Introduction to Focus Software

One of the sections of Race to the Top (RTT) is Section C3 **- Use Data to Improve Instruction**. This area mandates that districts have a Local Instructional Improvement System and that this system Support Research.

This is the original RTT definition of an Instructional Improvement System

> …technology-based tools and other strategies that provide teachers, principals and administrators with meaningful support and actionable data to systematically manage continuous instructional improvement, including such activities as: instructional planning, gathering information (*e.g., through formal assessments, interim assessments, summative assessments, and looking at student work and other student data); analyzing information with the support of rapid-time reporting; using this information to inform decisions on appropriate next instructional steps; and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken. Such systems promote collaborative problem-solving and action planning; they may also integrate instructional data with student-level data such as attendance, discipline, grades, credit accumulation, and student survey results to provide early warning indicators of a student's risk of educational failure.*

In Clay County, we have various systems that address some of these areas - TERMS, SmartWeb, Dashboard, DataStar, Blackboard, Learning Village, and Navigator Plus. However, we do not have one Instructional Improvement System and in reviewing the requirements, one thing became clear**. TERMS is outdated and to address C3, Clay must replace our Student Information System (SIS).**

Timelines and action steps were carefully detailed in the search for a new Student Information System. A District Team documented criteria and began the investigation process that soon narrowed the focus to three Student Information Systems. The team later narrowed to two SIS. Further investigation included site visits to districts that had recently implemented the new systems.

The result is that the District Team met consensus and Focus software has been selected for the new Student Information System. The next steps will be procurement and implementation of the product, again a carefully detailed procurement and implementation that includes contracting with CELT to ensure success.

The Board will be updated as this process continues. The timeline included in the Race to the Top application identifies future steps:

- Identify transition/project manager
- Convert existing data
- Implement system at one elementary(AES), one junior high(GCJ), and one high school(FIH) for the 2010-2011 school year.
- Plan Professional Development
- Identify curricular, assessment, staff development, HR, and learning needs
- Implement PD
- Create Student Schedules for 2012/13
- Implement at all schools 2012/13
- Launch student/parent portal