

Cherokee County School District

P.O. Box 769
Canton, Georgia 30169
Phone 770-479-1871 – Fax 770-479-1236

DEBI RADCLIFF
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SCHOOL BOARD VICE-CHAIR

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DR. FRANK R. PETRUZIELLO
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

May 25, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

The Cherokee County School District (CCSD) recommends Learning Focused Schools (LFS) comprehensive continuous school improvement model be considered as a service provider for Race to the Top Schools in Tennessee. Cherokee County School District has utilized consistent and pervasive effective instructional strategies for increased student academic achievement, which are hallmarks of the LFS model, as the vehicle to implement Georgia Performance Standards. CCSD partnered with LFS to provide staff training, materials and facilitation of school visits, making this implementation process highly successful.

The Cherokee County School District is the 22nd fastest growing county in the nation with a total student enrollment over 38,000 students. The School District is comprised of 40 schools, which include 22 elementary schools, an intermediate center, seven middle schools, six high schools, an alternative school, a Head Start Center, and an evening school. More than 28% of students are eligible for free/reduced meal benefits and approximately 23% are minority.

To provide all students with high quality teachers with extensive teacher preparation, classroom experience, and an in-depth knowledge of the subjects they teach is a continuous endeavor. Since 2004, LFS training and monitoring has been a core training and lesson planning model for certified employees. The Office of Educational Programs, Student Support and Professional Development has, in partnership with Learning-Focused, completed training for:

- Over 1,000 certified staff members
- 6 Innovation Zones
- 24 Schools (K-12)
- 52 in-district certified trainers
- All new certified staff member receive training prior to beginning school via Camp Cherokee

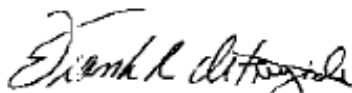
Through comprehensive implementation of the LFS model, a culture of effective instructional strategies used consistently and pervasively across the School District, combined with individual school improvement initiatives and monitoring, provided a powerful model for instituting the Georgia Performance Standards in all core content areas. Student academic achievement scores have progressively increased. Specifically in 2009:

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- Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency test (GCRCT) scores for grades 3, 5, and 8 in Reading and Math across the School District were significantly higher than State scores.
- In all of the GCRCT subtest areas, CCSD had a higher percentage of students exceeding or meeting the standards than the State from 3 to 19 percentage points.
- The percentage of students scoring in the highest category of exceeding the standards was from 5 to 17 percentage points higher than the State.
- Eighth grade math scores increased by 10%.
- Fifth grade math scores improved by 7%.
- In several schools, every student met the standards on certain subtests for particular grades.
- All five high schools rank in the top 25 high schools in Georgia as ranked by the Independent Georgia Policy foundation.
- All five high schools were recognized as "High Performing Schools" by the Governor and State School Superintendent under Georgia's single statewide Accountability System.
- The 2008-2009 high school graduation rate was 80.7%.
- CCSD was one of only three Metro Atlanta districts to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) last year under the Federal No Child Left Behind Act. This represents the third year in a row CCSD has made AYP.

LFS associates are professional, competent and accessible. Once contracted, the consultants have provided customized training, individual school planning, walk through and monitoring training, and conference opportunities in all participating CCSD schools. School improvement initiatives are grounded in LFS vocabulary and strategies.

Sincerely,



Dr. Frank R. Petruziello
Superintendent of Schools

CEC/PK/JM/sh

cc: Dr. Carla D. Cohen, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Programs, Student Support and Professional Development
Dr. Pat Kearns, Director, Academic Standards, Professional/Staff Development and Career Pathways
Jackie Miller, Supervisor, Professional/Staff Development

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