

**Grantee Name:** Georgia Professional Standards Commission

**Project Name:** Focus on Change in Underrepresented Staff and Staffing Systems (FOCUS)

**Project Director:** Cynthia Stephens, 404-232-2619, [cyndy.stephens@gapsc.com](mailto:cyndy.stephens@gapsc.com)

**Partner Districts/LEAs:** Baker, Baldwin, Ben Hill, Berrien, Bibb, Brooks, Burke, Calhoun, Chatham, Chattooga, Clarke, Clay, Clayton, Colquitt, Cook, Decatur, Dodge, Dooly, Doughty, Dublin, Early, Echols, Emanuel, Fannin, Gainesville, Glynn, Grady, Greene, Gwinnett, Hancock, Irwin, Lamar, Lanier, Liberty, Marietta, McIntosh, Meriweather, Miller, Mitchell, Montgomery, Pelhman, Putnam, Quitman, Randolph, Rome City, Seminole, Stewart, Sumter, Terrell, Thomas, Thomasville, Tift, Turner, Valdosta, Ware, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Webster, and Worth

Focus on Change in Underrepresented Staff and Staffing Systems (FOCUS): Direct Assistance in Recruiting, Training and Retaining Transition Teachers is a new plan for Georgia in the federal 2009 Transition to Teaching Grant Program. Georgia has formed a coalition of 13 education agencies, post secondary institutions and corporate partners, along with 60 partner high-need local education agencies (LEAs). The project will implement an innovative and connected series of objectives and strategies that streamline teacher hiring, selection, and placement. In addition, the project will revamp the preparation programs and support systems in order to promote effective teaching practices, and improve student achievement. Partnering LEAs comprise one-third of Georgia LEAs, and serve 30% of 1.6 million public school students.

The need for Project FOCUS is evident and well documented in Georgia's teacher supply and demand data, and in projected hiring needs for Georgia public schools over the next decade. The goal of Project FOCUS is to trigger essential changes to state and local policies in order to effectively staff high-need schools with high quality teachers. Paradigm shifts will systemically restructure schools hiring practices to include unique and research-based pathways that allow highly skilled, knowledgeable, and experienced individuals to transition into classrooms. Core content areas will include mathematics, science, special education, and foreign languages. A critical outcome of the project will be the models, coalitions, and practices that build a strong cadre of Transition Teachers, and that strengthen school leaders capacity to ensure that high-need schools are fully staffed with good teachers every year and where needed.