



The Parent Post

Facilitating Family School Partnerships

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Welcome to The Parent Post! This newsletter is published four times per year for students and families of the Douglas County School System. For more information, please visit dcssga.org or contact Patti Sullivan at (770) 651-2118 or email patti.sullivan@dcssga.org

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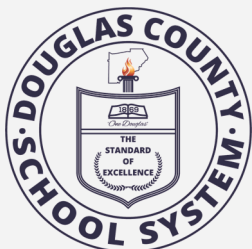
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Empowering Learning with Technology: The SAMR Model Explained!

By Ginny Dixon, Instructional Technology Specialist, Douglas County School System

As parents, we know technology plays a huge role in our children's lives. But how can we ensure it's being used effectively for learning? Technology continues to evolve, and so do our classrooms! Here in the Douglas County School System, we're committed to using technology effectively to enhance learning. Today, we'd like to introduce you to the SAMR Model, a framework that helps us understand different levels of technology integration in education.

What is the SAMR Model? The SAMR Model stands for Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition. Imagine a ladder with four rungs that represent each of these levels. Each "rung" explains how technology can be used in the classroom (or at home!), moving from simply replacing traditional tools to completely transforming learning experiences.

The Four Levels of SAMR:

- **Substitution:** This level involves replacing traditional tools with digital versions. Think online textbooks instead of paper ones, or using digital presentations instead of handwritten notes. While convenient, it doesn't significantly change the learning itself.
- **Augmentation:** Here, technology enhances existing tasks. For example, students might use online dictionaries or research tools to deepen their understanding of a topic. This level adds value but doesn't fundamentally change the learning process.
- **Modification:** Now things get exciting! At this level, technology allows us to modify tasks and create new learning experiences. Students might create digital presentations, collaborate on projects online, or participate in simulations. This level actively changes the way students learn and engage with the material.
- **Redefinition:** This is the ultimate level, where technology redefines learning altogether. Imagine students designing and conducting their own research projects using virtual reality or creating interactive games to teach others. This level transforms the learning process and creates unique opportunities unavailable without technology.

How Can You Help at Home? While substitution has its place, the true power lies in reaching the higher levels. Modification and Redefinition encourage deeper thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills – essential for 21st-century learners. Our teachers implement the SAMR Model in the classroom and you, too, can play a crucial role at home!

Here are 5 ways to help your child climb the SAMR ladder at home:

1. **Challenge them with projects:** Instead of simply completing worksheets, encourage your child to use technology to create presentations, write stories using online tools, or design projects that showcase their learning.
2. **Embrace collaboration:** Look for online platforms where your child can collaborate with classmates on projects, play educational games together, or participate in online discussions.
3. **Encourage creativity:** Let your child explore apps and tools that allow them to express themselves creatively, like writing music, designing animations, or creating digital art.

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4. **Think beyond the classroom:** Use technology to explore your child's interests beyond schoolwork. Visit virtual museums, participate in online coding courses, or create digital family scrapbooks.
5. **Be a partner:** Talk to your child's teacher about the SAMR Model and how they're using technology in the classroom. Find ways to connect the classroom activities to your child's home exploration of technology.

Remember, the SAMR Model is a guide, not a rulebook. Every child learns differently, and the path to technology mastery is unique. By understanding this framework and engaging with your child's tech use, you can become a powerful partner in their digital learning adventure!

Have questions or need resources? Don't hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher. We're here to support you on this exciting technology journey!

You Can Show What you Know!

By Julie King, ESOL Teacher, Annette Winn Elementary School

We are racing toward the end of the school year, and our English Language Learners (ELLs) are getting a chance to show what they know! From January 11 to March 1, all ELLs will take the ACCESS test. This assessment shows how much progress students have made in listening, reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English. The ESOL teachers have been preparing students for the ACCESS test all year, and we know our students are ready to do their best! In April, all third-eighth grade students will take the Georgia Milestones test (GMAS). High school students are preparing for End of Course tests. ESOL teachers and classroom teachers have been preparing students for these tests. You can help your child to do his or her best on these tests, too!

- Make sure your child is getting plenty of sleep at night.
- Your child needs to eat breakfast, either at home or at school.
- Attendance is important! Please try to make appointments after school.
- Encourage your child to do his or her best!

The ESOL teachers use several computer programs that can help ELLs achieve success. Lexia Core5 Reading is used for Kindergarten-Fifth grade students. Lexia helps students improve their reading, writing, and listening skills in English. Students in middle and high school use Lexia Power Up Literacy. This program focuses on word study, grammar, and comprehension. Both Lexia programs can be used at home, on a computer or a tablet with internet access. Check with your child's ESOL teacher for login information. In the classroom, ESOL teachers use Nearpod to teach interactive lessons that may include videos, games, and activities. Teachers also use Flocabulary to teach academic vocabulary using fun hip hop music. Your ELL student's teacher may assign activities on Nearpod and Flocabulary through Google Classroom.

ELLs can use the [Georgia Milestones Practice web page](#) to prepare for GMAS testing. High School students may find resources for [End of Course](#) tests on the End of Course test practice web page. These sites, as well as other information are also available on the [Georgia Milestones Resources page](#) provided by the Georgia Department of Education.

While these computer-based programs and websites help ELLs prepare for ACCESS, GMAS, and End of Course testing, there are other options that will help students as well. Reading is the best way to improve your child's academic performance. You can read to your child, listen to your child read aloud, or just talk to older students about what they are reading. Reading in your native language as well as in English is beneficial to your bilingual learner! Talking with ELLs is another way to prepare them for testing. Having conversations in English and in their first language can expand their vocabulary and improve listening skills.

Thank you, parents, for partnering with us this year! We are proud of our ELLs and expect them to do great things! things!



Georgia Milestones (GMAS) Testing Tips

By William Marchant, Director of Assessment and Accountability, Douglas County School System

For **parents**...You want your child to do his best on the test. Here are a few suggestions on ways to support your child during test time:

- ✓ Keep to your regular routine. Experts say that dramatic shifts from a child's routine can have a negative impact on performance. That's especially true for younger students who take comfort in regular bedtime rituals and meal routines.
- ✓ Help your child prepare for testing with a good night's sleep, a nutritious breakfast, and a positive attitude.
- ✓ Encourage your child to do her best. Encouraging words and a positive attitude about your child's test performance will go a long way toward calming test jitters. If you are anxious about your child's performance, you may send the message that you think she is not capable or is unprepared to do well.
- ✓ Avoid confrontation on the morning of the test.
- ✓ Make sure your child is in attendance and on time on test days. Attendance is important every school day, but especially on test days when students get the opportunity to "show what they know." Schedule doctor appointments for after the testing sessions are complete.
- ✓ After the test, let your child know that you appreciate that he did his best. Your encouragement will help your child gain confidence and encourage his or her best work.
- ✓ Contact your child's teacher if special circumstances may have affected test performance. A child's or parent's illness or a family crisis may keep a student from doing her best work on a test. Communicate your concerns to your child's teacher.
- ✓ Be familiar with the testing schedule for your child's grade. Check the school system website or ask your child's teacher for the testing calendar for this school year.



For **students**...Test-taking tips

Before the test:

- ✓ Get plenty of rest the night before.
- ✓ Eat a nutritious breakfast before the test. Avoid high sugar foods.
- ✓ Wear comfortable clothes.
- ✓ Arrive at school on time. You will feel more relaxed if you're not rushed, so wake up a few minutes early.
- ✓ Relax. You'll do better if you don't worry. Try to remember that the results of tests help your teachers plan for your education. It's your time to "show what you know." You've got this. You have been working hard all year.
- ✓ If you are "stressed out" about your test, here are three stress-busting strategies:
 - Slow down and relax;
 - Take slow, deep breaths;
 - Close your eyes and think positive thoughts

During the test:

- ✓ Always listen and follow the directions. Ask questions about any directions that are unclear.
- ✓ Take your time and read carefully.
- ✓ Read all written directions carefully before you begin.
- ✓ Read the entire question or story before you answer.
- ✓ On multiple-choice questions, read all your answer choices before selecting your answer. If you are not sure, eliminate answers that you know are wrong before you make a guess. Remember, there's no penalty for guessing!
- ✓ Think about your answers. Don't second-guess your answers. Your first answer often is the right answer.

When you are finished with the test:

- ✓ If you have time, go back and review your answers.
- ✓ Check that you have answered every question. Guessing is OK if you don't know the answer, but eliminate wrong answers first.
- ✓ Make sure that you have submitted your test. It is okay to ask the adult in the room if you have submitted it correctly.

U P C O M I N G T I T L E I W O R K S H O P S

Parents of children being served with Title I funds may attend any workshop, regardless of location. Please check the schedule to determine if parent workshops will be virtual or in-person. For additional information, please contact your child's school at the listed phone numbers below.

Beulah Elementary School Parent Resource Center
1150 Burnt Hickory Road, Douglasville, GA 30134
(770) 651-3300 bees.dcssga.org

Family Reading Day (IN-PERSON)

Monday, March 4, 2024 from 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Beulah families are invited to enjoy a special literacy activity with their students, in the classroom. The activities are designed to encourage discussion and guide the children's independent reading by demonstrating how to use skills and strategies.

Eastside Elementary School Parent Resource Center
8266 Connally Drive, Douglasville, GA 30134
(770) 651-3800 eses.dcssga.org

Science Night (IN-PERSON)

Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 5:30 PM

The event will allow participants to interact with science in a variety of ways. The participants will interact with the following: Snap Circuits, flip that spoon, Race Car Magnets, Alka-Seltzer rockets, table top fossil dig, Picasso Magnetic Tiles, Drops on a Penny, Glo Germ, Inertia Rings, & Microscopes. Join us for this fun event on Pi Day!

Factory Shoals Elementary School Parent Resource Center
2375 Mount Vernon Road, Lithia Springs, GA 30122
(770) 651-3900 fses.dcssga.org

SEL Student Health and Wellness (IN-PERSON)

Wednesday, March 27, 2024 at 6:00 PM

Parents are invited to attend our parent workshop on student health and wellness as we partner with a licensed professional on mental health, developmental norms and how to help your child succeed at school and home in every aspect.

Lithia Springs Elementary School Parent Resource Center
6946 Florence Drive, Lithia Springs, GA 30122
(770) 651-4100 lses.dcssga.org

GMAS Night (IN-PERSON)

Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 6:00 PM

We will discuss standards and provide resources to prepare the students for GMAS testing in reading, math and science. We will also use this opportunity to go over dates, information and how to be prepared for testing dates.

Winston Elementary School
13691 Veterans Memorial Hwy, Winston, GA 30187
(770) 651-4700 wes.dcssga.org

Gearing Up for Assessments and the End of the Year

Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 10:00AM (VIRTUAL) and 5:30PM (IN-PERSON)

Parents will receive information on Milestones testing week. Testing dates, schedules, ways parents can support their student at home and more will be shared.



Visit YOUR Title I
Parent Resource
Center Today!

ATTENTION ALL STUDENTS: Spring 2024 Georgia Milestones Testing Calendars



For more information on the upcoming Georgia Milestones testing, scan here to visit the Douglas County School System Testing Calendars.



Resources for Parents of English Learners!

The Douglas County School System has posted new resources for parents of English Learners on our website. Our goal is to provide effective outreach to parents of our English Learners and to assist them in being involved in their child's education. Please visit our website [here](#) or scan this QR code to access the website with the resources listed.

U P C O M I N G P A R E N T W O R K S H O P S

Please check the schedule to determine if parent workshops will be virtual or in-person. For additional information, please contact your child's school at the listed phone numbers below or visit the school website.

College and Career Institute

4600 Timber Ridge Drive, Building D, Douglasville, GA 30135
(770) 947-7690 cci.dcssga.org

Apply to CCI Night (IN-PERSON)

Tuesday, March 12, 2024 from 5:00 to 7:00 PM

Tuesday, April 16, 2024 from 5:00 to 7:00 PM

Join us at the CCI to tour the facility and learn about the programs that are offered. A Spanish interpreter will be available.

Chapel Hill Elementary School

4433 Coursey Lake Road, Douglasville, GA 30135
(770) 651-3600 ches.dcssga.org

Spring STEAM Night (IN-PERSON)

Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 5:30 PM

The Spring STEAM Night is present in partnership with GYSTC (Georgia Youth Science and Technology Centers). We want you there!! Join us for a night filled with hands-on STEAM activities sure to excite the scientist in you!

Chapel Hill Middle School

3989 Chapel Hill Road, Douglasville, GA 30135
(770) 651-5000 chms.dcssga.org

GMAS Information and Prep Night (IN-PERSON)

Thursday, April 11, 2024 at 6:00 PM

We will review details of the GMAS test such as length, order, and student expectations. We will also present ways to prepare for the test using various strategies.

Dorsett Shoals Elementary School

5866 Dorsett Shoals Road, Douglasville, GA 30135
(770) 651-3700 dses.dcssga.org

Arts and Achievement (IN-PERSON)

Tuesday, March 5, 2024 at 6:00 PM

We will be highlighting our excellence with a Chorus Performance, Art Exhibit, and classroom visits focused on the academic achievement of our students. We are looking forward to showing off all of our Panthers' hard work!

Mt. Carmel Elementary School

2356 Fairburn Road, Douglasville, GA 30135
(770) 651-4200 mces.dcssga.org

Let's "Taco Bout" Testing (IN-PERSON)

Tuesday, April 9, 2024 at 5:30 PM

We invite our 3rd-5th grade parents to have dinner with us as we talk about the end of the year assessments. At this parent night, families will learn more about the Georgia Milestones for students in Grades 3-5.

Mirror Lake Elementary School

2613 Tyson Road, Villa Rica, GA 30180
(770) 651-4300 mles.dcssga.org

Night of the Arts (IN-PERSON)

Thursday, March 28, 2024 at 5:00 PM

Student art work will be on display throughout the building for parents and students to view. The Mirror Lake chorus will showcase a preview of their upcoming Spring Chorus Performance. We are excited to showcase the many talents of our Mirror Lake students with our Student Talent Showcase.

Yeager Middle School

4000 Kings Highway, Douglasville, GA 30135
(770) 651-5600 yms.dcssga.org

GMAS Night (IN-PERSON)

Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 6:00 PM

Parents will receive information about the Georgia Milestones assessment (GMAS). They will preview sample questions and tips to help their child at home.



FRESHMAN EXPO ~ March 14, 2024

FINALIZE ELECTIVES, MEET COACHES & JOIN CLUBS

Click each high school's logo for more information about their Freshman Expo!

