Work Smarter, Not Harder

It’s 3:15 p.m., you’ve just returned from bus duty and you need to find instructional resources for your next lesson or next unit, and you need to find the resources fast! GeorgiaStandards.Org (GSO) offers you an efficient and effective way to find standards, standards-aligned resources and online productivity tools to help you teach using the GPS. GeorgiaStandards.Org has changed the way we work in the information age making our search for resources easier and faster.

Make GSO a permanent link on your school or school system website so you are just one click away from GSO’s One-Stop-Shop. It’s so easy... Right click on the GSO logo link immediately below this paragraph. Use the Save Target As command in order to save the logo to your local machine for placement on your website. Place the logo on your webpage and link the logo to http://www.georgiastandards.org.

Math GPS Has a New Web Address

The Georgia Department of Education recently started using a new web address that serves as a landing page for the mathematics curriculum of the Georgia Performance Standards. GeorgiaMath.Org is a great source that serves all of Georgia’s stakeholders. Parents, teachers and administrators can utilize GeorgiaMath.Org for a variety of math resources. There is a brief welcome message video from State Superintendent of Schools Kathy Cox discussing the need for a mathematics curriculum with more depth and rigor in order to keep up with the fast-paced economy of the 21st century. The new math webpage has a document where comparisons can be made between the old QCC curriculum and the current GPS Course Content. Visitors of GeorgiaMath.Org can also read what others have to say about the value of a solid foundation in mathematics.
Another Slam Dunk Georgia Read More Video!

Dominique Wilkins, also known as The Human Highlight Film, is an NBA Hall of Famer that spent most of his basketball career as an Atlanta Hawk. And this month, GSO to GO proudly features a Georgia Read More Video with Wilkins reading a great story that will have your students catching their breath. The Great Grace Chase is written by Cynthia Rylant and illustrated by Mark Teague. This book has a Lexile ranking of AD410L and has 25 words in its vocabulary list. You can meet the author and then learn more about her background and personal life. If one of your classroom resolutions this year is to integrate more online video into your reading curriculum, then bounce on over to the Georgia Read More Videos page and watch Dominique Wilkins read this fun story about Grace the dog.

The Georgia Department of Education has implemented a literacy program aimed at third grade students called the “Georgia Read More” program. The concentrated efforts of the Library Media Services Department have resulted in this award winning series. This program encourages children to read, supports parent-child interaction, and promotes literacy and libraries. Simply select from the many videos of dignitaries and celebrities reading a children’s book aloud to a group of students. Each video supplies a link to a vocabulary list that accompanies the story and some of the videos are also available in Spanish. Included with most books are a Lexile score and links to author websites.

Committed to Student Achievement

Have you ever tried keeping up with a State Superintendent of Schools? You might need to put on some sneakers to catch Kathy Cox. Since the beginning of the 2007-08 school year, she has visited dozens of schools all over the great state of Georgia. Catch a glimpse of her ongoing tour of school districts by visiting travel snapshots, a map that highlights Superintendent Cox’s travel itinerary of what counties she has visited. And be sure to read the superintendent’s full biography that highlights her accomplishments and service to Georgia public education through her 15 years as a classroom teacher and her service for two terms in the Georgia legislature as a State Representative.

Write a Lesson Plan, Win a Savings Bond!

The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta is conducting a lesson plan contest for the 2007-08 school year. This contest is aimed at those individuals teaching grades six through twelve or pre-service educators from the Sixth Federal Reserve District. Lesson plans should feature a Federal Reserve publication, Web site, and/or multimedia materials. Enter by the February 1, 2008 deadline to win savings bonds ranging from $200 to $1,500. If you have any questions about the contest guidelines, you can contact your local Federal Reserve office representative.
Reinforce Basic Math Skills with Online Video Games

Academic Skill Builders has a number of educational video games that can be used to reinforce basic skills such as Multiplication Grand Prix, Drag Race Division, Meteor Multiplication, Demolition Division, Alien Addition and Minus Mission. Multiplication Grand Prix and Drag Race Division allow up to four students to play against each other at the same time from different computers. Teachers can even set-up these multi-player games in public or private modes. Most of the Academic Skill Builders games are optimized for the Nintendo Wii gaming system by using the Wii Browser and a Wii Remote. Academic Skill Builders provides a teacher manual with steps on how teachers can use their online educational video games. Eventually, Academic Skill Builders is planning to add features that will enable teachers to save records, customize content, track scores and address problem areas for students.

Math Support for Struggling Learners

Criteria is outlined in the Georgia Department of Education Support for Struggling Learners in Mathematics document that every effort be made to assist struggling students before they fail a math course. Teachers and administrators can use this document when addressing the needs of students who struggle in a math class. There is useful information and guidance on providing a mathematics support class, including its purpose, who should teach this course and what credit is earned for taking a Mathematics Support class. For example, a great strategy that has been proven to have a positive impact on raising student achievement in mathematics is previewing content about to be taught in class. Another early intervention approach that can be used to prevent student failure is by referring to the Tier 1 Pyramid of Interventions/Response. There are many other important questions addressing successful opportunities that secondary teachers can provide to struggling mathematics students by reading Education Support for Struggling Learners in Mathematics.

Exemplary Math Questioning Techniques Caught on Video

At the top of the Math Frameworks webpage is a link to a document that has an introduction to the Mathematics. The mathematical frameworks document emphasizes many elements that can be utilized as a guide in teaching a standards-based curriculum. This includes the usage of tasks that can be used to maximize student achievement for Mathematics GPS. In a standards-based curriculum, teaching and learning should occur through a series of complex interactions. This includes communications between the teacher and individual pupils as well as communications between teacher and the entire class. Watch the videos on Questioning in Class (scroll down the page) to see examples of classroom questioning techniques to stimulate student thinking and learning with one-on-one and whole class interactions. Also worth a look is Tips from the Trenches, which is a video series that provides mathematical GPS tips from many experienced teachers.

Integrating Technology into your Curriculum

Is one of your New Year’s resolutions to integrate more technology into your curriculum? GeorgiaStandards.Org can help you with that goal. On the left-side of the GSO homepage under the Teacher Tools Portlet, you will notice a link to 4Teachers.org. 4Teachers.org offers teachers the tech help they need through many online tools and resources. You can get inspired by glancing over some teacher success stories of using technology in the classroom. Through these testimonials, teachers describe what they did in their classroom with technology and the equipment and software that they used. 4Teachers.org offers a set of fifteen tools that can be used by educators. One of those tools is PersuadeStar, a free online application that is designed for students in grades five through twelve to help them write an online persuasive essay. Once teachers register, they can assign an essay with selected criteria for students to use such as analysis of example essays, essay planning tool, essay writing space, spelling feedback and source and bibliography information. Student work is tracked through a series of complex interactions. This is a free online program that can improve student writing skills, so why not register for PersuadeStar today?

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Continuing Education

Georgia Teachers Invited to Join Elluminate Sessions

The following invitation was recently sent to over 11,000 Georgia educators by Kathy Politis, the GeorgiaStandards.Org Program Manager. This invite is actually extended to all the Mathematics and English/Language Arts teachers in Georgia.

Teachers,

As a GeorgiaStandards.Org user, I wanted you to be aware of this information that was sent to Curriculum Directors and Principals. We look forward to continuing to support your school and school systems' GPS teacher training initiatives.

The Georgia Department of Education will be hosting a series of on-line professional learning sessions for teachers in the areas of K-8 Mathematics and K-12 ELA/Writing. Please share this information with classroom teachers so they will be able to participate in these opportunities. The purpose of these professional learning sessions is to support the implementation of the Georgia Performance Standards, GA-DOE content area specialists will use GPS frameworks, tasks, formative assessments, and instructional practices to guide participants through rich discussions focused on student learning.

These professional learning sessions will be held through Elluminate, an on-line interactive communication program. Teachers will be able to participate from school or home. The only requirement is a computer with Internet access. Schools may choose to offer PLU credit for participation in these professional learning sessions. Possible options for offering PLU's are included below. Additionally, these Elluminate sessions will be recorded. Directions for accessing recordings are below.

This information will also be posted on GeorgiaStandards.Org on the Training page. Teachers should review the document links below and follow the short steps to prepare computers in advance.

Please contact me or John Wight (jwight@doe.k12.ga.us) with any questions or feedback you may have. We look forward to working with you.

Thank you!
Kathy Politis
kpolitis@doe.k12.ga.us

Elluminate Training Information & Links

> Elluminate Live! V8 Participant Quick Reference Guide
> Elluminate Pre-configuration Instructions
> Directions for Accessing Elluminate Recordings
> Options for PLU Support
> K-12 English Language Arts TALKs (Talking About Learning and Kids), Winter 2008
> K-12 English Language Arts TALKs (Talking About Learning and Kids), Winter 2008, Links to Meetings
> K-8 Mathematics TALKs (Talking About Learning and Kids), Winter 2008
> K-8 Mathematics TALKs (Talking About Learning and Kids), Winter 2008, Links to Meetings

Connect with other Educational Professionals

Tapped In is an online education community with the vision of transforming professional development. This academic community consists of K-12 teachers, librarians, administrators, and professional development staff as well as university faculty, students, and researchers who gather to learn, collaborate, share, and support one another. Tapped In believes that a combination of online activities and engaging training opportunities should be available to all educators.

Sign-up for a free membership and enter Tapped In as a member. Once you are logged in a reception chat area appears at the bottom portion of the page with a friendly and well-staffed help-desk that is available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (Pacific Time Zone). There are many tools to explore on the Tapped In site, such as groups. Groups in Tapped In have a room associated with them and are owned by one Tapped In member. Group members can meet to have online conversations and post to a discussion board about a particular subject or content area. A search for “math” in Groups returned 16 matches. In selecting the Math Transformers Group, you can see that their purpose is to learn how to differentiate math instruction. Currently, there are 14 members of the Math Transformers Group who meet online monthly. In fact, if you click on the calendar link you can see the many monthly activities available to educators.

Learn Cool Tools at the ETTC in Valdosta

The Educational Technology Training Center (ETTC) located at Valdosta State University is the training center for the southern-central region of Georgia. Teachers may want to sign-up for Cool Tools, a workshop series featured on the first Tuesday of each month. Upcoming workshop events include Cooling it with Galileo and Google Web-creator on February 5, 2008. On March 4, 2008, teachers can enroll for the Podcasting at its Finest or Web 2.0: Blogs & Wikis. Register for one of these great sessions by calling 229-249-2781. Additional technology-enriched courses are available for PreK-16 administrators, teachers, paraprofessional and technical staff. Registration information and a complete listing of all courses is available. Most of these courses offer PLU (Professional Learning Unit) credit. You can find the ETTC at Valdosta State University in addition to the other 12 ETTCs serving the state on the Georgia Department of Education website. The Educational Technology Training Centers (ETTCs) work collaboratively to provide professional learning, consulting, and service for Georgia educators to promote the appropriate use of technology in support of teaching, learning, and leadership. Thirteen ETTC training centers are located throughout the state for your convenience.

39th Annual Children’s Literature Conference

Athens, Georgia is hosting the 39th Annual Conference on Children’s Literature from February 29 to March 1, 2008. K-8 teachers, library media specialists, public librarians and others interested in children’s literature will enjoy this venue. The conference will take place in the Georgia Center for Continuing Education Conference Center & Hotel, which is located on the historic campus of the University of Georgia in Athens. Learn more about the tentative agenda, conference events or Georgia Children’s Book Awards Program by visiting the Children’s Literature conference page.
Celebrating January

January in Georgia History

The New Georgia Encyclopedia (NGE) is a major project of the Georgia Humanities Council. NGE has partnered with the University of Georgia Press, the University System of Georgia/GALILEO, the Office of the Governor and the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education. As a result of these strong alliances, the New Georgia Encyclopedia is available to everyone with Internet access. January in Georgia History is a month full of significant events. One important event of Georgia history was the Yazoo Land Fraud, which involved a generation of struggle with the state’s public lands. Eighth grade social studies teachers can address standard SS8H5b when teaching about the Yazoo Land Fraud. After decades of heated debate and conflict over slavery, January was also the month that Georgia seceded from the Union in 1861. This NGE article on Secession covers the SS8H6a social studies standard for eighth grade teachers that allow students to analyze the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on Georgia. Read these and other great January articles from the New Georgia Encyclopedia which includes Gainesville, Jekyll Island, Martin Luther King Jr., Coretta Scott King and the Civil Rights Movement.

Multi-Cultural Holidays in January

Kidlink.Org is a website that was built on teamwork and collaboration by contributors from North America and Europe. This site is a place for kids to network with other kids in an international setting. Since 1994, Kidlink.Org has been building a Multi-Cultural Calendar. The calendar has links to recipes for holiday foods, historical background, significance of the holidays and the special ways in which these days are observed. Take a look at what holidays are being celebrated around the world during the month of January. You can also select holidays by month, holiday or country.*

January EDSITEment Calendar of Special Events

EDSITEment is featuring some great links to lesson plans and website resources in their January 2008 calendar. For instance, Phillis Wheatly was the first black female poet to publish a book in America. Ms. Wheatly was born January 1, 1753 in West Africa. On January 7, 1610, Galileo discovers Jupiter’s first three satellites. The Galileo and the Inevitability of Ideas lesson plan can be used by teachers to introduce how Galileo exercised intellectual freedom to overcome superstitious beliefs. Teachers can use the Art and Life in Africa Online: Zulu Information website to discuss the Zulu war that commenced against the ruling British colonists in South Africa on January 11, 1879. Civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929. Teachers can access the following lesson plans from EDSITEment; Let Freedom Ring: The Life and Legacy of Martin Luther King and Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Power of Nonviolence. On January 30, 1882 Franklin D. Roosevelt was born. Teachers can focus on the 32nd US president with The Proper Application of Overwhelming Force: The United States in World War II and Worth a Thousand Words: Depression-Era Photographs lesson plans. These are just a few dates mentioned from the EDSITEment January calendar, so be sure to visit this month’s calendar to look over all the special events and birthdays.

Download Two Educational Games

First a loaded calendar with educational links and now downloadable educational video games? That’s right, TeacherVision has a few educational games that you can download to a PC or Mac computer. Math Baseball (Mac or PC) is an educational game that you can download that allows students to practice arithmetic skills using single, double or triple digits. You can even select the math problems to be presented with a variable (algebra style). The other download is Planet Zug (Mac or PC). This game is a galactic vocabulary encounter with a hostile alien planet. If your students get all the alien vocabulary questions correct they can return back to Earth! Both of these computer games are from FunBrain.com. FunBrain.com is an online education site for students in K-8 and teachers. You can check out their choices that feature many online numbers and words games.

Jump into January with More Links and Downloads

Education World features their January coloring calendar in web-based, printable or editable versions. Education World also has a New Year Celebrations Around the World activity that ties reading, science and social studies together. Winter, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Super Bowl are editable January holiday work sheets that your students will enjoy. Over at ABCTeach, it highlights a number of links for January as well. Your students can fill their writing journals by picking from a number of winter writing prompts or they can complete this Winter Word Search.
Celebrating January

Celebrate Letter Writing Week

TeacherVision is an educational site with lots of lesson plans and printables. TeacherVision also has a nice January calendar with holidays, seasonal events and celebrations. For instance, January 6-12 is Letter Writing Week. TeacherVision has compiled a meaningful list of writing activities that your students can do, here are some examples:

Anti-Smoking Letter Writing Campaign (Grades 3-5)
Students will explore arguments against smoking and write letters encouraging a friend not to smoke.

Write a Letter to Jesse Owens (Grades 6-12)
Assuming the role of a fellow athlete, Nazi supporter or African-American, students will write a letter to Jesse Owens describing their political views and their feelings about his accomplishments at the 1936 Olympic Games.

Write a Letter to the President (Grades 3-12)
Students will write a letter to the president with details of their ideas for goals to be met during his/her administration.

Letter for Great Mail Race (Grades 4-5)
Students practice writing and word processing a letter to be used in The Great Mail Race.

>> More Letter Writing Activities from TeacherVision