



## **Linking Afterschool Professional Development to Youth Outcomes**

Using the *Georgia Afterschool Institute (GAI)* to  
Improve Program Quality and Increase the Impact of Afterschool on Georgia Youth

### **WHAT IS GAI?**

The *Georgia Afterschool Institute (GAI)* is a statewide, multi-day afterschool professional development opportunity based on the evidence-based Afterschool Academies national model. The *Georgia Afterschool Institute (GAI)* is:

- A hands-on, in-depth, experiential-based learning experience;
- Focused on youth development, leadership training, project-based learning and the incorporation of afterschool time with the academic school day to create a seamless learning environment for youth;
- Grounded in national research and developed and led by a blend of national and local afterschool experts.

Research shows that high-quality afterschool programs allow youth to develop the skills, attitudes, and behaviors that will help them be successful in school, work and life. Content of *GAI*s will be geared toward assisting afterschool providers to influence many of these intermediate outcomes, including:

- More positive behavior
- Increased initiative
- Increased engagement in learning
- Better communications skills

- Stronger problem solving skills
- Improved relationships with peers and adults
- Improved academic performance

The first *GAI* pilot in July 2008 was a success with 95 percent of the participants completing positive evaluations. The extremely high ratings made it clear that there is high-demand for this type of professional development opportunity in Georgia. This multi-year initiative is part of a systems-building effort that will enable hundreds of afterschool providers in Georgia to take part in *GAI* and regional follow-up support, with a goal of high-quality afterschool programming across the state.

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### **HOW DOES THIS FIT INTO THE GEORGIA AFTERSCHOOL INVESTMENT COUNCIL'S WORK?**

GAIC will use the *Afterschool Institute* as a vehicle to build high-quality in afterschool programs across the state in order to positively impact youth outcomes by:

- Building the capacity of afterschool providers: strengthening providers' skills, knowledge, leadership and connection to national research and expertise, as well as local best practices; and
- Raising the bar of the afterschool profession as a whole.

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### **WHAT NEXT?**

**Key elements of this professional development systems-building effort are:**

- Taking the *Institute* model to scale and sustaining it across the state while continuing to develop and nurture local training expertise;
- Focusing on improving *middle and high school afterschool education*;
- Intentionally connecting with the *Assessment of Afterschool Program Practices (APAS)* evaluation tool to tailor future *Institutes* to the specific needs of afterschool providers in Georgia; and
- Developing *regional support networks* for afterschool providers across the state.

*The next Georgia Afterschool Institute will take place March 10-12, 2009.*

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**Strategic Partners:** Center for Afterschool Education at Foundations Inc.; Community Network for Youth Development; Education Development Center, Inc.; Emory University; Family Connection Partnership; and Fanning Institute at the University of Georgia.