



## **Making Connections: How the Board's Theory of Action, RBES, and IE<sup>2</sup> Partnership Contract support Higher Student Achievement**

**In *Good to Great* Jim Collins uses the analogy of a bus and how it is essential to have a clear destination and the right people on the bus who are in the right seats. The bus analogy is useful in understanding the relationship among all of the components of Gwinnett County Public Schools' (GCPS) improvement efforts and the district's goal of increasing student achievement for all students.**

**Destination** = Higher student achievement

**School Bus** = School Improvement (The vehicle that will help us get to our destination.)

**Engine** = Theory of Action: Managed Performance/Empowerment (The Board's Theory of Action is the engine driving school improvement in Gwinnett County Public Schools.)

**Four Wheels** = Flexibility, Accountability, Empowerment, and Capacity (Four of the six essential elements of Gwinnett's improvement strategy... All must be in balance to ensure a smooth, successful ride.)

**Chassis** = Standards and Instructional Management: Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment (The other two essential elements that are the foundation for our school improvement efforts)

**Dashboard** = RBES: Results-Based Evaluation System (Shows us how we are doing and alerts leaders if something isn't working correctly.)

**Steering Wheel** = Vision, Mission, Goals, and Beliefs (Steers the way, keeping us on the right course)

**Driver** = School and instructional leaders (School leaders, teachers, and central office staff who use their knowledge and experience to ensure the school improvement effort follows the correct route.)

**Passengers** = Students on the road to higher student achievement

**Route** = IE<sup>2</sup> Partnership Contract, local school plans (There are many routes a school improvement effort can take to reach the final destination of improved student achievement. Gwinnett schools are asking for flexibility that will allow them to determine the best route, one that is selected by the school's leaders and that best meets the needs of their school and its population.)

*As a coherent organization, GCPS ensures that changes and initiatives move us closer to our shared vision of becoming a system of world-class schools. The IE<sup>2</sup> partnership contract is a strategic initiative that blends well with the district's improvement strategy and its Results-Based Evaluation System. Combined, they create a structure that will take GCPS from "good to great"... ensuring that the strides Gwinnett schools have made in increasing student achievement in the past will continue in the future.*

## IE<sup>2</sup> Partnership Contract Background

- On December 11, 2008, GCPS will hold a public hearing on the proposed contract prior to its presentation to the Gwinnett County Board of Education. It will then be forwarded on for anticipated State Board action in January 2009.
- GCPS is seeking flexibility through the IE<sup>2</sup> partnership contract for one reason... to raise student achievement.
- Using the law (HB1209) and the subsequent State Board of Education rules as a guide, GCPS developed its contract, which includes a district strategic plan and a school plan for each school that identifies areas of accountability and flexibility, as well as consequences.
- The partnership contract will allow the district and local schools to improve teaching and learning by providing the flexibility for them to determine how to best use available resources (financial, human, and otherwise) to improve student achievement.
- Decisions on how to implement the flexibility will be based on what's in the best interest of students at an individual school.
- Flexibility in class size is not about making classes bigger; it's about removing an artificial barrier that prevents schools from being able to use different instructional models that could improve student learning.
- Principals have been instrumental in the process of determining the areas of accountability as well as flexibility they feel will best benefit Gwinnett's schools.
- Updates on the district's interest and progress in submitting a partnership contract have been provided during several School Board meetings.
- In light of the economic downturn, and the very real possibility of future state cuts, the partnership contract will release GCPS from restrictive rules, freeing up resources to extend services/programs that will positively impact student learning.
- GCPS is uniquely positioned to enter into the partnership contract, benefitting from its tradition of accountability and performance.
- Schools still must meet requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and other measures of the Single Statewide Accountability System. GCPS will provide support to ensure that all school initiatives are in compliance with state and federal rules.
- The district, along with the State Department of Education and the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, will monitor progress on each local school plan for improvement, recognizing schools that meet goals and providing support when needed.



**Destination...**

**Higher Student Achievement**

