

**GaDOE APPLICATION**

**2008 EXEMPLARY/EXCEPTIONAL LIBRARY MEDIA PROGRAM**

Please attach page 2 and 3 of this document to your application. Send electronically to [jserrite@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:jserrite@doe.k12.ga.us) by March 3, 2008.

**System Name**    *Lowndes County*

**School Name**    *Hahira Middle School*

**School Grade Levels**    *Grades 6-8*

**Administrator:**    *Kip McLeod*

**Library Media Specialist/s:**    *Debra Martin and Heather Morin*

**Library Media Coordinator:**    *Owen Prince*

**Library Media Liaison:**    *Molly Radford*

**(Please make sure that your Media Coordinator is aware of this program, your application and endorses your participation in the Exemplary Library Media Program.)**

**Contact Person for possible telephone interview and GaDOE observation visit about this application:**    *Debra Martin or Heather Morin*

**Contact Phone:**    *229-794-3524*

**Contact Fax:**    *229-794-3564*

**Contact Email Address:**    *Debra Martin* [dmartin@lowndes.k12.ga.us](mailto:dmartin@lowndes.k12.ga.us)  
*Heather Morin* [hmorin@lowndes.k12.ga.us](mailto:hmorin@lowndes.k12.ga.us)

**Our school's spring break dates:**    *March 31 – April 4*

**Our school's testing dates:**    *April 14 – 18*

**Respond by with “YES” or “NO” on 1-7 below indicating that any necessary school or system level approvals have been met/requested:**

1. Our school library media program is at the “**Proficient**” level on ALL 19 of the target indicators in the “Library Media Program Self Evaluation Rubric”. **YES**

2. There are at least 14 target indicators for which we can show evidence at the “**Exemplary**” level. **YES**

3. Our library media specialist can arrange to be available for a possible GaDOE telephone interview. **YES**

4. Our school and library media center can be open for a probable GaDOE observation visit. **YES**

5. Our school is willing to plan and host one Library Media Program Open House event between September 2008-May 2009 for visitors from other schools and school systems. **YES**

6. Our library media specialist will be able to attend and present at the GaETC in 2008. **YES**

7. The school administrator has written a one-page letter of support the library media program for this honor. This document should be attached to the narrative and is not considered part of the six-page requirement. The administrator’s letter should not exceed one page. **YES**

March 3, 2008

To Whom It May Concern,

It is my distinct privilege to support our Hahira Middle School (HMS) media center for the Georgia Library Media Exemplary and Exceptional Program for 2008. As principal, I continually observe and am amazed at the energy and dedication of our media program and personnel. Both of our media specialists are former middle school classroom teachers which aids tremendously when collaborating with teachers concerning Georgia Performance Standards and assisting students with projects. In addition, Hahira Middle School employs a full time paraprofessional to assist with student, parent and teacher needs throughout the school day, which allows the media center to maintain flexible hours.

Hahira Middle School's website, managed by our media specialists, was recently spotlighted by EduHound as an exemplary site worth visiting. HMS was also recently named as a 2007 School of Excellence as a direct result of the contributions by our media center. The HMS media center serves as the hub of our academic success. Whether it is curricular needs or recreational reading, the media center is proactive in ensuring all required and requested material is available. The media center implemented a school-wide reading program based on reading 25 books across the curriculum to include mid-year recognition and student incentives. They have also assisted in the planning and development of an annual Academic Olympics and ensured the media collection is aligned with the requirements of the Georgia Performance Standards. These are crucial programs which assist students in preparation for the CRCT along with learning about media skills, information literacy, and research.

The expanded use of technology has been a main focus of HMS media center. They plan and conduct professional development for teachers on media services, resources, and technology. The media specialists have developed a "Techie of the Year" program to encourage teachers to be more involved in technology. The creation of a student media crew and a teacher media crew to assist with technology has proven to be successful. Instruction and guidance are provided for teachers and administrators on creation of web pages. This year they have introduced and encouraged new technology resources such as podcasting and digital storytelling which were both highlighted at our recent technology fair. All of this is done while maintaining an active Media/Tech Committee, attending conferences and training, assisting in development of Teachers As Advisors programming, maintaining existing technology infrastructure, and working with our local RESA and ETTC officials to develop programs for collaboration among media specialists.

Our application will show what we at HMS already know; HMS media program is exemplary in all six categories and all nineteen indicators. I would be delighted to speak in person on behalf of our media center if necessary. Please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Kip McLeod

Wanted. Hard-working, creative individuals possessing innovative collaborative lesson planning skills. Must be able to plan and manage school-wide reading and incentive programs; budget state and local funds; maintain web pages; inspire students to research and read; create, evaluate, and update media policy; provide flexible scheduling of media resources and ensure that all students and faculty have access; spend 100% of funding sources on media resources while clamoring for grants and donations; remain abreast of current teaching practices and curriculum standards; provide equal media services to all students; ensure that media resources are available both within and outside of school and make sure that all stakeholders are aware; be familiar with the GALILEO layout and resources train students and teachers on its use; must be familiar with old word processing and presentation software and the newest versions to accommodate all patrons; develop guidelines and strategies to encourage students to read 25 books across the curriculum; provide adequate, appropriate reading sources for all students; provide staff development for all teachers from language arts to visual arts on strategies to incorporate media resources; provide assistance with research and instruction on effectively using the new reference tab in Microsoft Word to teachers working on graduate degrees; work effectively with administrators, parents, community members, students, and staff to develop a strong, exemplary library media program that is the hub of activity in the school's learning community. Applicants must be willing to work cooperatively with the physical education department in the annual Academic Olympics; serve on the School Improvement Plan, SACS, Needs Assessment, and Teachers As Advisors committees and the High Performance Leadership Team; develop training in conjunction with county office, RESA, ETTC staff members, and local college professors; coordinate a student media crew to foster student involvement in the program; and develop or assist in school events such as Relay for Life, Techie of the Year, field day, honors day, PTO, technology fair, and civic celebrations.

Sound exhausting? It is, but at Hahira Middle School we wouldn't have it any other way. In fact, HMS students have been quoted as saying, "Wow! I can't believe I learned this in the library!" or "You're the coolest librarian ever!" How can the library media center garner such a reaction from teenagers who have been raised in a world of video games and the Internet? It is in the creation of an exemplary library media program. What constitutes such a program?

An exemplary library media program must address the academic needs of its learning community. While the program plays many roles in the everyday school environment, providing instructional and curricular support to teachers is of the greatest importance. The HMS library media program has worked cooperatively with teachers to develop specific benchmarks to guide students in becoming proactive and thoughtful users of information and resources. By the end of the sixth grade year, students comfortably use the OPAC at school and at home, locate print materials on their own, and are aware of available online resources and utilize them with guidance. By the end of the seventh grade year, students use print and online resources, begin to determine an information source's authenticity, and quote, paraphrase, and cite sources appropriately. By the end of the eighth grade year, students independently identify authentic resources and determine, locate, and use appropriate resources based on the information need or assignment specifications. Cooperative planning with both regular and special needs classroom teachers enables us to offer training and resources that fit everyone's diverse learning needs. In fact, at this year's technology fair, there were 16 presentations: 11 by regular education classes with the inclusion of special needs students, two by special needs classes, two by gifted classes, and one by a connections class. Presentations were made by HMS students to demonstrate the method by which media resources and technology were infused into the curriculum. Students

created podcasts for the books they had read, demonstrated the mobile lab as an invaluable resource in the writing process; illustrated electronically peer-edited papers; shared survey data through PowerPoint; produced digital stories; diagrammed sentences on the SmartBoard; created digitally edited movies of student-written fairy tale spinoffs; designed timelines from 12,000 B.C. to present; as well as filmed original movies depicting scientific experiments on forces and motion. At HMS the library media specialists take the initiative to develop cooperative lessons. We utilize innovative teaching styles to actively engage students in the learning process and work with the teacher to cooperatively conduct student assessment. For instance, the Blueprint reading teacher wanted her students to create digital stories that featured appropriate pictures and music to tell a story without words but setting a definite tone and mood. We worked with the classroom teacher to determine appropriate software, music, video, and digital picture resources; develop a process for completing the assignment; and create a rubric for evaluation of the assignment. Upon completion, we cooperatively evaluated the finished product.

Both HMS library media specialists have attended Learning Focused Schools and Georgia Performance Standards training and have been instrumental in aligning the media center collection to GPS standards through curriculum alignment. By working cooperatively with academic department heads, academic coach, and curriculum director, books have been weeded from and added to the collection based on GPS standards and the state designed schedule for roll out. When conducting the curriculum alignment, the Georgia Standard webpage became an invaluable resource. Instruction on how to effectively use the GPS resource alignment tool within Destiny Library Manager, our circulation program, is provided for all teachers to insure they are able to utilize all of the library media center's resources. Additionally, instruction has been provided to teachers at our full day media staff development on the incorporation of Lexiles. The Lowndes County School System has been proactive in the incorporation of Lexile numbers in MARC record data for new book purchases.

As members of the SACS, school improvement, media/technology, and needs assessment committees as well as active stakeholders in our learning community, we are aware of the need for quantitative data demonstrating student achievement. Effective statistical data is generated and utilized to illustrate student achievement through circulation and online resource usage reports, Accelerated Reader and STAR Reading student data reports, and disaggregation of test data. Additionally, we work with teachers to develop rubrics to assess projects and presentations and provide the opportunity for students to present or showcase mastery of curriculum objectives through PTO presentations, the technology fair, displays of student projects in the center, podcasting, and presentations utilizing our multimedia room.

The library media program is a critical element in the school's reading curriculum. Through working with our library media committee, a solid reading program was designed around the GPS standard to read 25 books across the curriculum and successfully implemented over the past three years. Students are encouraged to read fiction and non-fiction books, materials to meet curriculum objectives, and for pleasure. A single, collaboratively developed, school-wide standard is in place and upheld by all teachers which includes a reading log for recording pertinent information. Copies of the chart are available for download through the HMS webpage to ensure that parents can see what is required of their student.

Since implementing this reading program, circulation statistics have steadily increased particularly in the non-fiction curriculum areas. In the 2005-2006 school year, 50,504 total books were circulated; in the 2006-2007 school year, 59,891 total books were circulated; and for the current school year through February 2008, a total of 53,381 books have been circulated.

Using 2007's circulation statistics and an average of 1200 students in attendance, HMS students read over 49 books per student. In the 2006-2007 school year, 31,250 of the 59,891 circulations were of non-fiction books. In the 2007-2008 school year, 29,640 of the 53,381 circulations thus far have been non-fiction books. To keep students focused on the goal of reading 25 books across the curriculum, we spearhead an incentive program which includes recognizing students on track at the half way point with Dessert in Paradise, various drawings and prizes, and then to culminate a year of reading across the curriculum, students who meet their reading goal are invited to attend a library media center sponsored luau. Last year students were provided a cookout, played limbo, enjoyed tropical music, sang karaoke, played in the sand, learned to hula, played volleyball, bobbed for dollars, and won a number of exciting prizes. Of the nearly 1200 HMS students, approximately 800 qualified to attend.

HMS is exceptionally fortunate in the area of staffing. In belonging to the media email list, we have found that many library media specialists are tasked with a world of responsibilities, duties, and assignments during the school day that pull them away from their library media and instructional responsibilities. The HMS library media center is staffed by two full time, highly qualified library media specialists and one full time library media paraprofessional. The HMS administration and central office personnel recognize the need to have dedicated library media personnel always ready to assist teachers and students throughout the instructional day. Our full time duty is to maintain the library media center and to provide media services to students and staff.

We pride ourselves in having exemplary facilities, resources and accessibility. Flexible scheduling is the norm at HMS. Students may attend the library media center as needed either with classes, in groups, or independently to locate books, work on projects, or access information on the computer. To make reserving the center more convenient for teachers, we implemented a free, open source scheduling program allowing teachers to reserve use of the media center online. Now teachers can schedule classes to check out books, use the computers, utilize the multimedia room or conference room, reserve resources such as mobile laptop labs, LCD projectors, digital cameras and video cameras, and request instruction by library media specialists all from the comfort of their computer at home or at school. We are then able to run reports to determine which teachers utilize resources most, how many cooperative classes have been planned and taught, how many classes have reserved the library for class work, or what equipment is used most. This allows for easy retrieval of valuable statistics for decision making and purchasing purposes. The center is open before and after school in addition to a number of evenings including family nights at each book fair, technology fair, and PTO meetings. Every attempt is made to include parents in the library media program. In fact, at our technology fair, a number of parents expressed a desire to know more about technology in order to help their students with projects. In light of this, classes for parents have been developed and will be taught at the next book fair family night in March. GALILEO, NetTrekker, NewsBank, and Destiny Library Manager are on the agenda for this session. In addition, future classes have been planned which feature instruction on Movie Maker, Office, Photo Story, and Internet safety in addition to other topics requested through the parent survey on the HMS webpage.

Access to the HMS library media resources is just as flexible. There are 903 networked computers on the HMS campus providing access to all media resources and online databases. In addition to school access, all resources are accessible at home via Internet. Having Follett's Destiny Library Manager as our OPAC system enables students and teachers to search not only our library holdings but retrieve reliable Internet sites on their search topic through Destiny's

Web Path Express. Additionally, patrons can access GALILEO, Georgia's virtual library; NetTrekker D.I. which stands at the forefront of differentiated instruction; and News Bank which provides access to current events and newspapers. Study Island and Georgia OAS for standardized test practice and BrainPOP for interactive games, tutorials, and videos are also accessible from home. Links to these resources can be accessed from the HMS web page. The center also has a multitude of print resources available as well with a subscription to 42 different periodicals and 18,009 copies in our collection. With 1,323 students, this averages out to nearly 14 books per student. The integrity of our MARC records is 99.66% accurate. Purchases are based on suggestions through Follett Titlewise, curriculum alignment, reviews from Horn Book, School Library Journal, Booklist, state and national award lists, and requests based on curricular needs of teachers. Resources are weeded to maintain an acceptable age of collection and to insure that materials are appropriate and acceptable to grade level and curriculum needs.

Having space to meet the needs of our patrons is another area in which we are fortunate. Several large working areas supplement the main library media center including a production room, server room, storage area, conference room, office, and audio-visual media storage area. In fact, we boast something rarely seen in a modern media center: a separate multimedia classroom featuring nine networked computers. Within the main library media center, we house large fiction, non-fiction, and reference sections; a group of 16 networked computers with a networked presentation laptop, LCD projector, and SmartBoard; and an area where classes or groups can meet. During recent inclement weather this was illustrated when the classes held in portables were moved into the media center for the remainder of a class day. Our square footage enabled us to accommodate a Blueprint reading class, a Blueprint math class, a gifted class, the chorus class with over 40 members, and students serving in-school-suspension while continuing on with the normal media schedule. Our server room houses our LAN and WAN as well as the electronic media distribution system which serves as the feed for our cable and satellite programming as well as closed circuit television distribution.

Since first developing our full-day staff development for teachers seven years ago, GALILEO has been on the agenda. Teachers have been instructed on the use of GALILEO as well as encouraged to utilize it for access to databases, journal articles, and a wealth of other statistical information. We include instruction on using GALILEO when teaching research skills to students and insure that students know the password for accessing this resource from home. Through our county media email list, VSU ETTC Library Media Specialist Consortium sessions, and Coastal Plains RESA work sessions, we have been able to share staff development strategies that included instruction on GALILEO. For the 2006-2007 school year, Lowndes County Schools completed 75,588 keyword searches and accessed 28,408 full-text articles. With the changes made to the GALILEO interface, we anticipate an increase in the use of all databases and look forward to presenting the new look to our parents and teachers at our upcoming PTO.

Without the support of our administrative staff, we could not provide services at an exemplary level. The time we currently have to collaborate, assist students, or accomplish any of the hundred other tasks we address on a day-to-day basis would be greatly constrained if our administration required fixed schedules or assigned the library media staff other duties. Owen Prince, our system media coordinator, plans county wide media meetings, acts on behalf of system library media specialists when soliciting additional funds for resources, requests continued subscriptions to online and print resources, and coordinates curriculum alignments. Both Mr. Prince as well as our media liaison, Molly Radford, served as library media specialists within the Lowndes County School System. This gives them unique insight into situations faced

daily by library media specialists in each of our schools. Together, they have forged a strong connection between elementary, middle, and high school media specialists and have created a climate conducive for resource sharing, troubleshooting assistance, or camaraderie. Our school administration from principal to academic coach is aware of both the media resources as well as the personnel resources afforded to the teachers and staff through the center. Collaboration is not only encouraged by the administration, it is expected. Gone are the days of rote memorization, pencil and paper lessons. Our administration expects teachers to work with us to develop media rich, technology infused, content strong lessons that will bring the curriculum to life for the students. By including us in GPS and LFS training and keeping us current in educational trends, we are better able to help teachers prepare appropriately. Also of equal importance is our administration's ability to provide financial backing for the programs and projects of the center. When we decided to have a cookout at last year's luau, our administration offered to pick up the bill. In fact, there are a number of media incentive programs in place that receive financial backing from our administration. We are fortunate to receive and spend 100% of our state designated funds. When the budget is released in the spring, the media committee meets to assess the annual media services survey and determine spending priorities. Through support of our administration, we are not expected to purchase laminating film, toner, overhead bulbs, equipment, copier services, or other instructional supplies.

Our library media advisory committees are structured in such a way that the teachers, support personnel, and parents on this committee advise us on issues, needs, and policy changes which we in turn take to our county level media advisory committee meetings. We are members of the county media/technology committee for long-range planning of infrastructure, new construction, development of media policy, and development of supplements to state media funding. Therefore, our policy manual is reviewed and modified as needed and includes such issues as budget development, acquisition, reconsideration of materials while establishing the policies that govern the management of all library media centers throughout the county.

Staff development is key in an exemplary program. We attend the GaETC each year in addition to our Regional ETTC Media Specialist Consortium and RESA events as scheduled. Our paraprofessional attends technology and LFS training. We take a lead role in planning staff development for area media specialists by working cooperatively with Janie Baxter from the Coastal Plains RESA. We bring back exciting ideas and programs from these events to share and implement at HMS as well as create a network of colleagues throughout the state. We work hand-in-hand with Renee McLeod, our academic coach, and Ann Rodgers, our professional learning coordinator, to create staff development opportunities based on surveys of and requests from faculty. These types of training are offered after school and teachers earn PLU credit for attending. Classes have included digital storytelling, podcasting, SmartBoard use, advanced PowerPoint, presentation equipment, Destiny Library Manager, Google Earth, online resources, Celestia, and Internet resources. In addition to these after school sessions, we are thrilled to have the support of our county administration in providing funding for our full day staff development. This provides a substitute for each teacher to attend the in-house training on their designated day. Each academic area meets as a group where we are able to show new library resources, books, periodicals, videos, software, and online resources to meet curricular needs. In addition we provide specialized training on technological resources. This year, our training was focused on development of classroom web pages. Through this training, HMS teachers hold the distinction of being the first school in the system where 100% of the faculty has individual web pages on which they can post assignments, news, pictures, podcasts, documents, dates, and useful links.



Utilizing instructional materials from the specific resource, we have conducted sessions on GALILEO, NetTrekker, and NewsBank. We believe that the improved GALILEO interface will increase the number of times this resource is accessed and utilized. We also learn the newest software available to find better ways to complete old tasks. For instance, we quickly learned the new Microsoft Word layout once we discovered the “references” tab. We have now provided greater assistance to teachers pursuing graduate degrees by showing them a much simpler method for managing their sources when composing papers. Couple this with securing resources from other schools’ collections as well as our local public library, and we are every graduate student’s best friend. While we are identified as library teachers our contributions are appreciated and recognized in that both of us have been selected as Teachers of the Month.

We believe incentives must be developed to reward teachers’ and students’ efforts at honing new skills. In keeping with the many incentive programs we have created and implemented in the past, this year we developed a Techie of the Year program. Our school is extraordinarily fortunate to have the level and amount of technical and media resources that we have. Each classroom is equipped with six networked computers and a networked printer. One computer has presentation capabilities to display the desktop to a mounted television. We have 26 multimedia carts with LCD projectors, laptops, and Airliner slates either assigned to academic teams or available for checkout. Fifty of our teachers have laptop docking stations and the rest will receive their laptop in the fall. We have four carts of sixteen laptops available as mobile labs. We have classrooms with mounted SmartBoards and projectors as well as a SmartBoard available for checkout. We provide digital still and video cameras, podcasting equipment, student response systems, and a multitude of software to bring the curriculum and classroom environment to life. We have offered training sessions during the school day as well as after school and during summer to give teachers the opportunity to develop a level of comfort with the resources and to design technology infused lessons. This year our goal is to move away from just using technology to infusing technology into the classroom making it as much a part of the classroom as test tubes, microscopes, calculators, and rulers. We decided to push our teachers to the next level by developing the Techie of the Year program. We plan to bestow a total of five techie awards: one 6<sup>th</sup> grade, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, one special needs teacher, and one physical education, connections, or Blueprint teacher. In conjunction with our administration and academic coach, we designed a rubric which would define the tasks teachers must complete to earn the distinction. To be considered, teachers must work collaboratively with the library media specialists to create media/technology rich lessons. Teachers must share resources, ideas, and equipment with others. They must allow their students to present their finished products in the technology fair. Finally, teachers must utilize different media and technology resources in their classrooms. At the end of the year, we will meet with the administrators and academic coach to assess which teachers have met the requirements and determine which teachers earned the prize. What will the winner receive? Along with the coveted title of Techie of the Year, the five techies will be given a list of available technology prizes from which they can choose. The program is funded by monies raised from our book fair and financial support from our PTO, administration, and county office. We are able to offer the winning teachers their choice of either an LCD projector, a student response system, a digital camera, or a digital video camera. Most importantly, what this program has done for the HMS library media program is highlight the things we do best: collaborate with teachers to develop strong, standards-based lessons, infuse technology, create opportunities for students and teachers to showcase their skills while demonstrating that the library media center is the hub of learning in our school community.