



STUDENT SUCCESS C.A.F.E.  
SESSION WRAP UP



DECATUR COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
3<sup>rd</sup> Full Working C.A.F.E Session  
Feb. 16, 2016

A cross-sector collaborative team of family, school and community members with the common agenda to work together to increase the post-secondary success of *all* students by working to intersect student success initiatives and supports.

C.A.F.E. Members in Attendance at 3<sup>rd</sup> full Working Session:

Jimmy Adamson, Local Minister and Community Activist  
Alesia Brinson, Community Volunteer, Middle School Mentoring Program  
Ronnie Burke, Coordinator, Decatur County Family Connection  
Michael Cox, Sheriff Deputy  
Tommy Howell, Bainbridge High School Principal  
Thea Gordon, Counselor Jones-Wheat Elementary Counselor  
Catherine Gossett, Exceptional Education Director  
Kimberly Coleman Jones, Ga Department of Labor  
Cheryl Guy, Bainbridge Parent Involvement Coordinator  
Joe Kelley, High School Math Teacher, Climax Councilman-elect  
Debbie McIntyre, Adult Education Bainbridge State College  
Ale Moreno, Parent  
Fred Rayfield, School District Superintendent  
Joseph Randall, Parent Mentor  
Kayce Shiley, Youth Services, SW Georgia Regional library, Decatur Branch  
Lanika Thomas, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor  
Kathy Varner, Title I, Federal Programs Director  
Catherine Vanstone, Technology, Training & Development, SW Reg. Library  
Elizabeth Whaley, Parent and Trainer – “Darkness to Light”  
Sylena Wiggins, Exceptional Education Assistant Director

C.A.F.E. Members Unable to Attend the Feb.16 C.A.F.E. Session

Dennis Brinson, Decatur County Commissioner  
Gena Burke, High School Lead Teacher  
Porche Chavers, Middle School Teacher-  
Kevin Bruton, Parent and local Business Owner  
Tom Griffin, Bank Representative, Graduate of Decatur Schools  
John Wooden, Middle School Principal  
Andrew Diaz, GAP Counselor

- ❖ Many of the C.A.F.E. members listed as representing an organization are also parents of students in the school district.



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### HIGHLIGHTS from Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> Session:

#### The C.A.F.E. Stakeholders:

- Reviewed and discussed input from the Jan. 28th C.A.F.E. Community Conversation, which they as a team organized, promoted and hosted. More than 200 community, family and school members participated in the forum, which included dinner.
- Revisited their role as stakeholders in overseeing the GA Department of Education's local initiative to target 50 high school students, who are academically at risk or identified with a disability, to receive intensive supports to reach graduation.
- Reconfirmed their plan to kick off a campaign around *all* Decatur students to be prepared to graduate and attend college, technical school or to pursue a career path.
- Discussed activities to energize the community by offering information around student success and the critical need for grade level literacy. They later plan to look into ways they can work to decrease the absentee rate
- C.A.F.E. members agreed to immediately begin work on a plan to partner with existing programs and build early reading interventions in the school, at home and in the community. They agreed to: collaborate with the Southwest Regional Library, Decatur Branch, on summer reading activities, including contests, to take place at the library and around the community; and find hosts to read books to children at the free school breakfast and lunch summer programs delivered throughout the county.
- Established three working stakeholder committees with designated leaders, time lines and short-term goals.
- In addition, the team is developing long term goals for the 2016-2017 school year based on: community and teacher input; research and data on the impact of poverty in Decatur County; as well as district data.

#### Discussion/Review of the Community Conversation with Parent Mentor Joseph Randal:

Please see attachment for listing of suggestions and input from the session. One critical factor that surfaced is the need to reach out to families in new ways and to improve communication methods between home and school. Team members were satisfied that the participants represented a cross section of the community.

Community Follow Up: Family, community and school members can follow the C.A.F.E.'s progress through the C.A.F.E. Wrap Ups which are posted on the district website.

Additionally they are encouraged to sign up to receive periodic C.A.F.E. Community Action Updates via email. The Community Action Updates will outline volunteer opportunities and other needs as they arise in the work. To join the mailing list, please send your email address to: **Sylena Wiggins**, Assistant Special Education Director, at [swiggins@dcboe.com](mailto:swiggins@dcboe.com)

*It is encouraged when you sign up, but not required, to indicate the stakeholder group you best represent (family, school or community member), and talents or interests that could apply to the C.A.F.E.'s work in supporting students in reaching their dream.*



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### State Systemic Improvement Plan (S-SIP)

As a part of a school district's work under the S-SIP, the C.A.F.E. serves as the Student Success Stakeholder team to assist in the improvement plan to increase the graduation rate for students with disabilities and connect general supervision to the work of meeting the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA.) Mrs. Wiggins explained to the team how the 50 students were identified for interventions by evaluating the End of Course (EOC) Testing results and Lexile Reading comprehension and fluency scores. Gina Burke, high school lead teacher, is the district's S-SIP high school coach and will be assisted by Exceptional Education Director Catherine Gossett and Assistant Director Sylena Wiggins.

The C.A.F.E. agreed to initially support these students with a requested adult mentor initiative around the advisement period on Thursdays. The C.A.F.E.'s role is to eventually look for other root causes for academic failure as it reviews progress-monitoring reports on certain data points in the improvement plan. *(The names of the students will not be identified to the C.A.F.E. team. In addition, the school district will carefully screen adult mentors by requiring training in ethics and confidentiality and potential mentors to undergo a police background check.)*

Mrs. Gossett explained that many interventions are underway for these identified students, as well as many other students, such as extra time during the day for support and tutoring; improved efforts to teach students about transition; improving co-teaching methods on content; and an emphasis on high tech industries by setting up field trips for student colleges and businesses.

### Partnership with the Southwest Georgia Regional Library in Bainbridge

Catherine Vanstone and Kaycee Shiley, representing the Decatur branch of the SW Georgia Regional Library, shared information about extensive free reading programs and contests throughout the summer especially targeting young readers. Ms. Vanstone said they are working on a campaign, which is research based, that promotes children being read at least 1,000 books before entering school.

In addition, the library is collaborating with the local YMCA. The C.A.F.E.'s newest members also discussed the book mobile, which provides service to rural areas, as well as elementary schools, day care centers and other facilities in Decatur, Miller and Seminole counties. The librarians said the organization is open to visiting local churches where summer Bible classes will be attracting many of the Decatur's elementary students this summer. They also said they are developing programs for middle students using writing as a way to increase interest in reading. C.A.F.E. parent Ale Moreno suggested she might be able to help to expand services to patrons who speak Spanish as their first language.



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The Team Choose a Campaign Slogan:

The team voted “**Read...Dream...Achieve**” as its campaign motto.

Three committees were set up and began work during the session.

I.) **District wide Campaign (to Increase Student Graduation Rates and Outcomes)**

Leader: Kathy Varner

Catherine Gossett, Cheryl Guy, Joe Kelley, Kim Jones, Fred Rayfield and Gina Burke

**Read.... Dream.... Achieve**

Looking at the big picture of graduation, careers, secondary outcomes and the critical need for grade level reading and how to energize the community.

**Campaign Ideas:**

- ✓ Setting up a year round calendar for messaging and also capitalizing on school and community special events to tie in message.
- ✓ Branding – banners, information post cards etc.
- ✓ Setting up a booth at Wal-Mart.
- ✓ Looking for funding from local businesses, particularly banks.
- ✓ Looking at ways to reach families in new ways such as: attaching information to the school supply list at Wal-Mart; messages on report cards; and bus drivers handing out information direct to parents at the bus stop.
- ✓ Social media: texting instead of sending flyers and emails; producing a rap video with messaging; increasing the C.A.F.E.’s presence on the district’ web site and eventually taking advantage of adding on a Facebook page, Twitter account and Instagram.
- ✓ Newspaper articles, radio PSAs, TV news features.
- ✓ Listing “Community Partners in the Dream” on the web site.

II.) **Ramping Up Early Literacy**

Leaders: Debbie McIntyre and Ronnie Burke

Members: Jimmy Adamson; Michael Cox, Kaycee Shiley; Porche Chavers; Ale Moreno and Catherine Vanstone

- ❖ Begin planning a summer reading effort with the local library and also a campaign around a reading program at the district’s free breakfast and lunch locations for students.



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**Literacy Ideas:**

- ✓ A baby shower for teenage pregnant students with an emphasis on the critical need for early reading.
- ✓ Reading Contests
- ✓ Community book drives
- ✓ Reading Buddies in the early grades to increase fluency
- ✓ Reading log partnership with school – incentives
- ✓ Information to physicians about the need for early reading

III.) **Outreach**

Leaders: Thea Gordon and Alesia Brinson

Joseph Randall, Tommie Howell, Kimberly Coleman Jones, Ale Moreno, Lanika Thomas, Elizabeth Whaley, Porche Chavers, Kevin Bruton, John Wooden, and Andrew Diaz

**Outreach Ideas:**

- ✓ Leading school adult mentoring needs/ *Finding Champions!*
- ✓ Developing a five-question survey to find out what S-SIP identified students' need.
- ✓ Developing volunteers where needed by working with community contacts and Title I Family Engagement and its more than 1,000 trained family members.
- ✓ Building collaboration between inter-agencies and other community partners around student achievement.
- ✓ Responding to cultural differences as the C.A.F.E. work expands including the challenges of poverty that are facing families.
- ✓ Listening and responding to teachers needs.
- ✓ Pulling in and celebrating others to work around the targeted improvement issues.
- ✓ Looking for ways to improve communication with traditionally hard to reach families.

Committee leaders then shared their initial team discussion with the entire C.A.F.E. and also set up a conference call for committee leaders and the C.A.F.E. core team for April 11 at 10 a.m.

The next full C.A.F.E Student Success Stakeholder meeting will be  
4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday, April 28  
Jones-Wheat Elementary School



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### Rewind:

To review past action, please refer to the first two C.A.F.E. Wrap Up meeting reports and the Community Conversation Wrap Up, *available* on the Decatur County School District website: [www/boe.dcboe.com](http://www/boe.dcboe.com)

C.A.F.E. Organizational Process: is based on best practices developed by school-based stakeholder teams in Georgia that implemented the C.A.F.E. process over the last seven years. National guidance for the process of running these stakeholder teams comes from 15 years of collective work of special and general educators, representing every state, many national health and education organizations, and families. These participants created a blueprint to assist in the facilitation of stakeholder teams called “Leading by Convening.” This work is led by the IDEA Partnership, which is a national organization supported by OSEP and the National State Directors of Special Education. “Leading by Convening. A Blueprint For Authentic Engagement.” It is available on line at: <http://www.ideapartnership.org/building-connections/the-partnershipway>

Ms. Patti Solomon, prepared this wrap up, and is the C.A.F.E. facilitator under the State Personnel Development Grant, Division for Special Education Services and Supports, GaDOE.