

# Superintendent Valya S. Lee, Ed. D.

## Highlights and Accomplishments in District and School Improvement

Liberty County Public Schools

July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2017

DEPARTMENT	HIGHLIGHTS
Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improved CCRPI scores: <b>The Liberty County School System made an overall gain of 3.5 points, rising from 72.2 to 75.7 points out of a total possible score of 100 on CCRPI.</b> The LCSS score exceeded the state score by 3.5 points.</li><li>• Instituted a successful credit recovery program to decrease the high school dropout rate. Currently, the <b>high school graduation rate</b> exceeds the state by 4.1%. The Liberty County School System continues to graduate a higher percentage of students than the state of Georgia during each year, 2013-2016</li><li>• Maximized <b>Move on When Ready</b>. The high schools experienced a significant increase in the number of students participating in these dual enrollment opportunities. Both high schools were recognized as <b>Advanced Placement (AP) Honor Schools</b>.</li><li>• Increased the number and percent of <b>CTAE End of Pathway Completers</b> consistently over the past three years.</li><li>• Provided students and teachers in grades K – 9 ready access to thousands of books via the digital <b>myOn e-Library</b>. Between October and May 2016, students read 171,855 books for a total of 44,470 hours of reading.</li><li>• Implemented school day, after school and Saturday <b>remediation plans/programs</b>.</li><li>• Created <b>transition classes</b> for ninth graders in reading and mathematics at both high schools. Intensive instruction in reading using the research-based <b>Read180</b> program and focused mathematics instruction have resulted in better transition to the rigor of high</li></ul>

school courses for struggling students.

- **Reduced retention statistics** by approximately 70%.
- Developed **RESSLA**, Retired Educators Supporting Student Learning and Achievement; the program has been highly successful and is being expanded.
- Employed **academic coaches** to develop highly effective teachers of English and mathematics.
- Established a **balanced assessment continuum** including assessment administration protocol, data review, and reporting.
- **Established focus on student performance data** as the means to differentiate instruction, inform instructional strategies and techniques, and to determine professional development needs of instructional staff.
- Facilitated **Teacher Think Tank** to promote vertical and horizontal teaming, to assess continuous improvement efforts and engage teachers in central level decision-making
- Developed the annual **All Staff Conference Day**.
- Coordinated and implemented **Three-tiered Professional Development Model** for instructional staff.
- Provided all staff with high quality professional learning opportunities. In 2015-2016, teachers were offered 1,587 hours of **Professional Development** courses.
- Initiated FLASH classes. Instructional Specialists offered **89 FLASH (Focused Learning After School Hours) Courses** which focused on content specific strategies, technology integration, and resources for teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators.
- Encouraged the expansion of GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) program: Twenty-three Cohort One teachers completed the **Gifted Endorsement course** in December 2015. A second cohort of twelve teachers completed the course in the fall of 2016. Plans are underway to begin seeking teachers interested in the third cohort.
- Improved county-wide discipline statistics: LCSS District-wide

2015-16 discipline data showed a 4.13 % reduction in Out-Of-School Suspensions from school year 2014-15. Four schools in Liberty County received state recognition for **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports**. Likewise, LCSS experienced **improved school climate ratings** in 100% of schools.

- Increased parent engagement at each school. The Annual Title I Needs Assessment and Parental Engagement survey shows an average **increase of 13.33% in parent participation** at events during the 2015-2016 school year.
- Implemented **electronic classroom observation process** to provide real-time feedback for administrators and teachers to inform instructional practices
- Supported grant-writing initiatives: LCSS was awarded a state grant for **Project RAMP**. The State Board of Education approved a Math and Science Partnership (MSP) Program with Georgia Southern University. Liberty County was funded \$283,945.00 for the 2014-2016 school year. Both high schools received the **National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI)**, Advanced Placement (AP) program for military families for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years. The addition of Liberty County High School was made possible by a \$504,909 grant from DoDEA. The county teamed with Georgia Southern University for a Science Learning Initiative. The goal of **Project ESCOLAR** is to improve science learning in middle school through appropriate, relevant, and effective Collaborative Online Learning Units.
- Provided support for two schools receiving state level recognition: Button Gwinnett Elementary School was named a “**Title I Highest Progress School**” for being among the top 10% of Title I schools in the State to make the most progress in improving their performance over three years on the statewide assessments. Taylors Creek Elementary School was awarded Governor’s recognition for its **gains on CCRPI**.
- Teamed with **Georgia Southern University** for a Science Learning Initiative. The goal of Project ESCOLAR is to improve science learning in middle school through appropriate, relevant, and effective Collaborative Online Learning.
- Adopted a **two-pronged approach to written expression** using Thinking Maps, a visual organization tool, with 6 Traits of Writing.

	<p><b>Student Support Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trained staff on <b>RTI (Response to Intervention)</b>; System Coordinators and Behavior Modification Specialist provided training on the RTI approach and process to all schools at the beginning of the school year and redelivered throughout the year as needed or requested by individual schools.</li> <li>• Matched <b>students and mentors</b> across the district as part of the Building SHIPS Mentor Program to promote successful behavior outcomes.</li> <li>• Established <b>Horizons Alternative Education Learning Center</b>. The center instituted a blended learning model to mesh direct instruction; 36 students graduated in the first year.</li> <li>• Adopted the research-based program, <b>Capturing Kids Hearts</b>, in all middle and high schools. This program focuses on building those critical relationships necessary to create a positive school climate.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communications/ Public Relations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Established WLCS, a video streaming channel</b> that provides videos that showcase and inform stakeholders about initiatives that are vital to the success of the school system. All schools will benefit by being able to customize their own on demand channel.</li> <li>• <b>Created iDashboard</b>, a web-based dashboard that facilitates communication about school system progress to all LCSS stakeholders with full transparency. It provides stakeholders with clear graphic representations of the data on key performance indicators under the system Strategic Plan.</li> <li>• Expanded the Liberty County <b>interactive website</b>, which has had in excess of 1,500,000 hits.</li> <li>• Maintained a <b>strong social media presence</b> in order to communicate with stakeholders through a variety of access points. The system’s Facebook page has 1,408 followers; the Twitter feed has 796 followers and sent out 7,248 tweets.</li> <li>• Utilized the system’s <b>Performing Arts Center</b> to book 306 events this year, collecting \$32,250.00 in proceeds</li> <li>• Facilitated national <b>DAY ONE Celebration</b> in Liberty County</li> </ul>

	<p>Schools to engage system stakeholders in the opening of school and ongoing support throughout the school year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased avenues for <b>stakeholder input</b> (i.e., feedback link on web site, and community forums).</li> <li>• Implemented a variety of methods to <b>inform stakeholders</b> of “good news” about LCSS; <i>Getting the Word Out, Bits and Pieces, press releases, postings on the website, Twitter announcements.</i></li> <li>• Served <b>as a guest speaker</b> at the Chamber of Commerce, local civic organizations, faith-based gatherings.</li> <li>• Established a <b>Superintendent’s Community Advisory Council</b> to engage stakeholders from cross sections of the community in district operations.</li> <li>• Oversaw development of <b>Charter System</b> School Governance Teams.</li> <li>• Appointed by Governor Nathan Deal to the <b>State Council of the Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission.</b></li> <li>• Filmed <b>State of the District Videos</b>, which are available to all stakeholders on the Liberty County School System website.</li> <li>• Recognized by the <b>Georgia Legislative Black Caucus</b> for outstanding contributions to education. The event celebrated educators whose contributions are noteworthy in helping to advance the educational outcomes in students attending Title I schools.</li> <li>• Coordinated the <b>Strategic Planning Committee</b> to develop the county’s <b>Blueprint for Progress.</b> The planning committee consists of stakeholders from across the community and the school system.</li> <li>• Built <b>leadership capacity:</b> The Performance Enhancement Process encompasses a two-day Summer Leadership Summit, Principals in the Pipeline, Coaching with Confidence, and TALL: Teachers as Learning Leaders. Training is extended beyond the face-to-face time through the development of iBooks and iTunes University courses.</li> <li>• Created the <b>Interagency Council</b> to assist in coordinating services for students and families.</li> <li>• Visited each school for <b>Coffee Chats.</b> These have been a popular addition to the system’s communication outreach. School-based</li> </ul>
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	<p>coffee chats allow staff and administrators to interact with the superintendent and chief executive officers concerning district initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Held monthly <b>Superintendent’s Round Table</b> meetings. These meetings allow Central Office personnel to communicate with each other and with the Superintendent in an open forum setting.</li> <li>• Initiated the <b>Teacher Think Tank</b>; as a result of these meetings teachers had a voice in instructional decisions and purchases made at the system level.</li> <li>• Began the Superintendent’s <b>Student Advisory Council</b>. The council has student representatives from each school and grade level. These students meet with Dr. Lee twice a year to discuss issues of importance to them. Their voice has helped make change possible.</li> <li>• Initiated a community focus on bullying prevention with the <b>United Against Bullying</b> campaign.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Technology</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused on putting technology into the hands of students and teachers; Liberty County was one of 200 systems in the nation to be chosen for Apple’s prestigious <b>National Recognition: Apple Distinguished Program Award</b>.</li> <li>• Developed a strong presence in both of Apple’s delivery platforms: <b>iBooks and iTunes University</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Increased the number of digital devices available</b> for student use; the system has a 1:1 ratio for students in grades 3-12. Each K-2 class has a minimum of 10 devices.</li> <li>• Deployed over 11,000 iPads county-wide. iPad refresh for the 2016-2017 school year has been conducted.</li> <li>• Provided ongoing, district-wide professional development that included <b>Technology Integration in Classroom Instruction</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Improved technological efficiency</b>. Total technology work order tickets completed 4,707.</li> <li>• Utilized funds from ERATE for <b>upgrade of central office and school level technology infrastructure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Every classroom has an interactive Recordex instructional system.</li> <li>○ There are 450 Student Response Systems in the county.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moved all email accounts <b>to Gmail</b> as part of a uniform adoption of <b>Google Online</b> opportunities for educators.</li> <li>• <b>Upgraded PowerSchool</b> for Student Information Services.</li> </ul>
<b>Human Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instituted an <b>online application process</b> to minimize paper applications Online Applications.</li> <li>• <b>Provided consistent and systemic professional development</b> for administrators and staff to ensure established practices and procedures as well as legal regulations are followed.</li> <li>• <b>Realigned district organizational chart</b> to eliminate non-essential positions and duplicated services as a cost savings measure for the district.</li> <li>• <b>Developed a Human Resources manual</b> along with consistent and systemic professional development administrators in HR processes and procedures.</li> <li>• Established <b>FMLA</b> website.</li> <li>• Established uniform <b>process for advertising employment vacancies</b>.</li> <li>• Implemented <b>aggressive recruiting plan</b> to attract Highly-Qualified staff.</li> <li>• Established <b>standardized staff investigative process</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Operations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted <b>internal and external department audits</b> to ensure organizational effectiveness.</li> <li>• <b>Restored</b> six furlough days to the instructional calendar for all employees.</li> <li>• Received grant from the GA DOE to purchase <b>four additional school buses</b> for LCSS fleet.</li> <li>• <b>Provided new state-of-the art copiers</b> in all district sites at a cost savings to the school system.</li> <li>• <b>Provided transportation beyond the school day</b> for students receiving after-school and Saturday remediation and supplemental education services.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Liquidated surplus vehicles</b> from transportation fleet.</li> <li>• Established a <b>Transportation Learning Center</b> for safety training.</li> <li>• Reduced <b>accident reports</b> by more than 50% during the 2013-2014 school year and these numbers have continued to improve.</li> <li>• <b>Streamlined</b> time and attendance and payroll processes.</li> <li>• Developed <b>school and district safety plans</b>.</li> <li>• Implemented <b>district-wide mail courier service</b> to all sites on a daily basis. Enhanced communication between sites and eliminated the local travel cost for the district.</li> <li>• <b>Enhanced security at each school</b> including secured entries with access control.</li> <li>• Made <b>parking and driveway improvements</b> at several campuses.</li> <li>• Implemented <b>Breakfast In the Classroom</b>. Percentage of students eating breakfast increased with less plate waste.</li> <li>• Received a <b>Best Practices Award</b> from the Department of Education for increased participation levels in the breakfast program.</li> <li>• Recognized as a <b>“Georgia Grown” program</b> promoting Georgia’s locally grown products.</li> <li>• Instituted use of <b>construction manager to maintain oversight of construction and renovation projects</b> yielding a savings of 1 million plus to the district.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Finance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Campaigned successfully for ESPLOST</b>; it was renewed for another 5 years by the voters on May 24, 2016.</li> <li>• Re-aligned budget expenditures to <b>balance budget and establish financial reserves</b>; at the end of 2016, there was</li> </ul>



	<p>\$1,000,000 in reserve funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aligned expenditures with revenues for the district which resulted in <b>additional contributions to the LCSS fund balance.</b></li> <li>• Presented a <b>balanced budget to the Board for FY2017</b> inclusive of additional contribution to fund balance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Board Governance and Relations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LCBOE members participated in <b>onsite training sessions with the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA)</b> inclusive of Governance training, Roles and Responsibility training, and a mediation session.</li> <li>• Implemented <b>student and staff recognitions at board meetings.</b></li> <li>• Developed <b>executive session packets</b> to expedite sessions and to promote compliance with Open Meetings Act.</li> <li>• Organized <b>eBoard training</b> and utilization for board members and responsible staff.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Charter District</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversaw the application process for converting LCSS to a Charter System. Each of the following steps were required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The LCSS charter system application was <b>approved</b> by the Georgia Department of Education in <b>July 2015.</b></li> <li>○ <b>School Governance Teams</b> were elected at all schools and training was provided to SGT members.</li> <li>○ Schools began <b>implementing the innovative practices</b> outlined in the charter.</li> <li>○ Funding appropriated to the district outfitted seven of our schools with <b>3D Z-Space labs.</b></li> <li>○ Remaining funds were allocated to each school to advance Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics (<b>STEAM</b>) learning opportunities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>