

## **School Board Revises Continuous Achievement Model**

Last May, the Fulton County Board of Education adopted new guidelines for the school system's Continuous Achievement Model, a framework for advancement that allows all students to be challenged according to their aptitude and motivation levels.

Under this model, elementary and middle school students are allowed to progress in language arts and mathematics at their optimum pace and depth. High schools do not follow the Continuous Achievement Model because there are already numerous advancement opportunities available through honors classes, Advanced Placement (AP) courses and dual-enrollment partnerships with nearby universities.

The revised guidelines were adopted so that the framework would better align with new curriculum standards. These changes also reflect recommendations from a recent curriculum audit and feedback from our parents, teachers and school leaders. Information regarding placement along with on-level and advanced curriculum standards will be available for parent review in the elementary and middle school curriculum handbooks. The level at which students are placed will also be noted on report cards.

### **Kindergarten (all year) and First Grade (first semester)**

Since the primary years are devoted to the development of basic skills and concepts, kindergarten and first-grade students (during first semester) will be appropriately challenged by differentiated instruction where teachers tailor the curriculum to each child's strengths and weaknesses. The K-1 curriculum is written so teachers can make adjustments for students based upon their individual learning needs.

### **First Grade (second semester)**

At the end of the first semester, students showing higher performance will be identified for advanced curriculum opportunities. The curriculum level at which the student is working will be noted on the report cards during the second semester as either "on-level" or "advanced." Grade placement for the following year will be made based on the student's academic performance in the advanced curriculum.

### **Grades 2-5**

In grades 2-5, students will be evaluated for curriculum placement based on testing data, grades and teacher recommendation and evaluated as either "on-level," "advanced" or "accelerated" (one year ahead). The advanced curriculum is written at a different pace, depth and instructional level than the on-level curriculum and additional resources are used to challenge students. Students identified for the accelerated curriculum will work at the next grade's pace and depth in that curriculum area. Student placement will be reviewed, at minimum, every 18 weeks to determine if the placement level continues to be appropriately challenging.

### **Grades 6-8**

The middle school mathematics curriculum is written so that the advanced students learn at a deeper level and faster pace. Additional resources are also used to support their learning and offer more challenge. Students identified for the accelerated curriculum will work at the next grade level's pace and depth. In the content area of reading, middle school students who, in fifth grade, scored at the 60th percentile on the ITBS or 825 or above on the CRCT, can take a world language course instead of reading. Those developmentally and academically capable of learning at a deeper level and at a more compacted pace can opt for an advanced language arts course. Like the elementary grades, student placement will be reviewed, at minimum, every 18 weeks to determine if the placement level continues to be appropriately challenging.

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### **Blended Math Approach Begins This Year**

This spring, as a way to provide learning opportunities for students using both conceptual and skills based methods, the Fulton County Board of Education approved a plan that blends the two philosophies harmoniously. Implementation of this blended approach will begin this school year. To support this blended approach, additional textbooks have been purchased, which will be used in conjunction with the texts already in place in grades 6-8. At the high school level, the names of some math courses are being changed to provide more description of the content. These descriptive course names will replace the more generic names, which were previously used. Over the summer, many teachers are receiving additional training in the delivery of the math curriculum in grade K-9. Opportunities will be provided in the fall for those teachers who are unable to attend summer training sessions.