October-November Professional Learning Builds Strong Foundation for Georgia Educators

On November 17, 2011, the last in the initial series of 12 ELA professional learning opportunities on the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards was broadcast by the English Language Arts and Literacy Department at the Georgia DOE. This initial phase of our CCGPS professional learning was developed for Georgia instructors and administrators who are preparing to transition to the CCGPS next year and was delivered via webinar through the Elluminate Live link at GeorgiaStandards.Org. Running intermittently since October 3, these sessions have been viewed by an audience of nearly 5,000 professionals. This series has been very successful in laying the groundwork for the in-depth exploration of CCGPS that will take place beginning next month via live-streaming, interactive, professional learning in partnership with Georgia Public Broadcasting.

On October 3, 2011, we launched a webinar series designed to provide an overview of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards from the ground up for those users who may not have been introduced to the standards yet or may not have understood the conceptual framework or rationale. Each webinar series ran for 4 days with content targeted at specific grade bands on each successive day (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12). Webinar Series #2 aired between October 24 and October 27, 2011, and focused on the critical issue of increased text complexity expectations within the Common Core GPS infrastructure. The webinar provided detailed information on the foundational research and data that make evident the need for more informational texts within the classroom and more rigorous qualitative and quantitative standards for the selection of texts for each grade band. This webinar series introduced a Text Complexity Rubric designed to assist educators in making meaningful and consistent determinations regarding text choices within the recommended CCGPS parameters.

Our final webinar series began on November 14 and ran through November 17, 2011, and provided the first glimpse at the basic outlines of the 2012-2013 curriculum maps and unit/task planning guidelines. Educators were able to examine the ways in which reading and writing are closely intertwined in the development of curriculum in CCGPS and experiment with the types of texts, writing prompts, and exciting, student-centered, technology-friendly learning opportunities the frameworks now in development will provide.

All 12 webinars are archived and available for viewing through Elluminate Live on the GeorgiaStandards.Org page on the DOE website at http://elluminate.gavirtualschool.org/doe/index.html.

Revised GPB Schedule for ELA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GEORGIA PUBLIC BROADCASTING (GPB)</th>
<th>12-TEACHERS OF HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES, SCIENCE, AND TECHNICAL SUBJETS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-12 TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS</td>
<td>6-8th History/Social Studies 05-02-12 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>1st grade 03-12 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st grade</td>
<td>2nd grade 03-12 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd grade</td>
<td>3rd grade 02-29 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd grade</td>
<td>4th grade 02-01 12:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th grade</td>
<td>5th grade 02-13 12:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th grade</td>
<td>6th grade 02-29 12:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th grade</td>
<td>7th grade 03-31 12:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7th grade</td>
<td>8th grade 03-14 12:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8th grade</td>
<td>9th &amp; 10th grades 03-13 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th &amp; 10th grades</td>
<td>11th &amp; 12th grades 02-01 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*6-12 English Language Arts teachers have two different GPB sessions to attend. The first session will be ELA content-specific, and the fifty 1 session will focus on the literacy standards for 6-12 content area teachers of history/social studies, science, and technical subjects.
Teacher Guidance Document Review

For several weeks we have been bringing you news of documents in development that are designed to assist instructors in implementing the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards and transitioning effectively from GPS. One of the most important documents is the primary Teacher Guidance document, which contains specific advice related to the teaching and learning of each individual standard. This document also contains extensive transitional advice detailing which standards are new to the grade level or have moved or significantly changed. We have posted complete DRAFT guidance documents for Grades 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12, as well as for Advanced Composition, British Literature, American Literature, World Literature, and Multicultural Literature. These documents represent the first complete drafts of these documents and as such will require significant shaping through multiple rounds of feedback from professional end-users.

Because we believe that these documents will be instrumental in shaping the way the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards will be implemented and delivered, it is imperative that they be clear, concise, correct, and easy to understand. We are soliciting in-depth reflection and commentary from professionals around the state to ensure that these documents fulfill their role as a useful, hands-on reference. Your role as an editor and reviewer of these documents will be critical. The CCGPS Teacher Guidance documents contain several distinct categories of information:

I. The Standards
The most significant section of each document will be the standards themselves. Each standard will appear in a box at the top of the page along with all elements pertaining to that standard, if any. Each standard will have about a page of guidance that will include
- Skills/Concepts for Students
- Strategies for Teachers
- Sample Tasks for Integration
- Recommended Vocabulary for Teaching and Learning

II. Transition Guidance
In the section immediately following the standards themselves, you will find a chart that provides the user with a one-to-one concept correspondence map between GPS and CCGPS. This chart is constructed so that the GPS – with which teachers are presently most familiar – are the key items, printed in their entirety and in order in the left column (see illustration below). Following the transition guidance chart, you will find additional tables that have taken certain elements from the chart and isolated them for easy reference. These tables include transitional items that will need instructional attention, for example, parallel structure. This grammatical concept was taught and tested in grade 11 in GPS but will now be taught and tested beginning in grade 5 with CCGPS. It is imperative that teachers not only in grade 9 and grade 11 be aware of this change, but also teachers in grade 10, so that they can cover this transitional gap for students who will miss instruction on this concept in the transitional year(s).

The transition document is qualitatively different from the crosswalks prepared earlier in the CCGPS adoption process that identified the closest standard-to-standard match in that it matches concepts instead. Here the many cases in which a CCGPS standard comprises several GPS elements from more than one domain can be documented.

The electronic form provided for your feedback is very simple. As you find items on which you would like to offer feedback, please note the page number on which the item appears. Provide any additional details we might require to find the item (for example, “line three, Skills and Concepts section.” Then type in your comments. The text box will stretch to accommodate any amount of text. Due to the volume of response, it will be helpful if your comments can be concise and specific.

To read and provide feedback on these documents, go to the CCGPS tab on the GeorgiaStandards.Org page and click on English Language Arts. There you will find detailed instructions and an electronic form through which to submit your comments. Second round documents incorporating your feedback will be posted for review in early 2012. We look forward to hearing from you and thank you in advance for your help!
Curriculum Map Document Review

Perhaps the most eagerly awaited documents currently in development at the DOE are the ELA curriculum maps for grades K-12. As all of us in education are aware, the curriculum maps are the fundamental basis from which units, lessons, materials, and pacing are derived, and because of their primary importance, they have been the subject of months of scrutiny and preparation.

The maps in production to help guide Georgia’s educators are based on the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) guidelines that have been under review for the past several months. The Partnership is a consortium of several states who have adopted the Common Core State Standards and are seeking to bring the same rigor and consistency to their common assessments. The PARCC frameworks illustrate the nature and complexity of the content that will be assessed within each grade. These frameworks provided the pathway of suggested instruction that served as the basis for the curriculum maps developed for Georgia.

In general terms, the PARCC frameworks represent a shift from genre-based units of instruction and towards a more unified and integrated formula that includes many genres within a given unit. Units vary in length from 5 weeks in K-5 to 9 weeks in grades 6-12. You will find that the units contain similar components throughout the grades, with changes occurring primarily within the number of short texts to be considered and the quantity and complexity of the analytic writing assignments. Units are generally composed of the following:

- I extended text (with either a literary or an informational focus)
- Several shorter texts from all genres (specifics vary by grade level)
- Grade-appropriate formal writing assignments (progressing from short, supported pieces in kindergarten to multiple, sophisticated literary and rhetorical analyses in high school)
- Routine writing (across all genres)
- Research (short, informal research in the primary grades progressing to formal, extended research work in the upper grades)
- Consistent, holistic integration of grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics
- Consistent, holistic integration of speaking, listening, and technology

The draft curriculum maps will be posted on the GeorgiaStandards.Org site under the Common Core GPS tab (click English Language Arts) after December 5, 2011, and will remain available for review and feedback through the end of the year. These documents cannot be considered complete until significant feedback from our partners and stakeholders has been gathered, reviewed, and integrated into these maps to make them as effective as they can possibly be. To that end, your participation is crucial. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Access and provide feedback on the curriculum maps at: https://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/ELA.aspx

Tech Talk by English Language Arts and Literacy Technical Specialist Angela Baker

How often have you sat through a presentation saying to yourself, “I can read the PowerPoint! Don’t read it to me!” It is never fun to sit in a meeting and watch as the speaker reads slide after slide during a presentation. PowerPoint was developed as a tool to enhance presentations, not to replace the presentation. Before you use PowerPoint to present information to a group, ask yourself, “Does this PowerPoint need me?” If the answer is no, then, “Houston, you’ve got a problem!” As a classroom teacher, I became adept at using PowerPoint and so did my students. It can be very useful in the classroom, especially when used correctly and when paired with other software, such as hand-held response units for student assessment or feedback. In addition, PowerPoint is available to anyone using Microsoft Office Suite and comes stocked with an array of beautiful templates and pre-formatted presentation outlines. Just make sure to personalize it and follow a few easy rules:

1. Less is more. Remember PowerPoint! What is your point? The audience will only remember the main points, so there is no need to include every detail.
2. Make your PowerPoint readable! Avoid paragraphs or even sentences for that matter. Be clear and concise! Six to eight lines per slide, no more than 30 words per slide.
3. Use the same background on each slide. Busy clip art and graphics distract from the main POINTS OF POWER!
4. Proofread, proofread, proofread.
5. Practice, practice, practice. Remember, you are the focus of the presentation, not the PowerPoint or any other tool. The audience needs to remember you, not the PowerPoint!

There are new tools to help make presentations more exciting for students.
http://prezi.com/index/
http://www.sliderocket.com/
http://280slides.com/
http://prezi.com/index/

These are excellent alternatives but require sign-in accounts. Zoho is linked to Google Docs, and if you haven’t found the power of Google Docs, tune in next issue!

https://zahw.zoho.com/login.do
Accessibility Forum

For those of you who are regular readers of our newsletter, you will be familiar with our ongoing efforts to ensure accessibility to instructional materials for all users. Our most recent focus has been on making our professional learning more widely available and on finding and disseminating resource information for all ELA stakeholders, whether they are students, teachers, administrators, or parents.

We are happy to announce that the next series of professional learning opportunities, the Common Core GPS training to be delivered in a live-streaming televised format through Georgia Public Broadcasting, will be closed-captioned. The webinars that aired throughout October and November were not archived in a closed-captioned format, but schools interested in inviting a signing interpreter to their site for a redelivery of the webinar material should contact one of the following agencies with which we are currently partnering. The resource we are highlighting this month is the “AMP” project.

The Atlanta Area School for the Deaf has undertaken the “AMP” project (Accessible Materials Project) in order to translate materials of all types into American Sign Language and distribute them free of charge to users all over the world. For information on obtaining translated materials or having your own materials translated for other users, contact coordinator Sandy Huston at shuston@doe.k12.ga.us or visit their Facebook site www.facebook.com/ampaasd

Striving Readers Grant Update

In October we reported the award of a twenty-five million dollar literacy grant from the U.S. Department of Education aimed at enhancing Georgia’s comprehensive literacy strategies and programs for children from birth through high school graduation. The “Striving Readers” grant monies will be allocated to educational providers through a sub-grant competition process that will allow qualifying providers to apply for funding through facilitators here at the Georgia Department of Education. Those qualified to seek funding include school systems K-12 and non-profit providers of early learning. The sub-grant application is now available to applicants and must be received by the DOE no later than December 16, 2011 (note: not post-marked, but RECEIVED). Archived webinars detailing the application process are available for viewing through “Elluminate Live” on GeorgiaStandards.Org.

Please contact Julie Morrill at jmorrill@doe.k12.ga.us or 404-657-8318 if you have technical assistance questions or would like to schedule a meeting.

Young Georgia Authors

The annual Young Georgia Authors (YGA) Writing Competition is a state-wide contest that inspires Georgia students of all ages to create original works from any genre, whether in the form of a poem, a newspaper article, a short story, a research project, or any other kind of writing the student enjoys. A school district may submit one first place winner from each grade level directly to the DOE (how a system chooses these overall first-place winners is at that system’s discretion). The DOE groups first-place submissions from systems by RESA district. Finally, a panel of judges from across Georgia meets to determine the first place grade level winners for each RESA district as well as the first place grade level winners for the state.

The rules for submission of student writing to YGA are simple but must be followed carefully. A few pointers to remember are as follows:

- Only ONE system-level entry per grade may be submitted to the final competition at the DOE level; multiple entries will result in disqualification.
- Entries must be received by 4/13/2012
- Entries must be mailed from the school system level; individual entries from students, teachers, principals, etc. will not be judged.
- Please send the original and one copy of each winning entry ALONG WITH THE ENTRY FORM.
- Entry forms must be signed by the system writing coordinator, the teacher, the student, and the parents.

For more information and to download the instructions and entry forms, please visit: http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/ci_services.aspx?

“The two most engaging powers of an author are to make new things familiar and familiar things new.”

~ Samuel Johnson