

GROWING EXCELLENCE



Adventist Education...Now, More Than Ever!



AAIS—Jonesboro, GA at the northern Georgia science museum in Cartersville.

Information Literacy Part 2

Michael Jon Cookenmaster, EdD
Associate Superintendent of Schools

The 1989 Presidential Committee stated everyone has the right to information. Yet, what was known as truth yesterday, maybe disproved tomorrow. All educators must become aware of the dilemma of ever-changing information and the availability of prevalent and faulty information when discussing the importance of Information Literacy. Internet fraud and the ability to be quickly published cause an alarming concern with multiple sources of information and wading through what can be trusted. All are at-risk of coming in contact with uninformed persons. When those persons are professionals that affect our daily lives, this can potentially be hazardous, such as a doctor prescribing medication that has recently been taken off the market. A part of analyzing the issue of Information Literacy within the educational setting is not adding more to a teacher's already busy day. Teachers are pressured to meet their current course objectives all the while dealing with increasing English as a Second Language (ESL) population, in which more time is diverted



Superintendent's Remarks

Kim Gaiter, EdS
Vice President for Education & Superintendent of Schools

Growing up, my dad had a tradition at the end of each year. We would stand against a particular door post and he would make a notch in the wood and date it for us to compare our growth from year to year. Some years, I would have a growth spurt, others not so much.

As we stand and our heavenly Father measures us on the door post of time, the big question is, "Did you and I grow this past year? This past decade? When we reflect over our lives since 2010, have we grown spiritually, mentally, socially, professionally, etc.? or are we in the same place we were 10 years ago? If you are like me, there are areas of tremendous growth, and areas that definitely need attention and prayer this new year.

Life in education is certainly busy. Most people who are not in the education system cannot fully appreciate how busy the days are in our school lives. When I reflect on my time as superintendent this past year, I have so many fond memories. The road has had bumps and many challenges along the way. Yet, the rewards truly have far outweighed the challenges. Working alongside dedicated principals, teachers and students with boundless energy and potential, we have so much to be thankful for and many fond memories. Great experiences such as the Festival Expo, Outdoor School, baptisms, community service, basketball tournaments, Oratorical Contest, choir tours, field trips, history tours, and the list goes on! All of the experiences have contributed in some way to ensuring we offer our students the best in Adventist Education.

As you come back, ready to press on into a new year, I would like to thank you for the spontaneous blessings each of you provide to our students and each other. We hope you walk into this new year with blessings and praises on your lips. May your new year be filled with peace, joy and love. And may God bless you in 2020. Maranatha!



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Information Literacy, continued from page 1

away from teaching the fundamentals of English language arts, and more time is devoted to language acquisition (Bruce, 2002). The added stresses of one more standard or core objective to cover is unthinkable.

Teachers, at every level, understand that citizenship in a democratic republic is vital if we expect citizens to recognize propaganda, distortions, misuse, and abuse. Rourke (2006), in her power point presentation, “Many Levels, Many Learners,” quotes from Gerlach, “Our task is to provide an education for the kinds of kids we have, not the kinds of kids we used to have, or want to have, or the kids that exist in our dreams.” When so much time is devoted to language acquisition, how do teachers provide effective balanced literacy, and specifically Information Literacy? This will be the subject of our third article in the spring issue of *Growing Excellence*.



Mr. Floyd provides DI for one of his students through content, process and products.

Different Paths... Same Destination

William Floyd, MA
High School Mathematics Teacher, GAAA—Atlanta

God created a wide variety of beautiful and unique flora and fauna, and humans in His own image with unique talents, capabilities, and personalities. Teachers, at every grade level, should remember students enter their classrooms with a variety of learning styles, and it is their responsibility to differentiate instruction to meet the needs

of the students.

In most high schools, students sit through 50-minute traditional lecture-style presentations with minimal time for interaction and collaboration between peers. This approach limits the opportunity for students to develop and strengthen necessary 21st-century skills.

Differentiated instruction, on the secondary level, requires the teacher to assess the needs of individuals and tailor activities for each student. At the beginning of each chapter or unit, assessing prior knowledge is essential to developing lessons targeted to individual needs. This assessment does not need to be cumbersome and can be accomplished by using digital tools such as Zipgrade or Plickers. During the unit lessons, the teacher may present the key concepts in whole group, providing students opportunities to interact with the concepts to ensure mastery of the standards.

The center/station rotation model, often used in elementary classrooms can be implemented with great success at the secondary level. After the mini-lesson, students rotate through stations with assignments developed specifically for them. Station rotations provide a time for students to have small group instruction, work independently, and use technology to provide remediation or enrichment through apps such as Nearpod or Edpuzzle. Differentiated instruction allows students to showcase their gifts of music, art, technology or drama while demonstrating content mastery. The increased rigor fosters student interest, which makes the learning relevant. While the standards remain the same the methods of delivery should differ to ensure each student has the opportunity to experience success.

“If a child
can't learn
the way we teach
maybe we should
teach the way,
they learn.”

- Ignacio Estrada



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Keeping the End in Mind

Angelia Mahone, MEd
Principal & Grades 6 - 8 Teacher, BJA—Charlotte, NC

Multi-tiered Structural Supports (MTSS) requires intentional planning within a structured framework to target specific academic goals for students; the MTSS process considers the emotional and social variables as well. As educational practitioners we partner with each student's family to evaluate a myriad of factors impeding academic growth: attendance, peer influences, are seeing positive gains due to our use of focused, intentional interventions, and we are staying the course. MTSS absolutely works in an Adventist classroom when implemented with fidelity.

Student success is influenced by home environment, curriculum, instructional implementation, and a student's metacognitive abilities. In Adventist Education we honor and respect the relationship between the mind, body and spirit. Additionally, a student's view of self is an important variable.

A teacher's consistent communication of expectation is another major factor in student outcomes; therefore, we must trust the MTSS process. This year our school enrolled a student previously enrolled at our school in the lower elementary period, but left and returned from a home school setting. The student's data indicated a national percentile ranking below the 25th percentile for three years. We suspected there were unidentifiable learning issues beyond the scope of services at our school; con-

sequently, I was prepared to refer the family to their neighborhood school for further evaluations.

In August, we administered the Star360 and the student performed as an end-of-year 2nd grade student in reading and a mid-year 3rd grade student in math. We then completed the SACOE Individual Literacy Plan (ILP) and scheduled a meeting with the parents. During the meeting, we were encouraged because a family friend joined us to review the data and to support the student throughout the implementation of the interventions. Remember, MTSS is all about supports and documentation!

We completed the ILP with a goal to move the student one grade level in reading, and as we closed and prayed, we encouraged the family by stating, "We must have a goal, and we are not limited by that goal." Going forward, we met with the student to model our thinking and to better understand the student's metacognitive process. Since student buy-in is a critical component in the MTSS process the student was introduced to the term "focus skills" as used in Stars360. This is a prescriptive approach to addressing specific deficit areas in learning. These focus skills provide the teacher specific, research-based strategies to support the learning process through interventions. After five weeks, we administered the Star360 progress monitoring assessment as one of the required steps in MTSS, and the student's growth in reading and math indicated 10 & 13% growth, respectively. While the interventions were working, we were prepared to meet with the family in a formal Student Intervention Team (SIT) meeting, after ten weeks, to discuss another round of five weeks of interventions, and possibly refer the family to their neighborhood school if necessary. We are seeing positive gains due to our use of focused, intentional interventions, and we are staying the course. MTSS absolutely works in an Adventist classroom when implemented with fidelity.



Ms. Mahone intentionally plans her weekly instruction with differentiation in mind, and the need to excel and remediate her bookend students.



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Students in Mrs. Dye's classroom are extending and refining the social studies standards, "Culture, and Time, Continuity & Change" with a classroom community Thanksgiving feast.

Integrating Practical Life Experiences Within the Curriculum

Vinette Dye, BA
Grades 1 - 4 Teachers, EJA—Winston-Salem, NC

We all know the adage, children learn what they live. But how do you make learning exciting when you spend so much time writing lessons plans, reviewing test scores, goal set with student goals, and do MTSS? Johnny is an entire grade level behind, Susie's anxious to soar. Your principal needs you to plan a program, and now you're expected to do something else to connect learning to every day life experiences? Who has time for extra stuff?

Sound familiar? Well, believe it or not, connections to real life events actually makes your job easier, because it creates life long learning experiences which translates to brighter, more curious, intelligent kiddos!

How do you do that and where do you start?

Well that's easy!

Here's what you'll need: You need a teacher's calendar, a smartphone, a little flexibility, and willingness to think outside the box.

Tying learning experiences to special days and holidays is just one way to cement learning experiences.

Johnny Appleseed may be a forgettable character until you bring your crock-pot in and make apple sauce in class. Stone soup in October may just be another book, until you actually make and eat the soup with your kiddos.

It's a new year! This year, forget that resolution to lose

weight. Try something with a higher success quotient like resolving to add more real-life learning connections in your classroom! No matter how many years you've been teaching the same stuff, you'll find yourself newly energized, freshly motivated and excited about each and every teaching and learning day!



Students in Mrs. Livermore's middle school language arts classroom participate in differentiated, guided reading.

Teaching Literacy Block in Middle Grades

Michelle Blake Livermore, BSED
Grades 5 - 8 Teacher, BJA—Sumter, SC

Accustomed to instant feedback and gratification from playing games, educating the minds of the 21st century students come with some challenges. Educators have had to dig deep into their toolbox to find methods of keeping students engaged and thrilled about learning. How is this achievable using the recommended South Atlantic Conference's ELA format? During Skills Block SpellingCity.com or Mobymax.com are excellent tools for engaging students with their phonics and vocabulary skills. This site incorporates games, the ability to differentiate activities thus meeting individual student needs, pre and post tests and a plethora of other stimulating options. In addition, allow students autonomy in deciding the number questions/ items to complete then afford them the privilege of developing leadership qualities by having them give answers.

After careful selection for shared reading lessons in Pathways, discussions throughout the story, making connections, annotating and pausing at suspenseful intervals, helps arouse their curiosity which at times lead them to research the character or book, which stimulates making inferences about the



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Teaching the Literacy Block in Middle School, continued from page 4

final outcome.

Students are prepared at all times to maximize instruction. During independent reading Just-right books should be available at their fingertips. Then students can rigorously participate in Zip Your Lips and Read (ZYLAR) time.

During guided reading, leveled groups work with the teacher to diligently work on focus skills and complete assigned tasks from Reading A to Z. Those not working with the teacher are working independently or collaboratively at varying work stations (typing, reading literature, etc). Following the lesson plans from Reading A to Z the teacher should also find meaningful opportunities to incorporate and connect the Word to the lesson.

Using the Portland Writers' Workshop lessons provide teachers and students ample opportunities to model and scaffold lessons based on the specific genre being taught using a type of topic, audience, purpose, plan format. This is especially valuable when students are being introduced to a specific writing format after which students then demonstrate their ability with their independent writing.

The recommended ELA format the Conference provides works not just for the lower grades, but for the upper grades as well. Through all our curriculum and implementation it is most important for us to remember that Christ is at the center of all we teach.

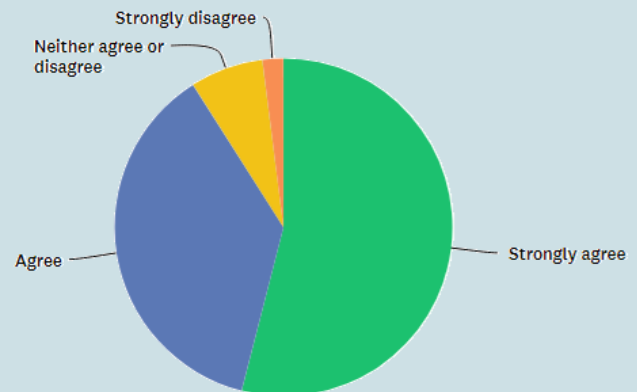


Michael Jon Cookenmaster, EdD
Associate Superintendent of Schools

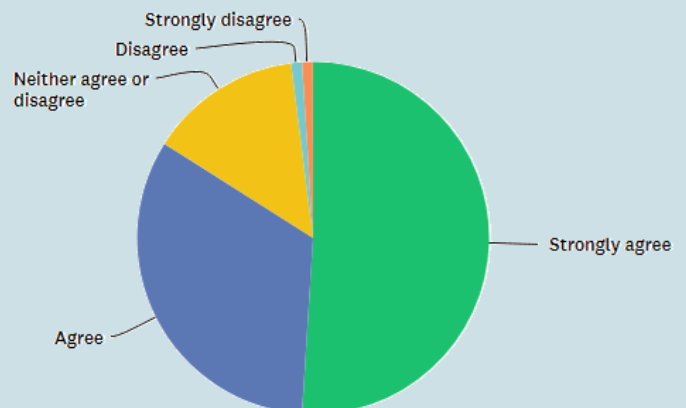
South Atlantic Conference serves 630 students in grades K - 12. We assume, that a majority of our students have two parents, bringing our estimated parent population to 1,260. In surveys it

is important for the results to be reflective of the targeted audience, in this case at least one parent from each student. However, it is important to remember that while all parents are asked to participate, doing so is not compulsory, and therefore the number of respondents who complete the survey are therefore referred to as the sample size. The sample size SAC needs, from 630 students, to determine a 95% confidence level of ± 5 is 239 completed surveys. SACOE received 228 completed surveys, bringing the confidence level to ± 5.19 of 95%. This is close enough to be considered statistically significant. The following are the results of the Fall 2019 Parent Survey:

1. There is evidence of spiritual activities in my child's classroom.

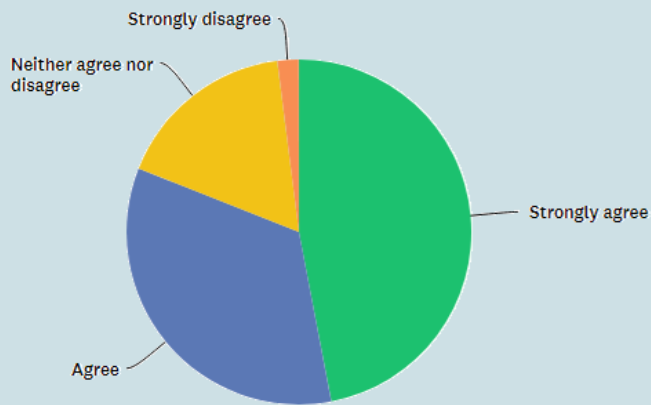


2. My child is actively involved in the spiritual activities of the classroom.

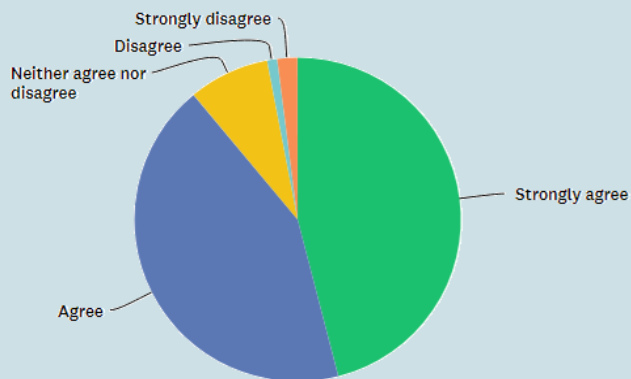


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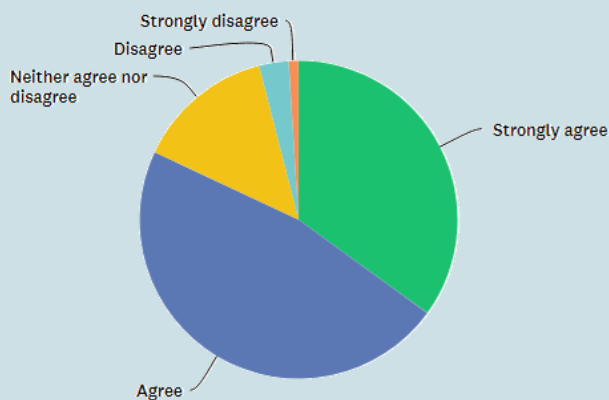
3. The teacher helps my child develop a closer relationship with Jesus.



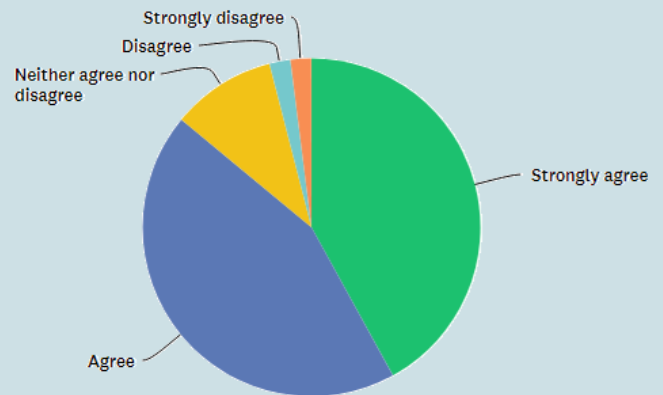
4. My child's teacher models positive Christianity.



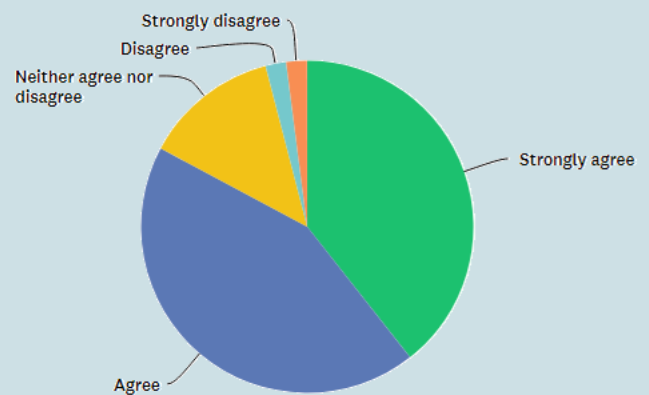
5. The teacher is preparing my child to deal with relevant issues and problems.



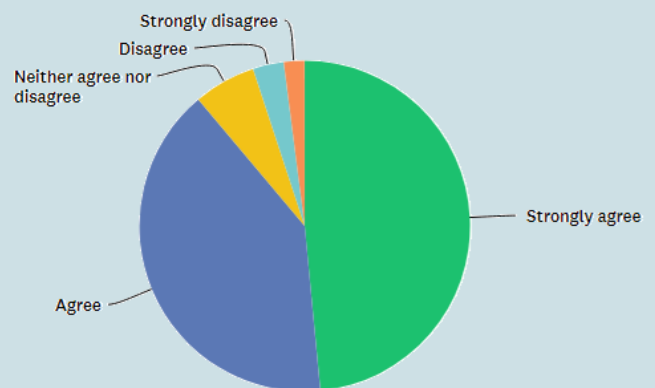
6. My child's teacher is aware of my child's needs in all subjects and prepares lessons to help him/her advance.

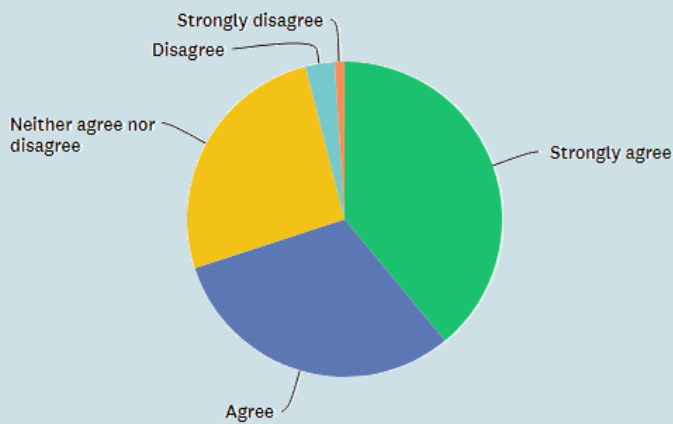


7. The teachers uses assessment data to determine strengths and weaknesses in order to help my child on an individual basis.



8. My child's teacher communicates with me about his/her academic progress.



Parent Survey Results, continued from page 5**9. My child is able to receive extra help from the teacher when needed.**

The conclusion we can draw from the survey results are that overwhelmingly, parents believe their students are receiving a quality, Adventist education. Our strongest assets as a teaching force are:

- Evidence of spiritual activities.
- Student spiritual involvement.
- Teachers help students develop a closer relationship with Jesus.
- Teachers who model positive Christianity.
- Teachers who are aware of student needs and preparation of lessons.
- Teacher communication.
- Teachers use assessment and data to help individual students.
- Teachers prepare students to deal with relevant problems and issues.

All of the categories were dominated by responses that showed parents Agree to Strongly Agree with the statement. There was a specific statement that indicated we can improve. This is most telling when a large percentage of parents responded neutrally (they are unsure or unwilling to say) to Strongly Disagree. The area of focus for all SAC teachers is:

- Children are able to receive extra help when needed.

It is paramount that not only we are using data to drive instruction and help our students—an area parents said they thought we were doing well—we must intentionally follow the MTSS process and communicate throughout the process with both the students and the parents.

To learn more about MTSS, South Atlantic Conference conducts each summer a professional development course entitled, *Learner Engagement: Instructional Effectiveness and MTSS*. The class provides you valuable insight into practices you are most likely already doing in your classroom, giving teachers additional strategies and quantifiable tools to help communicate your already strong instructional skills. Let's continue to work together to improve our educational system. Great job Growing Excellence Team. Go South Atlantic!



Teachers in South Atlantic schools help their students develop a closer relationship with Jesus. On Sabbath, November 23, 2019, BCJA - Atlanta, fourth grader, Ethan Foster and his mother gave their hearts to Jesus in baptism.



Teachers in South Atlantic schools are helping prepare students to deal with relevant issues and problems.

Photo courtesy of LAA - Stonecrest



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How *are we* **GROWING EXCELLENCE**



Thanksgiving Program at AAIS—Atlanta



Vinette Dye created a vibrant and festive holiday classroom display at EJA—Winston-Salem.

*It's
the most
wonderful
time of the
Year*



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Teachers like Ms. Bowers & Mrs. Blackwell model positive Christianity.



Preparing Gift Bags for the Homeless at BJA—Sumter

“It is not earthly rank, nor birth, nor nationality, nor religious privilege which proves we are members of the family of God; it is love, a love that embraces all humanity” (White, 1896).



Savannah's finest came out to play a little football during PE.

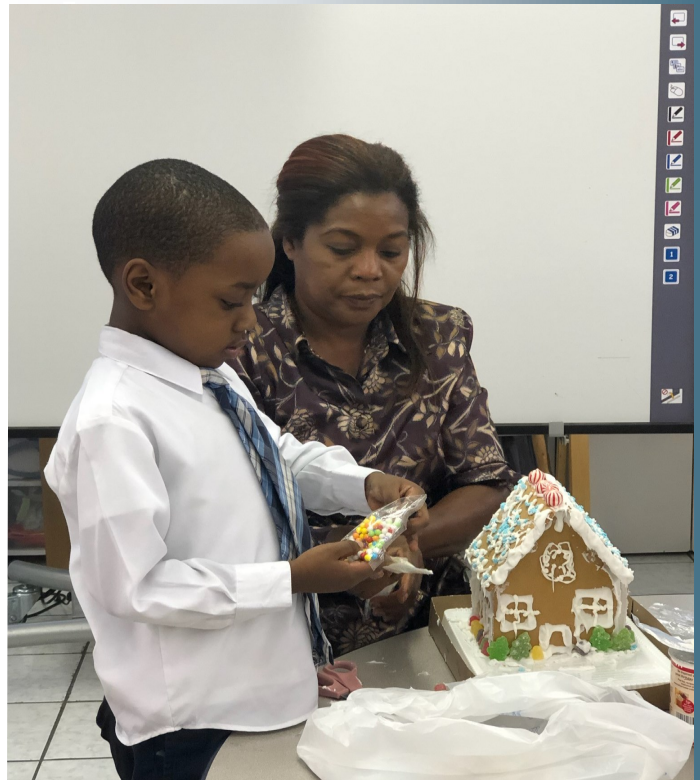
We need your
PICTURES



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The Nativity presented by student at LAA—Stonecrest



Students in K-2 create gingerbread houses in Lilian Moncada's classroom at AAIS—Jonesboro



Students at EJA—Albany create snow globe candelabras.

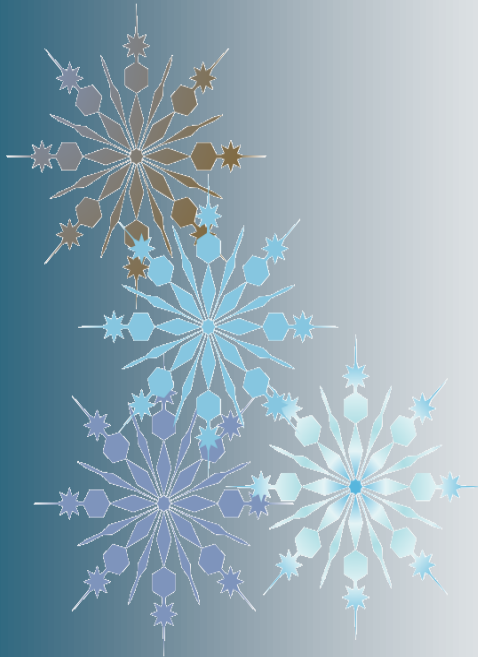


Students at NDRAS-Pageland create personalized ornaments.





Bethany Church and BCA—Macon combine for a special Christmas Service.



Students at DAJA—Stone Mountain, spread the Good News at the local mall.

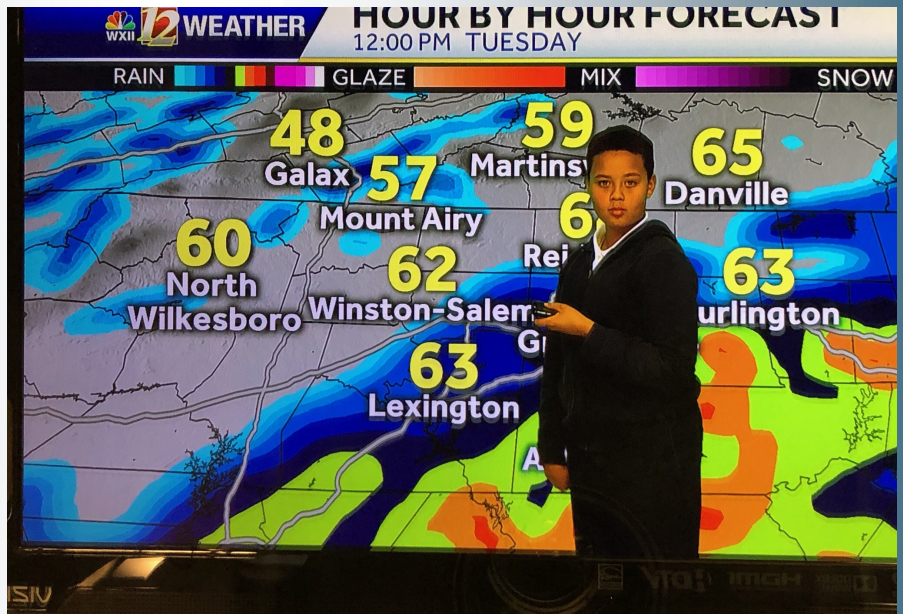




Students at NBACA—Columbus practice for their debut on the morning Christmas Special with WLTZ.



Students at NDRAS—Pageland discover it's so nice on the ice, when you glide, glide, glide.



Students at EJA—Winston-Salem got to help present the news on NBC WXII.

