



# **High School Graduation Coaches**

## **Promising Practices Manual**

### **2006 – 2009 Edition**



May 18, 2009

Greetings High School Graduation Coaches,

Welcome to the latest Promising Practices Manual! We have compiled all Graduation Coach submissions since the inception of the program. As always, we will be updating this manual regularly and posting it online. So please feel free to send a brief synopsis of any successful strategies you have created. A tremendous thank you goes to all of the inspirational coaches who have been willing to share their ideas to help their fellow coaches over the past 3 years!

Please note that we refer to these strategies as “promising” and not “best.” This is because they may not all be proven and/or research-based, but they are still great ideas that you can *always* feel free to improve upon.

We hope that these “Promising Practices” will inspire you to make the most of resources at your own schools, and come up with some great practices of your own. The full contact information of each contributing coach is included with each submission. Feel free to contact these coaches with questions or ideas, as they are all willing to help!

Best of luck in implementing these or similar programs! We look forward to including your strategies in our next edition. We sincerely hope that this manual helps you make a difference in your schools, and most importantly, in the lives of your students.

Happy Reading!

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# Promising Practices 2006-2009 Edition

## Academic Strategies

### GHSGT Test Prep and Tutoring programs during the School Day

We hold "cram sessions" the day before each testing session. For example, if students take the science test on Tuesday, we review for science on Monday. Since science is the area with the greatest need, students attend a two-block session. Two science teachers collaborate and decide which teacher will review certain areas. We divide students into two groups and send them to one of the two teachers' classrooms.

Teachers review their portion of the science curriculum with the first block then change rooms. That way the groups are manageable, and the content is also manageable. We hold similar sessions with other content areas the day before that particular test. In the spring, we hold cumulative reviews for juniors in their academic classes. I also hold individual and small group "test prep" sessions with students. In the fall, I teach a three-day writing workshop during the school day, which includes all students who are not currently enrolled in a literature class, or those who have not passed the writing assessment. I post test dates as well as graduation statistics on a bulletin board in the commons area, and I remind seniors of upcoming tests and present test prep resources in a monthly senior newsletter that is mailed to all seniors each month.

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### Eight Day Remediation Program

Prior to the November administration of the GHSGT, we sponsored an eight day remediation program for our seniors who had not passed all parts of the GHSGT. We concentrated only on science and social studies during our Instructional Focus Time period (11:25 – 12:05). Approximately forty-six students participated in this program. We were delighted when test scores were received. Fifty-nine percent passed the social studies portion of the GHSGT, while thirty-two percent passed the science portion. One particular science teacher had great success focusing only on the two specific strands of the science test that were most difficult for her students.

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### Graduation Room Provides Space for Exploration

The Student Resource Center (or Graduation Room) is one of the largest classrooms in the school. The Graduation Coach and clerk are housed in this classroom, which consists of eight new Dell computers, six student computers, one large library table and two extra work tables.

During our instructional focus time period, the room is full of students using the computers to research colleges, register for the SAT/ACT, and apply for scholarships; some are even here for tutoring and make-up work. As the former Career Coordinator for the high school, it is exciting not only to have the huge classroom, but to see students working together on their lives *after* high school.

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### **NovaNET Offered Until Students Pass GHS GT**

At Thomas County Central High School, we have a 7-period day. We offer NovaNET during 1st, 6th, and 7th periods. We currently have 84 students scheduled in those classes. We also have 4 study skills classes for students that have not passed the GHS GT scheduled during the school day. As soon as students pass the GHS GT or complete the course on NovaNET, their schedule is then changed for them to go into an elective of their choice.

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### **Grade Remediation with Tutors and Teachers**

For our 20-Day Focus, we targeted 2<sup>nd</sup> year 9<sup>th</sup> graders that were failing at the 9-week mark with grades between 50 and 69. They met for four days a week for five weeks after school for two hours. Teachers, the media specialist, and community volunteers helped staff the program. We set up a tutorial plan for them to visit their teachers and got work for them to do during the time there. We have not received all the data back since final grades are not complete, but all the students want to attend again next semester. More than anything, they built relationships and go to those teachers for help now. One suggestion we will be looking into for next semester is providing this earlier in the semester. For some students, a "50" was too hard to bring up. We still have tweaking to do, but the thing that amazed me the most was the number of students that came, all wanting to be a part of the program because they wanted the extra help. Also, every teacher in our school offers 1 hour/week before or after school for extra help.

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### **Guided Study Interventions**

At Cook High School, we have Guided Study Interventions in each academic area and CTAE during our 20 minute advisement period (which is scheduled right after 1st block). One teacher from each academic area tutors those students who are assigned by their academic teacher due to having academic difficulty, a need to take missed tests or to retake tests, and to do homework or any other subject related assignment. Our CTAE department also assigns students to this guided study period.

We have a guided study form that teachers fill out when assigning students. One copy is given to the student, one is sent to the advisor, and the teacher keeps a copy. When the student finishes the guided study assignment, the guided study teacher signs the form and returns it to the assigning teacher.

Many students have said they are improving in their classes because of this intervention. Next semester, because of the number of students needing math services, we will have two guided study math teachers: one for Pre-Algebra-Algebra II and one for upper level courses. We currently have a co-teacher for students with disabilities and a paraprofessional assisting the guided study math teacher.

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### **Remedial Education Program**

Salem High School uses this state program to help struggling 9<sup>th</sup> graders and upperclassmen with the GHS GT. Ninth grade students that did not pass a majority of their classes first semester were identified for these classes second semester. These struggling first year students that met the state qualifications will be provided extra support in their REP class with the hopes to increase skills that may be lacking that they may encounter in their other classes. Next year, we hope to identify students before entering high school that would most benefit from REP and place them in the class first semester to help them better transition to high school. We set aside 2 classes for 9<sup>th</sup> graders this year and our other REP

classes are reserved for upperclassmen lacking the skills to pass the GHSGT. In the past, students from multiple grades and with a variety of skill deficiencies were in a class together. This semester we tried to strategically place students so that they can receive the most support.

For more information, see: [http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/ci\\_services.aspx?PageReq=CIServRemedial](http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/ci_services.aspx?PageReq=CIServRemedial)

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## **Providing a Full Range of Options**

### **After School Tutoring (Science)**

Students who are scheduled in LEAP (Launching Effective Acceleration Performances) classes in their daily schedule were also offered a 2-week instructional session with a science teacher from 3:30-4:30. The sessions were offered to all students who failed the science portion on the GHSGT.

### **Academic Contract**

After the 4 ½ week grading report, failing 9<sup>th</sup> grade students will be placed on an academic contract. Grades will be checked weekly by the HSGC. Weekly reports are due each Thursday. When students are still being unsuccessful, a conference is scheduled by the graduation coach to develop interventions for success.

### **Saturday School**

Saturday School is offered to freshmores, seniors who do not have access to a computer for GHSGT practice on 2 computer programs (USA TEST Prep & Georgia Test Review), and 11<sup>th</sup> graders who need credit recovery to graduate this year. Nova Net is the credit recovery program that is currently being used.

### **LEAP Program**

2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Block LEAP Classes were developed for students who have not passed all portions of the GHSGT and for students who need credit recovery to graduate on time. Also, students have the opportunity to practice for the SAT and career planning with our local technical college.

### **Intercession Intervention**

Intercession will be offered to students who have failed a class at the end of the first semester. They can make no less than a 60 to be offered Intercession. The class will be offered after school 2.5 hours per day until 30 hours are completed. Students will take a pre and post mastery test. The post-test passing results will require a score of 80 to receive a 70 on report card for students to earn credit recovery for a particular class.

### **Twilight School**

A Twilight School will be developed next semester for students who are capable of graduating, but have difficulty adjusting to the regular setting of school.

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## **Study Skills Class**

One of our best intervention strategies is the HSGT Study Skills class for those students who have failed either the Science or Social Studies portion of the HSGT and do not have a Science or Social Studies class that semester. We picked these two subjects because they have the highest failure rate. Instructors use website remediation tools such as Novanet & Links to Learning. These websites are also posted on our school home page for all students to use at their convenience. Instructors also use the

EOCT study modules for Science & Social Studies as hand outs to supplement student learning.

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### **Graduation Contract**

In Bartow County, our seniors who have not passed the graduation test and their parents are requested to sign a graduation contract in January. The parents must come in to sign the contract. It's similar to an insurance policy. The contract states that if the senior participates in all remediation activities and the intense Blitz Week activities, then they are allowed to take part in all senior events, including graduation. The difference is that instead of a diploma, they receive a Certificate of Attendance, which means that the student has passed all their classes but still needs to pass the graduation test.

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### **Georgia High School Graduation Test Review Sessions**

Fourth year students who did not pass all or part of the GHSGT were offered tutoring during the school day the week before the GHSGT retakes in September. Teachers who have high success rates with student achievement were asked to prepare sessions during part of their planning period. A schedule was devised to provide students with a review in all areas. Four sessions in math, two sessions in science, two sessions in social studies, and one session in language arts were offered. Two sessions were also offered for the writing test.

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### **Fifth Year Seniors/Retained Seniors**

Students were tracked to determine what they actually needed to achieve their goal of GRADUATION. Nine students were offered credit recovery through NovaNet during zero period (7:30-8:15). They signed contracts to ensure attendance for this program. Three students were referred to our alternative school and several took extra courses at the alternative school evening program. Six students are enrolled in classes here at WHS so they can graduate this semester. One student will return second semester to complete the course needed to graduate. Two students took the summer administration of the graduation test and picked up their diplomas in September. Two students are taking courses through alternative methods-virtual schools and an independent study program through the University of Kentucky. One student received a waiver for one subject area of the GHSGT and thus was able to graduate.

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### **Skill of the Week**

I worked in a school system prior to coming to Fulton where we implemented "Skill of the Week." Each skill (concept to be taught) was planned by a member of the skill-related department (Science, Math, English, and Social Studies). It was distributed to all teachers and advertised throughout the entire school. Each teacher spent the final 15 minutes of class time teaching that skill, one designated day per week. That year we had the greatest score gain in our testing history.

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### **Graduation Review Class**

I created a Graduation Review class for all juniors and seniors who failed any portion of the required state tests. It is available on any computer with internet access. Teachers have the ability to group students so that usage reports can be generated. Students access it whenever and as often as they want at home, at the library, or in a class with teacher permission. Our school encourages all students to access this site to prepare for upcoming administrations of the GHSGT. In preparation for the September 2006 administration, the students logged in more than 1,300 minutes.

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### **Using Skills Tutor (one of our GHSGT and GHSWT Review Strategies)**

Skills Tutor, a division of Houghton Mifflin ([www.achievementtech.com](http://www.achievementtech.com) is home page for Skills Tutor), is provided by my district to all high schools. It is a web-based program that allows students to master essential skills that are aligned with Georgia QCCs and Performance Standards. Spanish audio is an option. It can be used on any computer with internet access.

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### **Instructional Extension**

Utilizing our Instructional Extension funds, West Hall High has developed a plan for students to receive after-school tutoring in science, math, social studies and language arts. Sessions are planned from 3:30-4:30 daily. Students who did not do well on EOCT's or are struggling in their classes are encouraged to attend. Part of the Instructional Extension Funds can be used for transportation.

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### **Activities for GHSWT**

I had a wonderful success just before the GHSWT. I worked with the technology department at our school to create a musical interview aimed at making students aware of all of the nuances involved in taking the new writing test. The video was created around the idea of me as a coach--like you see on the Sunday Coach shows--interviewing "former students" for tips and advice concerning the GHSWT.

For the answers to the interview questions, I chose clips of lyrics to answer the questions. For example, one question was, "What would you never expect to hear from the Graduation Coach concerning the GHSWT?" I answered the question with a section from *American Woman* by Lenny Kravitz. The answer was, "Don't come hanging around my door/I don't want to see your face no more/I got more important things to do/Than spend my time growin' old with you."

The video was a big hit and opened the door with some students I may not have reached otherwise. I made sure I included clips from all genres of music, and I involved students throughout the process. The video lasted around 6 minutes, but the impact has been countless.

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## School Day Programs

### Creative Bell Schedule Allows Time for Interventions

North Gwinnett High School has created an excellent schedule that allows for incorporating interventions into the school day. These interventions include: Advisement/Freshman Mentoring, Student-Led Tutoring, Teacher-Led Tutoring, Study Hall, and access to the media center over the lunch period.

**Please see the Appendix for the schedule and full description.**

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### Zero Period

A new period has been added to Dublin High School's schedule. The period is known as "Zero Period" and it begins at 7:45 a.m. and ends at 8:30 a.m. each day, Monday through Friday. Zero period will be managed by a teacher who will work with students on make-up work, GHSGT review, EOCT review, credit recovery, study skills, tutoring or academic assistance and assignments that students may need to complete. These teachers are paid for working an extended day, five days a week. Attendance will be required for students who are failing two or more courses at each grading period (4 1/2 week progress report) and the student will be required to remain in Zero Period until they remove one of the "F's." The components of the Zero Period are explained in greater detail below.

#### Credit Recovery

- Students must attend 40 class periods of 40 minutes each. The work attempted must be completed within the semester that the student starts the credit recovery. When they contract for Credit Recovery, we go back to the previous teacher to determine what standards were not successfully learned. We then develop an individual plan for each student. The students will study the information provided by a content teacher, and at the end of the 40 days, the student will take the semester exam (S-1 or S-2). If the student satisfactorily completes the exam with a passing score, he or she can receive credit for the class. Students attending recovery credit will be issued hall passes by the office. Also, students must have a minimum grade of 60 to be eligible to participate in credit recovery.

#### Class Make-Up Work and Extra Help

- Students who need to make up work, make up tests, or receive tutoring may attend Zero Period. The students must inform their teachers so that they can get the work to the Zero Period instructor. All make-up work must be done in a timely manner. Upon completion of the make-up work, the Zero Period instructor will return the work to the student's teacher. The individual teacher will send the make-up work to the Zero Period teachers and the teacher sending the student will be responsible for issuing the student a hall pass.

#### High School Graduation Test Review

- Students who have failed any portion of the GHSGT must participate in the review classes. If students attend 90% of the review classes that are held between the beginning date of August 14<sup>th</sup> continuing through March 15<sup>th</sup>, they will have 112 days of possible instruction. After having participated in review classes for 112 days, if the student still does not pass the GHSGT, that student will be allowed to participate in graduation ceremony but will not receive a diploma. The student will receive a Certificate of Performance.

#### Procedures

- Documentation from both the teacher and the student attending Zero Period will be required. The teachers will receive a copy of the procedural forms used. These forms will be used for documentation for pay purposes and for the student's documentation of having attended the courses. The classes will be in the same classrooms each morning per the time scheduled.

There will be one teacher from each of the following subject areas: English, math, science and social studies. Teachers serving as extension teachers will be in their classrooms every day for the time scheduled. Teachers will report to their rooms at 7:40 a.m. Teachers will send a folder for Zero Period for each student attending review classes, credit recovery classes, and for remediation purposes to the Graduation Coach. This folder will contain information (course work involved) needed for specific students who are attending the classes. Our school day starts at 8:35, so students must have a sticker on the back of their student ID in order to get into the building at 7:45. They must get that sticker from me so that I can monitor numbers and needs. Students are dismissed at 8:30.

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### **A.M. Tutoring Sessions**

In Seminole County, we have tutoring sessions in the mornings. The sessions begin at 8:00 while students are still arriving and eating breakfast. Many of our students are already here by then and finished with breakfast, so they are able to come on time. Our sessions only last thirty minutes, but the opportunity for them to attend each day makes it more beneficial. Our bell rings at 8:10. From 8:10-8:30, we have homeroom and the students watch Channel One News. Therefore, the students don't miss any hours of class instruction. The teachers expect a note from me when they come in at 8:35. Without that note, students are marked tardy or absent. I do have a few students who show up at 8:20 expecting to work for 10 minutes. Depending on what we are doing, sometimes I don't let the very late students come in, since it is disruptive and often unproductive.

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### **Alternating Tutoring with Elective Classes**

We are currently conducting an in-school tutoring program at Central High School in Carroll County. This is the first time our school has tried this method and so far it is going well. Our principal, Gail Stewart, designed the program. She enlisted nine teacher "volunteers" in the four major subject areas from the faculty to tutor during their planning period on Tuesday and Thursday only. Our superintendent, John Zauner, agreed to pay these teachers for their time out of local funds. The students who attend in-school tutoring are 11th graders who failed EOCTs in 9th and/or 10th grade, and 12th graders who have failed a portion of the GHSGT. The students go to tutoring during their elective classes. For example, Student A has weight training during 2nd period, but will go to math tutoring with Teacher A who has planning during 2nd period on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Our principal had to make sure all of the teachers were in agreement that a student's grade would not suffer due to missing the class. Logistically, it was difficult to schedule the students because we don't have tutoring offered every period--only during a volunteer's planning period. Unfortunately, we couldn't accommodate every student because they didn't have an elective class or couldn't maintain their grades in an elective class. So far the program has gone well, but it has only been going on for a couple of weeks. We will know how effective it is once we receive our GHSGT scores from the subsequent administrations of the GHSGT this school year.

We also offer two study skills classes during the school day. Fall semester, seniors who have failed one or more parts of the GHSGT are selected for these classes. Spring semester, we will include some of those seniors as well as juniors who failed the science or social studies predictor tests which were administered a few weeks ago. These classes are computer-based, with the teacher assigning appropriate lessons to meet the needs of each student from NovaNet, USA TestPrep, and the online assessment system. We are also using a set of workbooks from Contemporary Publishing Co. that are

keyed to GPS standards with diagnostic tests and post tests. These same resources are being utilized in the tutorials in-school two days a week and outside of school hours.

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### **Coordinating Options with Teachers**

At Colquitt County High School, we pulled the seniors who still needed to pass a part of the GHSGT from one of their elective classes and placed them in a computer lab with Links to Learning, USA TestPrep, and OAS for fourteen days before the test. We also paid a science and social studies teacher to give up their planning period to tutor and work with the students. We hope to see great results when the scores come back.

Dede Megahee, Colquitt County  
Colquitt County High School  
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### **Alternating Class Days**

HSGT Science & Social Studies Course classes: Monday through Friday, block 8 scheduling, alternating days (white days-4 classes and purple days-4 classes). The course is targeted to 4 and 4+ year students who failed the Science and Social Studies part of the HSGT. The purpose is to prepare students for retest in order to meet requirements for graduation. Resources are our Science and Social Studies teachers, [www.USATestprep.com](http://www.USATestprep.com), [www.linkstolearning.com](http://www.linkstolearning.com), and other related materials needed for preparation.

Vickey T. Huffman, Jasper County  
Jasper County High School  
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### **Lunch Directed Study Intervention**

At Cook High School we are currently serving 87 students in our Lunch Directed Study Intervention, Monday through Thursday each week. We have two lunches each day. Underclassmen failing 3 of 4 or 4 of 4 classes are assigned to the interventions. Seniors are assigned to the intervention if they are failing one class. The intervention lasts 25 minutes, leaving students with 15 minutes to eat. Currently, I supervise two groups, one during 1st lunch and one during 2nd lunch. Our counselors, principal, and two assistant principals supervise the other two groups on a rotating schedule.

We use four teachers' rooms on the office hall while they are vacant. Students have a calendar agenda they must write their daily assignments on and have each teacher initial it. They bring their work to the intervention. Presently, we monitor tardiness, whether they have their agenda and work, as well as behavior. The intervention is not an option. Progress is checked every three weeks, and students must be passing 3 of 4 classes in order to exit the intervention. Seniors must be passing all classes in order to exit. This intervention is more like a study hall than tutoring, due to the numbers in each group.

Over half of our seniors exited the intervention after the first assignment, and several of those wanted to return! We are in the process of developing a Student Leadership Team and hope to have student tutors assist during the intervention next semester.

Myra L. Fussell, Cook County  
Cook High School  
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## **Lunchtime Enrichment Program**

We have incorporated tutoring into half-hour “enrichment programs” during our 4<sup>th</sup> period from 11:42 – 1:42, which includes lunch break. The four smaller periods are:

Lunch 1: 11:42-12:12 (math, music, art)

Lunch 2: 12:12-12:42 (language arts, business, career tech.)

Lunch 3: 12:42-1:12 (social studies, foreign language, CBI, ESOL)

Lunch 4: 1:12-1:42 (science, physical/health education)

The classes that have lunch 1 eat their lunch at that time and then they have “enrichment” during lunch 2 and then during lunches 3 and 4 they have their 4<sup>th</sup> period class. Classes who have lunch 2 eat their lunch at that time and then they have “enrichment” during lunch 1 and then during lunches 3 and 4 they have their 4<sup>th</sup> period class. Classes who have lunch 3 eat their lunch at that time and then they have “enrichment” during lunch 4 and then during lunches 1 and 2 they have their 4<sup>th</sup> period class.

Classes who have lunch 4 eat their lunch at that time and then they have “enrichment” during lunch 3 and then during lunches 1 and 2 they have their 4<sup>th</sup> period class.

We offer all our tutoring programs during the enrichment period. Students who are not in remediation use that time to read, get caught up, study, tutor their peers etc. Our GHSGT tutoring is offered by teachers. The science department rotates the teachers who tutor, the English department has one teacher who tutors and I do the math. Teachers who provide the tutoring are excused from lunch duty.

I met with **all** the students who I referred to the GHSGT remediation and told them it was mandatory. I also gave the hall passes and emailed their 4<sup>th</sup> period teachers. The teachers who did the remediation kept attendance and I received the list at the end of every day. We didn't have very many students who did not show up. In fact, other students asked to be a part of the remediation as well (especially in science). The few students who did skip the remediation were called down to my office and were spoken to about the importance of remediation and passing the GHSGT. The assistant principal dealt with the students who skipped English and I dealt with the ones who skipped science and math.

Jasmine Kullar, Fulton County  
Centennial High School  
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## **Credit Recovery (including Georgia Virtual School)**

### **Performance Learning Center**

We use our Performance Learning Center for credit recovery. This past summer we had thirty students participate, and they earned a total of 36 credits. We are also looking at using our PLC for after school credit recovery in January.

Sheila Hendley, Berrien County  
Berrien High School  
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### **One-Block Credit Recovery**

Credit recovery during the school day is conducted during a single block. Utilizing the seat time waiver, students retake courses failed during this time--usually two--using the NovaNET program. Credit recovery after school is conducted for 1 hour after school Monday through Thursday, again using the NovaNET program. I coordinate this activity as well as supervise it. We are a small school so resources are limited, especially human resources.

David Clay, Bremen City Schools  
Bremen High School

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### **Clarifying Credit Recovery Options**

Northview High School in Fulton County has an effective recovery program. It has opportunities for students to recover from a low/failing cumulative grade only if the student has demonstrated a legitimate effort to meet all course requirements. Students who have not attempted to complete all course requirements are not eligible for recovery.

Students must contact the teacher concerning recovery opportunities at the time his/her grade falls below 74. Recovery work must be completed within ten school days prior to the end of the semester. The nature and type of recovery assignment is given at the discretion of the teacher.

This policy **MUST** be stated on every course syllabus that the teacher gives out at the beginning of the semester so that all students/parents/guardians are aware of the policy and procedure.

Bonnie Lee, Fulton County  
Northview High School  
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### **Jefferson County Internal Credit Recovery**

Jefferson County High School employs an internal credit recovery program for students who fail a course. We have found that students fail a course for one of three reasons: 1) failure to master the course objectives, 2) failure to complete the assigned work, 3) attendance. In either case, the teacher of origin develops a contract with the student and parent to complete the specific needs of the course. The contract details the work to be completed and a timeline for completion. We do not specify a minimum grade the student has to make in order to earn the opportunity for credit recovery. We believe that the teacher of origin is better equipped to specify the standards the students failed to meet than an external credit recovery model such as Plato or NovaNet. Internal credit recovery is also more cost efficient given that the computer programs are very expensive. For sample contracts, please contact Shirley Tarver, JCHS Graduation Coach.

Shirley Tarver, Jefferson County  
Jefferson County High School  
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### **Guided Studies Class**

The Guided Studies Class is composed of students from all four grades who are at-risk of failing to earn a high school diploma. The class meets for 25 minutes each day as a replacement for the student's homeroom period. This class is the nexus around which the students receive a variety of interventions and support. They are provided with tutoring, mentoring, extra counseling, instruction in appropriate learning behaviors and study skills, frequent progress monitoring, and opportunities to work on internet-based credit recovery classes for courses they previously failed.

Each student receives one-on-one tutoring from an accomplished 12<sup>th</sup> grade student. The students work with their peer tutor Monday through Thursday. The tutor is intimately involved in the education of their student, being privy to their assignments, grades, strengths and weaknesses, organizational habits, and knowledge of their teachers and classes. Through their relationship with their student, the tutor serves as a positive peer role model providing nurturing, mentoring, and an example of a successful student. This is beneficial to both students.

Adult mentoring and guidance is provided to the students from four sources. Each at risk student has a staff member that has volunteered to be their personal mentor. They will meet with the student on a weekly or biweekly basis during the class time on Fridays or at another agreed upon time. Secondly, there are several members of the community that have volunteered their time and talents to assist in the Guided Studies class. They are a great asset in helping to provide a sense of order to the class, to give encouragement and mentoring services to the students, and to provide direct assistance as a tutor for subject material, organization, and planning of studies. Thirdly, the students will meet monthly in a small group with their guidance counselor to identify and address issues which are impeding their academic

achievement and to increase the student's knowledge of their overall educational program and the options and requirements for graduation. Lastly, each of the students is on the caseload of the Graduation Coach who moderates the class, arranges the various interventions and support services, counsels, encourages, and prods the students to improve their performance in school, assists students in dealing with their parents, administrators, and teachers, and does whatever it takes to make a difference in their education.

Direct instruction and assistance is provided to the students regarding their development of the behaviors of successful learners. These are to:

- Demonstrate the desired behavior for each activity in class.
- Take notes and write down examples.
- Ask questions when you don't comprehend.
- Complete assignments diligently and hand them in on time.
- Critically assess your work when the teacher reviews assignments.
- Seek extra help when needed.
- Use study partners.
- Maintain and utilize your notes, examples, work samples, and previous tests and quizzes.

The Graduation Coach works in partnership with the student's parents and teachers to facilitate the development and generalization of these behavioral concepts. This includes regular intervention in their other class periods.

Progress reports for all classes will be provided for these students every three weeks rather than on the normal six week cycle. If they drop below 70 in any class, a Parent-Teacher-Student Plan for Success will be developed for that class and a progress report for that class will be sent home weekly until the grade returns to 70 or greater.

If the student is currently succeeding in all of their regularly scheduled classes, they may participate in an internet-based credit recovery program called PLATO to make up for a previous failure. Participation in this extra class will occur before or after the regular school day and during three days of their Guided Studies class. This program helps the credit deficient student to get back on track for graduation within the customary four year period.

*Class design and implementation by Tony Szczesniak, Graduation Coach*

Tony Szczesniak, Fulton County  
Chattahoochee High School  
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## **Mentoring**

### **Program to Bridge the Gap between Teachers, Parents, and Students**

So far I have created a program called Bridges. It is a teacher/student mentoring program, where fifty teachers all choose an at-risk student from the roster we created. The teachers are forming a relationship with these students, meeting them before and after school and even on the weekends. The teachers act as an additional support between the school, student and parents. I supplied the teachers with creative activities to help them form a trusting relationship between them and their mentee. I created activity logs and evaluation sheets for documentation, and we feel this will help a lot of those at-risk students feel supported to achieve at higher levels.

Gary Johannes, Harris County  
Harris County High School  
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### **Peer Mentoring**

I have worked with the sponsors of the school's Leadership Club and I have gotten student volunteers in the 10th and 11th grades to serve as peer mentors for the students on my caseload. We have paired them by gender and lunch period. I will have monthly Lunch and Learn Sessions for them on various topics and I have asked that the peer mentors eat lunch with their mentees at least once a week

or once every two weeks and check on them and get to know them. I have several churches that have donated funds to help us with the purchase of lunches for these sessions. It is a dynamic way to get these students involved in school activities and hopefully motivate them to want to succeed in school.

Deborah Marker, Cobb County  
Wheeler High School  
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### **\*NEW\* High School Students Reach Out to Younger Students**

Banks County went to a new schedule this year. Since we don't start on Thursdays until 9:00 a.m., and because most of the kids I work with still get to school by 8:00 a.m., I wanted to find something more valuable to fill their time other than socializing for an hour.

Every Thursday morning from 8-9am, I take a group of high school students to Banks County Primary School and Banks County Elementary School, alternatively. It is probably a 4-mile round trip. We have averaged about 28 high school students weekly starting in September. While at the primary and elementary schools, the high school students are assigned to a classroom. The high school students spend about 30 minutes reading to the younger students, practicing sight words, working on math, helping in the PE/art/computer/music, etc. Not only is it beneficial for the younger students, but it also reinforces the high school students' reading, math, grammar and social skills. The high schoolers LOVE IT! They want to stay all day! Most of the students who participate are on my caseload. Many of them feel so important because the younger students treat the high schoolers like famous people!

Lynn Suggs, Graduation Specialist  
Banks County High School  
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### **Ninth Grade Men's Group**

The high school principal placed an article in the local newspaper, asking for concerned community leaders to meet him for a luncheon along with the mentoring director. From that meeting, we had 30 ministers wanting to be a part of our mentoring program. These mentors will meet with our students once a month and participate in planned activities. The program objectives are to help students:

- Achieve at a higher academic level,
- Understand income earning potential of graduating from high school and attending college,
- Gain exposure to positive role models and professionals,
- Gain exposure to positive college campus environment,
- Apply for college, financial aid, SAT or ACT.

Dr. Linda Miles, Ware County  
Ware County High School  
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### **Advisement Program- Freshman Orientation**

We have a super program at West Hall High. One of our goals is to ensure that a student has a personal contact with an adult at West Hall that can help him or her with any issues s/he may have. Our program is very successful and has expanded from meeting monthly to twice a month. Each student remains with his or her advisor until s/he graduates. The advisor is actually the person who calls the student's name as s/he receives the diploma. Teachers are trained monthly and given detailed lesson plans on how to work with their student (school life, registering for classes, monitoring goals, etc.) to help him/her become successful in high school. This year's ninth grade advisors participated in a Freshman Orientation and Cookout. The parents were invited and met separately with the administration and guidance staff, while students met with their advisors to receive their schedule and participate in a scavenger hunt tour of the building. This year 47% of our freshman class attended the Orientation.

Amy Brock, Hall County  
West Hall High School  
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### **Successful Senior Mentoring**

We started “senior mentoring” for the freshmen who are on my case load this past week. The topics discussed were: how credits are gained, work ethic, getting involved in something, doing your homework, getting along with your teachers, not falling behind, etc. Seniors shared stories of how they failed several classes and were now paying the price. We only had 30 minutes but could have gone on because of the interest from the freshman. We are going to move this whole group focus to one-on-one mentoring after the first semester. We are taking this slowly, but from the reaction of both sets of students, the first week was a “big hit.” I must admit that I really did not believe this would generate so much conversation. The freshmen actually listened to what the seniors were saying. I have said the same things since August; then the seniors just say it once and it sinks in. I actually had a student come by this morning who did all his homework for the first time this year. He said it was because of the seniors talking to him last week.

Greg Gentry, Ed.D., Houston County  
Perry High School  
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### **Senior-Freshman Mentoring and High School Prep**

We scheduled the “Making High School Count” presentation from Monster.com to address our 9<sup>th</sup> graders, but we also had our 12<sup>th</sup> graders in the back of the auditorium just listening to what the freshmen were hearing. I talked with the seniors the day before and prepared them for the morning’s activities so they would know what to expect. I was sure to include ALL seniors (the good, the bad, and the ugly) so that we had a good representation. After the presentation, the seniors and freshmen were assigned to groups with about 12 seniors and about 18 freshmen. They met in a classroom with at least one teacher (usually two) who was there to facilitate.

The seniors worked as a panel to facilitate a discussion about the mistakes they made, while giving their best recommendations for how the freshmen could be more successful (see the attached prep sheet). I was so impressed with the level of maturity and the quality of the discussion. It was usually the student who had struggled in classes or who was the most regretful of his freshman year mistakes who shared the most.

The feedback we got from both seniors and freshmen was very positive. The younger students were much more involved and listened more carefully to what was said because it was coming from their peers, whom they admired. We will do this every year.

### **Prep Sheet: A Discussion between Seniors and Freshmen**

- ❖ All members of the senior panel introduce themselves.
- ❖ State the purpose for the meeting is for seniors and freshmen to discuss success in high school. Now that they have seen “Making High School Count,” let’s talk about “Why Make High School Count.”
- ❖ Talk about extra-curricular activities; i.e. sports, clubs, community groups and activities. Discuss what opportunities are available in our community.
- ❖ Talk about working after school and how that can affect grades and school and community involvement.

- ❖ Talk about social pressures both in and out of school that can affect school performance. “What Not to Do!!”
- ❖ Discuss mistakes that you have made that you wish you could undo.
- ❖ Share study skills that have worked for you or others.
- ❖ Avoid gossiping or negative talk during the discussion and emphasize the importance of avoiding this as much as possible during school.
- ❖ Assign one senior to take notes about the discussion and submit these to Ms. Moore or Ms. Banks. Note which freshmen seem to be the most involved in the discussion and make suggestions about who might make a good representative to talk with the incoming freshmen next year.

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 Lanier County High School  
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### **Peer-to-Peer Mentoring**

I am in the process of implementing a peer-to-peer mentoring program that allows seniors to “adopt” a freshman. It will run like a big brother or big sister program, giving students someone to talk to about social issues, grades, classes, or other school issues. The senior selection process and brief training has taken more time than anticipated, but I think it is a good idea. This is the first year my school has had a mentoring program, but I think this is something we will look to continue in the future. My local Dodge Connection is working on a grant that will be able to provide an end-of-the-year incentive for the mentors and the mentees. My local Dodge Connection is going to train my adult mentors who are willing to volunteer their time to work with any students who need guidance. I hope to have this up and running by January.

Juaquita Williams, Dodge County  
 Dodge County High School  
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### **Community Service Mentoring**

I have a Community Service Program I organized titled STEP (Students Taking Education Positively), which pairs 9th graders with upperclassmen. The groups of freshmen and seniors are then assigned to a class of pre-schoolers ages 2-5 in Thomas County. The team assists the teachers and interacts with the preschoolers emotionally, socially, and physically. To the small ones and the teachers, the Bishop Hall S.T.E.P students are considered teachers, buddies, cadets, role models, and big brothers or sisters. To Bishop Hall students, the small ones are their students, their responsibility and the reason they come to school. The students are responsible for teaching the alphabet, numbers, words, and social skills. In return, my students are coming to school more, especially on the days we travel to STEP. Bishop Hall students are motivated by their higher self-esteem. I often hear them saying, "I love my students and I can not wait to see them." My students feel they are making a difference and are feeling responsible for the small ones. Bishop Hall students receive Community Service credit for a total of 80 to 100 hours. Students are asking to sign up for this program every week. I have approximately 30 to 35 students in my S.T.E.P. program, and at the end of the year S.T.E.P. students are rewarded for their hard work with a trip to an amusement park such as Wild Adventures.

Verna Wiggins, Thomas County  
 The School at Bishop Hall  
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### **Academic 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Mentoring**

I established a working relationship with the Leadership Club at our school in order to create a mentoring program for the at-risk 9<sup>th</sup> grade students in my caseload. The students in the Leadership Club are academic student leaders who must log so many hours of community service in order to get their badge at the end of the school year. These students approached me about mentoring freshmen. I took my list of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and paired them with a same sex (if possible) mentor who had the same lunch period. I first had a lunchtime meeting with the mentors in order to train them. Lunch was provided for these students and we met in the school auditorium. After the initial training session, the mentors met their mentees at a future lunch meeting where lunch again was provided and we met in the auditorium. I had various activities planned such as goal setting, time management, career exploration, test-taking strategies and developing good study habits. I kept attendance at each of our monthly meetings. In addition, the mentors also had to post responses to the meetings by answering questions on a blog page that I created. In between our large group monthly meetings, I had the mentors and mentees eat lunch together in the cafeteria at least once a week in order to touch base and see what was going on with each other. For 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, because schedules change and students end up with different lunch periods, the 9<sup>th</sup> graders will more than likely get a different mentor but I will try to keep the same pairs together if at all possible. I had several churches donate funds to supply the lunches for our monthly meetings.

Deborah Marker, Cobb County  
Wheeler High School  
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### **Habersham Ninth Grade Academy**

Habersham Ninth Grade Academy opened its doors in August, 2005 to enrich the lives of students on a beautiful campus in Demorest, GA. Serving approximately 525 students, the NGA's mission is to ensure that profound learning will result as the students are actively engaged in quality work experiences. The Habersham NGA Faculty and Staff are committed to student safety and success, to creating quality work for the students, and to demonstrating professionalism and a positive work attitude. For more information, check out our website at <http://www.habersham.k12.ga.us/ninthgradeacademy/index.html> or contact Elizabeth Elger at [eelger@habersham.k12.ga.us](mailto:eelger@habersham.k12.ga.us).

Elizabeth Elger, Habersham County  
Habersham High School and Ninth Grade Academy  
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### **High School Tutors for Middle Schoolers**

Forsyth Central has a vibrant mentoring program between us and an adjacent middle school. This program began last year and has doubled in size. Currently, over 50 student mentors are involved, with most going for weekly sessions held at the middle school.

Several factors have made this program easy to implement:

1. The high school releases 40 minutes earlier than the middle school, thus the middle school students are mentored during their school day and are able to go home on the bus.
2. The willingness of both faculties to allow this program to exist. The high school students are dismissed ten minutes early from their classes to beat the crush of after school traffic. The middle school students are allowed to leave their classes for this program.
3. The service-minded students willing to give of their time to others are (of course) the key ingredient. Last year an all call was given at Student Council, and FCA. Twenty students volunteered. The program was held twice monthly. The administration and faculty saw such value in the program that they are allowing weekly mentoring this year.
4. Several upperclassmen kept their same "mentees" this year. Thus ninth graders see and associate with a friendly face right from the beginning of high school.

5. The program is expanding to include the Hispanic population beginning in January. Seventeen Hispanic high school students will mentor Hispanic middle school students weekly. (Our school social worker suggested this program and it was enthusiastically endorsed.)
6. I was at the middle school last year and started this program with the help of my twins who were then juniors at the high school. Since I am now the Graduation Coach at the high school, the middle school counselor is administering the program at the junior high.
7. Training is held to give guidelines, and we hold follow up sessions afterwards so the tutors can have their questions answered.
8. Group “ice breaker” type sessions were held to allow each group to get to know one another. By the third session everyone was given a specific mentee. **(See the Appendix at the end for more tips.)**

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Forsyth Central High  
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### **Caring Adult in the Building Program (CAB)**

The members of our graduation team and all administrators have chosen 4th year students to mentor. They are serving as Caring Adults in the Building for those students. I first heard about this strategy from Julie Moore at a Graduation Counts workshop last spring.

Not all of the faculty members have told their students they are serving as their CAB. That makes things even more interesting some times. Our apprenticeship coordinator has not told his young man why he stops and talks to him in the hall on a daily basis. But now, Justin stops to talk to Mr. B first!

If I get an e-mail from a teacher informing me of a problem with one of our 4th year students, I immediately forward the e-mail to that student's CAB. It is great to know that we are not alone in our efforts to reach these students. If a grade slips or a student is repeatedly tardy or absent, I let the CAB know.

I believe the reason why a CAB program is successful is that it encourages students to build relationships with adults. We know that students are less likely to drop out if they have an adult they can talk to about their reasons for wanting to quit. Sometimes they need to hear it again from a different perspective from an adult who is not their parent, teacher or counselor - just someone who cares about them and believes in them.

Pat Farner, McDuffie County  
Thomson High School  
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### **School-wide Involvement in Mentor Recruitment**

Creekside High School's Graduation Coach recently started a mentoring program offering identified students a caring adult role model for one-to-one mentoring, group mentoring, team-mentoring, or teacher-to-student mentoring. Students were given a mentee profile form to complete in order to appropriately match mentors and mentees. A program proposal/guidebook, that includes policies, procedures, training workbook, and various forms was created and given to the principal for approval.

The Graduation Coach met with the school's Partners In Education Coordinator to gather a list of businesses in the community to target for mentors and other resources. A special event called the “Creekside Stakeholders Awareness Luncheon/Mentor Training” was then planned. The list of partners as well as businesses and community leaders were invited. Teachers were also asked to submit names of potential businesses to target. Additionally, speaking engagements were made at local community meetings such as Kiwanis, and we represented Creekside at community events to promote our efforts to recruit mentors.

During the Stakeholders' event, we presented the State of Creekside High School and built our case for the need for support including mentors. We then began training our guests to become mentors. The event was a huge success, as twelve mentors were trained the day of the event including a Ron DeVoe, from the famous R&B groups New Edition and Bell, Biv, DeVoe. Each mentor was asked to recommend another person to serve as a mentor in order to help us meet our goal of matching students

with mentors. Our School Resource Officer issued background check forms and fingerprinted the mentors at the conclusion of the training. The fingerprinting was free of charge from the Fulton County School District because mentors fall under the category of school volunteers.

The *Elements of Effective Practice* was used as a guide to help create the program. To download a free copy: [http://www.mentoring.org/program\\_staff/design/elements\\_of\\_effective\\_practice.php](http://www.mentoring.org/program_staff/design/elements_of_effective_practice.php)

Maria Pinkston, Fulton County  
Creekside High School  
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### **Giving Every Student a Faculty Mentor**

We have established a unique mentoring program. All students with risk factors were assigned to a "caring adult mentor". Every member of the faculty is a mentor. Teachers hold informal meetings with their mentees to let these students know they have additional support if and when they need it. Teachers have sent letters to their students, and some have even talked about doing things for their students' birthdays. It's just another way for us to reach out and let students know they are important, and we are here to help them succeed.

Sheila Hendley, Berrien County  
Berrien High School  
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## **Transition Programs**

### **Effective 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Transitions/Partnering with Middle School Coaches**

Kendrick High School's Ninth Grade Counselor, Ms. Washington, and I met with all feeder Middle School Graduation Coaches this past semester. Ms. Washington provided a booklet entitled, "Reducing the Stress of Transition into High School", comprised of weekly group activities to help make ninth grade a success. She also provided copies of eighth grade CRCT study books and addressed our Transition Team responsibilities. I presented a Graduation Program orientation with a backup tri-fold brochure and name recognition flyer. I also provided a copy of the Graduation Goals for middle school through senior year as depicted on our graduation coach website, and called attention to Kendrick's Graduation Team.

Next semester we will meet with all feeder middle school eighth graders in February and March to present an overview of the ninth grade and to answer questions (e.g. 4x4 block scheduling, the new graduation rule, credit recovery, test tutoring, discipline and absenteeism).

In May, we will accompany our Assistant Principal, JROTC Instructor, Coaches, Special Ed. Department Chair, Freshman Academy Coordinator, and select seniors to pre-register eighth graders who will be enrolled at Kendrick.

Colonel Ilona Erolis Prewitt, MBA, M.Ed., Ed.S.  
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### **9<sup>th</sup> Grade Transition**

During the summer before 9th grade starts, we have a 9th Grade Parent Night. We discuss HS courses, credits, diploma tracks, attendance policy, dress code, the HOPE Grant, extra-curricular activities, etc. We also introduce parents and students to the administration and counselors.

During the first week of school, we meet with the entire 9th grade class in our gym. We introduce the administration, 9th grade counselor, and the HSGC. We briefly give an overview of attendance policy, dress code, clubs/activities, extra-curricular activities, etc.

During the second month of school, the 9th grade counselor & HSGC go into the 9th grade classrooms & discuss HS courses, credits, diploma tracks, HOPE Grant, attendance policy, clubs/activities, extra-curricular activities, etc.

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### **\*NEW\* Comprehensive Transition Programming**

Henry County Schools believes in investing high school resources in the ninth grade students, because research shows that if you can get ninth graders on track early, they are much more likely to graduate on time. In practice, we have learned that we are more likely to be successful in that goal if we coordinate with the middle school in order to make the transition to high school as smooth as possible. Mostly, this involves classroom guidance activities in conjunction with our feeder middle school, parent informational meetings, and a continued effort to counsel ninth graders throughout the school year. These activities, events and ideas are the result of many years of Graduation Coaches (formerly Ninth Grade Transition Coordinators) in Henry County working together to make the transition to high school as successful as possible for our students. High schools in Henry County have action plans in place to address our ninth graders' needs; in the appendix is the plan for Eagle's Landing High School.

- 2008-2009 Action Plan (see appendix), designed to reduce the number of "freshmore" students by half, begins with coordinating with our feeder middle school, including the graduation coach and 8<sup>th</sup> grade counselor. The plan includes several visits to the high school, classroom guidance, parent informational meetings and a culminating "walkover/graduation" ceremony at the end of the students' 8<sup>th</sup> grade year. The rationale behind these activities is to give the students early insight into high school life, expectations and the culture of our school. These events also serve to lower the anxiety level for incoming students as they familiarize themselves with the building, key helpful high school personnel and daily procedures at ELHS.
- The STAR (Students Taking Academic Responsibility) summer program (brochure in appendix) targets those students who do not pass the spring administration of the CRCT. These students participate in the summer remediation program at Eagle's Landing Middle School (ELMS) in the morning, then walkover to ELHS for afternoon sessions, including skills remediation and additional orientation information for this group of at-risk students. One additional benefit of this program is that it allows us to meet those students who are academically at-risk prior to the start of the school year, so we can lay the groundwork for positive relationships as well as reiterating our school expectations.
- Ninth Grade Orientation is held on a separate night from the whole-school open house prior to the start of the school year because ninth grade parents and students frequently need more information than returning students regarding credits, school procedures, introduction to staff members, etc. For those reasons, this event has a very high turnout every year. Ninth grade students and parents can pick their online grade access codes up, walk through their schedules and hear important information in a welcoming format, without any other students or parents in the building.
- Ninth grade students are assigned to interdisciplinary teams at ELHS, and the teams meet weekly with the graduation coach in order to collaborate, share strategies, and problem-solve about issues of concern as well as student progress. These meetings are an important part of the support structure in place for ninth grade students, and serve to support teachers as well.
- Classroom guidance is an important part of our ninth grade transition program at ELHS. The graduation coach and the ninth grade counselor conduct several rounds of classroom guidance, beginning in September. That presentation focuses on the importance of earning credits, promotion requirements, the impact zeroes have on grades and strategies for being a successful student (handouts in appendix). The next round of classroom guidance focuses on grade reflection and more strategies for success, and the next round takes place in January, after students receive their first transcripts. This presentation focuses on understanding transcripts, earning credits, credit recovery, and course planning for the 10<sup>th</sup> grade year.
- ZAPP (Zeroes Affect Passing and Promotion) (information in appendix) is a lunch detention program we have established in order to offset the impact zeroes have on our students' grades.

This is in place for ninth grade students only and serves the dual purpose of allowing me to talk with students who are not meeting work ethic expectations. The rationale behind the program is that we must train our ninth grade students that they must complete work assigned, and complete it to the level of expectation of the teacher. Failure to do so will result in loss of social time at lunch, at which time students complete the missing assignment for reduced credit.

- Celebrating good news and accomplishments is an important part of our program as well. In addition to the school-wide Student of the Month recognition, we host ninth grade A/B honor roll celebrations and send postcards for other positive accomplishments.
- Math I has been a challenge for our students, teachers and parents this year. The ELHS math department maintains a great resource, a Math I calendar for parents and students through our school website, which includes daily assignments, notes, helpful websites and upcoming events. Additionally, we hosted a Math I parent night (invitation in appendix) to provide parents with additional information and resources to help their students in Math I. The district also hosted meetings to this same end.
- Second Chance (brochure and parent letter in appendix) is a district-wide credit recovery program for ninth grade students who fail first semester courses. Some schools have built the credit recovery into their regular school day, while others offer recovery classes before and/or after school.

Shared by Karen Perry on behalf of Graduation Coaches and Anna Arnold, Coordinator of Graduation Coaches, Henry County

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### **First Look – High School Students Ease Middle School Transition**

The Harris County High School Coach and I have paired up to start a program we call "First Look." For this program, we have selected twenty 8th grade students and have paired them up with twenty formerly "at-risk" high school juniors. Last Friday, we took the middle school students over to the high school where we had some "panel discussions" with the 11th graders, the High School Graduation Coach and the 9th grade administrator. The high school students did a great job sharing their stories, relating to the 8th graders, and passing along what has helped them become successful in high school. They then took the middle school students on a tour of the school, where the students really enjoyed being exposed to the variety of courses offered at the high school--especially the vocational-technical options. We all returned excited and recharged. Next semester, we will take the same group of 8th and 11th grade students on some college field trips. We are excited about First Look and the motivation we hope it will provide our students!

Julie Whitney, Harris County

Carver Middle School

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### **Middle to High School Partnerships Evolve to Meet Student Needs**

West Hall Middle School and West Hall High School have joined forces and established the attached Pyramid of Intervention as a way to bring the two schools together and introduce middle school students to high school life. Information on the ELL Pen Pal Program and Parachute Packers (both referenced on the pyramid) can be found in the appendix.

These schools are blessed to already have a good communication history, and the addition of the Graduation Coaches at each school has allowed for even greater communication regarding programs that will benefit both schools. Originally, each school conducted their own career day. The middle school was 7th grade-focused and the high school was upperclassmen-focused. Now, we have kept the 7th grade career day, but expanded the high school day to include our 8th grade students, who will then get an opportunity to see what career pathways are available at the high school. We have also adapted our "High School Life" Program that the High School Graduation Coach started last year to include specific

questions that 8th grade students want to know about. 8th grade students will be polled prior to the program date so that FAQ's can be established and addressed. **(See Appendix for more information)**

Amanda Brown, Hall County  
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### **Pen Pal Program**

Our Pen Pal Program supports students transitioning from elementary school to middle school and from middle school to high school. I contacted all the feeder schools and spoke to all of the 5th, 6th, 8th, and 9th grade teachers who wanted to participate. I randomly matched up the students. Students in the lower grades wrote to those in higher grades first, and it just soared from there. They were originally writing only once per marking period, but some have written more often. It gives the students a sense of connection to the other school they will be attending next year. Those in the higher grades also have a greater sense of what it is to be a role model. It has turned out awesome and the students love it!!! **(See Appendix for more information)**

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### **The Ninth Grade Academy**

Lithia Springs High School implemented a Ninth Grade Academy during the 2006-2007 school year. The focus of the Academy is to assist students with the transition from middle school to high school. Teachers were provided the opportunity to volunteer to teach in the Academy. We have first year teachers with tons of energy and innovative ideas but we also have the expertise and wisdom of veteran teachers. This combination is proving to be a valuable characteristic of the Academy.

The year began with a separate first day of school for the incoming Ninth Grade Students. Thanks to Georgia Tomlin at Peachtree Ridge High School, this event was a success. Al “The Inspiration” Duncan spoke to the students as a representative from the Making High School Count program. Since we are implementing agendas this year in the Academy, a representative from Premier Agendas spoke to the students about how to properly use their new agenda books. Finally, the administrators and Academy teachers divided the group based on gender and had candid discussions about expectations of a high school student. The day ended with an ice cream social for the students.

The Academy teachers felt that it was important to expose the students to learning activities outside of the school building. Thus, the Ninth Grade Academy visited *Bodies: The Exhibition* as their fall field trip. The students were extremely well behaved and excited to go on their first high school field trip. The Academy is planning a spring field trip as well.

The most important part of preparing to implement the Academy was ensuring that first time ninth grade students were in classes designed only for them. Thus, all Academy classes are only open to first time ninth grade students. The teachers are pleased with this concept. Data will be analyzed at the end of the first semester. Failure rates will be compared to begin assessing the impact of freshmen only classes.

The Ninth Grade Academy is also dedicated to increasing parental involvement in high school. A series of parent nights will be implemented. The first parent night focused on End-of-Course Tests and the Georgia Freshman Index that is used during college admission. Parents were pleased with the information presented. Future parent nights will include topics such as the student athlete, preparing for life after high school, and how to talk to a teenager!

Finally, the Ninth Grade Academy recognizes a male and female student of the month. The students are not chosen solely on academic achievement but also attitude, character, and improvement. Our Partners in Education have donated “goodies” to the students of the month. In addition, their picture is placed in a display case on the Ninth Grade Academy hall and they receive a letter to their parents and a certificate signed by the principal.

Overall, we understand that the success of the program can not truly be measured until this group is prepared to graduate in four years. But, we believe that the Academy will make a difference and we are dedicated to the program.

Donita Cullen, Douglas County  
Lithia Springs High School Graduation  
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### **8th – 9th Grade Transition Strategies**

At Calhoun High School, we employ a three-prong strategy to help 8<sup>th</sup> graders make a successful transition into high school.

#### ***8<sup>th</sup> grade advisement/registration***

Our counselors and I (since I have helped with this for years) work with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers to obtain recommendations for language arts/math placement for diploma tracks. We host an 8<sup>th</sup> grade parent meeting and then hold two days of registration on the Calhoun Middle School campus in the Media Center. CHS takes 10 of our Teachers as Advisors to conduct the registration/placement of students. Each student and his/her parents are assigned a 15-minute time slot—the student's diploma track, classes, and electives are decided at this meeting.

#### ***“Talk and Tour”***

I will visit each Connections class in the spring and on the first day conduct a presentation (Talk and Tour) regarding diploma tracks, schedules, electives, clubs, athletics, and answer any questions that the 8<sup>th</sup> graders have about high school. On the second day, they come to our Vocational Dept., tour through the classrooms/labs with the instructors telling them what they teach and the clubs/sports that they sponsor. We believe that this gives students a better opportunity to select their electives (or major!) for high school. These students are urged to attend the Yellow Jacket Academy in the summer.

#### ***“Yellow Jacket Academy”***

Our 2-day Yellow Jacket Academy takes place the week before school starts. Over two morning sessions, students will rotate between CHS instructors in classes such as: test taking tips, time management, etc., and then have pizza at lunchtime! This program has grown considerably over the past three years. We feel that it is a great way for students to become familiar with the layout of our buildings/classrooms and our teachers.

Also – during our 2007-2008 year, we are planning for a transition program for our 9<sup>th</sup> graders through their computer applications classes (which are required). We are working with the Venturing Program of the Boys Scouts of America and hoping to incorporate this character, unity, and success program over either 9 weeks or a full semester.

Debra Moyer, Calhoun City Schools  
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### **Connecting 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers**

We held "walk-throughs" for teachers at the middle school and the high school. We used buses and transported teachers to schools during their planning times. I served as a tour guide for teachers at both schools. Having come from the middle school, I was able to give high school teachers a very informative tour. I explained daily procedures, class arrangements, hall rules, restroom rules, locker rules, etc. to paint teachers a clear picture of where high school students came from. The next day middle school teachers came over to the high school. We split the group and toured the high school. We explained procedures and rules, and we walked into classrooms, restrooms, AG shops, etc. so middle school teachers could develop a good sense of where students are going when they leave the

middle school. I think this was real eye-opener for teachers, and this served as the spring board for our vertical teaming meeting.

Early in the school year I spoke with our local area technical college's "Stay In School" grant coordinator (Valdosta - 30 miles away). We discussed transition and Berrien County's plan for vertical teams. Together we planned a "vertical teaming" workshop between 8th grade teachers and 9th grade teachers. We used our October in-service day and held the workshop at the high school. Mr. Tillman and Mrs. Emily Ryan from Valdosta Technical College presented the workshop and used activities that would help teachers discuss their content areas and form working relationships. The workshop was a success. Teachers walked away with a better understanding of their "sister" school, and plans were made for future meetings. This was definitely a worthwhile effort!

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### **Part-time Summer Camp**

During the summer, our upcoming 9th grade students attend our camp, where they come one week during the summer from 9:00 to 12:00 each day. They attend different sessions throughout the day. The students who attend all days of the camp get first selection of a locker on the last day. They always love to be able to pick out their locker. We do have a freshman academy here at Dodge County High. All of the ninth grade advisors (myself included) are involved. We monitor the students' academics closely each nine weeks, and we try to check their grades to see which students are failing so they can get the needed support. The entire freshman class and their advisors take a picture that is placed on the wall at school so they can look at it when needed. We have been doing the camp and the ninth grade academy for a few years, and it does get better each year.

Juaquita Williams, Dodge County  
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### **Union Grove High School's Comprehensive Plan**

At Union Grove High School, we have one feeder middle school--which happens to be next door. For the last four years we have had approximately 600 freshmen. In January, I begin to invite the 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents to my monthly 9<sup>th</sup> grade parent meetings. In February, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers and the leadership of the high school (curriculum AP, department chairs, and me, previously as 9<sup>th</sup> grade coordinator and now as Graduation Coach) meet. We give them a new course description book and review any changes in courses or requirements. Soon after, we have an 8<sup>th</sup> grade visitation day. The entire 8<sup>th</sup> grade walks to the high school and we have sessions given by current 9<sup>th</sup> graders and seniors, discipline AP's, and counselors. At this visit, all the students get their high school course description book, which contains graduation requirements, diploma types, and course offerings, and information on various types of colleges such as a research university, selective schools or technical college, and their admission requirements.

That evening, the parents are invited to an open house during which there is a short program. Afterwards, the school is open for the parents to walk around and visit with current 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers and see exhibits by current students, while learning about elective courses and technical/career clusters. We also hold an honors and AP night for those 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents who think they want their child in higher level classes. At the open house, the parents sign up for a registration time. Registration is held at the high school in the evening with high school counselors and teachers. We have approximately one teacher to 3-4 parents and students. We walk the parents through the entire process and start talking about five-year plans with the students. As the year progresses, I go over and visit all the 8<sup>th</sup> grade teams. I spend some days in the lunch room with the students and then with the teachers. They help me get to know my future students. On the last day of school we host a "graduation walk," when the 8<sup>th</sup> graders are walked to the high school, with their parents and family lining the path with balloons and signs. In a short ceremony in the gym, the middle school principal "gives" the graduating class to our

principal. Each 8<sup>th</sup> grader receives a t-shirt that has “Union Grove” on the front and Class of \_\_\_\_ on the back. As soon as possible, I receive any pertinent SST files and CRCT scores, and I use the summer to review this data in order to help the teachers in the fall.

After the 8<sup>th</sup> grade registration is completed, I schedule the students into teams. We usually have five or six teams of 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers. Each team has a math, science and English teacher, with some also having a social studies teacher. We have one team of honors teachers, which is how we serve our gifted students, and we also have one collaborative team. The team teachers meet with me weekly to go over instructional and student issues. They also have two professional planning days each year to meet with me for cross-curricular instructional planning. The tutoring program and lunch detention are held in my room, so I see the at-risk students daily. I speak to every ninth grader at the start of the year during classroom visits to cover high school expectations, and then again in January when I go back in to do classroom guidance with the 9<sup>th</sup> grade counselor. My assistant and I are available to the students, teachers and parents. A major factor in the success of our program has been communication. We strive to keep the lines of communication open. I feel we are successful, given that in this last year we had less than a 3% failure rate for 9<sup>th</sup> graders.

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### **Extensive Eighth Grade Enrollment Process**

#### 1. JCHS Tour (Fall Block)

During the Fall Block upcoming 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are transported to JCHS for a tour of the facility. Eighth graders are divided into groups of 8-10 students and Teacher Apprentice students serve as tour group leaders.

#### 2. Eighth Grade Class Rotations (Fall Block)

A team from JCHS goes to each of the middle schools to provide pertinent information regarding JCHS. Team members spend approximately 20 minutes talking to each class about the subject matter. The team members & topics include:

- E. Farmer – College Prep Program of Study
- B. Jordan – Attendance, Clubs & Organizations, etc.
- T. Stevens – Athletics & Eligibility
- I. Thomas & K. Williford – Youth Apprenticeship
- C. Lewis – Navy JROTC
- C. Porter – Tech/Career Prep Program of Study

#### 3. Eighth Grade Parent Orientation (early to mid February)

This takes place in the evening. Parents and upcoming 8<sup>th</sup> graders come to JCHS for a brief meeting in the theater during which introductions of administrators and counselors are made. Parents and students are given a mock schedule for each of the academic areas. They follow this schedule and are given a brief overview of each area at approximately 15 minute intervals.

#### 4. Eighth Grade Registration (mid February – late March)

Appointments are set at 20 minute intervals by middle school counselors for each 8<sup>th</sup> grader and his/her parent. Student & parent(s) meet with a JCHS counselor, or Ms. Jordan, to complete Program of Study selection sheet and select electives for 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Middle school counselors assist in getting this information for all upcoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students.

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## Community Partnerships

### Host a Community Forum

Sonoraville High School hosted a community forum to discuss the challenges our teens face in Gordon County. This gave us an opportunity to contact numerous businesses, agencies, community leaders, and all of our parents. The forum itself generated volunteers for several of our programs and for our community partners. It also opened up avenues to new resources that were not previously available.

### The “Reality Store”

Gordon Central High School and Sonoraville High School held a “Reality Store” event in which 90 community volunteers assisted 325 freshman through a series of booths designed to give them a picture of real life money management. Students pre-selected career pathways and were given an opportunity to speak to industry and college recruiters prior to receiving mock job assignments and pay stubs. They then proceeded through booths--such as housing, transportation, insurance, and entertainment--which required them to make financial decisions. Along the way, they were hit with unexpected events and had opportunities to obtain part-time jobs to deal with their expenses. The community volunteers and their businesses did a great job of making the event lively and engaging. The event was funded by the Georgia Appalachian Center for Higher Education.

Trace Vaughn, Gordon County  
Sonoraville High School  
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### **\*NEW\*** Community Partners Add Relevance to High School Projects

Students at Clarkston High School complete a High School Academic Yearbook project beginning in their ninth grade year. At each grade level, a portion of the academic yearbook is completed. For seniors, a college and career exploration research paper is completed with a presentation of a culminating project. Many seniors choose to be creative during their presentations by introducing an entrepreneurial venture based on their research. Each presentation includes a senior portfolio, power point presentation, visual aid and/or product pertaining to the research. In the past, only educators in the school were used to judge these projects. However, this year community stakeholders were invited to share in the judging process in order to increase the real-world connection for post-secondary experiences.

As a judge for the past two years, Joi Chester, the Graduation Coach at Clarkston High School, offered to coordinate the collaboration between the community and Clarkston High School for the judging of these projects. Judges volunteered from Communities in Schools of Georgia, Junior Achievement, DeKalb County Schools, Georgia Department of Transportation, DeKalb Workforce Investment Act, DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce, Georgia Public Broadcasting System, Morehouse TRIO Program, St. Louis Medical Hospital, and many others. These judges evaluated student presentations in the areas of health and fitness, creative arts, education, social justice, engineering and business industries. With representation from medical and educational fields, airline pilots, waste management engineers, former WNBA players, entrepreneurs, educators, and a former Superintendent of Atlanta Public Schools, students received wide-ranging feedback. As a result of these efforts, seniors were able to gain valuable insight from community partners that increased their level of preparation for the presentation.

Based on student comments relative to the process we are requesting community judges to provide feedback for future senior project presentations at Clarkston High School. Students scheduled to present this semester are anticipating the involvement of community judges and as a result, they are

increasing the rigor for the April presentations. The success of the partnership between Clarkston and community judges has spread throughout the school and we are excited about continuing this collaboration.

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### **Community Coach Helps with Vision Quest**

My community coach, Jan Hackett, Chamber Director, has given me about 200 t-shirts to use as incentive and prizes. She and I are also working together with other community people to offer a program called Vision Quest to our juniors. Vision Quest is an eight week program designed to foster leadership and entrepreneurial skills. Students learn about the community, develop presentation skills, and then work in small groups with business mentors to develop a business plan. The business plans are presented to a panel of bankers for potential “funding,” and a winner is selected. This program is patterned after the Leadership program sponsored by the Fanning Center at UGA. This is our 2<sup>nd</sup> year of sponsoring the program. Last year’s students loved it and encouraged the juniors this year to apply. We have 18 students registered to begin the program this Saturday with an all day team building activity at Eagle Ranch in Tennessee.

Jill E. Key, Fannin County  
Fannin County High School  
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### **\*NEW\* Community Coaches Help Create Job Shadow Day**

Our Dawson County Chamber of Commerce worked with the vocational and career teachers at Dawson County High School to create a Job Shadow Day. Approximately 30-40 employers will host up to 75 students who have been pre-matched with a company according to their job interest. They will spend a full morning with a mentor at the business. At lunch, the student and mentor will attend a debriefing and each student and adult will have the opportunity to share something they learned. Even if a student says, “I found out that type of job is not for me,” we deem it a success. The student now can move on to explore other options. The students also learn first hand that adults in the community care about their success. A past student survey revealed that often teens do not think adults in the community value them. Job Shadowing gives them a positive experience as well as a feel for what life is like after high school and beyond.

Additionally, the graduation coach and Dawson County Chamber of Commerce President have done a phenomenal job of connecting to the entire chamber, promoting jobs for students, working with the Rotary Club, and linking to Lanier Technical College and the Work Ready program to certify students.

Linda Williams, President, Dawson County Chamber of Commerce  
Steve Sweat, Dawson High School Graduation Coach  
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### **Connecting with Local CIS Staff**

I have gotten to know our CIS Director for the county. We have met about five times already! She is very supportive and has involved me in several community events. In fact, on October 26<sup>th</sup> we are having our annual CIS Dinner and I am in the program.

Kristy Ellard, Catoosa County  
Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe High School  
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### **\*NEW\* Community Coaches Teach Job Skills**

I am a Human Resources Manager. One of my coworkers, Shannon Turner, is a recruiter. She and I put together a program that we called "Getting a Job/Keeping a Job." We delivered the program to two classes of seniors at Dougherty High School in Albany, Ga. We discussed with them the importance of a high school diploma, the basics of preparing a resume, and some tactics for interviewing. We also explained that landing a job is not enough; keeping that job also requires effort. The same characteristics that are important in high school are also important in the work place. Good attendance, reliability, and a positive attitude are key ingredients in career success!

Submitted by James Lindsey, Community Coach and HR Manager, Regions Bank  
Cynthia Levatte, Graduation Coach, Dougherty High School  
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### **Catoosa County Early College Program**

Catoosa County has partnered with Northwestern Technical College and started an "Early College" program for at risk students. The students began at Northwestern on July 9<sup>th</sup>—they are taking their high school classes on Odyssey Ware and then taking college courses (that will count for high school and college) that align with their career interest. So far, we have seen great results! I have eight students in the program and will send about two or three more in January. We have guidelines, an application packet, and an interview process that they students must complete before they are accepted. HOPE pays for some of it, and then the FTE money that we get from the state for each student is given to Northwestern to cover the other costs. The students are still our students, but go there for classes. I hope it continues to grow!!

Also, I joined the local Optimist Club--their focus is totally on youth in our community. They have already given us money to help a pregnant student. The club is dedicated to helping our school in any way that they can. Today, I asked our superintendent to speak at the meeting—this will give the members a clearer vision as to how they can help.

Lastly, I work very closely with Jayme Elliot, our Executive Director of Communities In Schools. She has helped me so much: she paid my registration fee to attend the National Dropout Prevention Network conference in Kentucky, she has bought supplies for me, and is helping us with our "Intervention Day" that we are having with our 9th graders. On Oct. 18<sup>th</sup>, we will meet with all of our "at risk" ninth graders on an individual basis to help them see that they have support. Each student will meet with a team consisting of a teacher, community leader, and one more person. This is the first time we have done something like this--hope it is successful!

Kristy Ellard, Catoosa County  
Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe High School  
[kellard.lfo@catoosa.k12.ga.us](mailto:kellard.lfo@catoosa.k12.ga.us)

### **\*NEW\* Community Connections Links Graduation and Community Coaches**

With strong leadership, coordinated efforts, and a well-timed article in their local paper (thanks Nicole McCoy!), Forsyth County Community Connections recently enlisted the support of 18 new Community Coaches—more than enough to match with all their high schools AND middle schools! Community Connections hosted a kick-off event to introduce everyone, match the coaches with each other, provide guidance and ideas, and start making plans to work together.

Shared by Nicole McCoy of Forsyth County Community Connections  
[nicolemccoy@connectforsyth.org](mailto:nicolemccoy@connectforsyth.org)

### **CIS Decatur County Sponsoring a Peer Assistance and Leadership Training**

On October 10-11, 2007 Communities In Schools of Decatur County will partner with the Decatur County Board of Education and Decatur County Family Connection in sponsoring a PAL (Peer Assistance and Leadership Training) for local school and community adults. Information concerning the

program is attached (see appendix). At this time, representatives from our local high school and two middle schools will participate in the training. Dr. Myra Evans, Bainbridge High School Graduation Coach, will be trained; hopefully, the two graduation coaches from the middle schools will also be involved.

Second semester of this school term, an elective class will be taught at Bainbridge High School where selected 11<sup>th</sup> graders will be trained to become peer mentors. These mentors will then be matched with a ninth grade student who is considered at-risk of not graduating. The 9<sup>th</sup> grade students will be identified by Dr. Evans and other school personnel. We are excited about the possibilities of this program and are so glad to have the three Graduation Coaches on our team.

Martha C. Hawthorne, Decatur County  
Communities In Schools of Decatur County  
[mhawthorne@dcboe.com](mailto:mhawthorne@dcboe.com)

### **Developing Partnerships within the Community**

I have developed four partnerships within the community:

- The Center Pointe Counseling Center has agreed to train all of my "Peer Mentors" for free, and has given me a place to send students in need.
- Attorney Ashley Bell has formed a group of community leaders to serve as mentors for Gainesville High School. The names of about 300 students were selected as candidates.
- Nathaniel Shelton (former school social worker) is formulating a planned group to assist students who have dropped out in finding an alternative route to success or education, in order to reduce the likelihood of choosing criminal alternatives.
- Gainesville State College staff member Audrey Cheek and GHS social worker Jarod Anderson are putting together and mentoring plan to address high risk students at Gainesville High School.

I am mentoring through all these programs, and I also submit the names of potential students.

Gene Earls, Gainesville City Schools  
Gainesville High School  
[ernest.earls@gcssk12.net](mailto:ernest.earls@gcssk12.net)

### **Corporate Advisories for All Grades**

We have implemented an advisory program for our 9th-12th grade students. They currently meet for 20 minutes twice a week (to be increased to three times a week second semester). Our advisory program goal is to teach every student about the graduation requirements. All students learn about the types of diplomas offered, the number of credits required to graduate, and they receive copies of their transcripts so they can learn to read a transcript and keep up with their credits. They also learn about their four year plan. All advisors are asked to put up a board displaying graduation requirements. The students are given an objective relating to the graduation test. The advisors are also given various group activities on goal setting, character traits and inappropriate behavior, such as bullying and sexual harassment, which can help or hurt graduation success. Finally, each grade level is assigned a partner-in-education: 9th grade- 29th Infantry; 10th grade- Urban League; 11th grade – Bellsouth; and 12th grade - H & R Block. These organizations provide guest speakers and incentives to each advisory. To coordinate all of this information, the grade level advisors meet with their grade level Counselors once a month to receive all required information. This is the first advisory that has been done at this school, and I am so proud!

D.A. Tatmon, Muscogee County  
Spencer High School  
[dtatmon@mcsdga.net](mailto:dtatmon@mcsdga.net)

### **Biscuits and Mentors**

Our county has one of the most successful mentoring programs in the state; however, high school students tend not to reap this reward! I am in discussions with our Partner in Education with hopes of securing and training several mentors. This select group will bring biscuits to students on my caseload twice a month, and hopefully, in the process, develop a meaningful relationship with these students. As we all know, the more meaningful relationships a student has in the school setting, the more likely s/he is to stay in school. I look forward to these mentors working with my students for many years to come!

Elizabeth Elger, Habersham County  
Habersham Central High School and Habersham Ninth Grade Academy  
[eelger@habersham.k12.ga.us](mailto:eelger@habersham.k12.ga.us)

### **\*NEW\* Sample e-mail/letter to help recruit Community Coaches/Volunteers**

Here is a sample email you may wish to personalize to share with or recruit a Community Coach(es) or volunteers. (There is no rule against having more than one Community Coach!) Try to share specific, concrete needs that will help your Community Coach get engaged easily and find quick success!

Dear (potential Community Coach/Volunteer--name, if known),

I'm the Graduation Coach at \_\_\_\_\_ School and we would love to get our business community involved in helping our students graduate! Did you know that 81% of dropouts cited "lack of relevance" as a major reason for leaving school? They say they want more "real-world" opportunities to see the connections between school and getting a good job.

This is where we need you! Here at \_\_\_\_\_, we would like to provide more opportunities for students to see the critical link between their school performance and their futures. And more importantly, they just want to know that people really care about them. Here are a few simple things that you may be able to help us with:

(Note specific needs with simple, concrete things they may be able to do. Although you may want funding, please do NOT make that your first request! See samples below.)

- o Come speak to some classes or small groups of students about your job and what they might need to do to get it. (You can come with a colleague to talk about theirs too!)
- o Participate in our career/college fair on \_\_\_\_\_(date). You can conduct mock interviews with students. If you're interested, you could help us plan it or have your organization sponsor it.
- o Donate some simple "giveaways" that we can use as incentives for great attendance or grades.

Of course, these are just a few things you could do. We would be happy to have you involved in many other ways, even as a tutor or a mentor if you'd like. Thanks for your interest in helping our students. Please give a call and we can discuss further.

### **Using Local Groups in a Small Community**

We have a large group of counselors (elementary, middle and high) here at Gilmer that met with Family Connections and a Board of Education administrator to come up with a safe mentoring program that could involve anyone in our small community. We have presented our application to Chamber of Commerce members, the Rotary Club, and local religious organizations. We plan to try to include more "blue collar" groups and volunteers in our recruiting by targeting *all* types of businesses--not just "the banks". Family Connections was able to get the sheriff's department to do the background checks and fingerprinting for free by acquiring a fingerprinting machine for the department. Through these efforts, the children are protected and it costs nothing but time for the mentors. We are very excited to see the response to our three elementary schools, middle school and high school.

Heidi Kerley, Gilmer County  
Gilmer High School  
[heidi.kerley@gilmerschools.com](mailto:heidi.kerley@gilmerschools.com)

### **Guest Speaker Programming**

I have invited guest speakers from the community and local technical college to a class of 2<sup>nd</sup> year 9<sup>th</sup> graders. These students are average 9<sup>th</sup> graders and are behind on credits. They had goals of working at local factories, but did not see the importance of finishing high school. Most are on the verge of dropping out. I invited guest speakers from the local factories and community businesses that the students were interested in to come and speak about their hiring process and the importance of finishing high school and doing well in school. This has really seemed to motivate some of the students in the class. It helped them make the connection between high school and "the real world". They come to me asking lots of questions about finishing school and getting a job after school. Several students have improved their grades over the past few weeks.

Beth Mann, Ben Hill County  
Fitzgerald High School  
[mannb@ben-hill.k12.ga.us](mailto:mannb@ben-hill.k12.ga.us)

## **College Partnerships/Dual Enrollment/Career Exploration**

### **College Partnerships/Dual Enrollment/Career Exploration**

We have several students who participate in dual enrollment at one of the nearby colleges/universities. We also have on-campus classes which are sponsored by the local technical college. There are several avenues we use for career exploration. For example, with the guidance and support of Valdosta Technical College, our local business leaders presented the "Game of Real Life" to sophomores. Our media specialist trains students and teachers on using the Georgia Career Information System, and counselors train students on using Georgia College 411. Our counselors also plan a career fair in which they invite postsecondary institutions and folks from various career fields. They set up in our commons area, and students are given the opportunity to survey their options.

Sheila Hendley, Berrien County  
Berrien High School  
[shendley@berrien.k12.ga.us](mailto:shendley@berrien.k12.ga.us)

### **College Volunteer Tutoring Program**

I provided tutoring during our students' hour long lunch for GHSGT. Students came for half of their lunch period (designated by the tutors). Tutoring was held twice a week in a corner of the library. The tutors were college students (mostly engineering students from GA Tech) who were interning for Kimberly Clark at their Roswell location. Kimberly Clark does a lot in the arena of community involvement, and the company encourages their interns to do the same. There were about 12 interns who were involved, and they rotated through so that no intern had to come two times a week unless he/she signed up to do so. Now that GHSGT is over and we are waiting for results, these same tutors are going to tutor physics students that signed up. It will be in the time slot that we used for GHSGT tutoring.

I think this program worked because the tutors were encouraged at work to do this (some were allowed to record the tutoring as work hours) and were mature enough to understand the commitment they were making with these students. We never had a time where tutors did not show up. I also sent reminders to our students each day. Tutors also offered incentives to the students for coming. They provided treats during tutoring and gave \$5.00 gift cards to Starbucks (paid for by Kimberly Clark) if the student attended 75% of assigned tutoring sessions.

We are starting math tutoring for all 9<sup>th</sup> grade students who are in danger of failing their math class. This will be a much larger group (60 to 80). We will be utilizing both NHS and math teachers. The math teachers that agree to help will be relieved of lunch duty. Tutoring will be provided 3 days a week.

Students will choose 2 sessions a week to attend. If they do not attend at least those 2 sessions a week (they may attend all 3 if they want to) they will not be allowed to participate in the recovery process (doing extra work to improve grades).

What I have found is that it is difficult to get students to give up any part of their lunch. They want to socialize with their friends. For many of the students we work with, they have not always made good choices about using their time wisely. Therefore, the greatest task is getting them to buy into it.

Susan M. Chamberlin, Fulton County  
Alpharetta High School  
[Chamberlin@fulton.k12.ga.us](mailto:Chamberlin@fulton.k12.ga.us)

### **\*NEW\* Career Connections**

Mountain Education Center (MEC) conducts many events throughout the year to provide students with the information they need to make decisions about their future.

During the summer, the counselors developed a Career Connections course to help students transition from high school to the world after graduation. In order to earn this elective credit, students prepare a portfolio containing useful information and documents that will help them pursue any endeavors that they choose in the future. Also, an integral part of the course is modules on career exploration, post-secondary education research, job acquisition skills, and time management. The course has been well received by students and mentors alike. (course cover in appendix)

1) Besides career workshops, testing (ASVAB, PSAT, Work Ready), and training to use the various state websites (GAcollege411 and GCIS), MEC holds a fall **College Fair** (the most recent was "No Fright College Night" right before Halloween) and a **Career Night** in the spring (a "Job Safari"). Students are encouraged to attend and participate, so the turnout for these activities is never disappointing. (See invitations in appendix).

2) At the beginning of this school year, Mountain Education Center High School was excited to learn that we were one of eight schools chosen to participate in the **pilot initiative "Georgia Apply to College Night"**. Although the preparation for the event was extensive, approximately 30 students attended during the appointed evening to apply for colleges that had agreed to waive their application fees for that one evening. It was a whirlwind event with students, who usually are hesitant to apply to college. However, they participated with enthusiasm. Representatives from five post-secondary institutions were present to assist students in the application process.

3) **Field trips to post-secondary institutions** are a regularly planned opportunity for Mountain Education Center High School students. At least two trips per year are offered to students so that they can take the **Compass Entrance Test at the local technical college**. Also, MECHS provides organized daylong tours to three college campuses in the spring and in the fall, which we call our "Best Field Trips Ever!" We usually have a full busload of students who spend the entire day experiencing a semblance of what college life would be like.

4) During the second semester, the MECHS counselors try to **interview every graduating senior** to help them plan their future after high school. The interview provides personal one-on-one time to address the individual needs and interests of each senior. Many students learn about opportunities that will prepare them for the next step after graduation. **Seniors and juniors are the focus of meetings** to begin and end the school year. At the beginning of each year, all juniors and seniors receive updated handbooks that outline events being offered throughout the year and give information that will be important for them to address as the year progresses. At the end of the year, MECHS has its "Senior Celebration," which not only prepares the seniors for their graduation night, but also reemphasizes the post-secondary opportunities and financial aid available to them.

Submitted by the Graduation Coaches and Counselors of Mountain Education Center High School  
Barbara Waldschmidt, School Counselor  
[bwaldschmidt@mountaineducationcenter.net](mailto:bwaldschmidt@mountaineducationcenter.net)

## **College Tutors and NovaNET Instruction**

We have been running in-school tutoring programs for the past three years. We have partnered with departments at UGA to provide student tutors for our high school students. Tutors come into the classroom and work one-on-one with the students. We have some students that receive tutoring in more than one class.

The distinguishing features about our school are that we use a NovaNet on-line curriculum with a student seat time waiver (PLC model). The teachers are learning facilitators that work actively with the students and positively embrace the tutors when they come to work in the classroom. On occasion, the teachers do direct instruction, at which time the tutor participates. They are expected to come at least one hour per week. It often develops into a mentoring relationship between the UGA student and our student. Last year we had over 600 visits from UGA tutors. (Our enrollment is around 100 students.) We were able to secure some tutors for GHSGT prep this fall, and we provided a free lunch for the students as they went over the areas in which they had deficits. They did not miss one session.

Mimi Middendorf, Clarke County  
Services Coordinator, Classic City High School, A Performance Learning Center  
[middendorm@clarke.k12.ga.us](mailto:middendorm@clarke.k12.ga.us)

## **\*NEW\* College and Career Lunch and Learn**

At Northview High School, we have implemented a monthly program called LUNCH AND LEARN that helps students explore post secondary options with the end result of getting them excited about graduation and life after high school. In small groups, we provide lunch during the students' lunch period so they do not miss any class time. They hear speakers talk about College, Job Opportunities, What is the Right Career Path For Me?, What Do I Have a Passion For?, Apprenticeships, etc. To culminate these sessions before the end of the school year, we will provide job shadow experiences and a hands-on field trip. Our Community Coach from Georgia Power, Jon Widem, has been a very positive, integral part of this program.

Bonnie Lee and Bob Mangan, Graduation Coaches  
Northview High School, Fulton County  
[manganb@fultonschools.org](mailto:manganb@fultonschools.org), [leebonnie@fulton.k12.ga.us](mailto:leebonnie@fulton.k12.ga.us)

## **Social and Career Development**

### **Secondary Vocational Connections**

One of our overage freshmen has already passed The Adult Basic Ed (TABE) test and applied to Secondary Vocational Connections (SVC). SVC is an alternative, self-paced school environment that enables fastidious students to graduate with a high school diploma in as little as one year. The others are currently using TABE test study guides to prepare.

Ilona Prewitt, Muscogee County  
Kendrick High School  
[iprewitt@mcsdga.net](mailto:iprewitt@mcsdga.net)

### **Individualized Programs**

I work in the alternative high school in Hall County. Beyond the weekly graduation test and academic tutorials offered and the career shadowing partnerships created, I've recently introduced two programs that are new to my school. I'm implementing "high school 101" and "career cruising" for our GED day program students, as well as our evening high schoolers. Both of these programs are perfect for our "at-promise" children because they are unique and very individualized.

Shannon Obermeier, Hall County  
Lanier Career Academy  
[Shannon.obermeier@hallco.org](mailto:Shannon.obermeier@hallco.org)

### **A Day in the Life**

In conjunction with the Guidance Counselor at our Ninth Grade Academy, I am going to implement a program called, "A Day in the Life." I've created a game that will be played in each of our classrooms. This game is similar to the board game called "Life." Students will be given a career, education attainment level, salary, and family. They will then be able to pay bills, buy personal items, participate in entertainment opportunities, etc. However, during "A Day in the Life," students will be thrown curve balls. New car tires will have to be bought in the middle of the month; a child will need prescription medication; an unexpected vet bill will need to be paid. Students will have to figure out how to prioritize finances and, hopefully, see the importance of education!

Elizabeth Elger, Habersham County  
Habersham Central High School and Habersham Ninth Grade Academy  
[eelger@habersham.k12.ga.us](mailto:eelger@habersham.k12.ga.us)

### **Small Group Interventions**

- An outside agency, Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Inc. was contacted to work with our teen pregnancy population. A nurse works with these girls on a regular basis with health issues, parenting tips, and making sure they have a support system.
- Smart Girls is the second small group which will begin this month. Girls for this group were chosen based on multiple risk factors. These girls will meet on a weekly basis to discuss healthy decision making and healthy living.
- A Mother-Daughter dinner night has been planned on October 12<sup>th</sup>, for the female Latino population here at West Hall High. Girls signed up on a voluntary basis to come to school with their mom and enjoy a nice dinner and a motivational speaker from the Latino community.

Amy Brock, Hall County  
West Hall High School  
[Amy.Brock@hallco.org](mailto:Amy.Brock@hallco.org)

### **Small Talk with Students**

I have been working very closely with our CVAE (Coordinated Vocational Academic Education) teacher and students. I go into the CVAE classes at least once or twice a week and just "small talk" with the students. About a month ago, I went into the classes and introduced myself and did a PowerPoint on the benefits of staying in school. We also played "Career Charades" and they loved it! Last week, I went on a field trip with about 25 of them to the state prison in Summerville, GA. It gave me more time to get to know them, etc.

Kristy Ellard, Catoosa County  
Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe High School  
[Kellard.lfo@catoosa.k12.ga.us](mailto:Kellard.lfo@catoosa.k12.ga.us)

### **S.P.I.C.E. In My Life!**

"S.P.I.C.E. in My Life!" is a 2-3 day guidance curriculum that I created to motivate students to seek success and private victories. Each component below is brought to life:

**S** – Success **P** – Private Victories **I** – Integrity **C** – Composure **E** – Empowerment!

These class guidance sessions equip students to release the winner in them as they realize that they have gifts lying 'dormant' on the inside. The final session ends with "POTENCY – MY POTENTIAL" in which I hold up an apple and a sweet potato to discuss potency and potential!

Clemontene Slack, Ed.D, Rome City Schools  
Rome High School  
[cslack@rcs.rome.ga.us](mailto:cslack@rcs.rome.ga.us)

### **Behavior-OSS Intervention**

The most successful strategy/program I have implemented is the Behavior-OSS Intervention. The purpose is to deter out-of-school suspension by enforcing work detail with local businesses with no pay. The students in the program are required to check in and out at a designated location to prepare for work detail, turn in completed assignments handle concerns with work detail, etc. Our main objective is to stress the importance of students staying in school, displaying positive behavior and focusing on academic success. The program will assist in preparing them for a successful high school experience as well as on-time graduation.

Vickey T. Huffman, Jasper County  
Jasper County High School  
[vhuffman@jasper.k12.ga.us](mailto:vhuffman@jasper.k12.ga.us)

## **Attendance/Incentive Programs**

### **Attendance Incentives**

At the end of this semester we will hold drawings for attendance, and at the end of the year we hold a "picnic" for students with perfect attendance. We have door prizes, and everyone gets something. Last year, we gave away three iPods (along with other prizes).

Sheila Hendley, Berrien County  
Berrien High School  
[shendley@berrien.k12.ga.us](mailto:shendley@berrien.k12.ga.us)

### **\*NEW\* Project Stay**

Project Stay is an attendance incentive program combined with a Caring Adult in the Building Program designed to reduce the withdrawal rates at Oakwood Open Campus High School. The program combines a strict attendance, tardy and discipline policy with incentives for good attendance. Project Stay offers weekly attendance incentives of \$10 gift cards, three and six week gift cards worth \$25, and nine week gift cards worth \$50. Funding for the gift cards comes from local grants written by the graduation coach.

Project Stay also includes the CAB Riders program that pairs students with mentors in the school who set and monitor attendance goals and contracts for the students. In its first year, Project Stay is showing strong results.

Dr. Kenya J. Gilliard, Graduation Coach  
Oakwood Open Campus High School, Cobb County  
[kenya.gilliard@cobbk12.org](mailto:kenya.gilliard@cobbk12.org)

### **Raising Attendance Rates and Lowering Disciplinary Problems**

I started an incentive program for the students here. I am trying to raise attendance rates while lowering disciplinary problems. I have Partners in Education donating gifts to be given away to all those students that qualify. As soon as the program is announced, the students who do not have an unexcused absence from school or any administrative referrals will have their name put in the box. At the end of the school year we will hold a large assembly or pep rally to reward them with give-away

items. Here is the kicker: I got Bill Heard Chevrolet to donate a new car, and I have found a Partner in Education to donate the cost for the tax, tag and title. So the word is out and the kids are getting excited.

Gary Johannes, Harris County  
Harris County High School  
[johannes-g@harris.k12.ga.us](mailto:johannes-g@harris.k12.ga.us)

### **Lunch with a Coach**

The children are really excited, and we have begun innovations like the Lunch with Coach opportunity. A selected student is given the lunch period with the coach to talk about anything they want, and get the attention that we all know kids want from adults--no matter what age.

Vencer Cotton, Sr., State Schools  
Georgia Academy for the Blind  
[vcotton@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:vcotton@doe.k12.ga.us)

### **Reward Excellence**

Sonoraville High School is placing an emphasis on positive discipline through the P.R.I.D.E. (Phoenix Recognize Individuals Demonstrating Excellence) program. Teachers are encouraged to catch students "doing good," excelling in any area, or showing significant improvements. Students are recognized in morning announcements and on scrolling presentations in the school, receive certificates, are pictured in the local newspaper, and are entered into periodic prize drawings. Their parents also receive notification letters.

Trace Vaughn, Gordon County  
Sonoraville High School  
[tvaughn@gcbe.org](mailto:tvaughn@gcbe.org)

### **Recognition for Receiving Honor Roll or Perfect Attendance**

So often when students enter high school, they are not recognized for their achievements. However, even as adults, we all know that we like to be recognized, since recognition truly keeps us motivated. Therefore, I have created a display board on our media center window entitled "The Best of the Best @ BCHS." On this board, students are spotlighted for receiving honor roll or perfect attendance. I understand that everyone will not be on the honor roll, which is why I decided to recognize perfect attendance as well.

When students receive honor roll and perfect attendance, their names are placed in a drawing at the end of the nine weeks to receive a \$25 Wal-mart, Target or Staples gift card. Those students who receive honor roll or perfect attendance are invited to participate in an Award Pizza Party during their lunch period. Parents are also included in this initiative. At the end of the semester, parents are invited to an Achievement Awards Dinner hosted by the Graduation Team. At the dinner, the students who received honor roll or perfect attendance are recognized with an award, presented by their parent or guardian.

Katina Williams, Burke County  
Burke County High School  
[kwilliams@burke.k12.ga.us](mailto:kwilliams@burke.k12.ga.us)

### **Attendance Program Tips**

Always be mindful that when working with difficult populations with attendance problems, "perfect" may be a lofty goal. You can always make goals achievable by rewarding perfect attendance over short periods and/or recognizing "Most Improved Attendance."

## **Team Building/Engaging Faculty, Staff, and Parents**

### **Online forum provides Graduation Coaches opportunities to share**

A new online forum, called Georgia Graduation Coaches, has been created for all middle and high school coaches to communicate with each other, ask questions, and share common experiences on a regular basis. You can choose any level of participation that you prefer (web based only, email notification, etc.) Getting started is very easy...just go to: <http://groups.google.com/group/georgia-graduation-coaches> and click "Join this group." Over 200 schools across Georgia are already connected through the Georgia Graduation Coaches online forum!

Daniel Byrd, Barrow County  
Winder-Barrow High School  
[daniel.byrd@barrow.k12.ga.us](mailto:daniel.byrd@barrow.k12.ga.us)

### **Teacher Appreciation Program**

One program I created was a Teacher Appreciation Program. This program will help recognize those teachers that go above and beyond to help students. I had the construction class build a nice wooden box that will be mounted in the hallway for the teachers and students to put recommendations for the award. I call it the Tiger Pride Award. We will give out gift certificates to restaurants, as well as a five-inch Tiger Statue. I have the administrative staff reviewing all the recommendations at the end of the month and announcing the one recommendation that really moved them.

Gary Johannes, Harris County  
Harris County High School  
[johannes-g@harris.k12.ga.us](mailto:johannes-g@harris.k12.ga.us)

### **Parent Conferences**

Monitoring the withdrawal rate of 12<sup>th</sup> graders is very important when calculating the graduation rate. When students withdraw for reasons that will count against our graduation rate, the counselor secretary will send the parent and student to conference with the graduation coach before withdrawing the student from school.

Dr. Linda Miles, Ware County  
Ware County High School  
[lmiles@ware.k12.ga.us](mailto:lmiles@ware.k12.ga.us)

### **Communicating with the Faculty**

At a faculty meeting about a month ago, I presented one of the PowerPoints from our training to our faculty to let them know exactly what I do on a daily basis. I also typed a letter and attached the referral forms to it and put it in their boxes. I have had great response from that.

Kristy Ellard, Catoosa County  
Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe High School  
[Kellard.lfo@catoosa.k12.ga.us](mailto:Kellard.lfo@catoosa.k12.ga.us)

### **Developing an After School Group**

We (Graduation Team) have developed an after school group called Chat & Chew- "I'd Like to Get to Know You." This group was designed to give the "at-promise" students an opportunity to express their concerns surrounding their academic, personal and community issues. Each graduation team member chooses several "at-promise" students whom they would like to work with. Once the students are selected, they are invited to attend the after school group and a permission letter is sent home to their parents. Each graduation team member serves as the facilitator for his or her group of students. The other graduation team members are on hand to help with group supplies, snacks, etc.

At the first group meeting, the students are given the opportunity to tell the facilitator what topics they would like to discuss at each meeting. For instance, at our first meeting the students expressed an interest in learning more about saving money, college entrance requirements, senior requirements, goals after graduating and teen pregnancy. We invite guest speakers from our school and the community to come and speak to our students about their chosen topics.

The meetings usually last one hour, and dinner is served at every meeting. The Graduation Team members donate food and other supplies to ensure that all of the meetings are a success. During our wrap up session, students give an overview of the meeting, and they decide on what will be served for dinner at the next meeting. The students really enjoy getting the chance to express what is on their mind, and at the same time, they gain valuable information. I have had students come up to me in the halls and ask how they can become a part of this dynamic after school group!

Katina Williams, Burke County  
Burke County High School  
[kwilliams@burke.k12.ga.us](mailto:kwilliams@burke.k12.ga.us)

### **Utilizing our Parent Coordinator**

Our county has a "Parent Coordinator" who helps get our parents involved. I met with her and gave her a copy of my "case load" list thus far—she is going to mail a letter to the parents of those on my case load. This is a big help to me! As I add students to my list, I let her know and she sends a letter.

Kristy Ellard, Catoosa County  
Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe High School  
[Kellard.lfo@catoosa.k12.ga.us](mailto:Kellard.lfo@catoosa.k12.ga.us)

### **Make Yourself Visible!**

I got a smock made with a logo on the back stating "Wanna Graduate????? Ask Me How!!!!!" By doing this I make myself very visible to students; this in turn helps students know who I am and what my purpose is. This also allows students to ask for assistance in getting back on track to graduate.

LaVenice "Vince" Grace, Lee County  
Lee County High School  
[GraceLa@lee.k12.ga.us](mailto:GraceLa@lee.k12.ga.us)

## **\*NEW\* Serving Students in Non-Traditional and Alternative Settings**

### **Tips and Ideas from Across the State**

"Last year I completely forgot about those kids. This year I made home visits and the students shared that it made a difference. I did not realize that it made such an impact." Region III Coach – Jan. 09

Meeting the needs of students in nontraditional and discipline alternative settings is often left off of our list of things to do, but is critically important to the possibility of change for those students. This is most true for students assigned to discipline alternative settings by tribunal, hearing or waiver. Students who choose to go to a nontraditional setting due to credit needs, family /work issues, or learning style may not need the attention of staff from their home school in the same way, although they still appreciate knowing that they have not been forgotten.

Students assigned to a discipline alternative setting, although they may have engaged in behavior that landed them there, often experience a significant drop in self esteem and feelings of self worth. Over the years we have seen that students assigned to discipline alternative settings have a significantly difficult time returning to their home school successfully. There are many factors that create a lowered expectation for them at their home or base school, and the support of adults with whom they have a relationship is critical. Having someone who can offer them support in their return or other options (a non-traditional school setting) that may exist in the community is their lifeline to success.

We gathered ideas from the experiences of Beth Allgood McKinnon and graduation coaches all over the state during RESA consortiums in the winter of 2009. Below is a list of the ideas and resources we developed.

- ✓ Attend each student's orientation and transition meeting so that you are part of the process from the beginning. Attend tribunals / hearings / waiver meetings if possible. It is a good time to get information to the parents and to make a first contact with parent and student as an ally and advocate for their success.
- ✓ Visit students in discipline alternative settings frequently. Some coaches go and visit once a week, some bi weekly and others once a month. Once a month is not enough "face time" with these students to develop bonded relationships unless there are other ongoing forms of communication being used in the interim.
- ✓ When you visit use the time to get to know them, check in on their progress. You can conduct individual sessions or small group sessions.
- ✓ Create an on-going success portfolio of work and activities related to the student's placement.
- ✓ On subsequent visits, update their graduation and post secondary plans, assist with career planning, take an inspirational story, poem or news article to read and discuss, create transition plans, update transcripts, do the same things you might use in classroom guidance in the regular program, take photos of them wearing a cap and gown, show movies that are inspirational about success – break it up and show a section each week. .. See "Resources" section at the end of this article.
- ✓ Remember the importance and power of individual informal contacts with students in any setting.
- ✓ Create a data base of the students' contact information. **KEEP A RECORD OF THEIR CELL PHONE NUMBERS!**
- ✓ Be creative in communicating with these students – Call or text during outside of school hours. Write postcards or short notes to them and mail to school or home. Send them positive quotes with a nice border and font so they can hang them up. Create an audio or video tape message and send to them. They need to know you are out there.
- ✓ In some settings these students return to the home school to eat lunch before or after the regular school lunch periods. Go down to visit them then.
- ✓ Send materials about graduation, etc. to the students through their graduation coach or counselor.
- ✓ Plan programs in which the community and others get a chance to see the positive aspects of the students and alternative settings.
- ✓ If your School Social Worker or School Counselor is assigned to work with these students, either go with them and "double team" the students or work out an alternating schedule to provide more "face time" with the student.
- ✓ Try to get the community involved; mentors, sponsors for scholarships, and maybe even basic living needs for some.

- ✓ Take a lead role in the transition meetings and advocate for the student's success on return to the home or base school. Lead the process of putting structures in place that support the student's successful transition back into the home school environment.
- ✓ Train and assist the home school faculty and administration to create a success-oriented outlook and culture that invites and encourages the returning student(s). Establish a school based mentor for the returning student(s).
- ✓ Teach the students techniques for success with teachers... asking for help, being helpful, turning in homework on time, going to see the teacher after or before school for help or to develop a relationship, staying awake in class, . . .
- ✓ Conduct sessions with the student on peer pressure and the ease of falling back into negative expectations for self. Help student(s) create mantras and other helpful techniques to avoid getting drawn in to negative experiences.

Lastly, take your role seriously. You are the link for the student back to the home school. You will be a mainstay of hope and motivation for them. Don't underestimate that power to impact their success.

Resources:

Inspirational movies such as "Freedom Writers," "Stand and Deliver," or "October Sky." There are many of them that you can use as clips or spread out over several visits. Be sure to discuss their connection to the students' lives and choices.

[www.gacareercounselor.org](http://www.gacareercounselor.org) – Interest inventories and a wealth of activities and information to use in career counseling activities. The site has separate sections with middle school and high school information and activities.

[www.wingclips.com](http://www.wingclips.com) – Character education videos

<http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/index.html> - May be more appropriate for middle school but worth a look by middle and high school coaches.

[www.whytry.org](http://www.whytry.org) - Some coaches have recommended this curriculum of motivational activities to use with all of our caseload, including those in nontraditional or alternative settings. This is a commercial product that requires purchase.

## APPENDIX

### Mentoring Program Step by Step

Presented by Susan Wittmeyer, Forsyth Central H.S. Graduation Coach

1. Present a clear description of the Mentoring Program you would like to initiate to the administration of the schools that will be affected. Approval and support of the program is essential to insure success.
2. Identify leaders of the high school who will serve as the catalyst for recruiting mentors. Teacher referrals or clubs such as Student Council or FCA are good places to begin your search for mentors. Once you have a few leaders on board, have the students ask others to join in the effort. Have an application process that fits your plans for the program.
3. Have a "training" session with mentors. Let them know how much potential they have to impact a life. REALLY build up the importance of committing to the program. Present information that will give them guidelines and some knowledge of boundaries involved in mentoring.
4. Identify "mentees." These students are already on your caseload, though some can be referred to you by counselors or teachers. The students have to be asked if they want a mentor. The program needs to be explained to them so they know what to expect. The manner in which the program is presented is crucial to its success.
5. Set schedule and be extremely complimentary to the mentors who are giving their time to the program. Most high school students you would want to mentor are extremely busy with many activities competing for their time, so it is important to encourage them in their efforts to mentor. Let them know by note, email, and phone calls when they are to mentor. I have found that there is never too much communication of schedules...they simply forget to come until it is an established part of their routine. It took about a month of constant reminders to get everyone to show up consistently.
6. Make the first few sessions fun...have "ice breaker" activities and FOOD. Let the mentors know ahead of time that the first few times may possibly be awkward. We spent about three sessions as a large group and then let the mentors "choose" their mentee. The sessions evolved into the mentors getting their mentees out of class and finding what "worked" for them. Some went outside and did something active, others sat in the Media Center and talked. Pretty much anything was deemed an acceptable way to spend time. The students were monitored at all times by a "floating" adult or two.
7. In the beginning, meet with the mentors after each session to answer any of their questions and encourage them. Make sure the mentors know that you are available should they need you. Support them completely, and be understanding if they have scheduling conflicts. I try to have the mentors call or write their mentee if they will not be able to see them at their regularly scheduled time.

**Forsyth County Schools Mentor Program  
MENTOR APPLICATION**

Please Print

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Reference \_\_\_\_\_

Community Involvement: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other Languages You Speak: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Preferences: School You Would Like to Mentor

\_\_\_\_\_

Circle one:                      Otwell              or              Central

Time Available:

Days of the Week: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to commit 30 minutes per week for the remainder of the school year?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_              No \_\_\_\_\_

**Spencer High School and 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment**  
**9<sup>th</sup> Grade Mentoring Program: Operation Nextstep**

Presented by D.A. Tatmon, Spencer H.S. Graduation Coach and 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Counselor

Purpose of Operation Nextstep:

The purpose of this mentoring program is to focus on academic improvement and drop-out prevention of at risk 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. It is the desire that students who are mentored receive:

- Support in decision making, goal setting, time management, coping skills
- Broaden life experiences
- Increased opportunities to interact with people from various socio-economic, cultural, and racial backgrounds

Mentors:

The mentors will be our Partners-in-Education, the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Ft. Benning, GA. These dedicated soldiers have volunteered to give their time and talent to work with our freshman class. They will not only mentor our at risk youth, but also visit our freshman class each month to talk with them about army values.

Students:

Twenty Freshmen without serious behavior problems have been selected to participate in this mentoring program. They have either failed the 9<sup>th</sup> grade or were placed in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade because they did not pass the CRCT. There are male and females. The males are small in stature and mild-mannered. All students are over-aged.

Program Structure:

Group mentoring will be used to enhance peer interaction. All mentors will meet students at the same time.

Meeting Time:

Students and mentors will meet 30 minutes every other week during advisory period on Wed.

Activities:

Activities will be structured in the areas of academics, social, career, and personal domains. Field trips, the computer lab, and other various activities will be scheduled.

Sign-in/sign-out:

Mentors will sign-in at main office and pick up a visitors pass.

Evaluation:

The mentor program will run for a semester. An evaluation will be given to all participants at the end of the semester.

## Operation Nextstep Survey

So that we can match the mentor with a student with the same interest, please fill out the survey below:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Educational Level: \_\_\_\_\_

2. List your hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Academic subjects you like: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Favorite sport: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Favorite food: \_\_\_\_\_

## Communities In Schools of Decatur County



### **PAL PEER HELPING PROGRAM** **Submitted by Communities In Schools of Decatur County**

1. peer \ 'pier \ n one's equal
2. assistance \ as- sis - tance \ n giving aid; helping
3. leadership \ lead - er - ship \ n the ability to guide, lead or conduct

PAL® Peer Assistance and Leadership is an award winning, non-profit program providing effective training in "resiliency" strategies. The PAL® peer helping program combats problems such as violence in schools, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, gang participation and school dropouts by providing a critical line of defense both at school and in the home through building peer helping programs all across the United States of America.

The mission of the PAL® peer helping program is to utilize the potential of young people to make a difference in their schools and communities. In this effort, PAL® Services, WAP Inc. staff provides continual training of new students and adult training for improvement or enhancement of existing programs to meet community needs. We inform educators of latest developments in the field, ensuring adherence to programmatic standards, continually adding components such as suicide prevention education, improving communication skills, violence prevention, conflict resolution, and substance abuse prevention.

The PAL® Peer Assistance and Leadership philosophy is to recognize the potential of youth as a resource and catalyst for change in other troubled youth. They provide a critical first line of defense in building resiliency among peers. The PAL® peer helping program philosophy identifies an innate capacity for social understanding, personal well-being and community participation within every person. When participating in positive, productive pursuits with peers, youth can more easily resist negative influences, such as illegal use of addictive substances, excessive school absences and unlawful activities. The goals of PAL® Services, WAP inc. are to build peer helping programs throughout Texas; provide training, networking opportunities, and technical assistance to create exemplary PAL® programs; and most importantly, to replicate a proven model of peer helping, PAL®.

PAL® Peer Assistance and Leadership began in 1980 as a "peer helping" program, combining "peer assistance" and "peer leadership" strategies originally developed in the late 1970's. Over the last fifteen years, WAP has significantly enhanced and expanded these basic prevention strategies, evolving the PAL® peer helping program from an informal, extra-curricular activity in a single school district, into a formally structured, curriculum-based program, adopted by the Texas Education Agency as an accredited elective course. Because of its reputation for effectiveness and efficiency, over 750 school districts throughout Texas have requested services from PAL® Services WAP, Inc., and WAP has documented substantiated PAL® peer helping programs in over 1000 elementary, middle and high schools in Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah, and Washington.

August 29, 2007

Dear Joan:

Communities In Schools of Decatur County, Inc., the Decatur County School System and Decatur County Family Connection are joining forces to bring Peer Assistance and Leadership (PAL) training to local schools, after-school programs and other organizations who wish to consider implementation of a Peer to Peer Mentor program into their existing curriculum. The training is free of charge to all participants.

PAL training sessions will be conducted October 10-11, 2007 from 8:15 a.m. until 3:45 p.m. each day at the Decatur County School Support Center. The Center is located at 507 Martin Street, Bainbridge, Georgia.

PAL Peer Assistance and Leadership is an award-winning peer helping program providing effective training in helping skills. PAL combats problems such as violence in schools, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, gang participation, and school dropouts by providing a critical line of defense both at school and in the home. The goal of the program is to tap into the potential of young people to make a difference in their schools and communities.

PAL began at one high school in Austin, Texas in 1980 and grew into a district-wide, nationally recognized research-based program. Today, PAL is active in over 1000 schools throughout Texas. Owing to its tremendous success, PAL has also expanded into fourteen additional states: Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Utah and Washington.

This is how it works: after careful selection of PAL candidates by school representatives, the students (known as "PALS") undergo a four-to six-week training period, provided primarily by the previously trained PAL sponsor. Using a PAL Teacher's Manual as a guide, sponsors focus on communication skills, group dynamics, self awareness, decision-making, and problem-solving skills. Upon completion of this phase, the Pals are placed in peer-to-peer situations with other students (known as "Palees") in which they employ the training components in order to develop positive, supportive, and helpful relationships. PAL empowers students to serve effectively in specific peer-to-peer or general leadership roles.

Class size will be limited to 25 adults. Therefore; if you would like to be included in the training please do not hesitate to contact Martha Hawthorne at : [mhawthorne@dcooe.com](mailto:mhawthorne@dcooe.com) or [mhawthorne@alltel.net](mailto:mhawthorne@alltel.net); (w) 229-248-2829; (c) 229-220-2272; (h) 229-872-3500 or Ami Mejia at [amejia@bainbridge.edu](mailto:amejia@bainbridge.edu) or (c) 229-220-1901.

Thank you,

Martha C. Hawthorne, Executive Director  
Communities in Schools of Decatur County, Inc.

Dr. Suzi Bonifay, Assistant Superintendent  
Decatur County School System

Ami Mejia, Director  
Family Connections of Decatur County

Tommie Howell, Principal  
Bainbridge High School

<b>Period</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
1 <sup>st</sup>	7:15 – 8:09
Moment of Silence, pledge, Leadership Quote of the Week, & other announcements in 1 <sup>st</sup> period class	8:09 – 8:16
2 <sup>nd</sup>	8:21 – 9:15
3 <sup>rd</sup>	9:20 – 10:14
4 <sup>th</sup> or lunch	10:19 – 11:13
5 <sup>th</sup> or lunch	11:18 – 12:12
6 <sup>th</sup> or lunch	12:17 – 1:11
7 <sup>th</sup>	1:16 – 2:10

*The following interventions take place during the 54-minute lunch cycles (highlighted in yellow above):*

**ADVISEMENT/ FRESHMAN MENTORING:**

On Mondays & Wednesdays, students spend the first 20 minutes of lunch with their advisor. All students are assigned to an advisor whose primary focus is to form a positive mentoring relationship with students, ensuring that every student has an adult advocate who cares about his success. In an effort to individualize education, advisors help students to recognize the value of their time in school and to take ownership in their education. Advisement lessons are emailed to the staff each week.

On Mondays & Wednesdays, 9<sup>th</sup> graders spend the first 20 minutes of lunch with their advisor and their Freshman Mentors. Selected by the staff, Freshman Mentors adopt an authentic leadership role by guiding freshmen, in collaboration with the ninth grade advisors, in lessons that help facilitate a sense of belonging and connectedness as well as a smooth transition to high school. This year, we have a 1:4 ratio between mentors and freshmen.

**STUDENT-LED TUTORING:**

A classroom room near our commons area has been designated as a tutoring room—a place where any student may get tutored during lunch any day in any subject by student tutor volunteers. Volunteer tutors sign in to receive service hours that may count towards a Community Service Seal on their diploma. There is an adult (assistant principal or counselor) in the tutoring room during three lunch periods. Tutors can help with homework, studying for quizzes/tests, and organizational skills.

**TEACHER-LED TUTORING:**

If a student does not pass a test or if a teacher feels that a student needs one-on-one assistance, the teacher assigns him/her mandatory academic assistance before/ after school or during lunch. Departments work together to coordinate and publicize teacher-led tutoring.

**MEDIA CENTER ACCESS:**

Students may visit the media center during their lunch to study or to use the computers.

**RESTRICTED LUNCH:**

Students who have a 60% average or below in their six courses are removed from the lunch period with their friends to be in a mandatory study-hall environment. Counselors may individually conference with students in Restricted Lunch to discuss obstacles they're facing.

## Parachute Packers Program – FAQ's

### 1. Where did the name “Parachute Packer” come from?

The name comes from the book “Who’s Packing Your Parachute?” by Capt. Charles Plumb. The story is:

Charles Plumb, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate, was a jet fighter pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb ejected & parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured & spent six years in a Communist prison.

He survived that ordeal & now lectures about lessons learned from that experience.

One day, when Plumb & his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up & said, "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!" "How in the world did you know that?" asked Plumb.

"I packed your parachute," the man replied. Plumb gasped in surprise & gratitude. The man pumped his hand & said, "I guess it worked!" Plumb assured him, "It sure did-if your 'chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today."

Plumb couldn't sleep that night, thinking about that man. Plumb says, 'I kept wondering what he might have looked like in a Navy uniform-a Dixie cup hat, a bib in the back, and bell bottom trousers. I wondered how many times I might have passed him on the Kitty Hawk. I wondered how many times I might have seen him & not even said good morning, how are you or anything because, you see, I was a fighter pilot & he was just a sailor. Plumb thought of the many hours the sailor had spent on a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship carefully weaving the shrouds & folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hands each time the fate of someone he didn't know. Now, Plumb asks his audience, 'Who's packing your parachute?' Everyone has someone who provides what they need to make it through the day. Plumb also points out that he needed many kinds of parachutes when his plane was shot down over enemy territory-he needed his physical parachute, his mental parachute, his emotional parachute, & his spiritual parachute."

He called on all these supports before reaching safety. His experience reminds us all to prepare ourselves to weather whatever storms lie ahead.

### 2. How did West Hall make this idea work for students?

We believe that every student deserves to know someone in their life that will essentially “pack their parachute” and show them how to be a stronger, better person without any regard for receiving some reward or commendation in the end. High school students who have either overcome great obstacles or who have generally above average grades/skills/abilities are chosen to mentor middle school students.

### 3. How big is the program?

Currently, each school has 25 students involved, with the potential to “graduate” students from the program at the end of the first semester and invite new middle school students to join.

### 4. How do you keep it fun without having the students just sit around and chat with no purpose?

The middle and high school collaborate together to create different activities each month to keep the program on target. Students meet with their mentor twice a month, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting each month being a group activity focused on character building (creating Christmas cards for nursing homes) or team building (high school vs. middle school soccer games).

## Henry County Transition Program Action Plan

Strategy #2: Academic Interventions

Department Goal: Reduce the number of retained ninth graders (“Freshmores”) from 41 to 20.

Steps for This Strategy	Dates for Completion	Who Will Lead This? Who Else Will Be Involved?	Evidence of Implementation	Cost of Implementation
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Registration/Parent Information Night	March 10, 2009	Counselors Katy Brantley Karen Perry CTAE Teachers	Parent Invitation PowerPoint Presentation	\$0
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Visitation to ELHS	February, 2009	Karen Perry Vonda Turner ELHS Counselors Administrators ELHS Teachers 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade ELMS Teachers	Rotation Schedule 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Q & A	\$0
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Walkover	May 29, 2009	Karen Perry Calvin Wright Jim Davis Vonda Turner ELMS 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade teachers Nicole Hoffman School Resource Officer	Parent Invitation Letter Speaking Agenda	\$0
STAR Summer Transition Program	June 2008	Karen Perry Calvin Wright James Moore Barbara Rosolino Emily Spencer	Invitation Letters STAR Roll	???????? Paid through SIEP funds
Ninth Grade/New Student Orientation	July 2008	Karen Perry Calvin Wright Elisha Parker	Invitation postcard PowerPoint presentation New Student Orientation Packet	\$0
Teaming All Ninth Grade Students	Daily	Katy Brantley Counselors Karen Perry Core Team Teachers	Master schedule Weekly team meetings Team Communications to parents	Postage for mailings
ZAPP	Daily	Calvin Wright Karen Perry Core teachers of ninth graders	ZAPP log Grades	\$0
Parent Contacts	Daily	Calvin Wright	Call Log	\$0

		Karen Perry Counselors	Emails Student Files	
Ninth Grade Progress Reports	September 4, 2008	Karen Perry Teachers	Completed progress reports ConnectEd call to parents	\$0
Classroom Guidance- c/o 2012 Graduation Requirements & Strategies for Success	September 8-12, 2008	Elisha Parker Karen Perry English Teachers	PowerPoint presentation Handouts	\$0
Ninth Grade A/B Honor Roll Celebrations	September 29, 2008 November 12, 2008 January 12, 2009 March 2, 2009 April 20, 2009	Karen Perry Calvin Wright Gabe Cerie	Celebration Invitations	\$500
Classroom Guidance- Activating Student Infinite Campus Accounts	October 2-7, 2008	Elisha Parker Karen Perry PE Teachers	Activated Infinite Campus Accounts Handouts Completed student action plans	\$0
Infinite Campus Parent Account Activation	October 28, 2008	Karen Perry Calvin Wright Elisha Parker	Letter to Parents Activated Infinite Campus accounts	Postage for mailing
Math I Parent Night	October 15, 2008	Elisha Parker Lya Snelling Katy Brantley Rusty Shirley Julie Harrison Zack Parker Counselors Karen Perry	Invitation Postcards Parent sign-in sheets	\$0
Math I Calendar	October 2008- May 2009	Math I Teachers	ELHS website- Math I calendar Parent/Student Handout	\$0
Classroom Guidance- Earned Credits & Plans for Success	January 2009	Elisha Parker Karen Perry Karen Bright English Teachers	PowerPoint presentation Handouts Advisement sheets	\$0
Second Chance	January 2009- May 2009	Karen Perry Katy Brantley Second Chance Teachers	Second Chance Applications Second Chance Final Grades Changes	??????? Paid through SIEP funds

8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Classroom Guidance- Career Planning and Credits	February 2009	Jan Harris- WBL Teacher Karen Perry Vonda Turner- ELMS counselor	Handouts	\$0
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## Eagle's Landing High School - STAR Brochure (pages 1 & 2 only)

<h1>Eagle's Landing High School STAR Summer School</h1>	Summer 2008
<h2>Focus on English &amp; Mathematics for Ninth Grade Success</h2>	
<h3>PURPOSE</h3> <p>Students Taking Academic Responsibility (STAR) Summer School is designed to provide additional support in the areas of reading and mathematics to identified students and to prepare them for the transition to high school.</p>	

### Criteria for Admission to STAR Program

Students who have not met CRCT grade level requirements in the areas of reading and/or mathematics are eligible for participation. First priority will be given to 8th grade students who qualify for support based on reading and/or mathematics performance on the CRCT and MAP tests.

### General Scheduling Information

#### STAR Summer School Schedule:

June 9, 2008 to June 23, 2008  
12:15—3:30  
Monday through Thursday  
(No Friday classes)

**Students who attend the ELMS summer CRCT program will be escorted at 11:30 a.m. from ELMS to ELHS each day.**

*Because we will not hold sessions on the days of CRCT retakes, you will need to pick your child up from ELMS on those days.*

### Additional Information

**Transportation:** Bus transportation is provided from ELHS to home in the afternoon only. Those students with a permission form on file will be allowed to ride the bus home from ELHS.

**Class size:** Classes will range from a minimum of 15 students to a maximum of 18 students.

**Instruction:** Instruction will be provided by certified teachers in English and math based on the Georgia Performance Standards. Student will also receive support from guidance counselors, and ELHS upperclassmen. Participation in the ELHS summer program does not guarantee promotion to the high school.

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all class sessions. This is the best way to obtain the maximum benefits of the STAR Summer School Program.

**Student Behavior:** Students must conduct themselves in accordance with school and Board of Education expectations. Poor behavior may result in a student's removal from the program.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Classroom Observation Reflection

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: Baxley or Musick

**BE QUIET WHEN YOU ENTER THE ROOM! Find a chair to sit in or a place to stand.**

You are assigned to \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_  
(Teacher) (Room) (Course)

Leave the room at 9:05 11:50 1:25 2:25 3:20 and report to the Study Lab, room 2126.

Write your observations and reflections here:

1. What is the teacher doing? (Lecturing, helping students, etc.)
2. What are the students supposed to be doing?
3. Are all students on task? If no, what are they doing?
4. For the students who are off-task, what do you think their grade is in this course? What makes you think so?
5. What are some differences you notice between these classes and your classes now?
  - 
  - 
  -
6. What can you do right now to prepare for high school?
  - 
  - 
  -
7. What has surprised you today?
8. What are your Top 3 fears about high school?
  - 
  - 
  -

## Please join us for Math I Night EAGLE'S LANDING HIGH SCHOOL!

Dear Parents,

Please join us for a special ninth grade parent meeting on Wednesday, October 15, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. at ELHS. You will have an opportunity to learn more about the new Math I curriculum, as well as some ways you can help your child be successful in ELHS math courses.

We are excited about you joining the Eagle's Landing High School family and look forward to seeing you on October 15!

Regards,

*Rusty Shirley and Julie Harrison*

**ELHS Math Department Chairpersons**

### Being a Successful Student at ELHS

Are you capable of making better grades than you currently are? Consider whether you are:

- Sitting in the best place possible in each teacher's classroom?
- Distracted by other students around you?
- Alert, focused, and engaged during each of your classes?
- Studying at home every single night? This includes reviewing the day's class notes, reading novels in English, practicing math and foreign language and reading ahead in the book for classes.
- Using your agenda to write down homework and upcoming tests/quizzes?
- Using good organization in your folders, locker, backpack, and study area?
- Taking perfect notes in class (including writing any question you have as you go along)?
- Asking questions during class if you don't understand something?
- Asking for help outside of class if things still aren't clicking for you?
- Sitting next to another student who can help if you need it?
- Studying several days before the test, not just the night before?
- Being ZAPPED frequently?
- Asking your teacher (multiple times if necessary) for make-up work when you are absent from class for any reason? Remember make-up work is YOUR responsibility and will be counted as zeroes if you don't complete assignments/tests within allotted time. An excused absence does NOT mean you don't have to do the work you missed.

If you are struggling:

- **Your teacher is usually the best option for help.** If you find yourself falling behind in a particular class, set up an appointment in advance to meet with your teacher individually. Ask about missing assignments, concepts with which you need help, and any other advice the teacher can give you about how to be more successful in his/her class. Develop a good relationship with your teachers.

Once you have done that, move to the following options for help:

- Peer Tutoring before school and during lunch in the Study Lab (2126). It's best to make an appointment in advance with a peer tutor to make sure your needs will be met. Do not wait until the morning of a test to ask for help.

- Buddy up with a successful, studious, hardworking student in each of your classes and get their phone number in case you miss something during class or get stuck with homework.
- Ask any teacher you owe assignments to if they would accept your work late **this one time**. Do not make a habit of this. Teachers tend to give less grace as the semester goes on, so do not wait until the last minute and do not expect to receive exceptions time after time. Do not count on extra credit to save your grade.
- Request AE for that subject either for an extended period or temporarily. This is the intent of this time—use it!!!
- Ask your counselor (counseling office) or graduation coach (2126) what you can do to get more help if these things do not help.

## Contract for Success at ELHS

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand and agree to the following:  
(Student name here)

\_\_\_\_\_ Graduation requirements for my year of graduation are clear to me.  
(Initial here)

\_\_\_\_\_ I plan to graduate in four years.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will keep track of my credits toward graduation, with the help of my counselor.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will push myself academically to take as many AP/honors classes as I can reasonably handle.

\_\_\_\_\_ Any work due to my own absence is my responsibility and I will make it up promptly.

\_\_\_\_\_ Any class I fail must be made up, probably outside the regular school day and most likely at my own expense.

\_\_\_\_\_ There are many options available for extra help at ELHS and I will use them if necessary before I fail a class.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will not cheat in any way to be successful. My grades will be a true reflection of my own best effort and my own work. This includes: copying other students' work, plagiarism, using study aids on a test or any other display of academic dishonesty.

Signed, \_\_\_\_\_, on this day \_\_\_\_\_, 2008.  
(signature) (date)

Witnessed by \_\_\_\_\_ (a classmate) \_\_\_\_\_ (Ms. Parker/Ms. Perry)

## Freshman Grade Reflection

Name \_\_\_\_\_

	Course Name	Teacher	Current Grade	Explanation for current grade
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

How many A's do you have right now? \_\_\_\_\_  
 B's \_\_\_\_\_ C's \_\_\_\_\_ D's \_\_\_\_\_ F's \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any F's in your core classes? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, how many?

If the end of the semester was today, how many credits would you have earned? \_\_\_\_\_

How many days have you been absent from school so far this year? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What do **you** do to make up your missed assignments after each absence?

List the names of two good, responsible students in each of your classes, from whom you can get help if necessary.

- 1<sup>st</sup> \_\_\_\_\_
- 2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_
- 3<sup>rd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_
- 4<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_
- 5<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_
- 6<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

List two teachers who would give you a good recommendation today if you needed it  
 What would help you be a more successful student here at ELHS? Be specific.

- ✓ Have you spoken to each teacher for whom you have missing assignments?
- ✓ **If not, start there! Do it today!**
- ✓ Ask what you can do to improve.
- ✓ Ask what can still be submitted

Your action plan:

Missing assignment	Teacher	Can this still be turned in?	Can this be here when submitted	Check
_____	_____	Yes No	_____	_____
_____	_____	Yes No	_____	_____
_____	_____	Yes No	_____	_____
_____	_____	Yes No	_____	_____
_____	_____	Yes No	_____	_____

List three ways you can get help for your classes if you need tutoring:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is your goal for this semester? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you doing everything in your power to achieve this goal? Yes No

If not, what more can you do?

## **2008-2009 Zeroes Affect Passing and Promotion (ZAPP)**

**Target Group:** all freshmen students, including repeaters

**Goal:** To have all freshmen complete all assignments satisfactorily, which will translate into higher grades and better performance on assessments. Also, we will impress upon freshman students the importance of a strong work ethic.

**How it works:**

Teacher collects homework, but student doesn't have his.

Teacher fills out a lunch detention form and sends student to the Study Lab to schedule his lunch detention. After scheduling detention, student returns to class with the signed pass. Student attends lunch detention on assigned day for the entire lunch period.

While in detention, student will call parent (if required), complete missing class assignment, eat lunch, and read additional material, if necessary.

**How the student is released from lunch detention:**

Student must submit the completed missing class assignment to the lunch detention monitor before being released from lunch detention. If the assignment is not finished by the end of lunch detention, the student must return the following day and every day thereafter until the assignment is complete. The ZAPP monitor will return all completed work to teachers.

**Credit for completed assignment:**

Maximum grade of 50 for all work turned in

**Other:**

Core classes are required to participate, elective classes are optional

Can also be used for test make up, if room allows

Zeros will be allowed to stand in the following cases: unexcused absences, cheating, earned zeros on tests/quizzes.

**Zeroes Affect Passing and Promotion (ZAPP)**  
**Lunch Detention Notice**

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Time to sent Study Lab \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment to be completed: \_\_\_\_\_

How ZAPP works:

Take this detention slip to 2126 immediately to sign up for your lunch detention.

**On the assigned date, report to 2126 during your lunch before the tardy bell rings.**

Bring all necessary supplies to complete the assignment.

If your assignment is not completed before the end of lunch, you will return the next day.

The maximum grade you may earn for this assignment is a 50. This is better than the grade of 0, which your teacher could have given you.

-----  
Time returning from Study Lab: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Detention: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Perry/Calvin Wright

Lunch: 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup>

## **Henry County Second Chance Program (clipped from brochure)**

### **Criteria for Registration**

Students who have received a final semester grade of 50 to 73 in a course during the first semester of school.

#### **Course Offerings**

English IA

Math IA

Biology A

#### **General Program Information**

Students will be allowed to register for one course.

Classes may be scheduled before or after school (depends on school)

Courses may be offered at each high school.

Students may register for the scheduled class that best meets their individual needs.

Transportation is the responsibility of the student and/or parent.

Courses will be offered with a minimum of 15 students and maximum of 18 students enrolled.

Curriculum for each course is based on the essential elements of the current Georgia curriculum for that course.

Students must abide by the school disciplinary code of conduct.

#### **Attendance policies**

Attendance is expected for all class sessions.

Two unexcused late arrivals of ten minutes or more equal one absence.

Four unexcused tardies (less than 10 minutes) equal one absence.

Three or more unexcused absences (1/26/08—4/28/08) may result in no grade update.

Violation of the attendance policy may result in dismissal from the program.

Attendance during the school day is mandatory for participation in a Second Chance class.

Attendance appeals regarding extenuating circumstances should be submitted in writing to the building administrator.

#### **Final Grade Calculations**

The calculation of a final grade for a Second Chance course is determined by the following formula:

$$\text{Second Chance exam score} - 5 \text{ points} = \text{New course grade}$$

The new semester grade is 5 points less than the score on the Second Chance exam unless this would lower the original grade received. If the original grade was 65 or below and the Second Chance exam score is 75, then the original first semester grade will be changed to 70 on the student's transcript.

\*Unless this lowers your current grade.

\*\*The maximum grade earned in Second Chance cannot exceed a 79 or “C.”

The upgraded semester average will be calculated into the student’s GPA.

**Dates for Second Chance - January 26, 2009 to April 30, 2009**

Second Chance Pre-Test - January 26, 2009  
Last Opportunity to Post Test - April 30, 2009

Students who have a Second Chance average of 75 or higher after the post test may exit the program with the appropriate semester average upgrade.

Determination of post testing opportunities is at the discretion of the building administrator.

**Second Chance Parent Letter**

***Eagle’s Landing High School***

*301 Tunis Road*

*McDonough, GA 30253*

*Telephone 770-954-9515 Fax 770-914-9789*

January 21, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian of \_\_\_\_\_,

Your child has met the criteria for participation in the Henry County School’s Second Chance Program. The program provides a “second chance” for students to receive hours of additional instruction and possibly improve the grade earned in one of the following first semester 2008/09 courses: Biology IA, English IA, and Math IA.

By participating in this program, students have a “second chance” to improve the grade from first semester. The new semester grade is 5 points less than the score on the Second Chance exam unless this would lower the original grade received. Please see the chart below for specific course grades.

Second Chance Grade	New Course Grade
75	70*
76	71*
77	72*
78	73*
79	74
80	75
81	76
82	77
83	78
84 or above	79**

\*Unless this lowers your current grade.

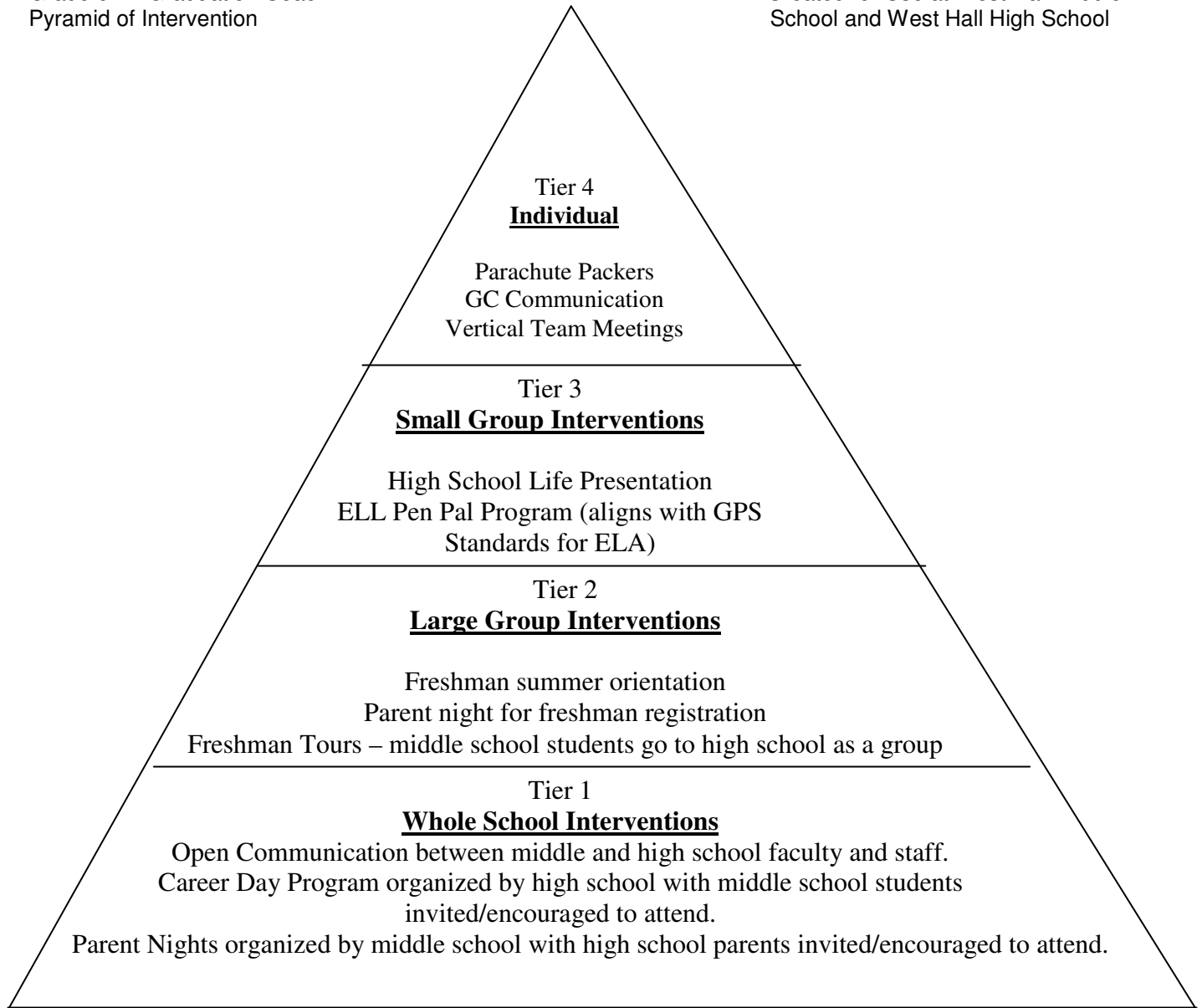
\*\*The maximum grade earned in Second Chance cannot exceed a 79 or “C.”

Your child has qualified for Second Chance in the subject of \_\_\_\_\_, which will be taught from 3:45-4:30. Transportation is not provided by the school. Please complete the attached application, and see the brochure for additional details. Applications are accepted on a first come, first served basis, and must be turned in to room 2126. The final deadline for applications is Friday, January 23, 2009. If you have any questions, please contact Karen Perry at the number listed above or via email: [kperry@henry.k12.ga.us](mailto:kperry@henry.k12.ga.us)

## West Hall Middle School's Pyramid of Intervention

Grade 6-12 Graduation Coach  
Pyramid of Intervention

Created for Use at West Hall Middle  
School and West Hall High School



## ELL PenPal Program Proposal

**Proposal:** PenPal program between middle and high school English Language Learner (ELL) students

**Target Population:** ELL students at WHMS and WHHS

**Purpose:** to introduce middle school ELL students to high school life while expanding their knowledge of the English language. Skills used:

- Written communication skills
- Proper use of English grammar
- Letter writing skills

GPS Standards Utilized: ELA6W1, ELA6W4, ELA6C1, ELA6LSV1, ELA7W1, ELA7W4, ELA7C1, ELA7LSV1, ELA8W1, ELA8W4, ELA8C1, ELA8LSV1

**Method:** Middle school and high school ELL students will correspond by writing letters to each other in their respective ELL classes. Letters will be checked for grammar and appropriate content by ELL teachers.

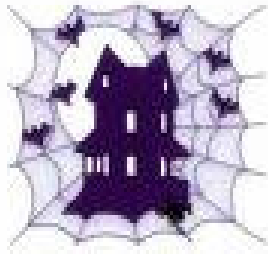
**When:** Beginning 3<sup>rd</sup> term and continuing weekly until the end of the school year. Each group will write approximately 9 sets of letters (one set every other week, allowing for reading of and response to letters to the other school).

**Where:** ELL classrooms during instructional time used for language arts.

**Who:** ELL teachers and students; coordinated by middle & high school graduation coaches.

**Summary:** ELL students will be pen pals between middle and high school. Correspondence will be written during ELL classes. Communication and letter writing skills will be utilized while providing middle school students with real-life feedback on what it is like to be a high school student. The primary focus of this program is to foster positive feelings toward high school, which will encourage more students to continue on and graduate. The secondary benefit of the program will be the increased use of the English language furthering the communication skills of ELL students.

Mountain Education Center's College Night



Are you SPOOKED???

... ..at the idea of  
COLLEGE

Overcome your **FearS**,  
Get the college **SPiRiT**,  
and be **treated** to **FREE PIZZA!**  
(**No Tricks!**)

Attend the **MECHS**  
College **"NO-Fright"** Night  
On Oct. 28  
At 5:00 p.m.

Sign up for presentations by nearby colleges,  
a financial aid expert, and/or the military.

**Parents are welcome!**

## Mountain Education Center – Career Night Invitation

EXPLORE YOUR CAREER OPTIONS AT THE

# JOB SAFARI

**WHEN:** FEBRUARY 24, 2009, 5:30

**WHERE:** MECHS, BLAIRSVILLE

**WHAT:** CAREER / JOB INFORMATION

**HOW:** REGISTER FOR SESSIONS STARTING  
FEBRUARY 9; THE SIGN-IN SHEET WILL BE AT THE  
FRONT DOOR

**BONUS!** THOSE WHO ATTEND WILL BE TREATED  
TO FREE PIZZA



**DON'T MISS OUT ON THE ADVENTURE!**