabulary in all subjects using a commonly adopted, systematic procedure, such as http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/media/siteASCD/common/six_step_flash.html as articulated within the CCGPS and within the School Improvement Plan. Accordingly, identifying skills or knowledge needed to be strengthened in future lessons for students to reach standards proficiency, and monitoring the use of instructional strategies to improve literacy through formal and informal observations will be a priority.

Teachers will:

- discuss exemplary samples with students to model features of quality writing, and actively guide students to focus on their own improvement by setting goals and help them accomplish the goals.

Teachers, across-the-curriculum, will:

- provide opportunities for reading varied genres to improve fluency, confidence, and understanding

- integrate appropriate comprehension strategies into instruction in all subject areas ("The Why," p. 57).

- expand the types of writing across the subject areas (e.g., songs, manuals, captions, word problems, e-mails, ads, instructions, etc.) and differentiate assignments by offering student choice (http://daretodifferentiate.wikispaces.com.

**Action: Collaborate with Supporting out-of-school Agencies and Organizations within the Community**

Because 60% of PCMS teachers believe that agencies and organizations with the community support literacy as associated with the CCGPS, it is necessary to continue to develop avenues of communication (both virtual and face-to-face) with key personnel in out-of-school organizations as well as governmental agencies that support students and families. Currently, PCMS hosts a Learning Academy administered by community members in order to instill excellence and increase exceeds rates within the gifted and high achieving students. Likewise, a comprehensive systematic approach to reach the average or low-level learner should be implemented.

The Literacy Leadership Team along with the administration will:

- identify and contact learning supports in the community that will target student improvement (tutoring, mentoring)

- encourage exceeding the standard. (e.g. Learning Academy and Mountain Mentors) to establish a means of continual learning and enhance student motivation ("The Why," p. 51).

- develop a comprehensive system of communication technologies to more creatively and effectively support stakeholder engagement (i.e., blogs, Twitter, electronic newsletters, blogs, websites, Google calendar) as stated in "The Why" document (p. 51, 57)

- establish a system for assessing the effectiveness of the after-school tutoring program using pre- and post- testing

- promote progress monitoring from various assessment models such as: OAS

   Benchmarking, AIMSweb, and CRCT data ("The How," p. 32).

*Building Block 3: Ongoing Formative and Summative Assessments*

Following a systematic approach to creating implementing ongoing formative and summative assessments is important so that data isn't skewed. Knowing that many assessment devices are used when gathering student data, it is important to keep the screening process common across grade levels. This will help in identifying addition programs and classes necessary to obtain optimal results. Therefore, progress monitoring will be an essential part of the assessment process as it is used as a supplement to screening to determine efficacy of an intervention ('The Why," p. 104), which is a corner stone of the Georgia Literacy Plan ("The Why," p. 105). To better implement the assessment process, PCMS will need to increase the technology infrastructure within the classroom setting. Labs are only available on a 6-7 rotation, so access to achieving and maintaining adequate student data is hindered. In addition, additional technology support will enable teachers to collaborate from grade-level to grade-level as well as to other schools within the system more effectively.

**Action: Establish an infrastructure for ongoing formative and summative assessments to determine the need for and the intensity of interventions and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction**

**Administrators will:**

- Provide professional training in the research and selection of effective screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic tools to identify achievement levels of all students.

- Ensure that teachers understand the purpose for and use of formative assessment and how it differs from summative assessment though ongoing professional development and professional discussions and sharing of ideas.

- Provide consistent expectations across classrooms and teachers by identifying or developing common curriculum-based assessments (formal, informal, and performance based.

- Ensure that common mid-course assessments are used across classrooms and include a variety of formats (multiple choice, short answer, constructed response, essay).

- Provide assessment measures to identify high achieving and advanced learners as well as struggling students who would benefit from enrichment activities.

- Create a data team that will develop procedures and expectations for staff to review and analyze assessment results.

- Clearly define a common standard for selecting appropriate interventions for struggling readers.

- Identify and purchase assessment and intervention materials aligned with students' needs.

- Identify and appropriately train all staff who will administer assessments to ensure standardized procedures and accurate data recording. Have all materials and procedures in place prior to start of the school year.

- Develop a formative/summative assessment calendar based on local, state, and program guidelines, including specific timeline for administration and persons responsible as possible among contents or grade levels.

- Hold high expectations of data collection and a plan for storing, analyzing, and disseminating assessment results.

- Upgrade technology infrastructure to support assessment data and dissemination of results.

**Teachers will:**

- Administer assessments and input and analyze data according to the established timeline set forth by the data team.

- Provide timely, descriptive feedback to students with opportunities to assess their own learning (e.g., setting goals and graphing their progress; student access to grades in order to create proactive, responsible learners).

- Continue to evaluate the results of the assessments in order to adjust expectations and instruction in all classrooms.

- Use screening, progress monitoring, and curriculum-based assessments to influence instructional decisions regarding flexible 4-tier service options for Response to Intervention (RTI).

**Literacy Team will:**

- Designate a person or persons to be responsible for ensuring continued fidelity to all formative assessment procedures and timelines beyond year one.

- Analyze student data in teacher teams to develop and adjust instructional plans.

- Use technology to share relevant student progress data with parents and caregivers in an easily interpreted user-friendly format.

- Record online or in team collaboration sessions for those who could not attend at the designated time.

- Continue to research and select effective screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic tools to identify readiness levels of all students (AIMSweb, Study Island, and Scholastic Reading Inventory).

- Continue to provide assessment measures that can help identify high achieving or advanced learners who would benefit from enrichment activities.

- Continue to purchase assessment and intervention materials aligned with students' needs.

- Use online training options to train/retrain all staff who will administer assessments to ensure standardized procedures and accurate data recording.

**Action: Use universal screening and progress monitoring for formative assessment**

**Administration will:**

- Provide opportunities for continued professional learning to staff who administer assessments to maintain use of standardized procedures and accurate data recording.

- Acknowledge staff's efforts to improve their use of assessment data to inform instruction.

- Make data-driven budget decisions aligned with literacy a priority.

**Teachers will:**

- Identify literacy skills needed to master CCGPS in each content area

- Research and select effective universal screening to measure literacy competencies for all students across the curriculum Research and select effective progress monitoring tools (AIMSweb, Study Island, Scholastic Reading Inventory, SEMS Tracker) to measure general-outcome literacy competencies (e.g., phonemic awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, written expression, vocabulary).

- Select or develop school -wide classroom-based formative assessments to assess efficacy of classroom instruction (AIMSweb, Study Island, etc).

- Include assessment measures to identify high achieving and advanced learners who would benefit from advanced coursework (AIMSweb, Study Island).

**Literacy Team will:**

- Develop an assessment calendar to include universal screenings and progress monitoring (both general-outcome and classroom based), designating persons responsible.

- Administer assessments and input data according to the established timeline.

- Teachers will provide timely, descriptive feedback to students with opportunities to assess their own learning (e.g., graphing their progress).

- Assign a person or persons responsible for monitoring and maintaining fidelity of all formative assessment procedures and timelines.

- Implement teacher teams to analyze student data in order to develop and adjust instructional plans.

- Use technology to share relevant student progress data with parents and caregivers in an easily interpreted user-friendly format (email, web pages, Robocall, newsletters, etc.).

**Action: Use diagnostic assessment to analyze problems found in literacy screening**

**Administrators will:**

- Develop a protocol for ensuring that students who are identified by screenings receive diagnostic assessment.

- Identify diagnostic assessments, where possible, that isolate the component skills needed for mastery of literacy standards (OAS Benchmark).

- Select interventions that include diagnostic assessments and multiple- entry points to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach.

**Teachers will:**

- Use results of the diagnostics for student placement within an intervention and to adjust instruction (SEMS Tracker).

- Use technology to differentiate learning within content areas (e.g., use Lexiles to match students to text; provide practice opportunities to strengthen areas of weakness; use gloss option on e-books to provide definitions for unknown words; translate material into student's first language; support students whose disabilities may preclude them from acquiring information through reading).

- Recognize and celebrate individual student's incremental improvements toward reaching literacy goals.

- Use summative data to make programming decisions as well as to monitor individual student progress

- Evaluate the capacity of technology infrastructure to support test administration and disseminate results.

- Analyze previous year's outcome assessments to determine broad student needs and serve as a baseline for improvement: Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) for students with disabilities and Georgia Middle School Writing Test given in fall of 8th grade year.

- Identify common mid-course assessments (i.e., end-of-unit /chapter tests) that are used to measure progress toward standards.

- Study how disciplinary standards are assessed on state and local tests.

- Analyze assessment data to identify teachers who need support.

**Literacy Team will:**

- Use student assessment data to assist students and teachers in setting learning goals and in monitoring progress toward those goals (SEMS Tracker).

- Use technology to share relevant student progress data with families in an easily interpreted format.

- Use technology for communicating data to the district literacy leadership team in a timely manner.

- Discuss assessment results with students to set individual goals Upgrade the capacity of technology infrastructure, if necessary, to support administration of assessments and the dissemination of results.

- Administer summative assessments at scheduled intervals. Include specific times on the school calendar for analyzing summative assessment data.

- Plan time in teacher teams to review assessment results to identify program and instructional adjustments, as needed.

- During teacher team meetings, focus discussions on changes that can be made to improve the instructional program for all students.

- Using online training options, offer professional learning on strategies to address specific skills identified as school-wide or subject area weaknesses.

- Disaggregate data to ensure the progress of subgroups.

- Apply protocols for looking at student assessments and evaluating student progress.

- Share and analyze student work samples as a way to inform instruction during collaborative planning (See Section I. B. and II.A.)

- Plan lessons, re-teaching, and intervention activities that target areas of need

- Record online collaboration sessions for those who could not attend at the designated time.

- Based on analysis of summative assessment data:

  o Evaluate the effectiveness of programs and policies

  o Redefine school improvement goals

  o Adjust curriculum alignment to eliminate gaps

  o Ensure that students are appropriately placed in specific programs

  o Using the school or classroom websites, recognize and celebrate individual student's significant improvements and attaining designated standards of achievement

**Action: Develop a clearly articulated strategy for using data to improve teaching and learning**

**Administrators will:**

- Identify participants for data teams for each content area and for specific grade bands. Identify participants for data team in each content area.

- Define roles and responsibilities for team members – including, but not limited to:

  o Building administrators

  o General education teachers

  o Teachers of students with special needs (SWD, ELL, gifted)

- Schedule collaborative planning time for data meetings at a minimum of once/month.

- Establish or select protocols for team meetings, such as those found on http://www.lasw.org/methods.html.

- Develop a protocol for making decisions to identify the instructional needs of students.

- Develop a data storage and retrieval system.

- Develop procedures and expectations for staff to review and analyze assessment results.

**Literacy Team will:**

- Communicate the expectations for meetings.

- Teach the data meeting protocol to the data team members.

- Train teachers to use the decision-making protocol to identify student instructional needs and group them by instructional commonalities.

- Implement protocol with fidelity.

- Using online options provide teachers with the training and time to analyze the data to determine the need for intervention.

- Review protocols at beginning of meetings.

- Evaluate the process for using data to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of students and teachers.

- Continue to build collaborative data meetings into the monthly calendar.

- Use online options to continue to train new members of the meetings in the expectations and function of the established protocols.

- Ensure that the data storage and retrieval system is effective and efficient.

*Building Block 4: Best Practices in Literacy Instruction*

Incorporating best practices in literacy practices is a key component of an effective literacy plan. Therefore, it is important for instruction to be direct and explicit and adequate time must be provided for students to absorb and practice skills ("The Why," p. 55). Beyond direct, explicit literacy instruction, students must also receive effective writing instruction across the content. In both areas of instruction, student motivation is key to achieving optimal student

engagement. Therefore, integrating technology into all content areas will surely foster student engagement in the literacy and writing process.

**Action:  Provide direct, explicit literacy instruction for all students**

**Administrators will:**

- Research and select a core program that will provide continuity based on a carefully articulated scope and sequence of skills that is integrated into a rich curriculum of literary and informational texts.

- Examine student data to identify areas of instruction with greatest needs (e.g., word identification, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension).

- Compile and examine classroom observation data (e.g., Literacy Instruction Checklist, GA or some other instrument) using a checklist to gauge current practice in literacy instruction.

- Allocate which aspects of literacy instruction students are to receive in each subject area.

- Plan and provide professional learning on direct, explicit instructional strategies to build students' vocabulary, comprehension, and writing skills within each subject area.

- Plan and provide professional learning on differentiated instructional options for literacy assignments.

**The Literacy team will:**

- Provide training to all pertinent staff in the use of the core program. Provide professional learning on the tenets of explicit instruction:
  - Use of data to inform instructional decisions and explicit teaching
  - Selection of appropriate text for strategy instruction

- o Telling students specific strategies to be learned and why

- o Modeling of how strategy is used

- o Guided and independent practice with feedback

- o Discussion of when and where strategies are to be applied

- Using online options where feasible, provide professional learning on research-based differentiated instructional strategies that support diverse needs.

- Using videotaping and peer-to-peer coaching, ensure that teachers receive frequent feedback and coaching.

- Ensure a daily literacy block in 6-8 that includes whole-group explicit instruction in word identification, vocabulary, and comprehension as well as small groups for differentiation for all students.

- Address both academic and workplace literacy skills across all content areas and provide students with knowledge of a variety of career pathways.

- Review teacher and student data to improve instruction. Collaborate with and obtain additional support from other educators who on differentiated instruction via online communities of educators.

- Share effective differentiated lessons and differentiation strategies in teacher team meetings. Use videotaping of differentiated lessons to share with other educators.

- Provide instructional and assessment accommodations/ adaptations for English language learners according to their English proficiency levels, and accommodations for students with exceptionalities according to their needs and talents.

- Provide families access to resources that differentiate support for students

- Continue analyzing data to determine the impact of teaching strategies on student achievement.

- Continue to provide ongoing training to all pertinent and new staff in the use of the core program.

- Provide support to new teachers on differentiated instruction for all learners, including English language learners and students with exceptionalities.

- Stay abreast of current research and new findings related to differentiated instruction by developing a library of professional books, journals, and online sources.

- Provide opportunities for teachers to learn more about how to make adolescent curriculum more accessible to all learners (e.g., participate in professional learning provided by district and state, attend conferences and/or institutes).

- Encourage teachers to participate in online professional communities to share ideas, questions, lesson plans and videotapes of classes.

**Action: Teachers work to develop and maintain interest and engagement as student's progress through school**

Understanding there is a need for each of the following as best practices related to student engagment:

- Providing student choice opportunities in reading material and topics for research

- Relating content to students' world

- Increasing opportunities for collaborating with peers

- Increasing access to texts that students consider interesting

- Scaffolding students' background knowledge and competency in navigating content area texts to ensure their confidence and self-efficacy

- Leveraging the creative use of technology within the learning process to promote engagement and relevance.

**Teachers will:**

- Ensure that incentive programs, if used, are:

  o Voluntary

  o Not tied to grades

  o Incentives are minimal

  o Incentives are connected to reading, such as books

  o Targeted at high risk learners that do not have the intrinsic motivation to read

- Teachers will explore ways to use peer collaboration with and discuss within the context of PLCs (e.g., literature circles, cross-age interactions).

- Ensure that incentive programs are effectively raising literacy achievement and lexile levels. Scaffold learning to incorporate the non-readers interest.

- Incorporate literacy strategies that promote student achievement such as Socratic circles.

**The Literacy Team will:**

- Use data to promote literacy success and determine weak areas.

- Seek and select additional texts such as e-books, eReaders, Periodicals, and Magazines that are interesting to the non-reader.

- Interview students to ensure their interests are being met in regards to literacy.

- Integrate social technology to support communication between teams, teachers, students, community leaders and administration (e.g. websites, blogs, email, Twitter, Facebook, Google Calendar).

**Action: Ensure that students receive effective writing instruction across the curriculum**

**Administrators will:**

- Design a vertically and horizontally articulated writing plan consistent with CCGPS - Writing to Win

- Identify the programs, protocol, and/or materials necessary to implement the plan at each level

- Professional Development
    - Teacher training sessions hosted by the developer of Writing to Win
    - Teacher handbooks
    - Online access

- Develop a coordinated plan for writing instruction across all subject areas to include: Explicit instruction, Guided practice, and Independent practice.

- Provide professional learning on best practices in writing instruction in all subject areas.

- Create a plan that describes how technology will be used for production, publishing, and communication across the curriculum (Implementation of Google Docs with student accounts.)

**Literacy Team will:**

- Create a plan for instruction in writing is consistent with CCGPS that is articulated vertically and horizontally.

- Implement a plan for writing instruction across all subject areas to include explicit instruction, guided practice and independent practice.

- Provide professional learning on best practices in writing instruction in all subject areas with Writing to Win workshops.

- Implement a plan that describes how technology will be used for production, publishing, and communication across the curriculum.

- Utilize articulated writing plan consistent with CCGPS and supportive of the School Improvement Plan.

- Develop or identify the programs, protocol, and/or materials necessary to implement the plan at each level of development.

- Ensure that a coordinated plan for writing instruction across all subject areas to include explicit instruction, guided practice and independent practice.

- Ensure the production of student work through various forms of media technology, publishing and communication avenues.

- Continue to reflect on the effectiveness of the writing plan maintaining connectivity to the CCGPS and supportive of the School Improvement Plan.

- Identify the programs, protocol, and/or materials necessary to maintain the effectiveness of the writing plan.

- Provide ongoing professional learning on best practices in writing instruction in all subject areas.

- Maintain the writing production plan set forth by the team.

### *Building Block 5: System of Tiered Intervention (RTI) for All Students*

Response to intervention is based on addressing the needs of all students and responding when students do not succeed at the current level of instruction.  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.  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 Why", p. 96).  Implementation of RTI requires a school-wide common understanding of the CCGPS, assessment practices, and instructional pedagogy. Tier I interventions include seating arrangements, fluid and flexible grouping, lesson pacing, collaborative work, demonstrations of learning, differentiation of instruction, and student feedback.  Interventions at Tier II are typically standard protocols employed by the school to address the learning and/or behavioral needs of the identified students ("The Why", p. 126).  Interventions at Tier III are tailored to the individual and in some cases small groups.  The Student Support Team should choose interventions based on evidenced-based protocols and aggressively monitor the student's response to the intervention and the transfer of learning to the general classroom.  Interventions at Tier IV are specifically designed to meet the learning needs of the individual.  These specifically designed interventions are based on the CCGPS and the individual learning and/or behavioral needs of the individual ("The Why", p. 127).

**Action: Information developed from the school-based data teams is used to inform RTI process**

Based on the Georgia Literacy Plan Needs Assessment, 28% believe that PCMS is operational and an articulated strategy for using data to inform the RTI process and to improve teaching and learning is followed.

**Administration will:**

- Determine percentage of students currently being served in each tier at each grade level.

- Articulate goals/objectives at building and system level based on identified grade-level and building needs, as well as system needs.

- Budget for recurring costs of data collection, intervention materials, and technology used for implementation.

- Develop protocols for identifying students and matching them to the appropriate intervention.

- Purchase, train and implement data collection.

- Purchase, schedule, train providers and implement intervention.

- Analyze data for individuals to identify students in need of intervention according to established protocols.

- Monitor to ensure that interventions are occurring regularly and with fidelity.

- Monitor results of formative assessment to ensure students are progressing.

- Develop standardized protocols for the collection of critical information to determine students' literacy competence in various content areas and response to interventions.

- Schedule grade-level and data-analysis team meetings.

- Provide building and system-level support of the process.

- Develop process monitoring the implementation of research-based interventions at the building level and across the system.

- Use the Georgia Department of Education problem-solving checklist to evaluate:
  - Personnel providing interventions
  - The ease with which students move between tiers

- Consider the options available through technology to provide ongoing, job-embedded support for data collection and analysis as well as for intervention, e.g., videotaping, videoconferencing, online collaboration.

**Action: Provide Tier I Instruction based upon the CCGPS in all grades to all students in all classrooms**

Based on the Georgia Literacy Plan Needs Assessment, 100% of the teachers believe that Tier I instruction based upon the CCGPS is not provided to all students in all classrooms.  They rated the school as emergent.  In providing Tier I instruction based upon the CCGPS

**Teachers will:**

Examine student data to determine the current percentage of successful students in the areas of literacy (i.e., reading and writing).  Develop a plan to strengthen Tier I instruction of disciplinary literacy in each content area.  If fewer than 80% of students are successful:

- Examine student data to focus on instructional areas of greatest need (e.g., vocabulary, comprehension, written expression)

- Compile data from classroom observations and review of plans to determine current practice in literacy instruction in each subject area using a checklist (e.g., Literacy instruction Checklist, GA or some other instrument)

- Provide professional learning on direct, explicit instructional strategies that build students' word identification, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing skills

- Provide professional learning on: GA DOE resources for RTI, universal screening (e. g., Study Island, AIMSweb

- Ensure team teaching and inclusion of students with special learning needs (EL, SWD, gifted) in the general education setting

**Action: School-wide understanding of assessment data and anticipated levels of student mastery during the school year.**

**Administration will:**

- Ensure that teachers within each subject area plan together to implement jointly adopted literacy instruction.

- Ensure that teachers develop and agree upon common classroom-based formative assessments within each subject area to ensure consistent expectations across classrooms. Ensure that teachers regularly meet, either face-to-face or online, to debrief on the progress of these lessons and to plan necessary changes.

- Schedule time for instructional planning, for student progress conversations across (vertical), and within (horizontal) grade levels.

- Use data from universal screening process to identify general weaknesses in instruction Tier I as well as struggling students.

- Use system-development classroom based formative assessment to monitor consistent grade level implementation of curriculum and to gauge students' progress toward mastery of CCGPS at each grade level.

- Promote the formation of professional learning communities with protected meeting times.

- Establish protocols to teach and monitor teachers' effective questioning and feedback skills.

- Ensure adequate time for planning and implementing flexible grouping based on students' learning needs.

- Monitor the planning, delivery and assessment for students with special learning needs (EL, SWD, gifted).

- Support teachers' effective use of time through use of technology during each stage of the process.

- Establish protocols to support professional learning communities and use decision-making model to evaluate effectiveness.

- Provide professional learning to support literacy face to face or online.

- Continue to ensure that teachers consistently provide instruction that includes explicit instruction designed to meet the individual students' needs.

- Encourage the use of technology to support proactive communication between students and teachers, parents and teachers (e.g., cell phones, texting, email).

- Ensure that communication between teachers and administrators is ongoing and effective.

**Action: Implement Tier 2 needs-based interventions for targeted students**

To improve literacy, content area educators should construct and differentiate lessons ("The Why", p. 152).  Based on the Georgia Literacy Plan Needs Assessment, 32% of the teachers believe we are fully operational and Tier 2 needs-based interventions are provided for targeted students.

**Administration will:**

- Plan and provide professional learning for interventionists on:
  - Appropriate use of supplemental and intervention materials
  - Diagnosis of reading difficulties
  - Direct, explicit instructional strategies to address difficulties
  - Charting data

- o Graphing progress

- Schedule times for collaborative discussion and planning between content area T1 teachers and interventionists (teachers or para-educators).

- Provide professional learning to ensure school wide understanding of assessment data and anticipated levels of student mastery during the school year.

- Ensure effectiveness of interventions by:
  - o Building sufficient blocks of time into the daily schedule
  - o Providing adequate space conducive to learning
  - o Ensure that they are provided by competent, well-trained teachers.

- Establish protocols to ensure consistent progress monitoring, data collection, and reporting.

- Ensure adequate time for planning and implementing interventions.

- Monitor student movement between T1 and T2.

- Provide sufficient resources (time, training cost, materials and implementation of interventions).

- Study schools successful in closing the achievement gap have effected change.

- Ensure that teachers consistently provide research-validated interventions designed to meet individual student's needs.

- Document data points to monitor student response to intervention.

- Encourage the use of technology to ensure proactive communication between students and teachers, parents and teachers, e.g., cell phones, texting, email.

- Use technology to track and endure the movement of students between T1 and T2 based on response to interventions.

**Teachers will:**

- Monitor effectiveness of standard intervention protocols in place for students (based on universal screening, progress monitoring and benchmark data).

**Action: Ensure that Student Support Team (SST) and Data Team monitor progress jointly**

Based on the Georgia Literacy Plan Assessment, 64% of PCMS feels that we ensure that SST and data teams monitor progress jointly.  The other 36% perceive us as emergent.

**Data team will:**

- In addition to everything that occurs at T1 and T2, data teams meet to:
- Discuss students in T3 who fail to respond to intervention
- Receive professional learning on Student
- Support Team processes and procedures as outlined in the GA DOE manual and guidance
    - Verify implementation of proven interventions
- Ensure that interventionist has maintained fidelity to intervention protocol prior to referral.
- T3 SST/Data teams meet at least once a month to discuss student progress based on daily interventions that include a minimum of four data points.
- Interventions are delivered during a protected time daily by a trained interventionist.
- T3 SST/Data teams follow established protocol to determine if specific nature of ELs lack of progress (i.e., language difficulty or difference vs. disorder).

**Teachers will:**

- Teachers consistently provide research validated interventions to meet individual student needs.
- Data points are documented to monitor student response to daily intervention.

- Ensure that T3 includes proven interventions that address behavior.

**Administration will:**

- Continue to ensure that:

    o  Students move into and out of T2 and T3

    o  Data is used to support response to intervention

    o  Referrals to special education are equivalent to proportion of school and system population that represent ethnic and racial composition as  a whole

    o  Schools and system consistently use decision-making checklist to ensure appropriate.

**Action: Implement Tier 4 specially-designed learning through specialized programs, methodologies or instructional based upon students' inability to access the CCGPS any other way**

In addition to Tiers 1 through 3, target students participate in specialized programs, methodologies, or instructional deliveries.  This provides a greater frequency of progress monitoring of student response to interventions.  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 ("The Why", p. 134).  Based on Georgia Literacy Plan Assessment, 100% of our teachers feel that we are either operational or fully operational and that we implement specially-designed learning through specialized programs, methodologies, or strategies based upon students' inabilities to access the CCGPS.

**Administration will:**

- Develop school schedules to ensure least restrictive environment (LRE).

- Ensure that building and system administrators are familiar with funding formulas affecting students in special programming.

- Consider assigning a case manager to each student with (IEP) (i. e., the case manager should maintain contact even if the student is served by a different special educator in multiple settings (such as team taught) so that communication with student and parents is seamless).

- Ensure IEP teams include key members required to support students' individualized transition plans and/or attainment of College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards.

- Special education, EL, or gifted case managers meet, plan, and discuss students' progress regularly with general education teachers.

- Case managers regularly participate in open houses, parent conferences and college and career planning activities.

- Student data supports the exit of students from T4.

- A system of checks and balances ensures fidelity of implementation and progress of student subgroups at a rate commensurate with typical peers indicative of closing the present gap in performance.

**Teachers will:**

- Expect the most highly qualified and experienced teachers support the delivery of instruction for students with the most significant needs (i.e., best Math II teacher teams with best special education teacher for team-taught instruction).

- Special education, ESOL, and gifted teachers participate in professional learning communities to ensure strict alignment with delivery of CCGPS, even in separate settings.

*Building Block 6: Improved Instruction through Professional Learning*

More and more research is beginning to show that effective professional learning is linked to higher student achievement.  Research shows that "for every$500 directed toward various school improvement initiatives, those funds directed towards professional development resulted in the greatest student achievement gains" (Greenwald et al., 1996).  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 student's experience.  In an increasing competitive global and technology-based economy, students should have strong literacy skills, and teachers should receive the training to improve their instruction and to promote student achievement.

**Action: Ensure that pre-service education prepares new teachers for all the challenges of the classroom**

Based on the Georgia Literacy Plan Assessment, 32% of teachers feel that pre-service education prepares new teachers.

**The Literacy team will:**

- Meet with representatives from Professional Standards Commission to enlist support for ensuring that pre-service teachers receive coursework in disciplinary literacy within content areas.

- Revise teacher preparation and training standards to include coursework in disciplinary literacy for pre-service teachers in all subject areas.

- Enlist support from institutions of higher learning to require pre-service teachers to demonstrate competency in reading theory and practice as well as in the development of disciplinary literacy.

- Provide professional learning, where necessary, for faculty.

- Develop revised evaluation instruments for pre-service teachers.

- Develop protocols for evaluating implementation of the new coursework.

- Ensure that mentoring teachers are fully trained in providing instruction in disciplinary literacy.

- Continue to monitor and support the integration of disciplinary literacy.

- Provide building level administrators with professional learning on the need to integrate disciplinary literacy instruction into the content areas in order to help them make informed hiring decisions.

**Action: Provide professional learning for in-service personnel**

Based on the Georgia Literacy Plan Assessment, 32% of teachers believe that in-service personnel participate in ongoing professional learning at an operational level because: ("The Why", p. 140-154)

1. The school calendar provides protective time to collaboratively analyze data, share expertise, study the standards, plan lessons, examine student work, and reflect on practice ("The How", p. 18; "The Why", p 141, 156).

2. Teachers instruction is monitored through classroom observations or walkthroughs using a variety of assessment tools tied to professional learning ("The How", p. 18; "The Why", p. 149).

**Administration will:**

- Schedule and protect time during the school day for teachers to collaboratively analyze data, share expertise, study the standards, plan lessons, examine student work, and reflect on practice.

- Use teacher data (surveys and interest inventories; teacher observations) as well as student data to target professional learning needs.

- Encourage every teacher to develop a professional growth plan based on a self-assessment of professional learning needs.

- Use Academic coach to provide site-based support for staff.

- Provide program-specific training in intervention programs (AIMSWEB) to prepare teachers and staff for implementation.

- Provide training in administering and interpreting results of assessments in terms of literacy.

- Allow pre-service teachers to work at the school.

- Consider the inclusion of some or all of the following in personnel in professional learning opportunities:
    - Paraprofessionals
    - Support staff
    - Substitute teachers

- Provide targeted professional learning on the CCGPS based on student and teacher needs.

- Meet in collaborative teams to support teachers in using literacy strategies effectively.

- Provide opportunities for teachers to practice techniques in non-threatening situations.

- Use checklists tied to professional learning when conducting classroom observations or walkthroughs to ensure clear expectations and to provide specific feedback to teachers on student learning.

- Develop a list of sites for an online professional library that includes research-based books, journals, magazines, videos, etc. that teachers can readily access for professional growth.

- Revisit and revise professional learning yearly based on student mastery of CCGPS and classroom observations.

- Partner experienced teachers with pre-service and beginning teachers.

- Use a model of blended professional learning – combining online learning with face-to-face support – to provide content and resources to teachers and staff.

- Use formal and informal observations to monitor and improve literacy instruction (Literacy Instruction Checklist, or some other equivalent instrument).

- Use classroom observations (or videotaping) to identify and support individual teachers with follow-up coaching, conferencing, and mentoring.

- Continue program specific professional learning each year for new and experienced teachers.

- Encourage all teachers to share information learned at professional learning sessions.

- Analyze student data to evaluate effectiveness of current professional learning on student mastery of CCGPS in all subgroups.

- Revisit professional learning options to utilize experts within the school to develop and support colleagues.

- Ensure that new personnel receive vital professional learning from earlier years.

- Provide videotaped important professional learning sessions for staff to review and share with colleagues inside and outside of school.

- Expand and strengthen school-university partnerships to build networks of support for literacy programs through the use of online collaborations, blogs and professional organizations.

- Continue to encourage "professional talk" among staff and provide time for discussions.