An exciting addition to the GADOE ELA resources for the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards made its debut this month with the introduction of the Drop Box sharing site for CCGPS Model ELA Unit Frameworks. The site provides easily-accessible space for large amounts of data to be posted, manipulated, and shared, and has enabled unprecedented levels of productive collaboration and exploration of instructional material for Georgia’s educators as we move ever-closer to the first days of CCGPS implementation in our classrooms.

Because of the size and diversity of our great state, it would be nearly impossible to produce one set of instructional units that would be perfect, just as they were written, for every classroom in Georgia. On the other hand, units of instruction that are extremely vague and generalized are not terribly useful either in a year when a brand new set of standards is being implemented. It was clear from the feedback we received from Georgia’s educators that a very detailed model framework was needed to begin the conversation about CCGPS instructional practices and expectations in 2012-13, but that many individualized versions of those units or entirely alternative units would also eventually be needed.

We are very proud to be able to say that, through teamwork and sheer determination, the teachers of Georgia rose to the challenge and pulled together to produce over 50 model units of instruction to share with their colleagues throughout the state, once again leading the charge and blazing a trail for teachers around the country.

Because of the level of detail at which the units are written, end-users will inevitably want to create alternative versions that utilize different extended text selections, have more or fewer tasks, tweak the timeline to better suit a block or traditional schedule, etc. It quickly became clear to us that teachers and other curriculum professionals were going to need to access these documents in their editable, Word formats so that they could take ownership and make the units their own. We also realized that, if these units were to be made available to all on a large sharing site, the cross-pollination of materials between educators would result in an amazing array of instructional materials as well as a hugely fruitful conversation about the basics of Common Core GPS.

To that end, it was decided that we would take this already-unprecedented project to an unprecedented level of collaboration and invite not just some, but ALL of Georgia’s educators to join us in this crucial and exciting project. To join the conversation and access the resources, send an email to sjacobs@doe.k12.ga.us simply requesting membership in the Drop Box site for “ELA Editable Units.” There you will find the editable Word versions of all of the 52 Model Unit Frameworks produced by the original cohort of unit writers. These documents can be downloaded and edited in any way that makes the units more amenable to your individual needs and texts. Of course we hope that in editing our end-users will remember all the shifts in CCGPS and will be sure to infuse their units with the rigor, complexity, and integration modeled by the original and as explicated in our professional learning throughout the year.

You will also find on this site a growing array of alternative units of instruction donated by your colleagues in the field. We have asked only that users who are kind enough to post resources for their colleagues put their own footers on the edited documents so each document can be properly attributed. Please use care and follow the instructions provided within the Drop Box tutorial so that you do not accidentally remove or delete original texts from the site.

We are excited about the opportunity to foster this collaboration and are proud of the amazing resources being produced in the field in our state. Georgia has led the charge in embracing the amazing opportunity afforded to us by the Common Core Initiative to change the face of education in so many positive ways, and we continue to set the bar for implementation, positive momentum, and teamwork. Thank you and welcome to the project!
Gerald Boyd:
Yes Virginia, You Do Have to Teach Science and Social Studies!

I remember when we were building the Georgia Performance Standards, one parent called and pleaded for us not to teach irrational numbers in mathematics. “Children today live in such an irrational world, they do not need irrational numbers to go along with it!” lamented the parent. This obvious misunderstanding of a mathematics concept reminds me of the many obvious misconceptions about the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards.

We have had some elementary teachers thinking that they no longer have to teach science or social studies. The thinking is that, if these subjects are integrated into the language arts and reading curriculum, there is no need to teach them separately. We have indeed tried to infuse some science and social studies texts into the language arts and reading curriculum; however, that infusion is a far cry from whole-hog integration. The CCGPS framework calls for students to read much more informational non-fiction text, and infusing some of the core texts from science and social studies is a way to do that. If you want full integration, you have to address the science and social studies disciplines standard by standard. That was never the intention of the ELA units that the GA DOE published on the website.

It will never be our intention to attain full integration. Students need to learn how to read. They also need to understand the concepts of science and social studies. I do not advocate teaching these subjects in silos, but I do understand the need for the separate subjects to own their importance. My suggestion is collaboration, not full integration.

Self-contained elementary educators who teach all subjects to a single group of students realize the time- and effort-saving economy of using texts from all subject disciplines in the reading lesson. It is certainly logical to select an informational text from a source that a teacher intends to use anyway in another area. Nevertheless, such integration has to be intentional, and it should be used to enhance, not replace instruction in other disciplines. Even when instruction is departmentalized, a close collaboration among the teachers of different disciplines can yield saved time and effort.

It is imperative that all teachers become familiar with the mandates of Georgia’s new accountability system – the College and Career Ready Performance Indices. There is an index for each grade band: K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. In every grade band, the specific measures of accountability include the CRCT in every subject area. To be satisfied with infusing science and social studies into the language arts and reading curriculum may lead to deficits on the state-mandated assessments unless a careful plan is made to address all of the grade-level standards. It is great to collaborate and infuse, but yes, Virginia, you still have to teach science and social studies.

Unit One Webinar Wrap Up

Between May 10 and May 18, your ELA department at the GADOE delivered 13 separate webinars introducing Georgia’s educators to the first 9-week Model Unit Framework for each grade level. These webinars answered many frequently asked questions about the scope and sequence of the instruction in the units including:

- Are the units mandated?
- How were the number and types of texts and assessments chosen and can they be changed?
- How can I grade the number of writing assessments that are expected?
- How were the texts and themes chosen, and can they be changed?
- Where are editable versions of the units located?
- How do these units meet the demands of best practices, standards-based instruction, and backward design?
- How can I adapt this unit to a block schedule?
- What if I find an error in a unit?
- What if this unit is too rigorous or not rigorous enough?

Please visit our website to view the archived webinars. 
https://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/ELA.aspx

Unit 2 webinars begin September 10 and run through October 4. Unit 3 webinars begin on October 22 and run through November 14. Unit 4 webinars will run during the month of January 2013.
Rubric Generator: Creating Simple Standards-Based Rubrics

On the cover of this month’s newsletter, we shared with you the exciting news of the Model Unit Frameworks being produced and shared around the state. One question that we often hear about the units is: “Where are the performance rubrics that go along with these assessments?” The answer to that question is that we did not include prescribed rubrics within the unit frameworks for a number of reasons.

First of all, we believe that rubrics should be unique to the task. While it is true that we could create a generic “Argumentative Writing Rubric for Grade 7,” for example, it is also true that a particular argumentative writing assessment in grade 7 toward the beginning of the year might have very different parameters and expectations than one due towards the end of the year. Dr. Teacher A might be assessing more for content and cited evidence in an assignment while Teacher B might desire a grammar and organization focus on the same assignment. The bottom line is that the best rubrics are the ones that are crafted to give the student the best and most specific guidance possible on the expectations for a given assignment.

Secondly, we would like to see all of our CCGPS rubrics adhere to standards-based language and expectations. The compact and streamlined nature of the CCGPS makes them uniquely suited to direct application within a rubric format, providing an opportunity for us to begin generating rubrics that are not only completely standards-based, but also specifically suited to unique assignments and expectations.

Lastly, it was our goal to provide not a set of “square peg” rubrics that may or may not fit a teacher’s needs, but to provide the ability to easily generate rubrics that would be exactly the puzzle piece required by an assignment. To that end there are two resources being made available. One is a simple table as pictured above. This table is available formatted for a 5-dimension assessment, an 8-dimension assessment, or a 10-dimension assessment. Along with the blank rubric formats you will find unformatted Word versions of the standards for each grade level that will facilitate easy cutting and pasting of the standards you might wish to assess. The sample below illustrates what a completed rubric would look like.

If a standard has more than one element, or more than one specific skill or concept inherent in it, you may want to break that standard into more than one line within the rubric, as illustrated below. We have not attached points values to the rubrics, nor have we attached specific descriptors for the “Exceeds,” “Meets,” and “Does Not Meet” categories. In most cases specific descriptors are not necessary. If the standard is citing textual evidence to support a claim, it will be fairly evident that “Exceeds” did this very well, “Meets” accomplished it fairly well, and “Does Not Meet” did not cite at all or not to the minimal standard. If you wish to add descriptors or points values, you may certainly do so.

One of the things that makes the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards and the Common Core Initiative itself so powerful is the standardization of focus, language, and methodology in instruction across the country. Most of us can agree that rubrics downloaded from hundreds of different texts, sites, and resources that all use different metrics and vocabulary can be enormously frustrating for students and can also result in an unnecessarily reinvention of the wheel in every classroom and for every assignment. One of the most positive aspects of the Common Core standards is their powerful simplicity. What could be more effective or elegant than communicating performance goals to our students using the standards themselves?

In development now is an electronic version of this rubric generator that will provide the standards to you in a drop-down box by grade. Watch the website for updates on this new resource. Until that software is ready to be published, the tables and their corresponding “cut-and-paste-friendly” grade-level standards documents will be available to you on the drop down menu for each grade band where your curriculum maps and unit frameworks are presently located.

This Month’s Featured Partner: Middle Georgia RESA

In April’s ELA Reporter, we were pleased to provide contact information for our closest partners and best allies in the implementation of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, and indeed in “making education work for all Georgians” year round, your 16 Regional Educational Service Agencies. Unfortunately, one of our hardest-working partners, Middle Georgia RESA, was lost to a formatting error, and failed to appear on the list. To rectify that omission, we would like to feature Middle Georgia, the wonderful, helpful liaisons between her colleagues in Warner Robins and our staff here in Atlanta. Middle Georgia RESA, their amazing leader Carol Williams and tireless professionals like Robin Smith, provide the support to teachers that allows them to be the best they can be, which means our students get to be the best that THEY can be. Our deepest thanks and gratitude go out to them all!
ELA CCGPS Facts-at-a-Glance

In collaboration with our RESA partners, we have recently compiled a list of frequently referenced Facts and Terms to assist with the implementation of CCGPS. The document provides concise descriptors for terms and concepts often used in CCGPS documentation and discourse as well as practical guidance on concepts such as Depth of Knowledge and Text Complexity. Other items addressed in the Facts at a Glance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balanced Literacy</th>
<th>Extended Texts</th>
<th>Close Reading</th>
<th>Academic Vocabulary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier One/Two/Three Words</td>
<td>Rigor</td>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Scaffolding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

https://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/ELA.aspx

Resources We Recommend

“As challenging as it must have been to write and finesse the adoption of the Common Core State Standards, that accomplishment is nothing compared to the work of teaching in ways that bring all students to these ambitious expectations. The goal is clear. The pathway is not.”

-Lucy Calkins, Mary Ehrenworth, and Christopher Lehman

Already, before they’ve even been implemented, the words “common” and “core” have moved into our schools, unpacked their stuff, and begun to act in general like they own the joint. Where exactly did these standards come from and what do they mean to teachers, administrators, parents, and students?

Ask no more. PATHWAYS TO THE COMMON CORE is 197 pages of concise elucidation, making it one book you’d love to put into the hands of everyone associated with education. [The authors] take us on a tour through the reading, writing, and speaking/listening, and language standards, laying it on the line in simple terms: This is what they say, this is what they DON’T say, and this is what they mean for us if we’re going to do the job right.

excerpted from Amazon.com

GADDE and RESAs Proudly Present CCGPS Summer and Fall Institutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institute</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast Georgia RESA</td>
<td>June 6 and 7</td>
<td>Oconee County Civic Center 2065 Hog Mountain Rd, Watkinsville, GA 30677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro RESA</td>
<td>June 12</td>
<td>Fulton Co. Staff Development Center 3421 Norman Berry Drive, Atlanta, GA 30344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart of Georgia RESA</td>
<td>June 25</td>
<td>Dodge County Board of Education 720 College Street, Eastman, GA 31023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chattahoochee Flint &amp; South West GA RESA</td>
<td>July 16 &amp; July 17</td>
<td>Southwest Georgia Center GLRS 433 Mercer Avenue, Albany, GA 31701</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle GARESA</td>
<td>July 18</td>
<td>Houston Co. Professional Learning Ctr 1100 Main Street, Perry, GA 31069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneer RESA &amp; North GARESA</td>
<td>July 24</td>
<td>Dawson Co. Middle School 332 Highway 9North, Dawsonville, GA 30534</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oconee RESA</td>
<td>July TBA</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<td>Griffin RESA &amp; West GARESA</td>
<td>September 18</td>
<td>Griffin RESA 440 Tingle Avenue, Griffin, GA 30224</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coastal Plains RESA</td>
<td>September 20</td>
<td>Coastal Plains RESA 245 North Robinson Street, LENOX, GA 31069</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reminders:

RESA/DOE Summer Summit, Thursday, June 21, 2012—9:00 am to 3:30 pm, 433 US 41 (Brooklyn Avenue) Forsyth, Georgia 31029
Georgia ELA Advisory Council, Friday, June 15, 12:00 noon—3:00 pm, 1100 Main Street, Perry Georgia 31069

Get all the news as it happens!
Join our mailing list by sending an email to one of the addresses below:
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Join-ela-9-12@list.doe.k12.ga.us
Join-ela-admins@list.doe.k12.ga.us
Join-ela-districtsupport@list.doe.k12.ga.us

Time Saving Tip:
Don’t waste class time by calling out students' names in order to take roll. Once students are at work, take roll. If you have a seating chart, you can see who is absent in one sweep!

-Education Oasis