

# School Profile

Created Thursday, December 06, 2012

## Page 1

### School Information

School Information   District Name:	Fulton County Schools
School Information   School or Center Name:	Tri-Cities High School

### Level of School

High (9-12)

### Principal

Principal   Name:	Dan Sims
Principal   Position:	Principal
Principal   Phone:	4046698200
Principal   Email:	simsd@fultonschools.org

### School contact information

(the persons with rights to work on the application)

School contact information   Name:	Dan Sims
School contact information   Position:	Principal
School contact information   Phone:	4046698200
School contact information   Email:	simsd@fultonschools.org

### Grades represented in the building

example pre-k to 6

9-12

### Number of Teachers in School

140

### FTE Enrollment

1806

## Fiscal Agent Memo of Understanding

The application is the project implementation plan, not simply a proposal. This project is expected to be implemented with fidelity upon SBOE approval. When completing the application, please remember that sub-grantees will not be permitted to change the project's scope that is originally outlined in the application. scored by reviewers during the application review process, and approved by SBOE. This policy is designed to provide basic fairness to applicants for discretionary sub-grants.

### Fiscal Agent/Applicant Required Signatures:

I hereby certify that I am the an authorized signatory of the fiscal agent for which grant application is made and that the information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, complete and accurate. I further certify, to the best of my knowledge, that any ensuing program and activity will be conducted in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, application guidelines and instructions, assurances, and certifications. I also certify that the requested budget amounts are necessary for the implementation of the program described in the attached application.

**Please sign in blue ink.**

Name of Fiscal Agent's Contact Person: Larry Wallace

Position/Title of Fiscal Agent's Contact Person: Program Administrator

Address: Fulton County Schools – 2370 Union Road SW

City: Atlanta Zip: 30331

Telephone: (404) 346-4376 Fax: ( )

E-mail: wallace12@fultonschools.org

  
Signature of Fiscal Agency Head (District Superintendent or Executive Director)

Dr. Robert M. Avossa  
Typed Name of Fiscal Agency Head (District Superintendent or Executive Director)

12-11-12  
Date (required)

## **Georgia Department of Education Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Policy**

Georgia's conflict of interest and disclosure policy is applicable to entities conducting business on behalf of and /or doing business with the Department and entities receiving a grant to implement a program and/or project approved by the State Board of Education. This policy is applicable for entities receiving state and/or Federal funds.

Questions regarding the Department's conflict of interest and disclosure policy should be directed to the program manager responsible for the contract, purchase order and/or grant.

**I. Conflicts of Interest**

It is the policy of the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) to avoid doing business with Applicants, subcontractors of Applicants who have a conflict of interest or an appearance of a conflict of interest. The purpose of this policy is to maintain the highest level of integrity within its workforce, and to ensure that the award of grant Agreements is based upon fairness and merit.

**a. Organizational Conflicts of Interest.**

All grant applicants ("Applicants") shall provide a statement in their proposal which describes in a concise manner all past, present or planned organizational, financial, contractual or other interest(s) with an organization regulated by the GaDOE, including but not limited to Local Education Agencies (LEAs), or with an organization whose interests may be substantially affected by GaDOE activities, and which is related to the work under this grant solicitation. The interest(s) in which conflict may occur shall include those of the Applicant, its affiliates, proposed consultants, proposed subcontractors and key personnel of any of the above. Past interest shall be limited to within one year of the date of the Applicant's grant proposal. Key personnel shall include:

- any person owning more than 20% interest in the Applicant
  - the Applicant's corporate officers
  - board members
  - senior managers
  - any employee who is responsible for making a decision or taking an action on this grant application or any resulting Agreement where the decision or action can have an economic or other impact on the interests of a regulated or affected organization.
- i. The Applicant shall describe in detail why it believes, in light of the interest(s) identified in (a) above, that performance of the proposed Agreement can be accomplished in an impartial and objective manner.
- ii. In the absence of any relevant interest identified in (a) above, the Applicant shall submit in its grant application a statement certifying that to the best of its knowledge and belief no affiliation exists relevant to possible conflicts of interest. The Applicant must obtain the same information from potential subcontractors prior to award of a subcontract.

## Conflict of Interest & Disclosure Policy

- iii. GaDOE will review the statement submitted and may require additional relevant information from the Applicant. All such information, and any other relevant information known to GaDOE, will be used to determine whether an award to the Applicant may create a conflict of interest. If any such conflict of interest is found to exist, GaDOE may:
  - 1. Disqualify the Applicant, or
  - 2. Determine that it is otherwise in the best interest of GaDOE to make an award to the Applicant and include appropriate provisions to mitigate or avoid such conflict in the grant awarded.
- iv. The refusal to provide the disclosure or representation, or any additional information required, may result in disqualification of the Applicant for an award. If nondisclosure or misrepresentation is discovered after award, the resulting grant Agreement may be terminated. If after award the Applicant discovers a conflict of interest with respect to the grant awarded as a result of this solicitation, which could not reasonably have been known prior to award, an immediate and full disclosure shall be made in writing to GaDOE. The disclosure shall include a full description of the conflict, a description of the action the Applicant has taken, or proposes to take, to avoid or mitigate such conflict. GaDOE may, however, terminate the Agreement for convenience if GaDOE deems that termination is in the best interest of the GaDOE.

### **b. Employee Relationships**

- i. The Applicant must provide the following information with its application and must provide an information update within 30 days of the award of a contract, any subcontract, or any consultant agreement, or within 30 days of the retention of a Subject Individual or former GaDOE employee subject to this clause:
  - 1. The names of all Subject Individuals who:
    - a. Participated in preparation of proposals for award; or
    - b. Are planned to be used during performance; or
    - c. Are used during performance; and
- ii. The names of all former GaDOE employees, retained by the Applicant who were employed by GaDOE during the two year period immediately prior to the date of:
  - 1. The award; or
  - 2. Their retention by the Applicant; and
  - 3. The date on which the initial expression of interest in a future financial arrangement was discussed with the Applicant by any former GaDOE employee whose name is required to be provided by the contractor pursuant to subparagraph (ii); and
  - 4. The location where any Subject Individual or former GaDOE employee whose name is required to be provided by the Applicant pursuant to subparagraphs (i) and (ii), are expected to be assigned.
- iii. "Subject Individual" means a current GaDOE employee or a current GaDOE employee's father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother, half sister, spouse of an in-law, or a member of his/her household.

## Conflict of Interest & Disclosure Policy

- iv. The Applicant must incorporate this clause into all subcontracts or consultant agreements awarded under this Agreement and must further require that each such subcontractor or consultant incorporate this clause into all subcontracts or consultant agreements at any tier awarded under this Agreement unless GaDOE determines otherwise.
  - v. The information as it is submitted must be certified as being true and correct. If there is no such information, the certification must so state.
- c. Remedies for Nondisclosure**  
The following are possible remedies available to the GaDOE should an Applicant misrepresent or refuse to disclose or misrepresent any information required by this clause:
- 1. Termination of the Agreement.
  - 2. Exclusion from subsequent GaDOE grant opportunities.
  - 3. Other remedial action as may be permitted or provided by law or regulation or policy or by the terms of the grant agreement.
- d. Annual Certification.** The Applicant must provide annually, based on the anniversary date of Agreement award, the following certification in writing to GaDOE. The annual certification must be submitted with the grantees annual end of year program report.

### ANNUAL CERTIFICATION OF DISCLOSURE OF CERTAIN EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS

The Applicant represents and certifies that to the best of its knowledge and belief that during the prior 12 month period:

A former GaDOE employee(s), current GaDOE employee, or Subject Individual(s) has been retained to work under the Agreement or subcontract or consultant agreement and complete disclosure has been made.

No former GaDOE employee(s), current GaDOE employee, or Subject Individual(s) has been retained to work under the Agreement or subcontract or consultant agreement, and disclosure is not required.


## II. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest after Agreement Execution

If after Agreement execution, Applicant discovers a conflict of interest which could not reasonably have been known prior to Agreement execution; an immediate and full disclosure shall be made in writing to GaDOE. The disclosure shall include a full description of the conflict, a description of the action the Applicant has taken, or proposes to take, to avoid or mitigate such conflict. GaDOE may, however, terminate this Agreement for convenience if GaDOE deems that termination is in the best interest of GaDOE.

Conflict of Interest & Disclosure Policy

**III. Incorporation of Clauses**

The Applicant must incorporate the clauses in paragraphs A, B, and C of this section into all subcontracts or consultant agreements awarded under this Agreement and must further require that each such subcontractor or consultant incorporate this clause into all subcontracts or consultant agreements at any tier awarded under this Agreement unless GaDOE determines otherwise.



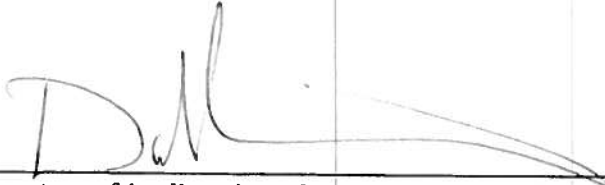
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Fiscal Agency Head (official sub-grant recipient)

Robert M. Avossa - Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Typed Name of Fiscal Agency Head and Position Title

12-11-12

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant's Authorized Agency Head (required)

Dan A. Sims, Principal

\_\_\_\_\_  
Typed Name of Applicant's Authorized Agency Head and Position Title

11/28/2012

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Co-applicant's Authorized Agency Head (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Typed Name of Co-applicant's Authorized Agency Head and Position Title (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date (if applicable)

# Preliminary Application Requirements

Created Monday, December 10, 2012

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## Page 1

Click on the [General Application Information](#) link below to assist you in the grant development process.

[General Application Information](#)

Did you download and read the General Information document to assist you with writing the grant?

- 
- Yes
- 

Click on the [SRCL Rubric](#) link below to assist you in the grant development process.

[SRCL Grant Rubric](#)

Did you download and read the SRCL Rubric to assist you with writing the grant?

- 
- Yes
- 

Click on the [Assessment Chart](#) link below to assist you in the grant development process.

[Assessment Chart](#)

Did you download and read the Assessment Chart to assist you in writing the grant?

- 
- Yes
- 

## **Assessments**

I understand that implementing the assessments mentioned on page 5 in General Application Information is a necessary part of receiving SRCL funding.

- 
- I Agree
- 

## **Unallowable Expenditures**

**Preparation of the Proposal:** *Costs to develop, prepare, and/or write the SRCL proposal cannot be charged to the grant directly or indirectly by either the agency or contractor.*

**Pre-Award Costs:** *Pre-award costs may not be charged against the grant. ☐ Funds can be used only for activities conducted and costs incurred after the start date of the grant.*

**Entertainment, Refreshments, Snacks:** *A field trip without the **approved** academic support will be considered entertainment. End-of-year celebrations or food associated with parties or socials are unallowable expenditures. Game systems and game cartridges are unallowable.*

**Unapproved out of state or overnight field trips, including retreats, lock-ins, etc.**

**Incentives** (e.g., plaques, trophies, stickers, t-shirts, give-a-ways)

**Advertisements, Promotional or Marketing Items**

**Decorative Items**

**Purchase of Facilities or vehicles** (e.g., Buses, Vans, or Cars)

**Land acquisition**

**Capital Improvements, Permanent Renovations**

**Direct charges for items/services that the indirect cost rate covers;**

**Dues to organizations, federations or societies for personal benefits**

Any costs not allowed for Federal projects per EDGAR, which may be accessed at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/fund/reg/edgarReg/edgar.html>. ☐☐

**NOTE: This is NOT an all-inclusive list of unallowable expenses.** If you have questions about unallowable expenses please e-mail your questions to [jmorrill@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:jmorrill@doe.k12.ga.us)

Upon approval by the State Board of Education, sub-grantees will be required to submit electronic budgets through GaDOE Consolidated Application Portal. All budget requests must be made in accordance with the use of funds for the SRCL project and must meet the requirements in EDGAR and OMB circulars. ☐

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• I Agree

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# Grant Assurances

Created Wednesday, December 12, 2012

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## Page 1

The sub-grantee assures that it has the necessary legal authority to apply for and receive a SRCL Grant.

- 
- Yes
- 

Sub-grantee certifies that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.

- 
- Yes
- 

The SRCL projects will target students who attend Title I schools or schools eligible for Title I schoolwide programs and their families.

- 
- Yes
- 

The SRCL project will be administered in accordance with all applicable statutes, regulations, program plans, and applications.

- 
- Yes
- 

The Grantee will participate in all technical assistance/information-sharing opportunities and professional development activities provided through the STRIVING READER COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY GRANT Project Grant Program.

- 
- Yes
- 

All activities must be correlated with the development of STRIVING READER COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY GRANT goals for children birth through grade 12.

- 
- Yes
- 

The second year of funding is dependent upon successful program implementation and progress aligned with the components of the request for application submitted.

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- Yes
- 

Prior to any material change affecting the purpose, administration, organization, budget, or operation of the SRCL project, the Sub-grantee agrees to submit an appropriately amended application to GaDOE for approval.

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• Yes

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The Sub-grantee agrees to notify the GaDOE, in writing, of any change in the contact information provided in its application.

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• Yes

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The activities and services described in the application shall be administered by or under the supervision and control of the Sub-grantee. The Sub-grantee shall not assign or subcontract, in whole or in part, its rights or obligations without prior written consent of GaDOE. Any attempted assignment without said consent shall be void and of no effect.

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• Yes

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Page 2

The Sub-grantee will use fiscal control and sound accounting procedures that will ensure proper disbursement of and account for Federal and state funds paid to the program to perform its duties.

- 
- Yes
- 

Funds shall be used only for financial obligations incurred during the grant period.

- 
- Yes
- 

The Sub-grantee will, if applicable, have the required financial and compliance audits conducted in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1966 and OMB Circular A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations."

- 
- Yes
- 

The fiscal agent will adopt and use proper methods of administering each program, including: (A) the enforcement of any obligations imposed on agencies, institutions, organizations, and other recipients responsible for carrying out each program; and (B) the timely correction of deficiencies in program operations that are identified through audits, monitoring, evaluation and/or technical assistance.

- 
- Yes
- 

The Sub-grantee will cooperate in carrying out any evaluation of each such program conducted by or for the Georgia Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Education, or other state or Federal officials.

- 
- Yes
- 

The Sub-grantee will submit reports to GaDOE as may reasonably be required. The Sub-grantee will maintain such fiscal and programmatic records and provide access to those records, as necessary, for those departments to perform their duties.

- 
- Yes
- 

The Sub-grantee will submit an annual summative evaluation report no later than June 30.

- 
- Yes
- 

The Sub-grantee agrees that GaDOE, or any of its duly authorized representatives, at any time during the term of this agreement, shall have access to, and the right to audit or examine any pertinent books, documents, papers, and records of the Sub-grantee related to the Sub-grantee's charges and performance under the SRCL sub-grant.

- 
- Yes
-

The property (e.g., computers, equipment, classroom desks, tables, and pilferable items) purchased with the SRCL grant funds must be managed in accordance with EDGAR section 74.34 through 74.37 (for non-profit organizations) and with EDGAR section 80.32 and 80.33 (for school districts).

- 
- Yes
- 

The Sub-grantee certifies that it will abide by GaDOE's Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Policy. Applicants with a conflict of interest must submit a disclosure notice.

- 
- Yes
-

## Page 3

The Sub-grantee will comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (34 C.F.R. 99).

- 
- Yes
- 

Sub-grantee will comply with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. These include but are not limited to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicaps; and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which prohibits discrimination on a basis of disability.

- 
- Yes
- 

In accordance with the Federal Drug-Free Workplace and Community Act Amendments of 1989 and the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the Sub-grantee understands that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance, marijuana, or dangerous drug is prohibited at geographic locations at which individuals are directly engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the 21st CCLC grant.

- 
- Yes
- 

All technology purchases (software and hardware) will be approved by the LEA Technology Director for compatibility with current operating systems and building infrastructure. The Technology Director must ensure that any purchases for the building will be able to be implemented and sustained beyond the grant period.

- 
- Yes
-

2007

**07-1. Segregation of Duties - Repeat**

**Condition/Cause:** The size of the School System's accounting and administrative staff and the lack of proper delegation of duties and training precluded certain internal controls, that would be preferred if the office staff were large enough, to provide optimum segregation of duties. Substantial duties relative to the receipt and disbursement processes, computer controls, payroll, and general ledger functions are handled by one individual.

**07-2. - Proper Recording of Property Taxes Receivable and Deferred Revenue**

**Condition/Cause:** Property taxes receivable and deferred revenue were underestimated by management as of June 30, 2007.

**07-3. - Proper Recording of On-Behalf Payments in the General Fund**

**Condition/Cause:** Management did not recognize revenue and expenditures in the General Fund for health insurance paid on the School System's behalf by the Georgia Department of Education to the Department of Community Health for health insurance of non-certified personnel.

**07-4. - Error in Posting Year-end Donated USDA Commodities in the School Nutrition Special Revenue Fund**

**Condition/Cause:** Management made an error in posting donated USDA commodities as revenue and inventory at year-end.

**07-5. - Cash Management - Title I, Part A (CFDA 84.010) - Repeat**

**Condition and Context:** The School System is not properly segregating duties in regards to draw down requests in that the draw down requests tested for the year ended June 30, 2007 were prepared and authorized by the same person.

**07-6. - Cash Management - Title II, Part A, Improving Teacher Quality (CFDA 84.367)**

**Condition and Context:** The School System is not properly segregating duties in regards to draw down requests in that the draw down requests tested for the year ended June 30, 2007 were prepared and authorized by the same person.

**07-7. - Error in Student Benefit Determination - Child Nutrition Cluster (CFDA 10.555) - Repeat**

**Condition and Context:** For the year ended June 30, 2007, we noted one instance in which an ineligible student received benefits under the Child nutrition Cluster program.

**2008**

**2008-1. Restatement of Beginning Fund Balance/Net Assets -Prior Period Adjustments**

Finding: Internal controls were not sufficient to prevent material misstatements in the reporting of the School System's financial statements.

**2008-2. Timely Recording of Intergovernmental Receivable and Deferred Revenue – 2002 SPLOST Capital Projects Fund and 1997 SPLOST Capital Projects Fund**

Finding: The School System's Program Management Director responsible for State Capital Outlay projects and management of the School System did not timely request State reimbursements for capital construction as of June 30, 2007

**2008-3. Proper Reconciliations of Cash Accounts – General Fund and Pension Fund**

Finding: Management of the School System did not accurately or timely reconcile the School System's bank account in the General Fund and the Pension Fund's bank account at year-end.

**2008-4. Eligibility - Title I, School-wide Programs (CFDA 84.010)**

Finding: As noted in our testing of the schools in the district operation school-wide programs, one (1) of the thirty-three (33) schools tested did not have all of the required elements to operate a school-wide program.

**2008-5. Error in Student Benefit Determination – Child Nutrition Cluster (CFDA 10.553 and 10.555)**

Finding: An ineligible student received benefits under the grant and reimbursement for the student's meal was claimed under the grant. Therefore, unallowable costs were charged to the grant. In one (1) instance, the necessary changes were not made to the system when verification documents provided by the student did not support the initial benefit determination.

**2009**

**2009-1. Restatement of Beginning Fund Balance/Net Assets -Prior Period Adjustments**

Condition: Internal controls were not sufficient to prevent material misstatements in the reporting of the School System's financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2009.

**2010**

NO FINDINGS

**2011**

**2011-01** Timely Recording of Intergovernmental Receivable and Deferred Revenue - 2007  
SPLOST Capital Projects Fund

Condition: As of June 30, 2011, documentation from the State regarding approved proceeds from the 2010 application to support the recording of State reimbursements for capital construction projects was not recorded by the School System.

**2011-02** Collateralization of Deposits

Condition: As of June 30, 2011, deposits of the School System held at a financial institution totaling approximately \$2.7 million were not fully collateralized or insured in accordance with the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (OCGA) Section 45-8-12(c). The pledged collateral for these accounts was less than the required amount by approximately \$2 million.

**2011—03**. Allowable Costs/Activities - U.S. Department of Education. IDEA, (CFPA #s 84.027, 84.173, 84.391, and 84.392)

Condition and Context: For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2011, the School System did not properly maintain semi-annual certification of time and effort sheets for teachers and other staff being paid out of Special Education funds during the period of August - December 2010. Eleven (11) out of 120 items sampled during our testing did not have semi-annual certification of time and efforts sheets for the fall semester of the school year. The errors occurred during the procedure to send the forms to each of the schools as several forms were improperly not sent. The processes, however, were updated during the spring semester and our testing disclosed no instances of noncompliance for that period of the fiscal year.



## DISTRICT NARRATIVE

**Brief History and Demographics:** Fulton County Schools (FCS) is a large district both in terms of enrollment – more than 93,000 students – and in terms of geographic size – 78 miles from north to south. FCS has two distinct regions that are physically bisected by the City of Atlanta’s school system, the Atlanta Public Schools. The district employs approximately 10,500 staff, including more than 6,800 teachers and other certified personnel. During the 2012-2013 school year, FCS students are attending classes in 96 traditional schools and 6 start-up charter schools. FCS is a diverse district both in terms of demographic and socio-economic enrollment. Its racial composition is 42% Black, 33% White, 13% Hispanic, 9% Asian, and 3% Multi-Racial. More than 44% of FCS students receive free and/or reduced-priced meals. Many schools in the northern part of the district have less than 5% of their students eligible for free and/or reduced-priced lunches while many schools in the southern part of the district have over 95% of their students eligible. Ten percent of FCS students are classified in special education, and seven percent are classified as having limited English proficiency.

**Current Priorities and Strategic Planning:** As part of its strategic planning process, FCS examined environmental realities, student needs, and organizational opportunities and identified five major themes based on stakeholder feedback: Advancing Instruction, Enhancing People, Integrating Technology, Ensuring Effective Schools, and Managing Resources. Under each theme, FCS identified its current priorities and built a strategic plan for 2012-2017. The plan focuses on enabling students to graduate college and to be career ready. To hold FCS accountable for the strategic plan, the district has committed to three long-term outcomes:

**Graduation Rate:** 90% of Fulton students will graduate on time; **College Readiness:** 85% of

Fulton’s seniors will be eligible for admission to a University System of Georgia college or university; **Work Readiness:** 100% of FCS graduates will be work-ready certified.

**Current Management Structure:** FCS is governed by an elected seven-member Board of Education that selects the Superintendent of Schools. Within the school system, the Superintendent – Dr. Robert Avossa - oversees the operations of six divisions: Academics, Information Technology, Operations, Financial Services, Human Resources, and Strategy & Innovation. In addition, FCS is divided into four “learning communities”: Northwest, Northeast, Central, and South. Organized geographically, the learning communities allow a decentralized approach to school management and provide schools the opportunity to work more closely together, aligning resources. Each is managed by an area superintendent and supported by an executive director.

On July 1, 2012, FCS became the largest charter system in the state of Georgia. Operating as a charter system is a game-changing opportunity for FCS to leverage more autonomy to implement innovative strategies, to increase student achievement, and to guide continual improvement. With state approval of the charter system model in hand, FCS has the legal authority to implement non-traditional instruction and curriculum options, as well as education reform ideas articulated by its stakeholders. The organizational framework by which FCS is implementing its charter system will devolve decision-making to the local school level, generating new opportunities for innovation and place-based strategies. Striving Reader schools will take advantage of the flexibility provided to the district through its charter system status to implement the more innovative aspects of their literacy plans.

**Past Instructional Initiatives:** FCS Teachers have access to model lesson plans written by district master teachers and the English/Language Arts Department staff. The model units

demonstrate a balanced approach to the teaching of standards. Instructional plans outline the standards addressed in each of the four nine-week units. Additionally, resources, strategies, and balanced assessments accompany each unit of study. A comprehensive scope and sequence outlines the standards and elements for each semester of the school year.

**Literacy Curriculum:** FCS is implementing the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) in K-12 English language arts and K-9 mathematics as well as literacy standards in grades 6-12 social studies, science, and technology curricula. The Common Core Standards infuse more rigor, complex texts, and informational reading for our students. FCS is adopting new Reading and English/Language Arts (ELA) materials for the next school year. FCS solicited extensive input from teachers, parents, students and administrators via surveys, feedback from a district oversight team, and a pilot of two vendor finalists. This process served not only the materials adoption but also established a basis on which to build our district's literacy plan. Balanced literacy is a K-5 literacy instructional approach that creates a gradual release of responsibility from the teacher to the student. FCS's balanced literacy approach will be used to ensure that each student will progress at his/her optimum pace and depth to maximize academic achievement. This approach will include:

- assessment based planning and student placement;
- modeled, shared, guided, and independent reading and writing;
- explicit skill instruction;
- use of authentic texts across content areas;
- integrated use of technology;
- authentic applications of learning.

**Literacy Assessments:** Our Striving Reader Cohort I schools use DIBELS Next and Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) literacy assessments. Other schools use Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2) and Balanced Assessment System (BAS) reading assessments. Further, FCS uses benchmark assessments called Checkpoints. Checkpoints assessments use a pre and post-test formula and are aligned to the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT), Georgia’s summative assessment that is administered in the spring. The 2013 and 2014 CRCT will be aligned to the CCGPS. The Partnership for the Assessment of College and Career Readiness (PARCC) assessment will become the summative assessment in April 2015. As FCS transitions to CCGPS and the administration of new summative assessments, FCS anticipates a temporary dip in scores. FCS schools administer a writing assessment every nine weeks that focuses on the studied genre. Schools create common assessments and assess formatively; therefore, a balanced assessment approach continues to be the assessment model for the district.

**Need for a Striving Reader Project:** The schools included in our district-wide submission for Striving Reader Comprehensive Literacy Cohort II funding were strategically selected to demonstrate FCS’s commitment to literacy improvement from Pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade. By including our Pre-K program, 6 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 1 high school we demonstrate a clear need for literacy support that runs throughout an entire feeder pattern. All schools selected are within the South and Central Learning Communities, where additional literacy resources are of the greatest need.

On average, students in FCS perform better than students across the state. In 2011, a larger percentage of FCS students met or exceeded CRCT standards than students across the state—in every grade and every tested subject. Yet, these district averages mask the rather striking achievement gaps within the district. As with so many schools and districts across the

country, the high poverty schools in FCS tend to fall at the lower end of the performance spectrum. Schools with large groups of students with disabilities or English learners struggle to meet achievement standards. A survey conducted last year of administrators, teachers and parents highlights concerns with the district's literacy efforts and Reading and ELA curriculum and instruction. More than 53% of administrators responding do not believe the current Reading and ELA materials provided by the district address the needs of all components of literacy. . More than 54% of parents do not believe their school offers adequate opportunities for parents to learn strategies to support their child's learning in the home. Clearly, the data point to a need for additional materials, professional development, parent outreach and supports to ensure quality literacy instruction in our schools. The Striving Reader grant will help FCS address these challenges.

**District Management Plan and Key Personnel**

The FCS management team has extensive experience working across departments and with external partners to achieve project goals and thus will implement the proposed project on time and within budget. The following individuals are qualified for their role and committed to improving literacy in targeted schools. The full time equivalent (FTE) for Fulton County Schools' staff to implement the grant is included in parentheses.

Dr. Robert Avossa – FCS Superintendent (0.025 FTE) – will be ultimately responsible for grant implementation. Dr. Avossa will keep the Fulton County Board of Education briefed on grant progress and results and will allocate the necessary resources to ensure fidelity of implementation.

Dr. Scott Muri – FCS Deputy Superintendent Instruction (0.05 FTE) will chair the Striving Reader Governing Board and provide strategic oversight for grant implementation. Dr. Muri reports directly to the Superintendent.

Amy Barger – FCS Assistant Superintendent Learning and Teaching (0.10 FTE) will be accountable for the Striving Reader grant and will supervise the Striving Reader Program Administrator to integrate proposed strategies and supports with other system processes to ensure alignment.

Dr. Donald Fennoy and Karen Cox – Area Superintendents (0.10 FTE) are the Area Superintendents for the South and Central Learning Communities. They will ensure vertical alignment of curriculum and professional learning across Striving Reader schools. In their capacity as members of the FCS Executive Leadership team, they will communicate best practices to schools across the district to support sustainability of Striving Reader strategies. The

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learning communities also have program specialists in each content and specialty area that provide support in all areas of instruction.

Larry Wallace – FCS Striving Reader Program Administrator (1.0 FTE) will coordinate the Striving Reader project and manage the grant budget. Mr. Wallace will serve as a bridge among the schools and the functional areas involved. Mr. Wallace has most recently served as Program Administrator for the district's \$4.2 million Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant and the \$5.2 million Smaller Learning Communities grant. He has extensive experience managing complex projects, involving multiple partners, with significant reporting requirements.

All members of the Executive Leadership Team have read each individual school's plan and reviewed each application with both the system and school teams. In reviewing the applications, we looked for alignment of Striving Readers goals with the district's and school's strategic and Title I plans. After reviewing all of this information there is a clear understanding of each school's plan and support will be given to implement the plans. The alignment of the Striving Reader goals allows the Learning Communities to narrow the focus of their monthly meetings and provide targeted support to the schools.

When start-up funding is awarded in February, principals will meet with the Area Superintendent and Program Administrator to develop their performance plan and begin the Budgeting for Outcomes (BFO) process. The BFO ensures that the cost center and grant budgets are developed by priority and are comprised of new ideas, innovations, cooperation, and improvement. Once the performance plan and budget are completed they are submitted to the Superintendent, Board of Education, and Georgia Department of Education for approval. The performance plans, budgets and assessment data are reviewed monthly to ensure implementation and compliance with local, state and federal regulations. In January, budget services conduct an

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analysis by function, department, and commitment item. The midyear analysis and necessary adjustments are then presented to the Board of Education. Final reports will be completed by the Program Administrator and forwarded to the state in July.



### EXPERIENCE OF THE APPLICANT

Fulton County Schools (FCS) has a strong track record of effectively implementing large, competitive grants at the federal, state, and private foundation level. The table below summarizes our grant initiatives.

Competitive Grant Title	Funded Amount
Striving Reader Comprehensive Literacy Cohort I grant	\$4.5M
Innovation Fund grant	\$640,326
Smaller Learning Communities grant	\$5.2M
Readiness & Emergency Management for Schools grant	\$608,355
Teaching American History grant	\$989,801
Carol M. White Physical Education grant	\$1.5M
Mathematics and Science Partnership grant	\$440,356
Strategic Data Project grant	\$500,000

**Capacity:** As demonstrated through our history with successful implementation of multiple federal, state and private grants and internal initiatives, FCS staff and faculty have the capacity and expertise to successfully implement large, complex initiatives. FCS will implement the proposed Striving Reader project on time and within budget. The FCS management team has extensive experience working across departments and schools as well as with external partners to achieve project goals. Further, FCS has rigorous internal controls that ensure funds are properly used and achieve intended results. FCS provides grant management training on all policies and procedures to all staff prior to releasing grant funds. Programs with similar goals and purposes are coordinated to reduce waste and increase efficiency. FCS is committed to the Striving Reader project and values the need to provide high-quality literacy support to targeted schools. Dr. Robert Avossa, the superintendent, has made this initiative a district priority. Conducting needs assessments in the Cohort 2 schools has provided a solid foundation for FCS’s Striving Reader grant and has allowed district and school leaders to plan with the end in mind. That is, the district

and targeted schools have established long-term goals and incorporated sustainability considerations into their literacy plans.

***Sustainability:*** FCS will sustain programming beyond the grant period by securing funding from a variety of sources. FCS general operating funds will be used to support literacy investments. Title II, Part A funds will help support professional development in literacy. Grant funding from local and national philanthropic organizations will be pursued to sustain the literacy interventions over time. Prospective funders who have a philanthropic focus on supporting literacy initiatives include: Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program, National Endowment for the Humanities, The Libri Foundation, The Braitmayer Foundation, The Malone Family Foundation, etc. The local business community will also be solicited for corporate contributions to support literacy interventions, e.g., Dollar General, Verizon, AT&T, Target, Wal-Mart, Sylvan Dell Publishing, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Barnes and Noble, ING, Sun Trust, etc.

***Internally-funded Initiatives:*** FCS has developed and implemented numerous education programs designed to increase student achievement using general operating funds without the support of outside funding. These programs attend to the delivery of student-focused instruction, ongoing assessment, use of data, and continuous improvement. FCS's benchmark assessment program, known as Checkpoints, assesses student mastery of standards in a pre-test/post-test format each semester. Teachers and principals have easy access to Checkpoints data for formative instructional planning, as well as placement of students within the on-level, advanced or accelerated curriculum through an online Student Achievement Management System (SAMS). Teachers access SAMS to support instructional practices through pacing guides, units, lesson plans and instructional resources for all curricular areas and grade levels. The utilization of these

formative assessments and the analysis of student-specific data have enabled teachers to implement differentiated learning strategies to improve student achievement.

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### **School Narrative**

Tri-Cities High School is a public high school in East Point, Georgia. As part of Fulton County Schools, Tri-Cities opened in 1988 under the leadership of Principal Dr. Herschel Robinson. It was originally formed by combining 4 schools: Woodland High School, Russell High School, College Park High School and Hapeville High School. Tri-Cities serves sections of East Point and College Park and all of Hapeville.

Tri-Cities has a Visual and Performing Arts Magnet Program which offers classes and experiences not offered in traditional high schools. The program promotes learning and provides experiences to motivate students to excel in academics as well as the arts. Tri-Cities' four learning academies include: the Business & Leadership Academy; the Marketing Academy; the Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics Academy; and the Ninth Grade Academy.

During the 2011-12 school year, student enrollment was at there were 1,746. The racial composition consists of 79% Black, 2% White, 16% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 1% Multi-Racial. Seventy-five percent (75%) of Tri-Cities' students receive free and/or reduced meals. Tri-Cities has a 4% ELL population and a 10% SWD population. The mobility rate is currently 46%.

#### ***Administrative and Teacher Leadership Team***

Since 2010, Dan Sims has been principal of Tri-Cities and just this year was named the district's first-ever "Principal of the Year." Dan Sims is a lifelong East Point resident who attended the area's schools from kindergarten through 12th grade. In 1995, he began his career as a math teacher and later, administrative assistant/dean of students, at Tri-Cities. Seven years later he returned to Tri-Cities as its principal. Under his leadership, he has implemented: PLAID (Professional Learning, Assessment, Instruction, Data) Teams to assess student progress towards

mastery; ABCD lists containing student achievement data (below standards, minimally meeting standards, meeting standards, exceeding standards) from assessments to make instructional decisions, enhance rigor of assessments/assignments, and share best instructional practices; weekly QUESTS (Quick Understanding Estimators for Students and Teachers) to provide students immediate, same-day feedback on their learning progress; and MESS (Math, English, Science, Social Studies) teams to monitor student progress in academics, behavior, and attendance.

Prior to Sims's arrival at Tri-Cities, Dr. Eldrick Horton was principal for four years. Under his leadership, the school was awarded a grant from the Department of Education for developing Smaller Learning Communities. Additionally, Horton implemented the Southern Region Educational Board's High Schools That Work School reform model, as well as a Comprehensive Student Resource Center; an Extended Day program for Academic Enrichment and Remediation; and Parent and Teacher Resource Centers.

Over the past several years, the administrative team at Tri-Cities has been in transition. Within just three years, two assistant principal positions were vacated and filled, and an additional earned assistant principal position remains vacant. Currently, we are experiencing a high volume of staff turnover. In the past two years alone we have had 37 employees retire, resign, or transfer. However, it should be noted that the majority of our teaching staff have been here for five or more years.

### ***Current Literacy Priorities***

Fulton County Schools (FCS) follows the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) to guide literacy instruction but will transition to Common Core Georgia Performance Standards in the

2012-2013 school year. The implementation of the GPS allowed the integration of reading and writing instruction—a paradigm shift for the schools. Common Core Standards will infuse even more rigor, complex texts, informational reading, and challenges for our teachers and students. Budget constraints prevented the adoption of new materials when GPS were implemented, but plans are underway to adopt a new set of Reading and English/Language Arts (ELA) materials for the school year 2012-2013. FCS solicited extensive input from teachers, parents, students and administrators via surveys, feedback from a district oversight team, and a pilot of two vendor finalists this school year. This process served not only the materials adoption but also established a basis on which to build our district's literacy plan.

### ***Past Instructional Initiatives***

Prior to the adoption of GPS, the learning objectives for the State of Georgia were known as Quality Core Curriculum. With those objectives, much of the literacy approach rested on the teaching of reading with some writing. Materials often produced whole-class instruction with little consideration for the individual needs of the students.

### ***Literacy Curriculum***

Teachers have access to model lesson plans written by district master teachers and the ELA Department staff. The model units demonstrate a balanced approach to the teaching of standards. Instructional plans outline the standards addressed in each of the four nine weeks' units. Additionally, resources, strategies, and balanced assessments accompany each unit of study. A comprehensive scope and sequence outlines the standards and elements for each semester of the school year. These findings guide our School Improvement Plan and our literacy plan.

***Student Data***

Our student data table below summarizes the significant literacy needs faced by our students as evidenced by our graduation rates and End of Course Tests (EOCT).

High School	% FRL	% SWD	% ELL	Mobility Rate	Met AYP?	Graduation Rate	% Fail 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Literature/Comp. 2011 EOCT	% Fail 11 <sup>th</sup> Grade Literature/Comp. 2012 EOCT
Tri-Cities	75%	10%	4%	46%	No Focus School	67.4%	11%	8%

Source: Fulton County Schools Administrative Records, 2012

***Teacher Retention Data***

Within the last four years, Tri-Cities' teacher retention rate has not been significantly different from the Fulton County high school rate or the system rate, with the exception of last year when the retention rate was 9% less than that of the system. Changes in leadership during this four-year period were contributing factors. Based upon a teacher survey, several indicated they did not feel they were receiving adequate support and resources to carry out their duties and responsibilities. A priority for our principal and the administrative team will be to address teacher retention and the number of certified teachers who are resigning and transferring.

Retention Data				TCHS Exit Reason		
Year	TCHS	High School	System	Resigned	Retired	Transferred
2011-2012	80%	83%	89%	15%	1%	4%
2010 – 2011	93%	89%	90%	6%	1%	0
2009 -2010	85%	85%	87%	12%	3%	0

***Need for a Striving Readers Project***

According to the East Point Housing Authority, Tri-Cities is located in a community of single-family dwellings and apartment complexes, with many Section 8, low-income rentals. Most families are headed by one parent; some students live in homes with other relatives and 2% of our students are homeless. As mentioned, we have a mobility rate of 46%. This negatively impacts instruction, for it is difficult to gain momentum when students are constantly in and out of school. We are very focused on moving the Level I students out of the “does not meet” category on Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT) and the End-of-Course-Test (EOCT). In addition, our students tend to have vocabulary and language deficiencies, which affect their performance across curriculum areas.

A Striving Reader grant would provide our school the necessary supplemental resources to support our students and families to ensure each child reaches his or her fullest potential. It is an opportunity to build on our current literacy work and to give teachers and administrators the tools and knowledge to help our students achieve across content areas. We believe with the initiatives proposed in this grant, we will increase the number of students exceeding in Reading and Language Arts, as well as in other content areas, while continuing to focus on moving students from the “does not meet” to “meet” category.



## School/District Literacy Plan

Tri-Cities built its literacy plan around the six building blocks identified in the document, *Georgia Literacy Plan Kindergarten-to-Grade 12 Necessary Building Blocks for Literacy: “The What”*, developed by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) as well as research from GaDOE’s *Georgia Literacy Plan: “The Why”*. The six building blocks and related research are described below.

### **Building Block 1**

***A. Action: Administrator demonstrates commitment to learn about and support evidence-based literacy instruction in his/her school.***

Mr. Sims has a deep commitment towards learning and supporting evidence-based literacy instruction in our school. Just as research states, “administrative support is...needed to ensure that the strategies are seen by the teachers as imperative” (Business–Higher Education Forum, *An American Imperative*, 2007). Together we are working diligently to improve student achievement in literacy. The results of our efforts are grounded in on-going professional development, standard-based instruction, appropriate intervention strategies, and high expectations. Mr. Sims’s commitment is evident through his participation in the following ways:

- Participation in state-sponsored Webinars and face-to-face sessions to learn about the transition to Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS).
- Participation in literacy instruction with the faculty and other administrative team members.
- Monitoring of literacy instruction within the school by engaging in daily observations and walk-throughs.

- Designing schedules to protect time for literacy and teacher collaboration.

<b>Literacy Strategy</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Owner</b>
Writing Lab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review guidance of the International Writing Centers Association</li> <li>• Assign tutors</li> <li>• Train tutors</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Carmena Lawson, Tammie West – Jones, Emily Galloway
Literacy e Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish editorial program</li> <li>• Recruit students and faculty</li> <li>• Create marketing plan</li> <li>• Publish articles online</li> </ul>	Once a semester	Literacy Focus Team, Elizabeth Elliot, & Octavious Hose
Open Mic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish guidelines</li> <li>• Recruit students and faculty</li> <li>• Create marketing plan</li> </ul>	Once each Spring	Literacy Focus Team, Elizabeth Elliot, & Octavious Hose
Parent Literacy Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create survey to identify parent needs</li> <li>• Research workshop topics</li> <li>• Invite guest speakers</li> <li>• Create marketing plan</li> <li>• Evaluate program effectiveness</li> </ul>	Once a semester	Parent Liaison & Literacy Focus Team
In School Suspension Classroom Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze reading level of students in ISS</li> <li>• Identify level appropriate books</li> <li>• Order books</li> </ul>	Annually	Assistant Principal for Curriculum and & Assistant Principal for discipline
Reading Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target students based on data</li> <li>• Update schedule to offer smaller classes</li> </ul>	Once a semester	Reading Specialist, Counselors, and SST
Reading Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research offerings available</li> <li>• Solicit input from English/Language Arts Department</li> <li>• Compare offerings to student needs</li> </ul>	Fall 2012	Literacy Focus Team
Technology Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow district processes, procedures, and guidelines to purchase technology</li> </ul>	Annually	Literacy Focus Team & Mr. Goldberg
Professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a comprehensive professional</li> </ul>	Fall 2012	Literacy Focus

Literacy Strategy	Activity	Timeline	Owner
Development	development plan to support the literacy plan · Research best practices in PD · Select providers · Implement	and then implement on an ongoing basis	Team
Reading Endorsements	· Research Reading Endorsement Programs · Solicit input from English/Language Arts Department · Compare curriculum offerings to teacher needs	Fall 2012	Literacy Focus Team

**B. Action: Organize a Literacy Leadership Team**

In order to achieve the goals and objectives for our literacy plan, we have established a literacy team. According to research, “the role of leadership in developing literacy in the nation, state, district, school and classroom cannot be overstated. It is a key piece in virtually every literacy initiative undertaken at any level in education.” (GaDOE, *The Why*, 2010, pg. 157). Our team is a collaborative system that encourages a literate climate to support effective teaching and learning. The team also functions as liaisons to the rest of our school family, sending messages to grade-level teams, as well as to other school committees.

Our literacy team convenes every three weeks to edit and adjust our literacy plan which is an essential blue print for improving student achievement. It describes the required components of an instructional program both generally and for specific grade levels. It spells out key infrastructure components, as well as state action steps and policy considerations. We also gather to collect and analyze a wide-range of data such as formative assessments, summative assessments, benchmarks, standardize test (EOCT, GHSGT,) and community input. As a result of the findings, the team determines which best practices are needed to better support our students. In order to ensure that the information discussed during the literacy team meetings are

disseminated to all staff and faculty, there will be periodic faculty meetings, emails communication, and regular communication with departmental chairpersons.

The Tri-Cities vision states that, “Through effective collaboration we will achieve comprehensive success for every student.” The team consists of the principal, an assistant principal, teachers from each grade level, and our literacy coach. Each individual on the team has a role in actualizing the vision and the implementation plan. In addition, each member brings specific expertise to help build the culture of literacy in the school.

<b>Member</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Role</b>
Mr. Dan Sims	School Principal	Monitors and evaluates the literacy program and curriculum implementation school-wide. Analyze data for effectiveness of instruction.
Mr. James Williams	Assistant Principal	Monitors and evaluates literacy instruction and curriculum in all grade levels. Analyze student achievement data. Research additional resources.
Ms. Ethel Lett	Assistant Principal	Monitors and evaluates literacy instruction and curriculum in all grade levels. Analyze student achievement data. Research additional resources.
Mr. Lorrie Green	Data Specialist	Analyze student achievement data. Research additional resources. Monitors teacher implementation of rigor.

Mrs. Claudia Greene	Math Instructor	Collaborate with the ESOL department to evaluate resources for effectiveness with ELL learners.
Mr. Antoine Johnson	Service of Exceptional Education Instructor	Evaluate resources for effectiveness with SWD students. Monitor least restricted environment implementation (Inclusion, team taught, resource, etc.)
Mr. Ruben Ogbonna	Math Instructor	Analyzes class and grade level data in mathematics at assigned elementary school for the purpose of sharing information with teachers and making informed decisions relative to instructional practices.
Mrs. Carmena Lawson	English Department Chair	Assess grade level literacy needs for instruction. Collect data and provide feedback to drive instruction and rigor. Provide resources for interdisciplinary classroom instruction.
Mrs. Corinthia Howard	Social Studies Department Co-Chair	Assess grade level literacy needs for instruction. Collect data and provide feedback to drive instruction and rigor. Provide resources for interdisciplinary classroom instruction.
Ms. Latasha Jones	Science Department Co-Chair	Assess grade level literacy needs for instruction. Collect data and provide

		feedback to drive instruction and rigor. Provide resources for interdisciplinary classroom instruction.
Mrs. Aisha Moore-Webb	English Instructor & BL Lead Teacher	Evaluate the literacy program to ensure rigor and attention to higher order thinking skills.
Ms. Tarrie McDaniel	Marketing Instructor & Marketing & Hospitality Lead Teacher	Research the most effective technology tools to using with integrating into every classroom. Implement technology to increase 21 <sup>st</sup> Century learning.

Sustainability Plan

To ensure that the work is sustained, our team proposes the following activities. Each will require teacher, administrative, community stakeholders, and parental support:

- Writing Support Lab-host a weekly after school writing support lab for students who need extra support while working on any writing assignment. One student volunteer as a peer tutor in the writing lab and one English teacher will serve as the instructor
- Letter Writing Campaign – a local radio station is hosting a letter writing campaign to thank overseas troops who will be away for the holidays. The literacy team is coordinating this effort to offer students hands-on, real-world lessons in revision and publication.
- Classroom Libraries – the team is helping to build classroom libraries across all content areas. Resources have been limited; therefore, a Striving Reader grant will expedite the process to

provide compelling books and magazines to each classroom. Our teachers will incorporate the materials across the curriculum.

- School-wide Writing Rubric – an interdisciplinary committee is developing a student-friendly persuasive writing rubric that will be used across the curriculum. All teachers are providing input and will be trained on the use of the school-wide writing rubric.

- Student Coffeehouse – the entrepreneurship classes created a coffeehouse in the school that will serve as a community space for reading and enjoyment.

- Recommended Reading List – reading lists were created for student use over holiday and summer breaks. This effort will provide suggested reading guidance for our students.

- Book Club – throughout the year, students meet for book club meetings in the media center during lunch and after school. This effort builds reading stamina and provides an opportunity for students to collaborate and discuss various texts. It also provides students with the opportunity to practice speaking and listening skills which are key to literacy development.

- Literacy Consultant - the English Department will continue to work with the literacy consultant to analyze the level rigor in the curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Revisions will be made as needed. In addition, short-term and long-term goals will be established and monitored for progress.

- An Extended Learning Opportunity Program– this is a standards-based, data-driven tutorial program will offer students additional support. Student placement in the program will be based on assessment results.

- Bulldog Bucks – an incentive program that recognizes student academic achievement across all content areas. Students will be recognized for academic achievement, attendance, behavior, etc.).
- Online Remediation –online resources for standards-based remediation for state tests.
- Summer Bridge – 48 hour instructional program in reading, writing and mathematics prior to the beginning of the ninth grade year. This program is designed for students who are at risk of academic failure in ninth grade. The program addresses academic deficits and provides literacy and numeracy academic support. In addition, the program offers support with time management, study skills, developing relationships, and coping skills that are necessary for success in high school.

***C. The use of time and personnel is leveraged through scheduling and collaborative planning.***

With the arrival of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) there is a more explicit focus on the integration of literacy across the curriculum. According to the Georgia Department of Education (2010), “the CCGPS Literacy in science, history/social studies, and technical subjects are being implemented in grades 6 – 12.” As a result, it is essential that students are able to comprehend, to make inferences, to draw conclusions, to communicate in oral and written formats, and to create and synthesize ideas.

To help students accomplish the aforementioned objectives, we have a protected, dedicated 90-100 minute literacy block allocated for literacy instruction. It is important for our students to receive two to four hours of literacy instruction across ELA and other content area classes. This time is divided between the four blocks. At the start of each block teachers have students participate in a “Literacy Warm-Up”. During this time teachers use the first twenty minutes to focus on literacy—primarily reading, writing and verbal communication. The teachers



present students with a reading based on their interest, which was determined by a previous questionnaire. After reading, the students use the “Claim, Data, and Commentary” approach to develop reading comprehension and speaking/listening skills.

In order to monitor the progress of this initiative there will be formative assessments given throughout the year. These assessments are from the state and composed during collaborative planning sessions. At Tri-Cities, common planning time has been built into the schedule for collaborative planning teams. Each team is required to meet at least twice a week, with documentation, within and across content areas. Our aim is to foster meaningful literacy-based instruction and planning.

***D. A school culture exists in which teachers across the content areas accept responsibility for literacy instruction as articulated in the CCGPS.***

Tri-Cities High School has a committed staff with strong and extensive educational backgrounds. Teachers participate in continuous professional development with an emphasis on targeted, sustained professional learning on literacy strategies within the content areas. Recently, the staff participated in an online course focused around a book study: *Rigor is not a Four Letter Word*. A culture exists in which teachers across each content area accept responsibility for literacy instruction as articulated in the CCGPS. Research suggests that “the key to reading achievement in schools is to provide a well prepared and knowledgeable teacher in every classroom” (IRA, 2007) (GaDOE, *The Why*, 2010, pg. 150). As a result, each Tri-Cities teacher is commitment to advancing and improving instruction. Mr. Dan Sims, Tri-Cities principal, makes a conscious effort to support these efforts. As the building leader, he provides the resources that teachers need in order to engage students in meaningful, appropriately leveled learning during the school day. These resources include smaller classes, engaging model lessons,

and models of successful programs that relate learning to real-life situations. The adoption and implementation of a comprehensive school wide literacy initiative has also been supported and adopted by the principal to help support collaboration and the development of best practices.

The Tri-Cities faculty and staff participate in multiple professional development opportunities throughout the year with a focus on enhancing literacy instruction. Several examples include:

- a. Incorporating the use of literacy initiatives in core content areas
- b. Using informational text in English language arts classes
- c. Incorporating writing instruction (narrative, argument, and informational) in all subject areas
- d. Selecting text complexity that is appropriate to grade levels as required by CCGPS
- e. Selecting text complexity that is adjusted to the needs of individual students
- f. Rigor within the Classroom
- g. Interdisciplinary Lesson Planning
- h. Engaged Pedagogy
- i. Using Data to Enhance Student Achievement
- j. Culturally Relevant Teaching
- k. Integrating Technology into the Lesson Plan

After the professional development sessions, teachers are required to incorporate their learning into their lessons. To ensure commonality, they are instructed to use their collaboration time in to develop a unified method of delivery. Once the delivery method is determined, the teachers conduct their lessons using the information discussed. Afterwards, teachers are encouraged to provide feedback to the group. The group then comes to a consensus and reports to the entire faculty and staff during interactive faculty meetings. We continue to revisit these sessions often in order to ascertain effectiveness.

***E. Literacy instruction is optimized in all content areas.***

The community at large supports Tri-Cities High School and its efforts to develop college-and-career-ready students as articulated in the CCGPS. Additionally, we are able to

ensure ongoing literacy instruction in all content areas through our daily school-wide Literacy Warm-Up. Our teachers have also participated in professional learning that is keenly focused on literacy such as the following:

- a. Incorporating the use of literacy initiatives in core content areas
- b. Using informational text in English language arts classes
- c. Incorporating writing instruction (narrative, argument, and informational) in all subject areas
- d. Selecting text complexity that is appropriate to grade levels as required by CCGPS
- e. Selecting text complexity that is adjusted to the needs of individual students

Our instructional staff has been given professional development opportunities on the aforementioned professional learning because research suggests that, “[Teaching] the process of writing, text structures for writing, paragraph or sentence construction skills improves reading comprehension. In addition, students who fair well on the ACT were those who had strong reading comprehension skills. The distinguishing factor was students’ ability to answer questions associated with complex texts,” (Graham & Hebert, *Writing to Read*, 2010, pg. 5).

Therefore, it is important for our faculty and staff to understand literacy instruction and how to incorporate complex text into instruction. Tri-Cities’ teachers are focusing on providing a challenging instructional environment as well as exposure to challenging text. This effort will continue to be supported by ongoing professional collaboration and development.

***F. The community at large supports schools and teachers in the development of students who are college-and-career-ready as articulated in the CCGPS.***

Tri-Cities works with its stakeholders in a collaborative manner to address literacy challenges. The community advisory board, which includes parents and community partners, actively participate in helping us to develop and achieve literacy goals. By working with this board we have been able to establish the Tri-Cities 300 program. It is a program that allows parents to interact with our students for one school day. They serve as secondary instructional

support (when needed), in order encourage our students and expose them to different opportunities.

We also work with the Ford Dealership in order to have our students gain real-world experiences. They are able to see the importance of literacy beyond the walls of the school. We also work with several other partners in our Sister to Sister Program. This program provides women from our partner companies the opportunity to come into the school and speak to our young women about the importance and value of education. The Alpha Phi Alpha Mentoring Program (Alpha Academy) and the Omega Psi Phi Mentoring Program also work with us to enhance the literacy experience of our male students by exposing them to post-secondary opportunities and scholarship competitions.

We will continue to foster partnerships to encourage literacy as we attempt to promote life-long learners. Through the school website and other technology, social media is utilized to communicate and promote the goals of literacy, as well as to celebrate student academic success throughout the community at large. Our partners, along with other stakeholders such as classroom teachers, grade level chairs, and parent teacher association members, are involved in the development and support maintenance of our literacy programs.

## **Building Block 2**

### ***A. Active collaborative school teams ensure a consistent literacy focus across the curriculum.***

At Tri-Cities we have active collaborative school teams, called PLAID teams, to ensure a consistent literacy focus across the curriculum. Our professional learning communities currently meet twice a week during common planning time. During these meetings the teachers collaborate and plan lessons and share best practices. Our Data Support Specialist, Curriculum Support Teacher, Administrators, SST teachers and ESOL teachers, and other Teacher Leaders are all

available to assist classroom teachers and provide strategies and support. We have vertical team meetings so that the grade levels can share their ideas and help plan for previous and upcoming years. During grade level meetings the Curriculum Support Teacher meets with every grade level to insure everyone is on the same page across curriculum. We use our professional development on data analysis in order to guide our meetings and to establish protocols.

Our grade level teams also meet to ensure that all students are working to meet the following requirements:

- Demonstrating competence in authentic, real world writing in all content areas, using formal, informal, literary, or technical language appropriate for the purpose, audience, and context of the communication in a variety of genres.
- Demonstrate the ability to approach and understand ALL content area texts by applying critical reading skills.
- Apply the fundamental components of Standard English language to communicate or exchange ideas or information to specific audiences and purposes within contexts.
- Evaluate and deconstructs the strategies, propaganda, biases, and messages delivered by a variety of sources, print and digital media, to inform, persuade, entertain, transmit messages, and influence culture.

In order to assess the information above, teachers have been trained in data analysis, and time has been allowed during our collaborative planning meetings in order to examine student work and assessments.

***B. Action: Support teachers in providing literacy instruction across the curriculum.***

Tri-Cities administration works hard to support teachers, particularly when it comes to literacy across the curriculum. We have established our “*Literacy Lab*” with the purpose of

providing additional support for literacy and students’ literacy-related assignments. The Literacy Lab is staffed with literacy-trained instructors from all disciplines. Moreover, the Lab is staffed with peer and college tutors to support the instructors. It is primarily open for the needs of students; however, four times per month, the Literacy Lab holds seminars and/or workshops for students and teachers in order to boost literary skills and techniques. These workshops are determined based on student need and feedback. We have a suggestion box located in the Lab so that students are able to offer feedback. Additionally, our staff host workshops based on the common issues they see students having.

We have created the lab because research says that,

The Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) require that students become proficient in three types of texts, argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative, beginning as early as kindergarten. According to National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), writing becomes a critical need for workers: Technological advances, changing workplace demands, and cultural shifts make writing more important than ever, especially because the way we write often predicts academic and/or job success, creates opportunities, maintains relationships, and enhances critical thinking (GaDOE, *The Why*, 2010, pgs. 43-44).

***C. Action: Collaborate with supporting out-of-school agencies and organizations within the community.***

At Tri-Cities literacy instruction within the classroom is complemented by a comprehensive system of learning supports from out-of-school agencies and organizations. Research suggests that, “people who cannot write and communicate clearly will not be hired, and if already working, are unlikely to last long enough to be considered for promotion,” (GaDOE, *The Why*, 2010, pg. 28). As a result, partnerships have been established with local colleges and universities to coordinate bringing in professors to conduct in-school literacy

workshops and seminars across the curriculum. Partnerships have also been established with out-of school organizations to provide opportunities for students to apply appropriate literacy skills in “real world” settings through internships. We have identified the following organizations to help complement our vision: The East Point Public Library; Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated; Barnes and Noble; and The Woodruff Arts Center. All of these organizations help to expose our students to the importance of literacy beyond high school. Our students participate in field trips with these organizations. In addition, these partners have representatives come to us in order to share vital information with regard to their level of preparation for post-secondary life.

### **Building Block 3**

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

Tri-Cities implements a student, whole school screening procedure in the area of reading, the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). During implementation, we screen all students in Grades 9-12. We use our identified monitoring and diagnostic tools to help students based on their results. In addition, we conduct common mid-course checkpoints throughout all of our classrooms. Research tells us that,

A universal screener is a general outcome measure used to identify underperforming students and to determine the rate of increase for the district, school, classroom, and student in reading and math. A universal screening will not identify why students are underperforming; that is, it will not identify specific skill weaknesses. Rather it will identify which students are not at the expected performance criteria for a given grade level in reading and mathematics. One less frequently mentioned reason for the use of universal screeners is that they may allow administrators to detect patterns of achievement during the school year to provide additional support to particular teachers or classrooms. The key feature in

a screening measure is the accuracy in classifying a student as “at risk” or “not at risk (GaDOE, *The Why*, 2010, pg. 100).

We also screen incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students during our Summer Bridge Program and transfer students upon entering the school. We then use the results to determine what intervention strategies are needed. Our screening process includes a tool that assesses our students’ progress through their graduating year.

Our staff has been trained on our assessment and intervention materials. These materials are aligned to our students’ needs and are readily available to our staff for use. Timelines and calendars are created based on curriculum maps that establish specific assessment periods and opportunities.

To assist with data collection, we utilize SAMS, the Student Achievement Management System, Achievement Series program that is connected with SAMS, the Teacher Access Center, and some monitoring charts. These programs allow us to store data, retrieve, analyze, and disseminate assessment results.

We will continue to use data to help us enhance student achievement. It has now become a part of our culture. With the instatement of the PLAID teams and the common planning, we made this a fundamental part of our duties and responsibilities.

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

As a part of our universal screening and progress monitoring, we are able to determine if a student understands the GPS standards and content by conducting bi-weekly and monthly formative and summative checkpoints. We analyze data results for all the students in common core and elective classes. According to research, “the Georgia Literacy Plan includes a deliberate and comprehensive plan for assessment. The plan promotes the use of ongoing,



frequent, and multiple measures that will be used as a diagnostic and monitoring tool to plan for instruction. It is necessary to examine both summative and formative assessments, to determine how that data positively affects instruction, and to see how formative assessments enhance the overall picture of evaluation” (GaDOE, *The Why*, 2010, pg. 94-95).

By the end of each year, more than 18 bi-weekly checkpoint results and nine monthly checkpoint results will have been evaluated by teams. Teachers will use the data from each checkpoint to plan future lessons, differentiate classroom instruction and to offer remediation where necessary. Our administrative team disaggregates the data from checkpoint results and makes future predictions regarding student outcome on our high-stakes tests including EOCT, GHSGT and SAT/ACT scores.

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

Tri-Cities Language Arts Department conducts SRI screenings to determine the reading level for students in Grades 9-12. Upon getting the results, students are placed in a reading support class to get the additional assistance that is needed to help our students to become successful and productive in their classes. This is accomplished because research tells us that, “adolescents’ perceptions of how competent they are as readers and writers, generally speaking, will affect how motivated they are to learn in their subject area classes (e.g., the sciences, social studies, mathematics, and literature). Thus, if academic literacy instruction is to be effective, it must address issues of self-efficacy and engagement” (GaDOE, *The Why*, 2010, pg. 52).

***D. Action: Use of summative data to make programming decisions as well as to monitor individual student progress.***

We have collaborative teams and meetings for all core subjects. Teams meet twice a week with the school’s data support specialist in order to analyze and review their assessment

data. Teachers keep a data chart that shows the results of their pre-assessments and post-assessments in order to assess gains. With this information the teachers determine what they need to teach or to make instructional adjustments. Also, teachers create common assignments and assessments.

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

As a part of our progress monitoring, teachers use multiple data sources to plan lessons, differentiate instruction and for remediation. Our Data Support Specialist creates a professional learning calendar that provides ongoing training for teachers on how to access data from the district’s online database; facilitate data discussions; and utilize Microsoft Excel to analyze, display and manipulate data.

Additionally, the Data Support Specialist provides training for all instructional personnel on how to disaggregate data. Research states, the Georgia Literacy Plan includes a deliberate and comprehensive plan for using data (GaDOE, *State Literacy Plan*,). The online student databases allows for technology to be used as a tool for literacy instruction. Professional learning that is both long term and ongoing provides continuous support for teachers, as they use data to make instructional decisions. Ongoing summative assessment of students and programs allows data to be analyzed for accountability and research purposes. Interdisciplinary teacher teams meet regularly to discuss data as it relates to students and the alignment of instruction.

Below is a sample of our unified method of analyzing data:

**Collect and Organize the Data**

1. What is the data piece we are using for today’s meeting? Achievement Series -Standards report – table view

- a. What is the purpose of the data? (diagnostic, formative, or summative)
  - b. What is our goal in reviewing the data? What do we want to learn from the data?
2. Analyze the Data and Prioritize needs
- Each teacher needs a CLASS Goals sheet
- a. Each teacher highlights the lowest and the highest performing standard/element
  - b. Record each team members' lowest & highest performing elements with the topic of the standard identified next to each element (example: ELA6RC2.a. Identifies themes) on chart paper.
3. Discuss the identified elements
- a. What trends do you see?
  - b. Are there common weak or strong elements among the team?
  - c. Share best practices.
  - d. How can weak elements be blended into your lesson plans in the next few weeks?  
(generate quick ideas)
4. Write one of the identified weakest standards/elements on the CLASS goals form.
5. Date - Record the date or the range of dates the assignment or assessment was given (February Checkpoints, for example).
6. Element and Description - Record the element number & description of the element in the left column.
7. Mastery Group - In each column, decide on mastery groups that are most meaningful. This may change for different data sets. Discuss mastery categories as a team.

a. For the data set we are using today we chose the mastery levels for each group as follows: Group 1 is above 80%, Group 2 is between 60% - 75%, and Group 3 is below 59%.

b. The number of items per element/standard is an important piece of information to review. The number of valid items per element will increase the reliability of the test.

8. **Mastery Columns** - Record the students' first names or first and last initials in these columns according to the percentage the student earned per element on the assessment.

9. Record the number of students in each group. Record the percent of the total class that this represents.

10. Create goals for the mastery groups and record them on the CLASS goals form (be sure the goals are SMART) – moving a percentage of your students from meets to exceeds, for example.

11. **Select Strategies**

a. Record instructional strategies you and/or the group members deem appropriate to refine, review, or extend the element/content assessed.

b. Determine how you will re-teach the lowest groups and extend your highest group(s).

c. Break the standard/element into learning targets and assess formatively the lowest groups.

12. **Determine Results Indicators**

- a. Result indicators are used to monitor whether the instructional strategies put in place in the previous step are being implemented.
- b. These allow for changes in strategies that may not be getting desired results.

### 13. Monitor Results and Adjust Instruction

- a. We monitor results to engage in a continuous improvement cycle that:
  1. Identifies midcourse corrections where needed
  2. Adjust strategies to ensure fidelity of implementation

14. Repeat steps 1-6 for each additional subject/class period.

## **Building Block 4**

### ***A. All students receive direct, explicit instruction for all students***

At Tri-Cities teachers deliver instruction based on the CCGPS. Our teachers are highly qualified and have experience in teaching reading. They provide all students with the direct, explicit instruction that they need. They also have the ability to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students. Additionally, teachers use a variety of teaching styles, e.g., peer-to-peer, hands on, one-on-one, direct instruction, student facilitated lessons, learning centers that contain activities based on student learning styles and hands-on technology. They are able to motivate students to participate and be fully engaged by accessing and utilizing outside resources to supplement what is needed to instruct students. The effectiveness of their instruction is monitored regularly by analysis of student common assessments and teacher data derived from administrative walk-throughs and observations.

We also use many resources and activities to help enhance literacy within the classroom including: guided reading lessons for difficult text, differentiation based on process and product in all content areas, web-based reading materials, interactive white boards, a Skype Lab, common assessments in reading/writing, and monitoring and analyzing student work in professional learning communities.

Additionally, we offer Team Teaching classes to address the unique needs of our students with disabilities. Our team teachers collaborate with the regular education teachers in order to maximize learning by focusing on differentiation and modification. Although these specialized services are put in place to support our Students with Disabilities (SWD) community, the collaborative effort also serves our regular education population.

Students' daily schedules include 90-100 minutes literacy blocks that include scheduled time for intervention, disciplinary literacy in content areas, and time for collaborative planning. At Tri-Cities we have a core program that provides continuity based on a carefully articulated scope and sequence of skills that is integrated into a rich curriculum of literary and informational texts. Students' performance on common assessments is examined regularly to identify areas of instruction with the greatest needs.

Administration conducts classroom observations using the Teacher Keys assessment tool to gauge current practice in literacy instruction. The faculty participates in professional learning on: using data to inform instructional decisions and explicit teaching; selecting appropriate text and strategies for instruction; telling students specific strategies to be learned and why; modeling of how strategy is used; providing guidance and independent practice with feedback; discussing when and where strategies are to be applied; and differentiating instruction.

Our parents also play a vital role in helping us promote literacy. They volunteer monthly by participating in a program called, *The 300*. We also have a Title 1 Parent Resource Room that has many books, electronic instructional information, and informational pamphlets, internet access, and a Parent Liaison who provides assistance to parents as needed.

***B. Teachers are beginning to develop a plan for writing instruction across all subject areas.***

Teachers in content areas provide instruction in and opportunities for developing an argument, writing coherent informational and explanatory texts, and writing narratives to explore content area topics. A plan for instruction in writing is consistent with CCGPS that is articulated vertically and horizontally. A coordinated plan has been developed for writing instruction across all subject areas that includes: Explicit instruction, Guided practice, Independent practice, and Formative Assessments.

All subject area teachers participate in professional learning on best practices in writing instruction in all content areas. In every class at least one day a week, teachers provide instruction in and opportunities for:

1. Developing an argument citing relevant and reliable textual evidence.
2. Writing coherent informational or explanatory texts.
3. Writing narratives to develop real or imaginary experiences to explore content area topics.

Technology is also used for production, publishing, and communication across the curriculum.

Tri-Cities enforces and promotes writing in all content areas because research says that it is important to “require all students—especially those less experienced—to write extensively so that they can be comfortable writing extended prose in elementary school and writing essays in

high school (minimum five pages) and college (ten pages). Create writing assignments that ask students to interpret and analyze a variety of texts and to write in various genres,” (*Writer’s Workshop: Rapid City Area Schools*, pg. 4).

Additionally, research states that schools should, “Employ functional approaches to teaching and applying rules of grammar so that students understand how language works in a variety of contexts.” This helps to, “foster collaborative writing processes, include the writing formats of new media as an integral component of writing, use formative assessment strategies that provide students with feedback while developing drafts, employ multiple assessment measures, including portfolios, to assess students’ development as writers.” (NCTE, 2008, p. 5)

***C. Action: Teachers work to develop and maintain interest and engagement as students progress through school.***

Teachers have received professional development in strategies for developing and maintaining interest and engagement appropriate to their grade levels. Teachers’ efforts include the following:

- Providing students with opportunities to self-select reading material and topics for research.
- Taking steps to provide students with an understanding of the relevance of academic assignments to their lives.
- Increasing access to texts that students consider engaging.
- Increasing opportunities for collaborating with peers in the learning process.
- Scaffolding students’ background knowledge and competency in navigating literary and informational texts to ensure their confidence and self-efficacy.



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

Research states that it is important for schools to...

- Provide students with opportunities to make choices, particularly in what texts to read.  
This highlights the importance of having rich classroom libraries.
- Provide students with work that allows them to experience success, thus increasing their self-efficacy.
- Construct opportunities for students to work with peers.
- Incorporate technology into literacy through the use of e-readers, blogs, and social networking.

### **Building Block 5**

#### ***A. Action: Use information developed from the school-based data teams to inform RTI process.***

All instructional personnel are provided professional development training in data analysis, data teaming, and scientifically proven, research-based, and evidence-based intervention strategies. According to research, “professional learning in intervention techniques permits teachers to incorporate strategies that allow students to access texts, to practice communication skills, and to use information. Professional learning centered on cognitive strategies may include paraphrasing, summarizing, synthesizing, predicting, and drawing conclusions” (GaDOE, *The Why*, 2010, pg. 124).

School leaders use the information garnered by the data teams to help inform the RTI process because, “data-driven decision making must be available at the classroom level.” We currently have an RTI team that is comprised of teachers, school leaders, community members,

and parents, “who serve as the driving force for instructional decision making in the building” (GaDOE, *The Why*, 2010, pgs. 125-126). Data is collected, analyzed, and disaggregated throughout the school year from local, district and state standardized test to identify at-risk populations of students. This data is used to inform the intervention strategies needed to support student progress. Administration then monitors those intervention strategies as well as the data showing progress or digression. Monitoring also includes reviews of formative assessment data, and classroom observations.

Our teachers are participating in ongoing professional development on the CCGPS and how to understand the test data that assesses these standards because, “implementation of RTI requires a school-wide common understanding of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (GPS), assessment practices, and instructional pedagogy.” Additionally, “as Georgia moves towards full implementation of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS), the standards are the foundation for the learning that occurs in each classroom for all students.” Additionally, teachers receive ongoing training in best practices, “to support the RTI pyramid tiers 1 and 2 because the focus is on all students accessing the CCGPS by 2014” (GaDOE, *The Why*, 2010, pg. 126).

#### Plan for Tiered Literacy Instruction

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-step approach to instructional intervention used to provide support and services to struggling learners. Teachers meet twice each month in Informal Collaboration (IC) meetings to discuss students who exhibit early signs of struggling to grasp and maintain academic material. Teachers meet in these IC Professional Learning Vertical Teams in order to discuss proven strategies, as well as to offer new strategies for the requesting teacher to use. Classroom teachers collect formative and summative assessment data on

students' progress and share this information with the PLC vertical team. The team discusses progress made or receives additional strategies from their team members. After nine weeks of strategy implementation and collecting data on students' performance, teachers will then use the data to determine whether the student should be moved to Tier II of the RTI process.

To support our RTI approach, we want to provide quality professional learning in differentiating instruction to give teachers continuous feedback and systemic monitoring of these best practices throughout the school.

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

Classroom teachers work within data teams to review assessments in order to determine what students need additional support and the types of supports that will be conducive to the classroom environment. Research states that, “teachers routinely address student needs and environmental factors to create the optimal learning environment” (GaDOE, *The Why*, 2010, pg. 126). This is accomplished using various intervention strategies. For example, “seating arrangements, fluid and flexible grouping, lesson pacing, collaborative work, demonstrations of learning, differentiation of instruction, and student feedback.”

Teachers are provided instructional strategies to identify those students who need additional support. According to research, “The teacher’s ability to identify areas of focus, scaffold the learning for the individual to reach the expectation, and support the solidification of new learning behaviors is vital to student success.”

Data teams and school leaders have criteria established in order to determine a student’s entrance and exit from the RTI tiers. The 2010-2011 Georgia Literacy Task Force recommends the following for interventions in general and for RTI in particular:

- Schools and districts should establish entrance and exit criteria for tiers.
- Movement between Tier 1 and Tier 2 is fluid and flexible. Adequate time should be given for the Tier 1 instructional program to be implemented before determining Tier 2 support is needed.

Students performing below grade level are given tiered, evidence-based interventions in the general education setting. Students who make expected rates of progress with interventions are considered to be in the appropriate general education setting. If a student does not adequately respond to all three tiers of general education intervention, then we will consider a referral for special education services. Our RTI model considers “failing to respond to well designed and implemented interventions” as evidence of an underlying disability. RTI is an early intervention model that Tri-Cities will implement rather than a “wait to fail” model.

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

Teachers identify those students who need support beyond what is available within the classroom. The students are then referred to the schools reading specialist. According to research it may be beneficial to a school to have a reading specialist who works with the students outside of the regular classroom setting. He/she “uses specific research-based practices to address the group’s reading needs while keeping a clear focus on the GPS, grade level expectations in the content areas, and transfer of learning to the general classroom.” Additionally, a regular education teacher is beneficial however, “highly qualified specialists are recommended for struggling readers.”

Instructional personnel work with a reading specialist in order to put together a plan that will focus on each student’s individual needs because, “collaboration between the intervention

teacher and the general teacher team is required. During the intervention, progress monitoring is used to determine the student’s response to the intervention.”

The classroom teacher and the reading specialist determine which evaluations are to be used to assess student progress and how frequently those assessments will be given because, “the progress monitoring tool and frequency of implementation [should be] collaboratively determined by the teaching team and the intervention teacher.” Additionally, research tells us that, “schools should identify common formative assessments and a common protocol for analyzing and recording student progress... A universal screening process [should be] used to identify students requiring additional assessments in reading, math, and/or behavior. These additional assessments ensure accurate identification of struggling students or students not performing at expected levels.”

Below is a sample of the way our Tier 1 and Tier 2 program interventions function:

- For 6 weeks, 3-5 days a week for at least 15 minutes students receive prescribed intervention strategies.
- They are in groups of 8 or less.
- District and/or school benchmark assessments are used to determine student progress toward grade level mastery of the CCGPS.
- A universal screening process is used to identify students needing additional assessments in reading, math, and/or behavior. These additional assessments ensure accurate identification of students needed supplementary support.

During Tier 2, parents are invited to attend a series of meetings to discuss their student’s academic performance and on-going progress or failure to achieve. Parents are given strategies to

use outside of school during this time. Students performing below grade level are given tiered, evidence-based interventions in the general education setting. Students who make expected rates of progress with interventions are considered to be in the appropriate general education setting. If a student does not adequately respond to all three tiers of general education intervention, then we consider a referral to special education. Movement between Tier 1 and Tier 2 is fluid and flexible. Adequate time should be given for the Tier 1 instructional program to be implemented before determining if Tier 2 support is needed.

***D. Action: In Tier 3, ensure that Student Support Team (SST) and Data Team monitor progress jointly.***

Data teams (expanded to include the School Psychologist, the ESOL teacher, etc.) meet to:

- Discuss students who fail to respond to interventions.
- Receive professional learning on Student Support Team (SST) processes and procedures as outlined in the GaDOE manual and guidance.
- Verify implementation of proven interventions.
- Ensure that interventionists have maintained fidelity to intervention protocol prior to referral to SST.
- SST/data teams meet at least once a month to discuss student progress based on daily interventions that include a minimum of four data points.
- Interventions are delivered 1:1 – 1:3 during a protected time daily by a trained interventionist.
- SST/data teams follow the established protocol to determine the specific reason when an EL fails to make progress (i.e., language difficulty or difference vs. disorder).

Our interventions take place 4-5 days a week for at least 30 minutes. They happen in groups of 4 or less. The students’ progress is monitored weekly. In some cases we have a need for Intensive Intervention (II). During this phase interventions are performed by general education teachers, paraprofessionals, SST’s, ESOL teachers, and other teacher leaders. They use the following strategies:

- Books in audio format
- Technology hardware
- Observations
- Continuation of Tier 2 recommendations and interventions

After the appropriate amount of time had lapsed, the data team assesses the students’ progress and determine if continued support through Tier 2 is required, if additional Tier 2 interventions are required, or if Tier 3 support, in addition to Tier 1 and Tier 2 is required.

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

In addition to Tier 1 through 3, targeted students participate in specialized programs, methodologies, or instructional deliveries. This provides a greater frequency of progress monitoring of student response to interventions. Research states that, “Tier 4 is developed for students who need additional support and who meet eligibility criteria for special program placement, including gifted education and special education.” Special Education Teachers, Speech Language Pathologist, and General Education teachers are involved with the activities aforementioned.

Therefore, to ensure that the most highly qualified teachers provide Tier 4 instruction, the educators mentioned above, participate in professional learning communities to ensure strict alignment with CCGPS. School schedules are developed to ensure least restrictive environment

(LRE). Building and system administrators are familiar with funding formulas affecting students in special programming. Most highly qualified and experienced teachers support the delivery of instruction for students with the most significant needs (i.e., best Math II teacher teams with best special education teacher for team-taught instruction). Special education, ESOL, and gifted teachers participate in professional learning communities to ensure strict alignment with delivery of CCGPS, even in separate settings.

With these effective tiers in place, prior to specialized services, more struggling students are successful and do not require this degree of intervention. Tier 4 does not represent a location for services, but indicates a layer of interventions that are not provided in the general education class or in a separate setting. For students with disabilities needing special education and related services, Tier 4 provides instruction that is targeted and specialized to meet students' needs. If a student has already been determined as having a disability, then the school district does not require additional documentation of prior interventions in the effect the child demonstrates additional delays. The special education instruction and documentation of progress in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) will constitute prior intervention and appropriate instruction. In some cases, the student may require a comprehensive evaluation to determine eligibility of additional disability areas.

### **Building Block 6**

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

At Tri-Cities it is important for novice teachers to receive professional development and coursework in literacy within the content they teach. Research suggests that, “the key to reading achievement in schools is to provide a well prepared and knowledgeable teacher in every



classroom.” Additionally, school leaders look for new hires that have received professional development in literacy within their discipline by utilizing specific questions that provide evidence of such training because research says that, “content literacy strategies and reading instructional best practices need to be the focus in pre-service courses. Requiring teachers to demonstrate competency in theory and application ensures having a quality teacher in every classroom” (GaDOE, *The Why*, 2010, pg. 150).

Our school leaders and community representatives consistently engage in communication with representatives from the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) in order to make certain pre-service teachers are receiving coursework in literacy within the content they teach. Research says that, “Because reading is a priority in the state of Georgia, it is a goal of the Georgia Department of Education to ensure that the overwhelming majority of students are proficient in reading. Also, “all quality teaching in all classrooms necessitates skillful leadership at the community, district, school, and classroom levels. Ambitious learning goals for students and educators require significant changes in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and leadership practices” (GaDOE, *The Why*, 2010, pg. 84). Therefore, collaboration has been established with other agencies and teams within the Department to ensure that all of our students’ needs are being met through a tiered learning process.

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

All faculty members who serve as instructional personnel participate in literacy instruction which include: disciplinary literacy within content areas and the school’s core program. Additionally, all faculty members who serve as instructional personnel participate in professional development on technology that supports literacy development. These professional learning opportunities include: Achievement Series, SAMS, E-Beam and Document Reader,

Read 180, SRI, Microsoft Publisher, Movie Maker, Distance Learning, Skype, Google Documents, Web design, Edmodo, and simply the integration of technology within the classroom. Tri-Cities High School focuses on professional learning because research says that:

The Georgia Literacy Task Force, 2010-2011, recommends on-going purposeful, differentiated professional learning for teachers by:

- Strengthening mentoring programs.
- Providing online and face-to-face professional learning in literacy.
- Providing direct teacher support through webinars, ETCs, and Video Conferencing.
- Consider providing a monthly “problem/solution” series from the Department in which issues that teachers identify as obstacles to teaching are addressed through modeling or a video sequence.
- Provide instruction in when to select specific strategies and how to implement those strategies effectively.
- Maximizing the effect of excellent instruction by establishing a model classroom and providing opportunities for teachers to visit it.
- Videotaping classrooms implementing the CCGPS modules created through the Gates Grant (see Section 8. E.).
- Videotaping instructional sequences to be posted online.
- Developing a library of excellent instructional videos to be accessed through GSO.org.
- Identifying instructional opportunities from evolving technologies.
- Providing professional learning in the area of assessment:

- A. How to administer grade-level assessments
- B. How to organize the data
- C. How to interpret the data
- D. How to respond to data through instruction
- E. How to interpret data from assessments given in the grade or setting from which the student has come
- F. Providing support to content area teachers in the area of literacy instruction within their discipline

Our principal and the administrative staff support the efforts of Tri-Cities’ teachers to promote literacy across the curriculum because research states that, “the role of leadership in developing literacy in the nation, state, district, school and classroom cannot be overstated”

(GaDOE, *The Why*, 2010, pg. 156).

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### **Needs Assessment, Concerns, and Root Cause Analysis**

Our school is constantly reviewing data to identify student needs. We conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to support our School Improvement Plan. Literacy needs are identified through this rigorous process. Each member of our school team has a part in the completion of our comprehensive needs assessment. Data is collected and analyzed throughout the school year from local, district and state standardized tests to identify at-risk populations of students. Team members gather and analyze data from the following: Student Support Team referrals, Response to Intervention, Informal Collaboration process, school discipline data, and School Social Worker referrals.

As part of our needs assessment process, school leadership meets with individual teachers to review their grade level outcomes by content area and to discuss the teacher's plan for meeting individual student academic needs. School leadership monitors the implementation of the teachers' action plans and provides support as needed. Monitoring may occur in many different ways to include a review of formative classroom data on a regular basis, period teacher-leadership conferences, and classroom observations. Teams of certified staff members develop intervention plans for students who are at-risk of not meeting minimal standards. English Language Arts and Social Studies teachers along with the Math and Science teachers collaborate in vertical teams to analyze data, plan for instruction, and develop common assessments that assess students' mastery of standards. Professional Learning Communities support and plan for more effective instructional alignment based on the needs of the students. Student data are collected and disaggregated from End of Course Tests. Data are also retrieved from the Student Assessment Management System (SAMS). Data are collected by subgroups (economically

disadvantaged, gender, and ethnicity). Student discipline and attendance data are collected from our student information system.

### ***Student Literacy Needs***

Through our needs assessment process, we identified the following **strengths**:

- The after school tutorial programs provide additional support for deficient readers.
- Professional Learning Assessment Instruction and Data Teams (PLAID) meet weekly to discuss student progress, failures, and possible intervention strategies for deficient readers.
- The Language Arts Department is dedicated to improving literacy instruction and partners with the Media Center to promote high interest reading materials.
- The Media Center sponsors a book club geared toward high interest materials and open to all students.
- The bi-weekly advisement sessions are used as opportunities for students to engage in the reading and discussion of multidisciplinary reading materials.

However, through our needs assessment process, we identified numerous **weaknesses**:

- Many of our students lack fluency which impacts comprehension in all content areas. Students with processing deficits have difficulty reading with appropriate rate, prosody, and accuracy. A decrease in fluency rates results in a decrease in comprehension.
- Students are unable to produce writing products that establish appropriate organizational structures, engage the reader, and maintain a coherent focus.
- Limited vocabulary development continues to be a challenge for both writing and reading proficiency. Our students often have difficulties understanding science, social studies, and math curriculum and assessments because of limited content vocabulary.

- There continues to be a significant number of students who enter Tri-Cities from middle school ill-prepared for high school having failed one or more mandated assessments and yet, they were still promoted.
- Results from the chart below indicate a steady decline over a three year period on both the ACT and SAT.

Test	2008-09	2009-2010	2010-2011
ACT	15.3	16.5	16.7
SAT	425	428	419

### ***Teacher Professional Learning Needs***

The School Leadership Team distributed an informal online survey in order to collect data on professional learning needs. Data collected from the survey included the following needs: structured and practical professional development regarding the integration of literacy with math and science curricula; additional training to support ELL instruction in an inclusive setting, co-teaching strategies; and techniques for utilizing technology across content. Teachers volunteered to forego their planning periods in order to observe exemplary teachers integrate data and technology into their instruction.

### ***Technology Needs***

The changing nature of literacy necessitates effective listening, writing, speaking, reading of print and electronic format, and comprehension of nonverbal systems. Without question, present-day students are more visual and more accustomed to the use of technology in virtually

all aspects of their daily lives. Using technology and the Internet develops reading and thinking strategies because not only must students be able to wade through the huge amount of material that is available, but they must also be able to compare what they see with their own beliefs and community, state and national standards. The use of technology inside every classroom is a vital need that can aid in differentiation of instruction and is necessary for teachers to reach a student's learning potential. Additionally, the district must be made aware of our need to use various Websites, technology plans and Internet filtering software as a part of daily lessons. We can use 21<sup>st</sup> Century technology skills to meet our students at their level of need.

### ***Family Engagement Needs***

At Tri-cities, we know our strides to improve literacy in the school must be supported at home. As a result, we provide various opportunities for parent involvement and enrichment throughout the school year. These opportunities include: “The 300” (a parent group that comes to the school to assist teachers with student transitions, cafeteria duty, mentoring, and minor discipline infractions.), PTSA, and Title one workshops that cover various topics for personal and family improvement. We use various forms of media such as newsletters, website, email, and calling trees to promote these events. Despite our outreach efforts, only about 15% of our parent and guardian population attend these school events.

Throughout the school year, parents are offered multiple opportunities to discuss student progress with teaching staff. However, less than 10% of parents participate at scheduled events such as: Parent Nights, Parent University or Parent Teacher conference.



Tri-Cities High School – Needs Assessment, Concerns, and Root Cause Analysis

Sub group	Standard	Assessment	Current Strategies	Future Strategies	Transitions (Existing)	Root Causes
Students with Disabilities	Increase the percentage of Students with Disabilities who meet/exceed on the Ninth Grade Literature EOCT by 25% and GHS GT by 20%	Weekly and common assessments, benchmarks/Checkpoints, EOCT, and GHS GT	Comprehension Guided reading instruction Web-based standards mastery program Writing-Student workshop Literary Magazine Vocabulary- Print rich Environment Writing-Student workshop	Theater Digital storytelling Published author visits School-wide novel study Classroom libraries eBooks/eReaders Content area database subscriptions Writing Consultant	End of the Year transition Meet at the beginning of the year Curriculum Night 9th grade visits colleges and universities IEP meetings revise goals for entering general education or next grade level	There is no established school wide protocol for looking at data.  There is a need for more professional development on using and understanding data.
All Students	Increase the percentage of Students who meet/exceed on the Ninth Grade Literature EOCT by 25% and the GHS GT by 5%	Weekly and common assessments, benchmarks/Checkpoints, EOCT, and GHS GT	Comprehension Guided reading instruction Web-based standards mastery program Writing-Student workshop Literary Magazine	Theater Digital storytelling Published author visits School-wide novel study Classroom libraries eBooks/eReaders Content area database subscriptions Writing Consultant	End of the Year transition Meet at the beginning of the year Curriculum Night 9th grade visits colleges and universities	a. All faculty members are not participating in all aspects of explicit literacy instruction.

*Tri-Cities High School – Needs Assessment, Concerns, and Root Cause Analysis*

<p>English Language Learners</p>	<p>Increase the percentage of English Language Learners who meet/exceed on the Ninth Grade Literature EOCT by 25% and the GHSGT by 20%</p>	<p>Weekly and common assessments, benchmarks/Checkpoints, EOCT, and GHSGT</p>	<p>Fluency- Audio books Bilingual book packs Databases (9-12) Vocabulary- Print rich Environment Writing-Student workshop</p>	<p>Theater Digital storytelling Published author visits School-wide novel study Classroom libraries eBooks/eReaders Content area database subscriptions Writing Consultant</p>	<p>End of the Year transition Meet at the beginning of the year Curriculum Night 9th grade visits colleges and universities</p>	<p>a. We do not have a fully operational RTI program and team.</p>
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**Analysis and Identification of Student and Teacher Data**

Lit EOCT	2011-2012				2010-2011			
	Does Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds	Total Tested	Does Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds	Total Tested
	%	%	%		%	%	%	
<b>9th Grade</b>	20.4%	60.2%	19.4%	475	29.9%	52.3%	17.8%	455
--SWD	75.7%	24.3%		37	69.4%	30.6%		49
--ELL	60.0%	40.0%		25	60.6%	39.4%		33
<b>11<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	17%	70%	13%	453	19.2%	67.5%	13.3%	428
--SWD	58.8%	41.2%		34	50%	50%		46
--ELL	25%	75%		20	52.6%	47.4%		19
<b>Writing Test</b>								
<b>11<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	7.7%	88.5%	3.8	426	5.1%	98.1%	3.1%	415
--SWD	27%	73.6%		41	47%	53%		36
--ELL	28%	72%		18	53%	47%		15

% FRL	% SWD	% ELL	Mobility Rate
86.2	10.21	4.68	35.7

School Year	Percentage of Certified Teachers Retained
2011-12	79.9
2010-11	92.8
2009-10	85.1

Here at Tri-cities we have seen small gains in the number of students who met the standards in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade EOCT. In the 2010-2011 school year, 52.3% of the 9<sup>th</sup> graders met the standards Lit EOCT while in the 2011-2012 school year 60.2% met the standard. We also noticed a slim 2% growth in the number of students who exceeded the standards. In the 2010-2011 school year we had 17.8% of the students to exceed, and in the 2011-2012 school year we had 19.4% to score in the exceed range. Out of the 455 9<sup>th</sup> grade students tested in the 2010-2011 school year, 29.9% did not meet standards. Out of the 475 9<sup>th</sup> grade students tested in the 2011-2012 school year, 20.4% did not meet standards. In the students with disabilities demographic of 2010-2011, 69.4% of the 49 students tested, scored in the does not meet range. In the 2011-2012 schools year, 75.7% of the 37 students tested, scored in the does not meet range. The students of the English language Learners demographic of 2010-2011, 60.6% of the 33 students tested scored in the does not meet range. In the 2011-2012 schools year, 60% of the 25 students tested, scored in the does not meet range. None of the students in these sub groups scored in the exceeds range.

In the 2010-2011 school year, 67.5% of the 11<sup>th</sup> graders met the standards Lit EOCT while in the 2011-2012 school year 70% met the standard. In the 2010-2011 school year we had 13.3% of the students to exceed. In the 2011-2012 school year we had 13% to score in the exceed range. Of the 428 11<sup>th</sup> grade students tested in the 2010-2011 school year, 19.2% did not

meet standards. Out of the 453 11<sup>th</sup> grade students tested in the 2011-2012 school year, 17% did not meet standards. In the students with disabilities demographic of 2010-2011, 50% of the 46 students tested, scored in the does not meet range. In the 2011-2012 schools year, 58.8% of the 34 students tested, scored in the does not meet range. The students of the English language Learners demographic of 2010-2011, 52.6% of the 19 students tested scored in the does not meet range. In the 2011-2012 schools year, 25% of the 20 students tested, scored in the does not meet range. None of the students in these sub groups scored in the exceeds range.

In a comparative view of the Writing test scores of the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years we observed a 10% point decrease in the number of students who scored in the meets range. Of the 415 11<sup>th</sup> grade students tested in the 2010-2011 school year, 98.1% met standards. Out of the 426 11<sup>th</sup> grade students tested in the 2011-2012 school year, 88.5% did met standards. In the students with disabilities demographic of 2010-2011, 47% of the 36 students tested, scored in the does not meet range. In the 2011-2012 schools year, 27% of the 41 students tested, scored in the does not meet range. The students of the English language Learners demographic of 2010-2011, 53% of the 15 students tested scored in the does not meet range. In the 2011-2012 schools year, 28% of the 18 students tested, scored in the does not meet range. None of the students in these sub groups scored in the exceeds range.

At Tri-cities 86.2% of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Students with disabilities account for 10.21% of our population while English language learners account for 4.68% of the population. We also have a 46% mobility rate.

From the 2009-2010 to the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years we have had a teacher retention rate of 85.1; 92.8%; 79.9%, respectively.

### **Project Plan, Procedures, Goals, Objectives, and Support**

Based on our needs assessment data, Tri-Cities has developed the following goals to support our school-wide literacy plan. By the end of the grant period...

- Student achievement on the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade English Language Arts End of Course Test for Students with Disabilities (SWD) and English Language Learners (ELL) will increase 25 percentage points for each group.
- The percentage of SWD and ELL who meets/exceeds on the American Literature EOCT will increase by 25 percentage points.
- Using a cohort model starting in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, students will increase their Lexile scores as measured by the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) by a range of 80-100 points per year.
- Using a cohort model starting in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, student graduation rate will increase by 20% and increase the percentage of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students who leave 9<sup>th</sup> grade on track for graduation by 10%.
- Increase the percentage of students who meet/exceed on the GHSGWT by 5%.
- Increase the percentage of SWD and ELL who meet/exceed on the GHSGWT by 20% for each group.
- Increase the students' verbal scores on the SAT by 30 points.
- Increase the students' scores for the ACT by 4.2 points.
- Increase the number of students scoring a 4 or 5 on Advanced Placement exams.

**Project objectives that relate to implementing the goals identified:**

Our project objectives build on existing initiatives and include new strategies to help us achieve our literacy goals for targeted students. With grant funding, we will implement the following strategies to better address our areas of concern:

- The new Common Core Standards call for greater rigor in all academic areas. In order to meet this requirement we will need additional instructional materials and supports to impact students' achievement through rich literary experiences.
- Expand our Writing Lab to include writing assistance and writing instruction across content areas.
- Launch an eliteracy magazine that showcases faculty and student writing through poetry, short-stories, and columns.
- Establish an Open Microphone Program for faculty and students to display literacy talents.
- Offer Parent Literacy Workshops with topics including Financial, Computer, and Occupational Literacy.
- Provide a print rich environment in our In School Suspension program and classroom libraries.
- Offer smaller reading classes for more individualized instruction.
- Implement a research-based reading program designed to increase reading achievement for struggling readers.
- Implement a Summer Program for 2 weeks that will focus on enriching some students, SWD with special education teacher, ELL with an ESOL teacher and students on level 1 with a

regular classroom teacher. Ratios will be small. Develop the curriculum to close gaps to make learning engaging and exciting.

- Engage students in 2 hours of literacy instruction daily.
- Provide robust technology resources that will engage learners.
- Provide additional professional development in literacy instruction, educational technology, differentiating instruction, and the Response to Intervention process.
- Offer Reading Endorsement Certification through Metro RESA.

The literacy program will be implemented school-wide and formative and summative assessment data will be collected using the assessment school protocol, which was discussed earlier.

The table below summarizes our implementation plan and identifies the faculty and staff members who are responsible.

RTI Tiers	Time	Personnel	Strategies
<b>Tier I</b>			
<b>Core-Curriculum</b>			
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	<i>(Common Core Georgia Performance Standards)</i>	All certified personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole group instruction</li> <li>• Small group instruction</li> <li>• Centers</li> <li>• Technology/Websites</li> <li>• Instructional Calendars</li> <li>• Informal progress monitoring</li> <li>• Prescription assessment to design instruction</li> <li>• Standards based classroom</li> <li>• Universal screening</li> </ul>
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade			
11 <sup>th</sup> Grade			
12 <sup>th</sup> Grade			
ALL STUDENTS	2.0 Hours of Literacy Instruction		



RTI Tiers	Time	Personnel	Strategies
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early morning tutoring</li> <li>• Differentiated instruction for all learners</li> <li>• Use of eReaders</li> <li>• mobile labs and interactive white boards.</li> </ul>
<b>Tier 2 Needs-Based Learning</b>			
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade 11 <sup>th</sup> Grade 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade  Students are identified as at-risk, performing below expected levels or needing specific supports to make adequate progress.	1 hour extended day 2 hours (Identified, ELL and SWD students) twice a week	General Education Teacher  ESOL Teacher  Special Education Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small group instruction</li> <li>• Web-based instruction</li> <li>• Informal Collaboration</li> <li>• Differentiated instruction for all learners</li> <li>• Individualized progress monitoring</li> <li>• Research based interventions</li> <li>• Guided Reading groups</li> <li>• Provide intensive, systematic instruction on up to three foundational reading skills in small groups to students who score below the benchmark score on universal screening.</li> </ul>
<b>Tier 3 Student Support Services</b>			
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	30 minutes daily (Identified, ESOL, and SWD)	Reading Endorsed Certified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided Instruction</li> <li>• Instructional Games</li> <li>• Progress Monitoring</li> </ul>

RTI Tiers	Time	Personnel	Strategies
<p>10<sup>th</sup> Grade 11<sup>th</sup> Grade 12<sup>th</sup> Grade</p> <p>Students who continue to struggle without measurable progress after a period of 12 weeks in Tier I and Tier II</p>	<p>students) 1 hour extended day 2 hours (Identified, ELL and SWD students) twice a week</p>	<p>Teacher General Ed. Teacher ESOL Teacher Counselor Instructional Support Teacher(IST) Student Support Team(SST) Interventionist Data Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EOCT practice materials</li> <li>• Vocabulary Acquisition</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tier 4 Student Support Services</b></p>			
<p>9<sup>th</sup> Grade 10<sup>th</sup> Grade 11<sup>th</sup> Grade 12<sup>th</sup> Grade</p>	<p>Determined by Individual Educational Plan (IEP)</p>	<p>Special Ed. Teacher General Ed. Teacher Speech-Language Pathologist Instructional Support Teacher(IST)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech and Language services</li> <li>• Co-teaching</li> <li>• Collaborative teaching</li> <li>• Team Teaching</li> <li>• Specially Designed Instruction</li> <li>• Second Language support</li> <li>• Due process</li> <li>• Push-In</li> </ul>

This RTI system includes the following essential components:

- High-quality instruction for all students, demonstrated through scientific research and evidence-based practice to produce high rates of learning for most students.
- Universal screening of all students with periodic monitoring of students' progress in the curriculum.
- Interventions for struggling learners provided at increasing levels of intensity and matched to individual student need.
- An integrated system of assessment and data collection for identification of students struggling to meet academic and behavioral expectations.
- Mechanisms for monitoring students' learning rates and levels of performance and using that information in ongoing problem solving and decision making.
- An approach for determining which students need additional help and about the intensity and likely duration of interventions, based on each student's response to instruction across multiple tiers of intervention.

To support tiered instruction, we include additional time for common planning and collaboration among teachers. The school schedule is designed to reflect designated times for common content area teacher meetings, departmental meetings, and vertical planning meetings. Most learning team meetings are scheduled during common planning periods, and teachers meet during the school day each week. Teachers also meet afterschool in Professional Learning Communities to discuss student data and instructional strategies that work best for the struggling learners. Informal Collaboration meetings are also held during the school day, and are designed for teachers to discuss and provide support strategies to each other for those students who have

been identified as may be in need of additional support to meet current academic goals and expectations.

Our project objectives are built on existing initiatives and include new strategies to help us achieve our literacy goals. Tri-Cities has effective screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic tools in place to identify achievement levels of all students, advanced as well as struggling. Common mid-course assessments are in place for use across classrooms and include a variety of formats (multiple choice, short answer, constructed response, performance tasks and essay). The assessment and intervention materials align with students’ needs are available to use. All teachers and administrators are trained at the beginning of the school year to be proficient in administering and interpreting all assessments.

**Goals to be funded with other sources:**

Parent liaisons	Title I Funds
UGA Mock Writing Assessment for 10 <sup>th</sup> grade students	Title I Funds
Data Support Specialist	Title I Funds
3 Extended learning teachers	Title I Funds
Consultant (PLCs)	Title I Funds
Purchase professional books for PLC book studies	Title I Funds
Additional transportation for Extended Learning	Title I Funds
CCGPS professional learning from MRESA consultant	Cost Center
Purchase extended texts for students for CCGPS	Cost Center
Reading Endorsement from MRESA	District / Title I Funds

Sample Schedule (INTERVENTION) 2012-2013

8:10-8:37	Breakfast and Independent Reading	
8:37-8:45	Morning Announcements	
8:45 – 9:15	Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) Literacy Intervention	1 <sup>st</sup> 15 minutes of the instructional block, all teachers provide content related reading for students.
9:15 – 9:50	Instructional Block	Standards-based Instruction
9:50 – 10:05	Claim, Data, Commentary (CDC) Literacy Intervention	Last 15 minutes of instructional block students will write a response to learning giving a claim, supporting that claim with data from the lesson, and providing commentary about the learning in a well-developed short response.
10:10 – 10:25	Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) Literacy Intervention	1 <sup>st</sup> 15 minutes of the instructional block, all teachers provide content related reading for students.
10:25-11:25	Instructional Block	Standards-based Instruction
11:25 – 11:40	Claim, Data, Commentary (CDC) Literacy Intervention	Last 15 minutes of instructional block students will write a response to learning giving a claim, supporting that claim

		with data from the lesson, and providing commentary about the learning in a well-developed short response.
<b>A-Lunch Classes</b>		
11:50 – 12:20	A-Lunch Book Club (Media Center) Coffee House	Independent Reading
12:25 – 12:40	Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) Literacy Intervention	1st 15 minutes of the instructional block, all teachers provide content related reading for students.
12:40 – 1:50	Instructional Block	Standards-based Instruction
1:50 – 2:05	Claim, Data, Commentary (CDC) Literacy Intervention	Last 15 minutes of instructional block students will write a response to learning giving a claim, supporting that claim with data from the lesson, and providing commentary about the learning in a well-developed short response.

### Assessment / Data Analysis Plan

Tri-Cities High School utilizes a number of standardized assessments (both high-stakes and low-stakes) in order to drive instruction for all students. The table below outlines our current assessment practices:

Assessment	Purpose	Students Tested	Frequency
GPS Checkpoints	To monitor progress toward student mastery of Georgia Performance Standards in various English/Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, and Science courses. All tests contain literacy components.	All GPS course student, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algebra</li> <li>• Geometry</li> <li>• US History</li> <li>• World History</li> <li>• American Lit.</li> <li>• Economics</li> </ul>	Twice per Semester
Common Summative Assessments	Every department collaborates to develop common summative assessments in order to regularly assess mastery of state standards for core courses.	Students in all <b>core</b> content areas, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Math</li> <li>• English</li> <li>• Science</li> <li>• Social Studies</li> </ul>	Approximately every month
Common Formative Assessments	Departments collaborate to develop common formative assessments in order to identify and bridge gaps in student understanding <i>before</i> summative assessments.	Students in all <b>core</b> content areas, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Math</li> <li>• English</li> <li>• Science</li> <li>• Social Studies</li> </ul>	Weekly
Georgia Performance Standards: End of Course Tests	The Georgia Department of Education administers an EOCT and the conclusion of designated courses within each core content area in	All GPS course student, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algebra</li> <li>• Geometry</li> </ul>	At the end of each course

Assessment	Purpose	Students Tested	Frequency
(EOCT)	order to obtain a final assessment of content mastery for each student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US History</li> <li>• World History</li> <li>• American Lit.</li> <li>• Economics</li> </ul>	
Georgia High School Graduation Test for Writing	The Georgia Department of Education administers a writing test to all juniors in order to assess students' ability to structure a five-paragraph persuasive essay.	All 11 <sup>th</sup> grade students.	Once per year
ACT/SAT	The ACT and SAT are used as tools to assess college-readiness.	All students who apply to a four-year college/university	ACT: 6 times/yr SAT: 5 times/yr
Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI)*	The SRI is a universal screener used to assess reading comprehension for all students (K-12).	All TCHS students	Three times per year

**\*Note:** SRI testing will begin once the Striving Readers Literacy plan is fully implemented.

10 additional faculty persons will need to be trained in administering the SRI.

**Data Analysis Protocol**

As illustrated in the table below, Tri-Cities High School utilizes a number of different assessments to inform curriculum and instruction. Every one of these assessments, provide meaningful data about student literacy. Data is primarily analyzed within our collaborative planning teams. Each core content course is taught by a team of three to four teachers. Every member of the team shares the same planning period. During this time, teachers analyze data and make instructional decisions together based on assessment trends and results.



With the implementation of the Striving Readers Literacy Program, all students will take the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) three times per year. The SRI is a research-based, computer-adaptive test that assesses reading comprehension. The assessment is fast and easy to administer with reliable results. Most importantly, data is easily tracked and managed using the *Scholastic Achievement Manager (SAM)* system. This will allow for data-driven differentiation as well as accurate and effective RTI.

Each student will be assessed upon matriculation and their initial scores will be benchmarked. Growth goals will be set for each student and our newly implemented literacy curriculum will support students in reaching these goals. For those students who fall far below grade level or who consistently fail to meet growth goals, the RTI team will develop a plan to better address the student's individual needs.

### ***Sharing Assessment Data with Parents***

It is imperative that we not only share test data with parents but also help them interpret the results. We always give a copy of standardized test results to parents through the mail, in student packets/progress reports, or during parent/teacher conferences. Guidance counselors, administrators, graduation coaches and teachers are always available to answer any questions parents may have. We provide a number of resources to parents to help them understand their child's assessment data and how to improve performance:

- Parents can arrange parent/teacher conferences any day of the week through the Counseling Office. During these conferences, teachers can help parents decipher assessments scores and plan for the future.

- We host up to 6 open house and “parent night” events per semester. At these events, parents are introduced to the numerous standardized assessments their student will take.
- We also provide parents with passwords to the district’s Home Access Center where parents can go online to review their child’s schedule and grades.

**Resources, Strategies, Materials including Technology to Support the Literacy Plan**

Existing Resources (Time, Personnel, and Strategies) for Tier I-Tier IV Instruction

Teachers at Tri-Cities High School have access to and use the following interventions:

Informal Collaboration – in Tier II, two or more certified staff will review baseline achievement prior to intervention and progress monitor a student’s response to focused intervention.

Following Informal Collaboration, students are recommended to the Student Support Team (SST) as needed. Students are also extended the opportunity to take advantage of tutorials in reading and mathematics during the Afterschool Extended Day Program. Our literacy team will help to ensure that there are no conflicts, in terms of philosophy, time commitments, or allocation of resources, between Striving Reader and any other initiatives. Collectively, we understand the importance of aligning limiting resources to address student needs.

Sample Schedule for Tiered Instruction

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Amount of Time – Literacy</b>	<b>Delivered By</b>
Tier I	2 hours	Content Teacher
Tier II	30 minutes – small group, differentiated	Content Teacher, Teaching Assistant
Tier III	45 minutes	Content Teacher, EIP Teacher
Tier IV	Dependent on individualized plan	Exceptional Education Teachers, EL Teachers

Faculty and Staff to Implement Plan

All certified staff will be responsible for implementing Tri-Cities’ literacy plan. Designated staff members will be responsible for redelivery of professional development. All members of the staff that do not currently hold reading endorsement or postsecondary degrees in Reading and Literacy will be provided the opportunity to partake in the reading endorsement. Administrators will work assiduously to monitor the reliability of the implementation and teams will regularly evaluate the processes.

Proposed Resources

The table below highlights the literacy strategies aligned to our areas of concern that we will implement to achieve Striving Reader project goals.

<b>Striving Reader Literacy Plan</b>	
<b>Lack of vocabulary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Digital storytelling</li><li>• eReaders</li><li>• Classroom libraries (leveled readers / content areas)</li><li>• General Educator / Special Educator cross-training</li><li>• Assistive technology</li><li>• 180Reader Programs/Support</li></ul>
<b>Lack of reading comprehension</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Phonics instruction</li><li>• Reading Endorsement</li><li>• Technology training (interactive whiteboards, digital storytelling, table mount projectors)</li><li>• Smaller reading classes</li><li>• Research-based Reading Program (CRISS Training for Staff)</li></ul>
<b>Lack of writing skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing instruction</li><li>• Writing Lab</li><li>• Literacy Magazine</li><li>• Open Microphone</li></ul>

### **Professional Learning Strategies Identified on the Basis of Documented Need**

Each year Tri-Cities completes a professional learning survey provided by the district office. We use the results of this survey as well as the results of our comprehensive needs assessment of student achievement to determine the professional development needs of our staff. Professional Learning opportunities are provided to teachers, principals, and paraprofessionals in Fulton County based on needs assessment surveys provided to all stakeholders. Professional Learning is also provided based on other data, such as student assessments and district initiatives determined by student needs. Nearly 20% of educators at Tri-Cities are involved in on-going professional learning through endorsement programs such as reading, gifted and ESOL. The endorsement programs are yearlong endeavors with 150 or more hours. School Improvement activities at the district and school levels align to the stated goals and priorities. Tri-Cities have “School Leadership Teams” who are trained to guide educational growth and development for the school. Continuous, on-going training is provided to teachers, principals and paraprofessionals in order to develop a clear understanding and consistent implementation of standards-based classrooms to enable students to meet and exceed literacy goals.

To address the root causes, professional development has been conducted on the following: Webb’s Depth of Knowledge, Rigor and Relevance, and Differentiated Instruction. Teachers are expected to attend various professional development sessions throughout the year that are geared towards specific teacher needs and development. Examples include: Common Core, Classroom Management, Flexible Grouping, Collaborative Planning, Critical Friends Groups, Differentiated Instruction, NCTE, NCTM, NCTS, and ASCD. The Curriculum Department encourages teachers to meet before the start of school to analyze student

information/data from the previous year. Results are compared to previous years and across the grade levels to look for trends and areas of concern like literacy. Teachers then plan as a team to emphasize those skills with a high degree of importance while covering the other necessary skills prior to testing. At-risk students will be identified so that they can be provided with additional educational opportunities for needed subject level support.

Teachers are offered staff development in areas that show as a need from the student data and past data from previous years. We offer training on data analysis, progress monitoring tools (Achievement Series, Checkpoints, etc.) and support in the curricula subject areas. Teachers work in collaborative teams to review data and target the differentiated needs of students. The current ELA GPS are 85% aligned with CCGPS. There will be an in-depth focus on literacy deficiencies. There will be an in-depth focus on a balance of literature and informational texts, text complexity, argument, informative explanatory writing, research, and speaking/listening skills. Demo lessons have been taught to train teachers on GPS and the use of standards throughout the system. Teachers have had over 15 hours of Writer's Workshop training during the 2011-12 school years. The Curriculum Department has increased the purchases of supplemental literacy and math materials to support RTI and the Tier process for all of the Fulton County Schools.

At Tri-Cities, professional learning to identify at-risk students is job-embedded. We use pre-planning days and specified collaborative planning time during the school year to analyze multiple types of data: formative, summative, qualitative, and quantitative. The emphasis is on collaborative analyses that lead to instructional improvement and differentiation. Using the data, at-risk students are identified and scheduled into courses that provide tiered levels of intervention. Data drives instructional settings and strategies for students. Tri-Cities provide

professional learning to teachers for differentiating instruction, effective feedback, and “Response to Intervention” with its tiered supports for student learning.

<b>Professional Learning Topic</b>	<b>PL Hours</b>	<b>% of Staff Attending</b>
Web’s Depth of Knowledge	10	85%
Rigor is not a 4 Letter Word	30	100%
Differentiating Instruction	10	95%
Team Teaching Strategies	10	80%
DATA Analysis	30	100%
Achievement Series	20	95%
Reading, Gifted, ESOL Endorsement Programs	150	25%
Writer’s Workshop	15	50%

## **Sustainability Plan**

### ***Extending the Assessment Protocol beyond the Grant Period***

Beyond the life of the grant, READ 180 and Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) can be used to provide essential data for all students. READ 180 provides differentiated instruction tailored to meet the individual needs of the student. It is a research-based program proven to build the skills necessary for success in high school English courses. The SRI provides benchmark assessments for the identification of students' reading skills; SRI guides teachers to differentiate and offer intervention strategies for struggling students. Students receive a Lexile score based on the comprehension of a text which has an equivalent reading level. Once a student masters one level, the program gives another reading passage at a higher level. Media centers categorize books by their Lexile levels; therefore, SRI helps match the reader to the appropriate text for 75% reading accuracy rate. An accuracy rate ensures that appropriate challenge is built in, but the level of frustration for the student will be low. The grant-sponsored professional development for READ 180 and the SRI will ensure that all staff will be trained in the use of these assessments.

### ***Extending the Professional Learning Practices beyond the Grant Period to New Staff***

Scholastic will provide personnel to train teachers on skills and knowledge required to enhance literacy skills through the use of the SRI and READ 180 curriculum. The professional development plan systematically addresses literacy skills essential to future reading success by providing seminars, field trips to model classrooms, study groups, in-classroom coaching, summer institute and local and national conferences. The success of the Scholastic's programs



can be measured by the quality of the classroom environment, student outcomes that assess the main skills predictive of reading success, the use of valid assessment instruments, and the professional learning opportunities provided to teachers. Aspects of the Striving Reader professional learning practices delivered by United Way that will be continued beyond the grant period include: enhancing classroom learning environments; providing teachers with new ways to help children improve their literacy skills; providing coaching and early literacy training for teachers to help them fully integrate literacy throughout their classrooms; engaging families in their child's early reading experiences to reinforce these skills at home; and partnering with outside agencies and institutions of higher learning to reinforce the skills being taught and provide opportunities for students to apply them in real world situations.

As additional staff is hired in future years, literacy training will be included in the pre-planning agenda as part of the new teacher staff development. Department Chairs will coordinate opportunities for new teachers to learn grant-funded strategies and use resources during the first two years of employment as a part of the school's new teacher support program. These practices will support the new teacher's transition into the school.

### ***Sustaining Technology beyond the Grant Period***

Recently, Fulton County voters extended a one-penny sales tax to upgrade technology in classrooms and build new schools. The SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) education tax is expected to raise \$912 million for Fulton County school improvements over its five-year lifetime. The SPLOST proposal calls for technology enhancements, particularly in the areas of wireless, mobile learning devices for student use, updated video and audio recording tools, improved and expanded distance learning for students, virtual space for digital student work, interactive classroom websites with curriculum resources and assignments, updated

equipment for technology and career-oriented classes, teacher/student communication and collaboration tools, and online professional learning resources for staff. The district's technology plan will facilitate the sustainability of the Striving Reader investments made in educational technology.

## **Budget Summary**

### ***Technology and Software***

Tri-Cities High School requests funding for technology supplies, laptop computers for targeted classrooms in Year 1, with additional laptops based on school need in subsequent years, USB headsets in Year 1, with replacement headsets in subsequent years, digital cameras and projected replacements for subsequent years, digital storage space and batteries for cameras, e-readers and tablets for targeted students with unlimited 3G internet access, along with power adapters, carrying cases, and headsets for each e-reader, replacement e-readers for subsequent years, and a one-time cost for a locking/charging station to house the e-readers.

We also request funding to purchase Read 180. Read 180 a reading intervention program that will be utilized in the supplemental reading program, which is designed to increase reading achievement for students reading two or more years below grade-level. Funds will also be utilized for electronic books and periodicals, and lending library subscriptions allowing each student unlimited downloads to check out books for a period of 30 days. These resources will support teachers in engaging learners and differentiating instruction, and necessitate professional development (see “Professional Development” below), to ensure that teachers have the skills to utilize these tools effectively. All hardware and software purchased will comply with Fulton County Schools’ policies, procedures and guidelines. Hardware and software purchased that is considered non-standard to FCS must be purchased with manufacturer warranty agreements.

### **Professional Development**

We request funding for professional development through Metro RESA, which offers a PSC approved add-on Reading Endorsement for a total of 15 Professional Learning Units (PLUs) for each of the targeted teachers. The Metro RESA Reading Endorsement prepares

educators to demonstrate competency at assessing students' literacy needs and planning appropriate for the needs of students. The endorsement is divided into three courses consisting of five PLUs each. Completion of the three courses is required in order to add to the base certificate. Funds would also be used for required texts and supplemental materials for each teacher.

Additionally, funding is requested for professional learning to acquaint teachers to Read 180. READ 180 is an intensive reading intervention program that helps educators confront the problem of adolescent illiteracy and special needs reading on multiple fronts, using technology, print, and professional development. READ 180 is proven to meet the needs of struggling readers whose reading achievement is below proficient level. The program directly addresses individual needs through differentiated instruction, adaptive and instructional software, high-interest literature, and direct instruction in reading, writing, and vocabulary skills.

We also request funding for professional learning for targeted teachers to be initially delivered by a consultant, with follow-up by Fulton Instructional Technology staff. The amount incorporates a consultant fee for targeted teachers. It also includes benefits calculated at 27.7% for full-time employees and at 10% for teacher stipends for targeted teachers to attend content-specific professional learning. Additionally, funding is requested for substitutes to effectively lead instruction while allowing targeted teachers to attend professional development.

This professional learning is critical for teachers to learn how to incorporate technology and software into everyday use. This professional development will ensure that technology and software support instruction, and does not become burdensome on teachers.

**Subcontractors/Consultants & Stipends**

We request funding to have the initial professional learning to be delivered by consultants, with supplemental professional learning to be provided by Fulton Instructional Technology staff. We are also requesting funding for five teachers to support our extended learning program for 36 weeks, to ensure that our struggling readers have the support they need to improve. In addition to the year-long program, we request funding for five teachers for the summer-bridge program.