



# NEWSLETTER

## Reimagining Our Principal Meetings: A Data Driven Approach to Student Success

Submitted by: Allysun Davis, Director



Pictured: The OPLS planning with a purpose to develop strategies to drive student achievement

The session, led by the district's Office of Professional Learning Services (OPLS), emphasized intentional planning and targeted support. Principals engaged in meaningful discussions, examined trends, and developed action steps tailored to their school's unique needs. As a result, each school team left with a clear and focused plan of action to maximize student growth during the remaining days of the school year.

In an effort to strengthen instructional leadership and improve student outcomes, the district recently transformed its traditional principal's meeting into an engaging, data focused work session. Principals participated in a hands-on data disaggregation session designed to deepen their understanding of student performance and school accountability.

This shift in approach reflects the district's ongoing commitment to data informed decision making and continuous improvement, ensuring that every student is positioned for success.

Guided by strategies from the district's Value Added Model (VAM), principals worked collaboratively to analyze student data at an individual level. The session focused on identifying how each student contributes to the overall grading calculation, allowing school leaders to more strategically determine how student performance impacts their school grade.



Pictured: GCSD principals actively engaged in the data disaggregation session, collaborating and applying VAM strategies.

### UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

Good Friday - April 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Half Day-PL/Planning - April 17<sup>th</sup>

Elijah Key, Superintendent  
Lisa Robinson, Asst. Superintendent,  
Academic Services

## Expanding Digital Access and Family Engagement

Submitted by: Joannette Thomas, Director

The Office of Federal Programs is proud to announce a major technology initiative that will benefit every student in the Gadsden County School District. All students will receive a brand-new Dell laptop, reinforcing the district's commitment to academic excellence and digital access for all learners.

This initiative is designed to support student achievement by expanding access to online testing platforms, digital academic resources, and other instructional programs that enhance classroom learning. By ensuring that each student has reliable access to technology, the district continues to close gaps and create equitable learning opportunities.

Federal Programs has worked diligently in collaboration with Mr. John Thomas, IT Coordinator, to ensure the purchasing process, asset tagging, logistics, and distribution procedures are structured, efficient, and well organized. Schools across the district can expect to receive the new laptops by May 1, 2026. District leaders anticipate that this investment will have a lasting and positive impact on teaching, learning, and overall student success.

In addition to strengthening instructional technology, the Federal Programs Department is also prioritizing family and community engagement. In partnership with the FACE (Family & Community Engagement) Department, the district is planning a dynamic Community and Parent Meeting scheduled for April 7, 2026, at Stewart Elementary School.

After meeting with Principal Germany, Stewart Elementary has been confirmed as the host site for this important event. Organizers are introducing a new and engaging format to encourage increased parent participation and involvement.

The evening will feature student performances from Stewart Street Elementary's Chorus and Cheerleading Team. Shanks Middle School will also participate, with students from the Basketball Team and Cheerleaders performing and being recognized during the program. This collaborative showcase highlights the district's belief that student talent and academic achievement go hand in hand.

The meeting will also provide valuable Title I information for parents and families, ensuring they remain informed partners in their children's education. Local vendors will be present to share community resources and services that support families beyond the classroom.

District leaders recognize that achieving different results requires meaningful change. By combining academic information, student celebration, and community partnership, the Federal Programs Department aims to create an informative and inspiring evening of engagement, celebration, and collaboration.

The district looks forward to welcoming families and community members as it continues working together to support student success across Gadsden County.

## Growing Strong: PreK Enrollment and Student Success on the Rise

Submitted by: Velencia Denson, Director

The program held its second pop-up registration March 2-4, 2026, from 9:00-2:00pm at the PreK Office. Based on our Head Start grant of 227 students for enrollment, we currently have accepted (96), waitlisted (61) and new status (104) for the 2026-2027 school year.

Title I has an enrollment slot for 68 students and we currently have accepted (12) at GEMS. There is no waitlist or new status.

Our annual PreK registration will be March 31<sup>st</sup> - April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2026 at the Joe Ferolito Recreation Center from 9:00-2:00p.m.

In February, the school-wide PreK administration of STAR Early Literacy Assessment was administered to all 3- and 4-year-olds.

However, the data below showS the state STAR Early Literacy assessment growth between PM1 and PM2.

Grades Tested: Pre-K PM1	Taken: 191	Date Last Taken: 09/17/2025
85%	163	
14%	27	
1%	1	

Grades Tested: Pre-K PM2	Taken: 191	Date Last Taken: 01/27/2026
49%	94	
44%	84	
5%	9	
2%	3	
1%	1	

### Growth Analysis

#### Major Gains

- Lowest category dropped from 85% → 49% (-36 percentage points)
- Mid-low increased from 14% → 44% (+30 points)
- Higher categories (combined) increased from 1% → 8%

This means many students moved out of the lowest band. Also, many students are now approaching or reaching benchmark levels. The Early literacy skills (letter recognition, phonological awareness, vocabulary) are developing as expected.

- Strong overall growth across the cohort
- Instruction between PM1 and PM2 is clearly effective
- Still 49% in the lowest band, meaning continued support is needed
- A growing group (8%) is now in proficient/advanced ranges

#### Next Steps:

- Continued targeted small-group instruction for the 49% still below level
- Provide enrichment for students now in higher bands
- Focus on:
  - Phonological awareness
  - Letter-sound correspondence
  - Oral language development

## Inspiring Achievement: OPLS Drives Instructional Excellence

Submitted by: Kysha Hopkins, Director

OPLS is supporting West Gadsden Middle School with intervention in Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Civics. We are committed to assisting our schools as we work together to improve teacher and student achievement.

Our Reading Endorsement Cohort recently began Competency 4 on March 11, 2026. This competency focuses on differentiating reading instruction to meet the diverse needs of all learners. Participants are learning how to use assessment data to plan targeted instruction that supports students at varying levels of reading development. A key component of this competency is understanding how differentiation aligns with the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) process. Educators are exploring how to provide effective Tier 1 core instruction while also identifying when students may need additional Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions. Through discussion, application activities, and analysis of classroom scenarios, participants are developing strategies to adjust instruction, group students flexibly, and provide appropriate supports that promote reading growth for every learner.

### Upcoming Professional Learnings

- April 11, 2026: Planning with the B.E.S.T. in Mind-Part 3 (UDL: Science of Reading, Technology & AI Usage in the classroom, and Identifying and Applying Evidence-Based Practices) held at GTC from 9:00am – 12:00 pm. (Registration will open in ePDC on March 23, 2026)
- May 23, 2026: “Teacher Believed in Me” for administrators and teachers held at the Gadsden Extension Center from 8:30 am – 3:30 pm. (Registration will open in ePDC on March 23, 2026)
- May 26-27, 2026: FL VAM Professional Suites held at the Gadsden County School Boardroom from 9:00 am – 3:30 pm. This session will be for school administrators only.
- July 13-16, 2026: GCSD Education Summit held at the Orchid Center from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm (Registration is open now in ePDC)

## Stronger Together: Advancing Student Support Through Collaboration

Submitted by: Kesandra Brown, Director

The ESE, Student Services and Mental Health Department is proud to share the continued success of our recent initiatives aimed at strengthening family engagement, community collaboration and student support systems.

Our Family Café event was a tremendous success, welcoming over 100 families and featuring more than 30 community vendors. This event provided a meaningful opportunity for families to access valuable resources, build connections and engage in supportive dialogue centered on student success and well-being.

In addition, we successfully launched our first Collaborative Juvenile Coordination Task Force meeting, marking a significant step forward in cross-agency partnership. The objective of this initiative is to establish a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach among juvenile justice stakeholders to improve communication, streamline case processing and ensure timely, effective interventions that promote the safety, rehabilitation and overall well-being of youth and the community. The strong participation and engagement from stakeholders reflect a shared commitment to this important work.

Looking ahead, we are gearing up for the Gadsden County Law Enforcement Torch Run scheduled for April 13 at 10:00 a.m. The run will begin at 1509 West Jefferson Street (old IGA parking lot) and conclude at the Gadsden County Courthouse, covering approximately 1.2 miles. This event serves as a powerful opportunity for law enforcement, community partners and supporters to unite in support of a shared cause.

On behalf of our team, we extend a formal invitation to all partners and stakeholders to join us in this impactful event.

Together, these efforts reflect our department’s ongoing commitment to collaboration, community engagement and the holistic support of the youth and families we serve.

**Districtwide Academic Growth:  
FAST PM1 to PM2 Results**  
Submitted by: Caroline McKinnon, Coordinator

With less than 30 days of instruction remaining before statewide testing in May, students across Gadsden County School District are working hard and showing strong academic growth!

Students in grades K-8 are preparing for iReady (April 7-17) and District Star assessments (March 23-April 3), while grades 4-10 will complete the statewide Writing Assessment between March 30 and April 10. Our youngest learners in grades K-2 will take the statewide Star assessment April 14-28.

Recent district assessment data shows encouraging progress:  
 Star Reading: 49% meeting the district benchmark  
 Star Math: 57.9% meeting the district benchmark  
 Star Early Literacy: 65.1% meeting the district benchmark  
 Student growth percentiles remain strong across subjects.

High school students at Gadsden County High School and Crossroad Academy are also participating in ACT School Day, SAT School Day, and the Classic Learning Test to support graduation readiness.

While the schedule may seem full, these assessments help guide instruction and ensure every student receives the support they need to succeed. We are proud of the hard work happening in classrooms across the district!

**The Data Speaks**  
Submitted by: Kimberly Cummings, Coordinator

The diagram shows that effective Science instruction is taking place in the classroom. Schools are active using the resources chosen by the office of Academic Support, Edmentum-Study Island. Engaging students with practical, real-world science concepts increases motivation, fosters critical thinking, and improves performance on assessments.

We understand that science classes often use nonfiction texts, charts, and diagrams. These help students practice reading informational text, which is a KEY skill for academic success. Science teaches students to ask questions, make predictions, and analyze evidence. These same skills are essential for strong reading comprehension, especially when students are asked to infer meaning or evaluate arguments in a text.

**Next Steps**

District staff will continue to monitor the results of the weekly assessments and the data from Edmentum’s Study Island program. Ongoing progress monitoring ensures that schools continue to utilize resources aligned with their specific academic goals. The data, which reflects steady improvement, highlights the need to maintain a sense of urgency in accelerating student learning. This focused and collaborative approach is designed to address the individual needs of students and drive continued improvement in overall academic performance.



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District Summary Report: All Activity by Subject

Report Filters

District: Gadsden County SD

Report Period:  01/23/2026 - 03/24/2026

[Update](#)

Subject	Sessions	Time Spent	Correct	Total	% Correct
Science	8,007	1026:00:42	56,964	83,976	67.8%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>8,007</b>	<b>1026:00:42</b>	<b>56,964</b>	<b>83,976</b>	<b>67.8%</b>