

Floyd County Schools QLTE Action Plan

This Action Plan is a result of Floyd County Schools participation in the BellSouth Quality Learning and Teaching Environments QLTE initiative. Floyd County Schools was one of ten school systems in Georgia selected to pilot the initiative to attract and retain quality teachers. The public and private initiative will seek to use your input to improve working conditions for teachers throughout the state.

Floyd County Schools is very proud that our teachers gave the school system high marks for teaching and learning conditions on the survey sponsored by BellSouth. We are pleased with the results, but we believe that we can use the information provided by our teachers to make a good school system even better. The system is working hard to make sure that teachers are a part of the process to seek improvement for the children of Floyd County. At the beginning of the school year a meeting was held with all school faculties to share the BellSouth survey results. The QLTE committee then held district focus groups to clarify results of the survey and to get ideas for improvements as we developed this Action Plan. The information teachers have shared with the QLTE committee has narrowed the groups focus for improvement to four major areas - Time Constraints, Improving Resources, Empowering Teachers, and Improving Professional Learning Opportunities. The committees investigating options in these improvement areas will also make recommendations of improvements that can be made at the local school level. Each school will be encouraged to develop a school plan for QLTE improvements.

Reduce Time Constraints Affecting Instruction

In the domain of time constraints, the QLTE committee has identified four areas of focus. The areas include: reassessment of all paperwork, reassessment of the SST process, streamlining absence reporting procedures and class size. It was determined that three of these areas required additional study and teacher participation to get to the heart of the problem. By developing teacher initiated solutions as the basis for improvement, the committee believes that plans can be implemented that will truly work for teachers. The QLTE committee will form three study committees made up of teachers to take a deeper look into the topics of paperwork, SST and absence reporting. Three different groups of teachers will be given an opportunity to study these areas over the summer and make recommendations for improvement to be included in the QLTE Action Plan. We will use the month of June to work on these topics so that we do not take teachers out of the classroom and we do not make additional demands on the teacher's time during the school year. Teachers will be compensated for their work during the summer.

Reassessment of all Paperwork

Earlene Cameron, teacher at Alto Park Elementary, and Beverly Smith, director of teacher instructional support, will co-chair the committee to study paperwork. Other committee members include: Ray Tucker, Armuchee High; Apryl Hawkins, Pepperell High; Mary John Hendrix, Pepperell Middle; Marcie Lane, Armuchee Middle; Suzanne Hulsey, Pepperell Elementary; Valerie Plunkett, Alto Park Elementary; Jaki Day, Alto Park/ McHenry; Rebecca Beckham, Glenwood Elementary; Teresa Teague, Model Elementary; Kim Wheeler, Garden Lakes Elementary; and Brenda Preston, Armuchee Elementary. This group will collect samples of all paperwork that a teacher deals with during the school day, evaluate the necessity of the paperwork using input from departments requiring the paperwork, seek alternatives or consolidation of required paperwork. The committees final recommendations will be submitted to the QLTE committee by the beginning of July, 2006.

Reassessment SST Process

Dr. Charlotte Roberts, assistant superintendent, will chair the SST study committee. The committee includes: Allison Chambers, teacher, Glenwood Primary; Carla Clemones, teacher, Pepperell Middle; Marie Mercer-Lewis, teacher, Coosa High; Angela Brock, 21st Century coordinator, Alto Park Elementary; Maggie Foy, assistant principal, Armuchee Elementary; Sherry Nix, administrative intern; Stephen Stewart, administrative intern. This committee will study ways to streamline the SST process.

Streamline Student Absence Reporting Procedures

Tony Bethune, principal at Model Elementary, will chair the absence reporting study committee. The group also includes: David Snow, director of technology; Vonnie Tant, student data specialist; Heather Money, system data support specialist; and the entire Model Elementary staff. Teachers from other districts in the system and grade levels are being added to the committee. The charge of this committee is to streamline the process while working within existing state guidelines and requirements. **Findings:** The protocol procedure calls for teachers to contact parents on each absence. Teachers are also required to contact parents when a child returns to school without a valid excuse. This leads to multiple parent contacts for one absence at the high school level. **Conclusions:** The committee is exploring the use of technology to improve the efficiency of the absence reporting process. Heather Money is streamlining the absence report that is generated by the computerized student data program. The committee will also look at ways the computer system can be used to make this process less cumbersome for teachers and reduce duplication of effort. The committee's final recommendations will be submitted to the QLTE committee by the beginning of July, 2006.

Set goals for Class Size Reduction

Bill Gilbert, principal of Armuchee Middle School, will chair the class size committee. This group will look at developing models for schools to use in the reduction of class size and class load. The class size committee will have recommendations for the QLTE Committee for possible adoption into the Action Plan in April, 2006.

Improve Resources for Teachers

The committee developed two major areas of focus for improving resources for teachers. The areas of focus will be: improved access to copy machines for teachers and staffing of school computer labs.

Copy machines

Beverly Smith, director of teacher instructional support, will chair a committee to study improving access to copy machines for teachers. Others on this committee include: Jamie Howell, copier technician; Bob Puckett, assistant superintendent; Teachers are frustrated that copy machines are not operational or are not convenient to them for use during their limited planning time. Some felt that more machines that are less sophisticated would be more appropriate for the school setting. Superintendent Kelly Henson has approved additional funding in this area for the 2006-2007 school year. Jamie Howell addressed provided the group with information about current copy machine allocation for the system. He also discussed the benefits of Risograph machines as opposed to copiers. The group will continue to study comparisons of the two machines as they consider how to allocate the new funds for next year in this area. The committee will have recommendations for the QLTE Committee for possible adoption into the Action Plan in May, 2006.

Staff Computer Labs

Tim Hensley, APR, director of public relations will chair a study groups to explore options for staffing of school computer labs. Additional committee members include: Kathy Cook, administrative intern; Melissa Pyle, Apprenticeship Coordinator; Dr. Lynn Plunkett, assistant superintendent. **Problem:** Currently, most school computer labs do not have a person who is responsible for staffing the lab. Teachers must teach the lesson and act as a technology person to get the computers up and running and also trouble shoot problems. By the time a teacher gets all of the labs computers on and any problems that may arise corrected, the class time in the lab is over. This wastes precious instruction time in the computer labs. A person staffing the lab could already have the computers turned on and loaded with the appropriate software. The person could also perform needed updates on computers and request service on computers needing additional

attention. The system can't afford to hire additional full time staff person for each school's lab. **Possible Solution:** The committee is exploring options for staffing the school computer labs using student workers who are studying for a career in a technology related field. The committee is exploring options available in the Floyd County Schools Apprenticeship Program, programs at Coosa Valley Technical College, Berry, Shorter and Georgia Highlands. The committee will make a presentation to the education committee of the Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce in February to make the group aware of this opportunity for the community to get involved in planned improvements in this area. The committee would like this to be a formal program along the lines of student teacher programs currently operated in the system in conjunction with local colleges. The committee believes that any student participating in the program would need to get credit for their time spent in the school labs for the program to be a viable long term solution to the staffing need. The group will also explore the possibility of a small stipend that may be able to be paid to students to cover travel expenses. The committee will have recommendations for the QLTE Committee to consider for the Action Plan in May, 2006.

Empower Teachers

In an effort to empower teachers, the committee has developed two plans that will be put in place this school year and one that will be implemented next school year. This year a teacher advisory group will be formed that will meet with the superintendent and discuss teacher concerns or recommendations and a yearly survey similar to the BellSouth survey will be developed to allow teachers to communicate with administration on a regular basis. Next year, an assessment will be developed to allow teachers to evaluate administrators on an annual basis.

Form a Teacher Advisory Committee

A teacher advisory group will be formed that will meet with the superintendent three times a year to discuss teacher concerns or recommendations. This advisory group will be made up of the current "Teacher of the Year" from each school in the system. The first meeting of this group will be held in March, 2006. The meeting time will be structured such that time away from class will be minimized. Tim Hensley, APR, director of public relations, will be responsible for developing this ongoing committee.

Yearly survey of staff

The system will also implement a yearly survey for staff similar to the BellSouth survey to allow teachers and system staff members to communicate with administration on a regular basis. Plans are for the survey to be given near the end of each school year beginning in the late spring, 2006. Tim Hensley, APR, will be responsible for developing and administering the survey.

Evaluation of administrators by teachers

An assessment will be developed to allow teachers to evaluate administrators on a yearly basis. The administrative assessment study group will be chaired by Charlie Kessler, executive director of human resources. An assessment instrument will be submitted to the committee for adoption by May, 2006.

Improve Professional Learning Opportunities

The Action Plan will center on two major areas for improvement in professional learning. A plan will be developed for improved collaboration among teachers and enhancements will be made in paraprofessional professional development opportunities.

Improve Opportunities for Teacher Collaboration and Sharing

Ruth Pinson, a teacher at Armuchee Elementary, will chair the committee to formulate opportunities for teachers to collaborate and share with colleagues. Others on the committee include: Allison Kelley, Johnson Elementary; Stacey Farrer, Garden Lakes Elementary; Linda Pinson, McHenry Primary; Jennifer Wofford, Alto Park Elementary; Karen Foss, Midway Primary; Jennifer Jones, Coosa Middle; Gretchen Brock, Pepperell Middle; Jackie Deaton, Armuchee High; Anne Kerr, Floyd County Technical High; Sherri Nix, administrative Intern; Dennis Abney, executive director of curriculum; Dr. Lynn Plunkett, assistant superintendent. The group will explore options for improving collaboration opportunities for teachers. The group will consider options for opportunities on the school level, within the school system and outside the system. The committees recommendations will be presented to the QLTE committee in May, 2006.

Improve Staff Development Opportunities for Paraprofessionals

Linda Spivey, principal of Pepperell Primary, will chair a group to recommend enhancements to paraprofessional professional development opportunities. Recommendations will be presented to the QLTE Committee in May, 2006.

Implementation Timeline

The timeline for completing the QLTE Action Plan calls for approving parts of the plan noted in this summary in May, 2006. The plan will be completed in July after the summer teacher study groups have finished their work. The committee will then present the complete plan to teachers during preplanning next school year with the implementation to begin during the 2006-2007 school year. The timeline for implementing the Action Plan is delayed from what was originally proposed but we feel that this is necessary to develop a plan that will truly impact the areas that teachers have identified in the QLTE process. We also felt that it was vital to include teachers in the process of seeking solutions to identified areas of need.

Assessment

The system will begin to assess progress in improving the teaching and learning environment in Floyd County Schools this spring. We will include questions related to the development of our Action Plan in the system's formal survey in May, 2006. The complete Action Plan will be assessed in the May, 2007 staff survey. We will also assess the program using the Teacher Advisory Committee.