

Strategies from excellent school visits

Strategy	Description	Evidence & Resources
1. Arts Integration	An approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form (dance, visual arts, etc.) and another subject area (math, reading, etc.) and meets objectives in both.	Powder Springs ES attributes this approach with a whole school culture shift toward increased student engagement and academic gains. ArtsNow provides professional development and resources to schools.
2. Trauma informed practices	Childhood trauma can impact a person’s development, and these students often benefit from extra support in learning how to manage emotions in healthy ways. But learning healthy coping strategies can benefit all students, and incorporating the teaching of these strategies can be as simple as teacher modeling.	Usher-Collier ES partners with CHRIS 180 to train staff on recognizing, responding and de-escalating agitated students who have experienced trauma. The approach of starting with adult trauma and then addressing student trauma positively impacts school culture. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) research can be found here .
3. Units of study	Delivered through a workshop model to offer a simple and predictable environment so that the teacher can focus on the complex work of observing students' progress and teaching into their needs. Each session includes a mini-lesson, partner time, independent work, and workshop.	Annistown ES and Dunleith ES reported improved instruction when they adopted units of study into their curricular approach. Lucy Calkins is the most commonly used curriculum for units of study.
4. Assign EIP teachers homerooms	The Early Intervention Program (EIP) is designed to serve students who are at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level. The GaDOE allocates additional funding for schools to provide more teachers for EIP students to increase instructional support.	Dunleith ES reduced class sizes for all students from the low 20s to 16-18 by using the reduced class model, and attributes this as one positive factor in improving 3 rd grade reading proficiency. There are five EIP service delivery models ⁱ .
5. Retired teacher tutors	Retired teachers can be hired by schools as part-time instructors during the school day. This provides additional support to struggling readers and reduces the student/teacher ratio.	Usher Collier ES and Dunleith ES hired retired teachers to provide targeted instruction to students during class time. To receive pension from the Teachers Retirement System of GA , retired teachers cannot work more than half-time employment in TRS covered positions (monthly allocations here and other rules here .)

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6. Teacher mentorship	Teachers new to the profession, or to a school or district, benefit from mentoring programs. Research supports teacher mentorship: overviews from SREB , Education Week , Hammill Institute , Hechinger , and NEA .	Annistown ES attributes part of its academic growth to strong teacher mentoring, despite having high levels of inexperienced teachers, as well as high turnover rates. Like many districts, Gwinnett County Public Schools has developed district mentorship programs .
7. Curated external professional development options	Each of the four schools L4L visited attributed some of their success to partnering with external professional development providers to build specific capacity in their staff. There may be a role for L4L to curate a list of providers from successful schools.	Some of the professional development options schools reported include: Get Better Faster , the Ron Clark Academy , metro RESAs , ArtsNow , CHRIS 180 , and Cox Campus .

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- ⁱ 1. Augmented– adds an additional early childhood certified teacher to the regular class.
 2. Self-Contained– EIP students in their own small class.
 3. Pull-Out– EIP students are removed from the classroom for instruction part of the day.
 4. Reduced Class Model– combines EIP students with regular ed students in smaller classes.
 5. Reading Recovery Program– students are removed from the classroom for one segment of reading.