



# Meeting the Needs of Struggling Students in Alternative Education

*"Growing Minds, Building Futures"*

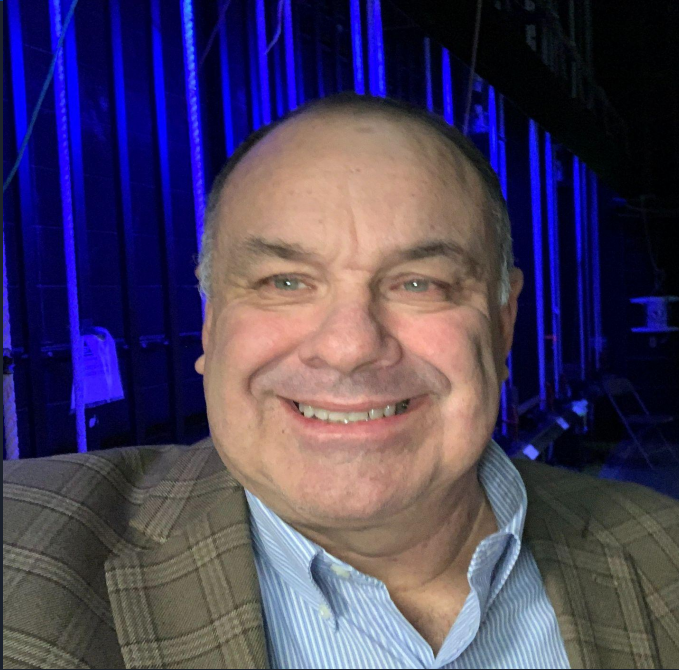
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# Mark I. Stroud



- 31 years in education
- 8 years in alternative education
- 4 years principal, Second Chance Academy
- 2 years board member for Georgia Association for Alternative Education
- 6 years district level
- Coach/Athletic Director for 28 years
- Savannah native
- 18 years in Claxton





# History of Alternative Education in Public Schools

Alternative education has evolved to support students struggling in traditional settings.

- **Early Foundations (19th–20th Century):** Progressive educators like John Dewey emphasized student-centered learning. Vocational schools provided hands-on training.
- **1960s–1980s:** Civil rights movements expanded alternative programs for marginalized students. Special education laws (IDEA) and dropout prevention programs emerged.
- **1990s–2000s:** Charter schools and online learning provided flexible options. Credit recovery programs helped students stay on track.
- **Present & Future:** Alternative schools now integrate mental health support, trauma-informed teaching (building safe and supportive environments), and personalized learning to improve student success.



# Today's Alternative School

- The most common type of alternative school today plays a crucial role in a school district's comprehensive dropout prevention strategy.
- These schools, typically integrated into middle and high school programs, support secondary-aged students who are often struggling academically and falling behind in the credits required for graduation or staying on track with their peers.

Additionally, many communities offer specialized completion schools that provide flexible educational opportunities for students facing unique circumstances, such as parenting, employment, caregiving responsibilities, or health challenges, allowing them to complete their education outside the traditional high school environment.

# School Options

## District Alternative Programs/Schools in Claxton (Evans County).

### Second Chance Academy

- Evans County Charter School System
- Claxton, GA
- Grades 6-12
- 90 students in the building (45 HS, 25 MS)
- 12 students virtual program (10 HS, 2 MS)
- 24 graduates in last two years
- 100% Economically Disadvantaged

### Coastal Plains Education High School (others include Foothills and Mountain Ed.)

- ❑ Completion School
- ❑ Evans Site-same building as SCA
- ❑ Grades 9-12
- ❑ 60 students
- ❑ 20 graduates in last two years



# Non Traditional Hours

1. A/B schedule for SCA High School
2. Evening school-Coastal Plains
3. Virtual-SCA & CP



# Curriculum @ SCA

## 1. Standards Based

- Computer based-Edgenuity-electives and core
- Direct instruction-whole group math and science
- Small group instruction-ELA and math



# What is Tier 1 Instruction?

- Universal, high-quality instruction for all students
- Focuses on engagement, differentiation, and accessibility
- Essential for preventing learning gaps
- All students





# Unique Challenges in Alternative Schools

- Diverse academic backgrounds (different grade levels & different academic levels)
- Attendance issues-20% of students miss 10% -20% of school days
- 51% miss 20% or more of school days
- Behavioral challenges
- Social emotional learning needs (in the MS  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the students suffer from a medical diagnosis such as ADD, ADHD, Anxiety, Depression and other medical issues)
- Poverty (23.7%)
- Ethnicity-Evans County BOE
  - White 34.3%
  - Black: 35.3%
  - Hispanic: 25%

# HELP

## 2024 Georgia Milestones

### SCA Middle School (6-8)

Content Mastery-----> 3.8

Progress -----> 45.6

Closing Gap -----> 0

Readiness -----> 46.4





# So What Did I Do as Principal?

1. Met with district leadership
2. Created a leadership team
3. Created a SIP with the leadership team that is data driven and academically focussed
4. Went to superintendent and asked for the following:
  - Reading interventionist
  - Math interventionist
  - Counselor
  - Administrative assistant who was multilingual
  - Sped teacher
5. I asked for the whole pie and got it!
6. Now the plan better work

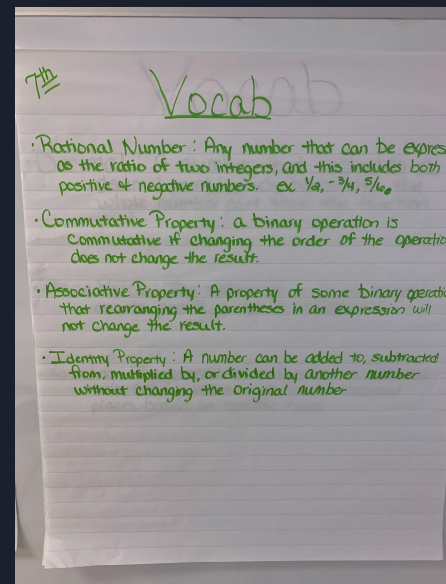
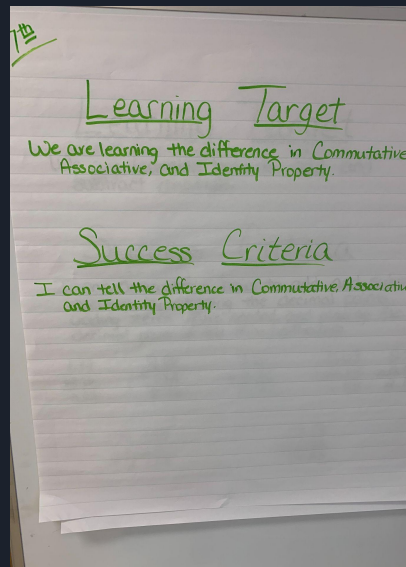


# Leadership Team Next Steps

1. Established team which meets 3x a week instead of the required 1x.
2. Sets norms, agendas, topics and timelines.
3. Also works together to handle the “so what, now what”.
4. Created a small group instructional walkthrough form.
5. District, principal and peer observations occur monthly.
6. Data is disaggregated monthly from walkthroughs in order to know next steps.
7. Professional learning teams occur three times a week for a total of 135 minutes per week. Teachers are working on lesson plans and pacing guides.
8. Second semester it is now at twice a week for 90 minutes total.
9. Other time is spent on collaboration and lesson planning for small groups.

# What Does Small Group Instruction Look Like in my School?

1. Learning Targets are introduced and posted.
2. Success Criteria is communicated while being aligned to the rigor of the standard.
3. The instructor reviews prior knowledge and skills before beginning instruction.





# What Does Small Group Instruction Look Like in at Second Chance?

4. The instructor provides step by step instruction. (I DO)
5. Teacher and students work together to complete the problem or task. Teacher provides guidance and support as student actively participates. (WE DO)
6. Students work independently. (I Do)



# What Does Small Group Instruction Look Like in at Second Chance?

7. The instructor provides timely and individualized feedback to students.
8. The instructor builds student capacity to self monitor.
  - Graphic organizers
  - Student self reflection
  - Create rubrics that students can use to evaluate themselves
9. The students are actively engaged.
10. The instructor implements strategies to meet specific learning needs of students during the course of the lesson.
  - Provide different ways to learn the same content
  - Offer a variety of activities and project options




# Small Group Instructional Walkthrough Form

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1OPvMmL3x5jPWkvbWade4Sm8otr2sUH8H6K0FMYVvJ04/edit>

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Om2JT6u1xqM85G3dfr1J1ra6kpYfemzPA6Uyd94VDMo/edit?gid=318143758#gid=318143758>





# Small Groups

## 30 minutes segments

### Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday

#### 1. Small guided reading



Small Groups  
30 minutes segments  
Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday

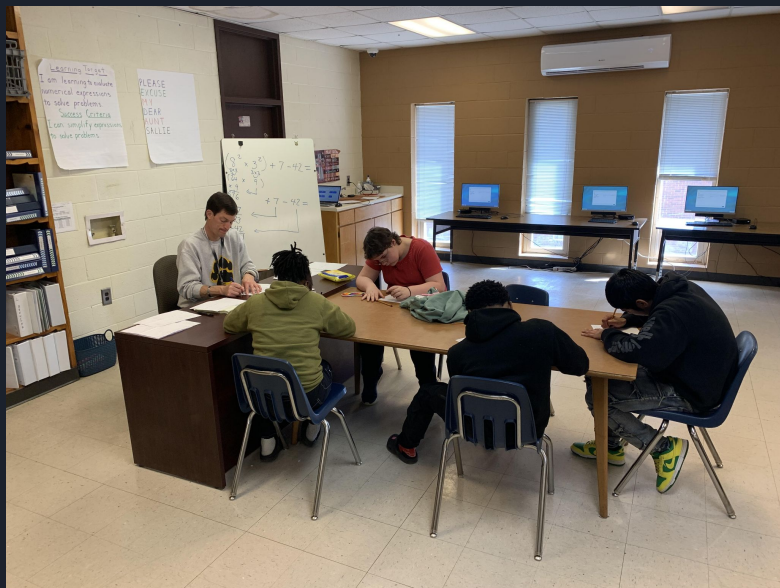
## 2. Khan Academy



# Small Groups

## 30 minutes segments

### Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday

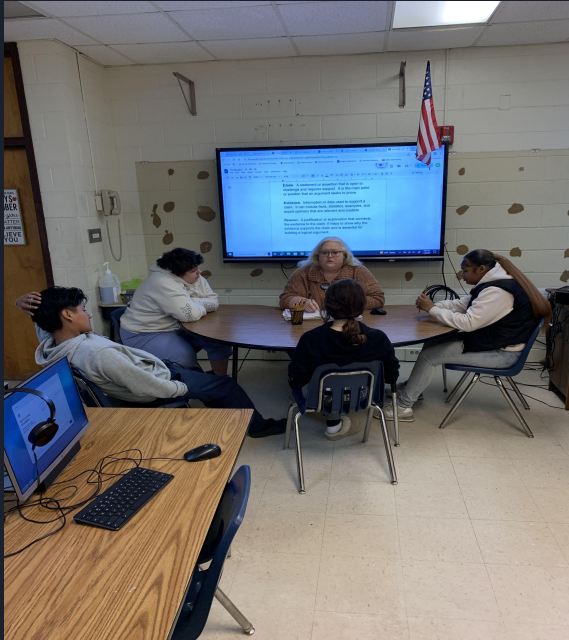


### 3. Grade Level Math Standards

# Small Groups

## 30 minutes segments

### Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday



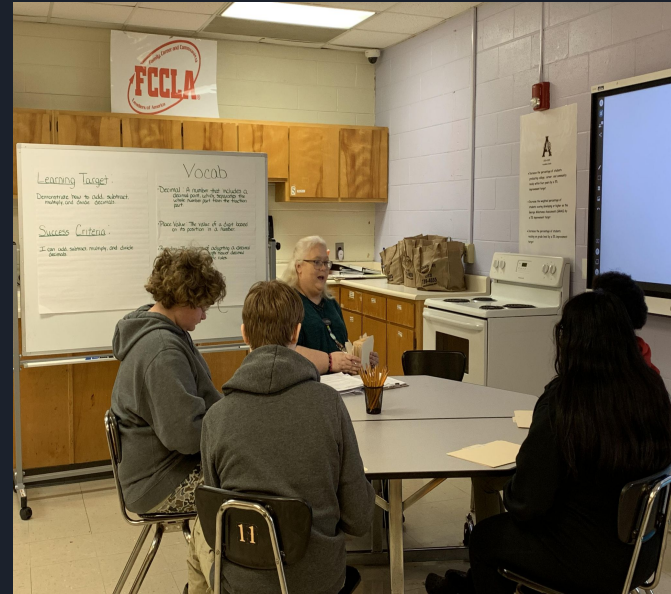
4. Grade Level Standard  
Writing

# Small Groups

## 30 minute segments

### Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday

## 5. Grade Level ELA Standards



DISCLAIMER:  
I AM NOT ENDORSING ANY  
PRODUCTS!



# Assessments Leading to GMAS



Using DRC BEACON to Predict Georgia  
Milestones Performance

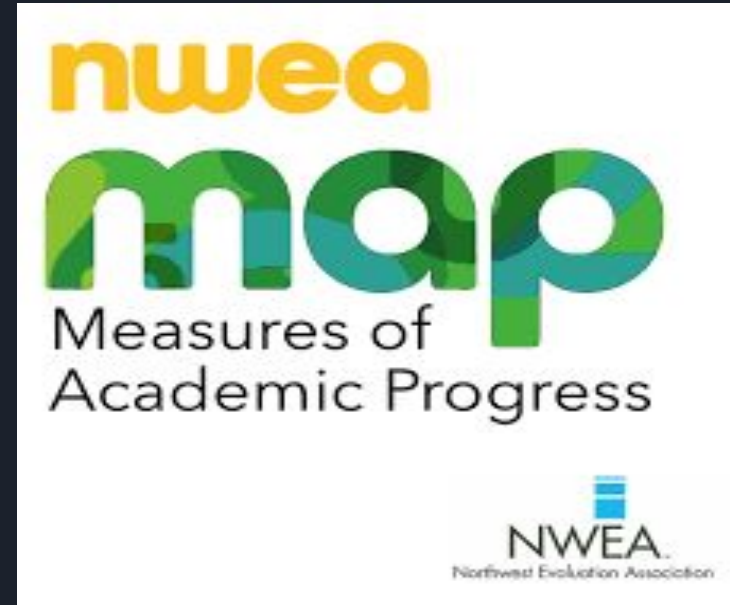
Beacon offers  
benchmark assessment  
in Math and ELA for  
grades 3-8 multiple  
times per year.



# Assessments Leading to GMAS

MAP testing or Measures of Academic Progress testing, is a computer based assessment that measures student growth in core subjects. It is used by teachers to identify students' strengths and areas for improvement.

MAP is given three times per year for math and ELA. MAP has an .86 correlation to GMAS scoring.





## Programs Leading to GMAS



Students work in Khan Academy 45 minutes per day.

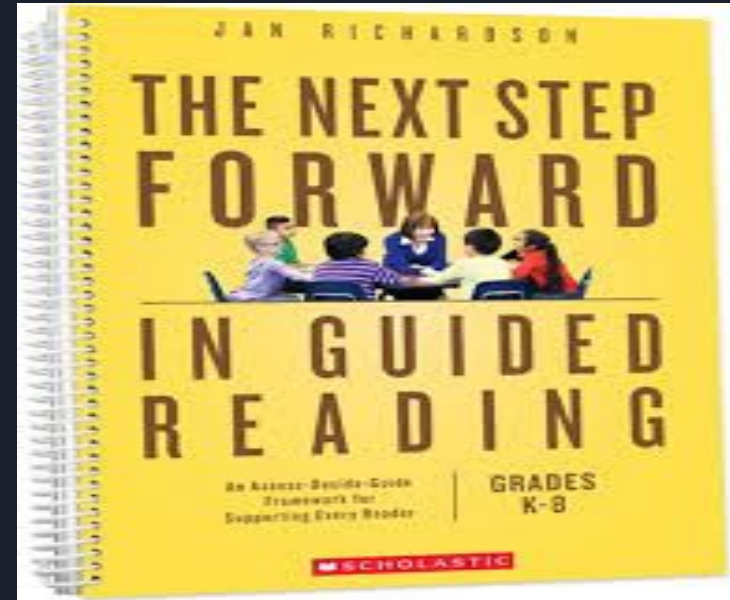
Recommendation for growth is 30 minutes per week.

HS students work in EOC courses.

## Programs Leading to GMAS

Jan Richardson's Small  
Guided Reading Program.

This is our second year  
using the program.



## Programs Leading to GMAS



This is our first year using Beable.

Beable links to students' personal interests and aspirations to literacy growth, personal growth, career exploration and academic rigor.



# Mid Year MAP Projections for GMAS

## 2024 Georgia Milestones

### SCA Middle School (6-8)

Content Mastery-----> 3.8

Progress -----> 45.6

Closing Gap -----> 0

Readiness -----> 46.4

## 2025 Georgia Milestones

### SCA Middle School (6-8)

Content Mastery-----> 27.5

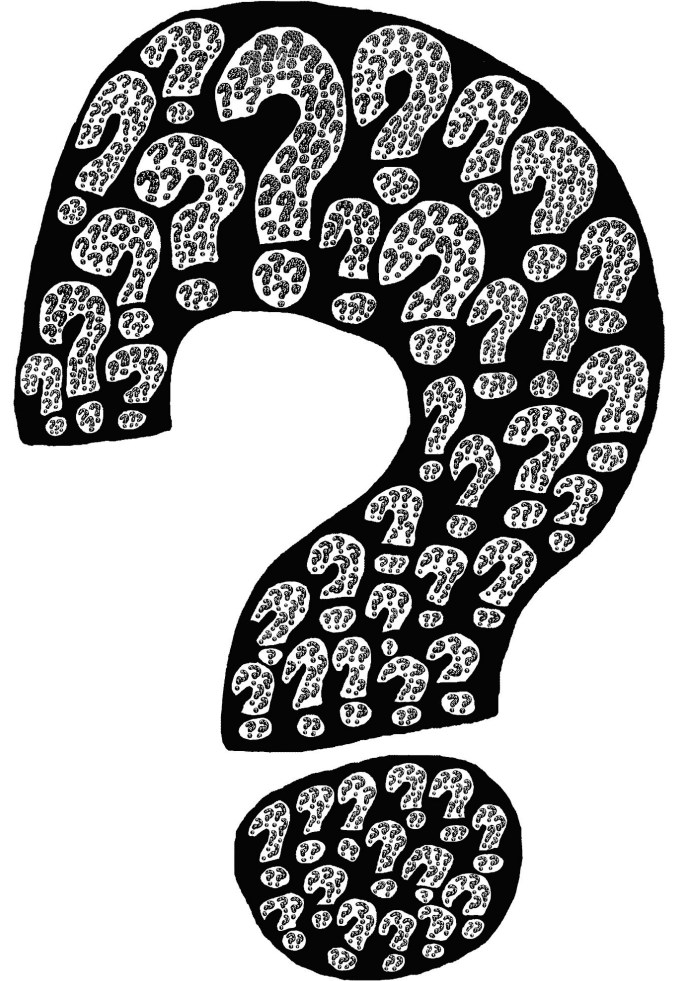
Progress -----> 88.23

Closing Gap -----> Green flag and  
green flag with distinction

Readiness -----> 46.7



# Questions



*Thank You*

