



**Georgia College & Career Academies  
Ignite College and Career Academy  
Quarterly Report: *January – March 2019***

**Mission, Goals, and Need**

Ignite's Board-approved mission is "To ignite the aspirational spirit of students, inspiring and empowering them to become leaders in a world-renowned workforce that will impact generations of learners and workers."

The 2018 Ignite Employer Needs Assessment was designed and conducted by the Workforce Needs and Curriculum Subcommittee of the Steering Committee during the winter and spring of 2018. It received 135 voluntary responses from the Sumter region (Sumter and nine other counties), and the data from the survey was the main driver of Ignite's planning for its curricula and culture of achievement. Employers identified 12 work ethic characteristics and 87 "major job titles" (defined as job titles that are held by 20% of more of their workforce, and/or for which it is hard to hire and retain workers, and/or for which they plan to add more workers in the next five years) that drive the region's economic need.

Ignite's 120-member Steering Committee, all three subcommittees, and its 13-member, majority-business governing board approved the following academic and organizational goals for Ignite. There are five academic goals with a combined seven measures and three organizational goals with a combined eight measures. The goals are as follows:

**Academic Goal 1 (Literacy Goal):** From a baseline established in Year One (2019-2020 School Year) Ignite CCA students will show annual improvements in literacy.

**Measure 1:** The percentage of students scoring Meets Expectations or higher on the Ignite Work Literacy Assessment (an instrument being developed and maintained collaboratively by Ignite's education and business partners) will increase by 5% over the prior year's results.

**Measure 2:** The percentage of students meeting or exceeding the cut score on the literacy portion of the Accuplacer to be considered "program ready" by South Georgia Technical College and/or satisfying the ACT or SAT reading and writing requirements for dual enrollment at Georgia Southwestern State University will increase by 5% over the prior year's results.

**Academic Goal 2 (Numeracy Goal):** From a baseline established in Year One (2019-2020 School Year), Ignite CCA students will show annual improvements in numeracy.

**Measure 1:** The percentage of students scoring Meets Expectations or higher on the Ignite Work Numeracy Assessment (an instrument being developed and maintained collaboratively by Ignite's education and business partners) will increase by a minimum of 5% over the prior year's results.

**Measure 2:** The percentage of students meeting or exceeding the cut score on the mathematics portion of the Accuplacer to be considered "program ready" by South Georgia Technical College and/or satisfying the ACT or SAT mathematics requirements for dual enrollment at Georgia Southwestern State University will increase by a minimum of 5% over the prior year's results.

**Academic Goal 3 (CTAE Pathway Completer Goal):** Using the 2018-19 CCRPI CTAE Pathway Completer results as a baseline (62.35%), the percentage of participating high school students passing three pathway courses and passing the corresponding End of Pathway Assessment will increase by a minimum of 3% over the prior year's results.

Academic Goal 4 (Dual Enrollment Goal): Using the 2017-18 average percentage of Americus Sumter County High School students participating in dual enrollment per semester as a baseline (121 of 950, or 12.7%), the average percentage of Ignite CCA students participating in dual enrollment per semester at South Georgia Technical College and/or Georgia Southwestern State University will increase by a minimum of 2% over the prior year's results.

Academic Goal 5 (Dual Credit Goal): From a baseline established in Year One (2019-2020 School Year), the percentage of Ignite CCA students earning two Carnegie Units by passing a single dual credit class (a CTAE course with embedded academic standards) and any aligned End of Course assessment will increase by a minimum of 2% over the prior year's results.

Organizational Goal 1: From a baseline established in Year One (2019-2020 School Year), the percentage of Ignite CCA students scoring meets or exceeds expectations on the Ignite Work Ethic Assessment will increase by a minimum of 3% over the prior year's results.

Organizational Goal 2 (Faculty Externship Goal): From a baseline established in Year One (2019-2020 School Year), faculty externships with a regional employer will increase annually.  
Measure 1: The percentage of Ignite CCA faculty participating in externships will increase by a minimum of 5% over the prior year's results until it is at 100% and remains so.  
Measure 2: The number of employers offering faculty externship opportunities will increase by five employers annually.

Organizational Goal 3 (Work-Based Learning Goal): From a baseline established in Year One (2019-2020 School Year) Ignite CCA improve Work-Based Learning annually.  
Measure 1: The number of businesses offering job-shadowing will increase by three annually.  
Measure 2: The number of businesses offering unpaid or paid internships will increase by four annually.  
Measure 3: The number of businesses offering apprenticeships will increase by two annually.  
Measure 4: The number of businesses participating in the Georgia Consortium for Advanced Technical Training (GA CATT) German apprenticeship model will increase by one annually.  
Measure 5: The number of students offered full time employment (or employment connected to college enrollment funded by the employer) by WBL partners after high school graduation will increase by five annually.

### **Partnerships, Governance, and Leadership**

In March 2018, the Sumter County Board of Education to approve the request by the Ignite Steering Committee to incorporate, to pursue 501(c)(3) status, and to appoint a majority-employer governing board that will hire a jointly-funded CEO. The model for joint funding has already been put in place and is being used to fund the consulting work during two planning years and the first two operational years. The BOE vote was unanimous, and it also voted in June and again in August to amend its SWSS contract and Strategic Plan to include Ignite.

All the above Directors also volunteered on the Ignite CCA Steering Committee, its three subcommittees and nine teams. The chief executives of every partner that signed the Ignite Operational MOU serve as ex-officio members of the governing board and participate in all meetings and training. 100% of the governing board of Ignite and of One Sumter Economic Development

Foundation, Inc. (the foundation acting as the initial coordinator of Ignite's planning starting in 2016) are among the 102 individuals, corporations, nonprofits and other governments that submitted 10-year Letters of Commitment with signed checklists. Five of these partners have already either donated or pledged \$120,450 of the \$245,100 in (mostly private) cash funds. The estimated in-kind value of the Letters and checklists attached to Ignite's grant application was \$8,437,600.

The governing board has already reviewed (with the Sumter BOE) another agreement to fund the CEO from three sectors (the One Sumter Economic Development Foundation, the governing board itself, and the Sumter County School District). One Sumter, which is supported mostly by private sector donors, has already approved its own plan to support the CEO. The CEO compensation will be 100% locally-funded by Ignite's partners with zero GCCAP grant funds used. The CEO's job description is already approved, and the CEO can be hired as early as this summer.

Because Ignite CCA already exists (even though the facility is still being designed), Ignite will begin impacting the curriculum programs of high school students in the fall of 2019 with the CEO and collaborative leadership of the principal of Sumter County High School, the governing board, the CTAE Director (also a member of the Ignite governing board), the newly constituted advisory committees, and both dual enrollment partners. The completely new Ignite CCA facility will open in August 2021 directly across the highway from South Georgia Technical College, on a new campus in the middle of the Sumter County Industrial Park - a fact that will significantly drive Ignite's Work-Based Learning (WBL) program.

Leadership is embedded in the mission statement of Ignite and the culture of achievement and curriculum programs that will serve Ignite's students. Among the innovations designed by the partners and already in process is creating a new CTAE pathway to train Ignite's student in leadership principles.

### **Is your board up and running? (If so, who are the members?) Have you had any meetings?**

The governing board had its organizational meeting in June 2018 and meets at 409 Elm Avenue in Americus the third Wednesday of every month at 8:15 am. Ignite's 13 member, majority-employer board has the following voting members: Two Directors appointed by Sumter County School District (filled by Andrea Ingram, a parent who also works at South Georgia Technical College, and by the Sumter County Schools CTAE Director, Dr. Don Gilman); two Directors appointed by the President of South Georgia Technical College (Vice President of Academic Affairs, David Kuipers and Georgia Power Local Manager Don Porter from the SGTC Board of Directors); two Directors appointed by the President of Georgia Southwestern State University (GSW President, Dr. Neal Weaver, appointed himself and GSW's Director of First Year Experience, Dr. David Jenkins); and seven Directors nominated by the boards of the Sumter County Development Authority and Sumter County Chamber of Commerce to represent employers (Chair, Eshonda Blue, Founder and CEO of Innovative Senior Solutions; Vice Chair, Brandi Lunneborg, CEO of Phoebe Sumter Medical Center; Secretary, Rene Smith, Senior Vice President of Operations of Sumter EMC; Treasurer, Chris Saunders, Systems Engineer of NEOS Technologies; Tammy Pettyjohn Jones, a retired Procter & Gamble executive who now owns Jones Builders; Jerry Lott, Plant Manager of Imerys; and Matt Berry, owner of two agricultural firms in the region). In addition to its monthly meetings, the governing board began its training with David McCurry of TCSG last fall, and it will complete its annual training requirement in May

2019 in Morgan County. Please note that all board officers are employer voting members of the governing board.

### **Commitment and Sustainability**

102 individuals, corporations, nonprofits and other governments have submitted 10-year Letters of Commitment with signed checklists. Five of these partners have already either donated or pledged \$120,450 of the \$245,100 in (mostly private) cash funds. The estimated in-kind value of the Letters and checklists attached to Ignite's grant application was \$8,437,600.

Ignite's implementation plan relies on data-driven innovation, and Ignite's many innovations take one of two forms: 1) Creating new, never-before-implemented innovations that Ignite can refine, enhance and offer through its commitment to replication as worthy best practices for other CCAs to study and implement. In some cases, Ignite's planners believe the innovations rise to the level of being worthy for statewide implementation by and through the authority of the Technical College System of Georgia's Office of College and Career Transitions, which oversees the state's network of CCAs and also governs the certification process for all CCAs according to state law. 2) Embracing best practices at existing CCAs, but using the autonomy of the Ignite CCA governing board and CEO to customize those practices and make them uniquely relevant to Ignite's programs and mission.

Starting with truly unprecedented innovations, Ignite will be the first college and career academy in Georgia to design and implement the following best practices:

1. Ignite's CEO (who may be hired in 2019) will either already be or will become a Georgia-certified Economic Developer. The CEO Job Description was formerly approved by the Ignite Board in March 2019 and by the Sumter County BOE in April 2019.
2. While there are several CCA CEO's statewide that are jointly funded, Ignite's CEO will be the first in the state to be partially funded by a nonprofit private partner mission-driven by economic and workforce development. The One Sumter Board of Directors has committed \$300,000 over five years as a portion of the private-sector support for the CEO's compensation package and other startup costs. This is the first time a Georgia nonprofit other than the governing board has committed to fund a CEO.
3. Ignite has also developed external funding for another critical position: Ignite's Work-Based Learning Coordinator will be the first WBL manager funded by a source other than a school system. Ignite's WBL Coordinator will be dually-funded and will work for both Sumter County Schools and the Sumter County Development Authority, and this position will be compensated according to an intergovernmental agreement signed by both parties. SCDA's Board has already authorized its Executive Director to begin the process of writing this agreement, and SCDA also made a \$50,000 cash donation to Ignite in August to support operations unrelated to this WBL position.
4. Ignite's teachers will receive professional development about how to influence young people to become public and private sector leaders. The training will be conducted by the University of Georgia J. W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development's "Career Leadership Smarts" program to enhance youth leadership and workforce skills (a program that is also funded by the Technical College System of Georgia). Ignite will propose that this training program become a CTAE Pathway upon approval by the Georgia Department of Education.
5. In a separate initiative leveraging Fanning's expertise, Ignite will adapt the curriculum Fanning designed for UGA's College of Engineering students as the basis for a new Entrepreneurship pathway that can be reviewed and approved by the Georgia Department of Education and added to the state's approved list of CTAE Pathways.
6. Ignite will create an Entrepreneurship/Incubator Campus to grow its own Work-Based Learning partners and to recruit and create new, high-tech businesses for the region. To build its new high

school campus and Ignite's separate-but-connected facility, the Sumter County School District (SCSD) purchased a 400 acre tract from the Sumter County Development Authority (SCDA). The current footprint of the high school/CCA will only occupy eight acres when they both open in August 2021. The campus is surrounded by the rest of Sumter County's industrial park and is across the street from South Georgia Technical College and the Jimmy Carter Regional Airport. SCSD and SCDA can both issue bonds to build buildings adjacent to Ignite that Ignite and economic developers, working together, can fill with startups that need low-cost space to "incubate." Ignite will also attract venture capitalists (who can do double duty as finance/investment mentors for Ignite's students), UGA's Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC), local banks and other governments to counsel and help entrepreneurs access capital to invest in Ignite students as interns, apprentices and part-time employees (among other critical investments). Ignite will help the region grow its own new businesses and help those businesses grow their own workforce. The Ignite Incubator and WBL program motto will be "Earn While You Learn!" This innovation also aligns with a priority in SCDA's strategic plan.

7. Ignite is partnering with K-12/Infinite Campus to create and pilot a dedicated relational CCA performance database. The database is referenced in Ignite's operational MOU and in the Letter of Commitment by Infinite Campus. Unlike year-to-year CCRPI measures (which tend to change every year), the Ignite database will track all student and stakeholder interactions - customizing fields, queries and reports - in such a way that baselines, trends, and cross-indexed records can be tracked and reported with precision over any period of time. If this innovation is embraced by TCSG statewide, it will finally be possible to report at the state level - merely by running a simple macro program - statistics like how many students graduated from CCAs; how many were dual enrolled by semester (across TCSG and USG); how many were employed by business partners after graduation; the average GPA of all CCA students; how many credit hours, certificates and diplomas are earned by CCA students annually; what impact CCAs are having in communities and statewide on dropouts, the graduation rate, and unemployment; and many other returns on investment.

8. Ignite will collaborate with Georgia Southwestern State University's College of Education to create, pilot and offer for state approval a series of alternate End of Course exams for paired academic-CTAE courses. Taking advantage of a 2013 law that permits local districts to create their own assessments (and that has not been used by any CCA yet), these exams will evaluate students based on "applied mastery of content" - the very policy direction the Georgia legislature has been advocating for most of this decade.

9. Further fulfilling the legislative intent of this same dual credit/local assessment law, Ignite will be the first CCA in Georgia to blend academic standards into the high school half of a TCSG dual enrollment course. Ignite will call these dual credit/dual enrollment opportunities D3 credits. Once the first suitable tri-credit opportunities are in place, the Ignite governing board will add an academic goal to track and report results. A student who passes such a course will earn two secondary Carnegie Units and transferable TCSG college credit hours towards a technical college certificate (at a minimum).

10. With the final measure of its third organizational goal, Ignite has committed to tracking the placement of Ignite's Work-Based Learning students after high school graduation with precision (i.e., Ignite will not rely on a report generated by the state; instead, the Ignite partnership will work with students and employers to get them to "opt in" and report on successful placements, and Ignite will delegate professional staff to this task).

Embracing and adapting existing CCA best practices, Ignite will add the following student support programs:

1. Volunteer Mentors/Career Coaches to Assist Middle and High School Counselors And With Students - Ignite's counseling plan incorporates a new CCA best practice that Ignite found at Greene College and Career Academy (GCCA). This year, Greene's partnership scaled up an entirely new "Career Coach" program that started with one volunteer working with economically-

disadvantaged youth living in Habitat Homes. Now, a cadre of more than 20 retired professionals and others with private sector experience are working with all GCCA's students in tandem with the CCA's middle and high school counselors. The program allows a student and his family to have access to all relevant documents and options for each individual student - including YouScience results - on a smartphone. The end result is one-stop access to see and improve a student's 10-year, strategically-developed and vetted college-to-career plan. The Career Coaches all receive training, and the faculty and staff who interact with them receive professional development. 70 Ignite business partners have already volunteered to support students through organized counseling and mentoring programs, and Ignite's planners are tasking these volunteers to undergo planning and training beginning in January 2020 to serve as Ignite Career Coaches begin in Year One (2021-2022).

2. Advisory Committees - Sumter County Schools' CTAE Director has embraced the nine teams formed by the three subcommittees of the Ignite Steering Committee and used them to jump-start the advisory committees for each of the following program areas: Manufacturing/Mechatronics, Healthcare, Agriculture, Hospitality/Tourism, Business/Finance, Arts/AV/Entertainment, Education, Information Technology, Public Safety/Law Enforcement, Construction/Architecture, Work-Based Learning, and Welding. Further, the Letters of Commitment and signed checklists document volunteers (in addition to the existing members of the Steering Committee's nine teams who have committed to serve on Program Advisory Committees).

### **Plan to Address Workforce Development Needs**

Ignite's 135 needs assessment respondents identified 87 specific "major jobs" that they expect Ignite to help them fill with trained workers. Ignite's needs data is so precise that planners know how many workers are needed (by job title and employment sector) within five years. There are two other positive aspects of this forecast: 1) The number of jobs needed in five years is greater than 5,300, which is also more workers than the number of students who will graduate from Sumter's three high schools (counting a charter school and private school that have expressed willingness to work with Ignite in the future) over the same period. In other words, every student who attends Ignite should have a job waiting upon completing his or her Individual Graduation Plan. Ignite is therefore assured of having a positive impact on the regional workforce. 2) Because the needs assessment of employers in the region was voluntary (as opposed to comprehensive, covering all employers), the data and conclusions driving Ignite's planning are targeting minimum needs. The actual jobs needing to be added in the same employment sectors will all be higher. Ignite's planners are motivated by this insight, knowing that they have significant proof that there is a need in the region for a college and career academy.

### **Standards & Curriculum**

Ignite's curriculum plan includes 55 secondary CTAE pathways with aligned dual enrollment offerings in 16 Career Clusters (six clusters are combined because the documented need in the Sumter County region requires an interdisciplinary approach). Employers are not particularly interested in "clusters" or "pathways" per se; they gave Ignite's planners lists of skills and certificates they expect a CCA to help students earn to ensure those students are good employees and productive citizens. In order of documented need - as defined by the number of current and projected jobs students can fill - Ignite's curriculum clusters are: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) + Manufacturing (combined clusters); Health Science; Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources; Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics; Business, Management and Administration + Finance (combined clusters); Hospitality and Tourism; Arts, AV/Technology, and Communications + Information

Technology (combined clusters); Architecture and Construction; Education and Training; Energy; Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security; Government and Public Administration; and Human Services.

The pathways in Ignite's curriculum plan, the 135 business partners who completed the needs assessment, and the 102 partners who sent Letters of Commitment and signed checklists are all identified by their connection to Georgia's High Demand Career Initiative sectors. The curriculum plan also specifies 29 dual enrollment certificates (at a minimum) that Ignite's students can earn with the support of this innovative partnership's support, encouragement and guidance. Ignite has 31 partners who are providing externships. Ignite's CEO and the principal of Sumter County High School will collaborate to promote professional development, co-planning and co-teaching for dual credit opportunities, common planning time, and equal access to business externship for academic and CTAE teachers. Ignite is so serious about externships that the governing board has approved an annual goal dedicated to increasing the number and quality of teacher externships.

### **Plan to Increase Student Participation in Dual Enrollment**

Ignite's 55 secondary CTAE pathways are also aligned with dual enrollment offerings in 16 Career Clusters (six clusters are combined because the documented need in the Sumter County region requires an interdisciplinary approach). Within these clusters and pathways, Ignite's Workforce Needs and Curriculum Subcommittee recommended offering 29 dual enrollment certificates from South Georgia Technical College and 10 USG dual enrollment Bachelors of Arts or Science from Georgia Southwestern State University.

Dual enrollment in Sumter County is starting from a strong place: an average of 291 students per year from Americus Sumter High School have earned dual enrollment credits from South Georgia Technical College - by far the highest countywide dual enrollment numbers in SGTC's 10-county service area. That being so, Ignite's planners and governing board have approved goals and measures that target dual enrollment. Of Ignite's five academic goals (see above), three directly impact dual enrollment.

### **Faculty & Staff**

Ignite College and Career Academy will serve the Sumter County region and be known for innovation, student focus, professional and visionary leadership, and "moving the needle" for the students and economy of Sumter County and its neighbors. Key to that reputation will be the quality, qualifications, experience and capabilities of Ignite's management and faculty/staff.

Four years of work among every conceivable level of stakeholders has resulted in a staffing plan first proposed by the Steering Committee's Partnership and Operations Subcommittee. That plan includes the job descriptions for five key leaders: The CEO of Ignite College and Career Academy, Inc., the Principal of Sumter County High School, Ignite's Leadership and Professional Learning Manager, Ignite's Work-Based Learning and Business Retention Manager, and the High School Coordinator of South Georgia Technical College. There are other critical positions, especially those of counselors and teachers, but the five listed above will have significant leadership responsibilities that support and inspire the professionals who

teach and guide Ignite's students daily. In the planning year, Ignite's governing board and key partners are focused first on filling these key leadership positions and building the chemistry between them.

The CEO will ensure the continuous improvement of the programs and personnel of Ignite. The CEO will be lead a Georgia nonprofit corporation, will be accountable to a 13-member, majority-employer governing board and the Superintendent of Sumter County Schools, will raise and manage private assets in support of Ignite's mission, and will work closely with the Principal to track and report progress to ward achieving Ignite's five academic and three organizational goals. The CEO will also be responsible for overseeing the accomplishment of the tasks outlined in the two-year implementation plan. The CEO's focus will be outward, working with and helping Ignite define and meet the needs and expectations of employers as Ignite meets its workforce development mission. In a major innovation, the CEO will either already be (at hiring) or will become a Georgia Certified Economic Developer. Ignite's CEO will be the first in Georgia to earn this certification.

The CEO will collaborate with the Principal of the Sumter County High School. Ignite will be on the SCHS campus when both new buildings open in August 2021, and the Principal will be both the building administrator and instructional leader for Ignite - evaluating teachers, overseeing all aspects related to accreditation and professional development, counseling, public funds and budgets, and intramural programs. As Ignite grows into a truly regional partnership, attracting and serving students from neighboring counties, the CEO and Principal will both have responsibilities for those students and partnering with their base schools - the CEO on the partnership maintenance and expansion level (funding, negotiating, and envisioning improvements), and the Principal on the line level (safety and security, curriculum, transportation, and discipline). The Principal will report to the Superintendent.

The CEO will manage an employee in another new, innovative position: the Work-Based Learning and Business Retention Manager will be Georgia's first jointly-funded WBL overseer, working for both Sumter County Schools and the Sumter County Development Authority. This position will be compensated according to an intergovernmental agreement signed by both parties. SCDA's Board has already authorized its Executive Director to begin the process of writing this agreement, and SCDA. This manager will fulfill Ignite's Work-Based Learning organizational goal, recruiting business partners willing to job shadow and place interns and apprentices. He or she will also work to recruit businesses to the region and will also participate and help manage one of the largest and most exciting innovations in the history of Georgia's CCAs: Ignite will create an Entrepreneurship/Incubator Campus to grow its own Work-Based Learning partners and to recruit and create new, high-tech businesses for the region. The Ignite Incubator and WBL program motto will be "Earn While You Learn!" This innovation also aligns with a priority in SCDA's strategic plan - another reason for SCDA's interest in sharing this position.

Ignite will have yet another new position: the Leadership and Professional Learning Manager, who will report to the Principal. This manager will support and enhance Ignite's professional culture through soft skills and workforce expectations, aligning those expectations with curriculum standards. He or she will motivate faculty trainees using group and individual classroom methods, and manage the design, delivery and continuous improvement of training programs. The Professional Development Manager will serve as a "counselor for teachers" in this reflective process.

The High School Coordinator for South Georgia Technical College will have dedicated office space at Ignite. He or she will work directly with the CEO, Principal, counselors, teachers, students and business partners, being the primary point of contact on dual enrollment options and opportunities for Ignite. The HSC will have a role in recruiting other districts to partner with Ignite, and in helping Ignite's teachers work with SGTC's instructors in shared professional development, lesson planning, and marketing related to dual enrollment and career preparation. Ignite has another academic innovation that has yet to be implemented in Georgia, and the HSC will be a key player in making it real: Ignite will be the first CCA in Georgia to blend academic standards into the high school half of a TCSG dual enrollment course. Ignite will call these dual credit/dual enrollment opportunities D3 credits.

The above five leaders will run point on establishing and enhancing the brand and culture of Ignite (under the oversight of the governing board), and jointly, they will ensure that Ignite enjoys a successful launch.

### **Plan to Increase Work-based Learning Opportunities**

There are no better ways to simulate the real world than to bring the real world to the students and also to bring the students to real world jobs so they can learn by doing. Ignite is doing both. 63 business partners have volunteered to come to Ignite to share their work experiences and to inspire students with classroom presentations, to volunteer as mentors, and to open their businesses to teachers for summer externships that will have a direct impact on every classroom. Still more have volunteered to serve as Work-Based Learning (WBL) partners in the following ways and numbers: 54 will host field trips of their worksites, 41 will offer job shadowing, 42 will offer internships, and 23 will offer apprenticeships. Sumter County currently has a modest WBL learning program, and bolstering it is a major focus of Ignite's planners, which include the Superintendent and CTAE Director of Sumter County Schools.

Ignite's 120 member Steering Committee and 13-member, majority business governing board have approved five academic and three organizational goals, including the following goal that targets WBL: "Organizational Goal 3 (Work-Based Learning Goal): From a baseline established in Year One (2019-2020 School Year) Ignite CCA improve Work-Based Learning annually.

Measure 1: The number of businesses offering job-shadowing will increase by three annually.

Measure 2: The number of businesses offering unpaid or paid internships will increase by four annually.

Measure 3: The number of businesses offering apprenticeships will increase by two annually.

Measure 4: The number of businesses participating in the Georgia Consortium for Advanced Technical Training (GA CATT) German apprenticeship model will increase by one annually.

Measure 5: The number of students offered full time employment (or employment connected to college enrollment funded by the employer) by WBL partners after high school graduation will increase by five annually."

Ignite is seriously looking at Georgia's innovative GA CATT program. Ignite's consultant (working under contract to help the Sumter region's planning effort since the fall of 2017) was one of the first stakeholders approached by the German-American Chamber of Commerce in Atlanta to educate the chamber's planners about Georgia's CCAs. That consultant has been

involved in 31 of the 46 CCAs in Georgia, and he convinced the chamber leadership that the state's CCA network was a fertile ground for a new model of apprenticeship. Now that same consultant is working with Ignite to help educators and businesses alike understand and embrace the significant advantages of apprenticeships that start at age 15, last for three year, pay an apprenticeship student \$24,000 towards college, and result in an associates degree by the time the student graduates from high school.

Ignite is also implementing innovations that will enhance WBL. Starting with truly unprecedented innovations, this is a partial list of innovations that Ignite will be the first college and career academy to implement:

- Ignite's CEO (who will be hired in 2019) will either already be or will become a Georgia-certified Economic Developer.
- Ignite will be the first CCA to fund its Work-Based Learning Coordinator externally. Ignite's WBL Coordinator will be dually-funded and will work for both Sumter County Schools and the Sumter County Development Authority, and this position will be compensated according to an intergovernmental agreement signed by both parties. SCDA's Board has already committed funding and authorized its Executive Director to begin the process of writing this agreement.
- Ignite will create an Entrepreneurship/Incubator Campus to grow its own Work-Based Learning partners and to recruit and create new, high-tech businesses for the region. To build its new high school campus and Ignite's separate-but-connected facility, the Sumter County School District (SCSD) purchased a 400 acre tract from the Sumter County Development Authority (SCDA). The current footprint of the high school/CCA will only occupy eight acres when they both open in August 2021. The campus is surrounded by the rest of Sumter County's industrial park and is across the street from South Georgia Technical College and the Jimmy Carter Regional Airport. SCSD and SCDA can both issue bonds to build buildings adjacent to Ignite that Ignite and economic developers, working together, can fill with startups that need low-cost space to "incubate." Ignite will also attract venture capitalists (who can do double duty as finance/investment mentors for Ignite's students), UGA's Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC), local banks and other governments to counsel and help entrepreneurs access capital to invest in Ignite students as interns, apprentices and part-time employees (among other critical investments). Ignite will help the region grow its own new businesses and help those businesses grow their own workforce. The Ignite Incubator and WBL program motto will be "Earn While You Learn!" This innovation also aligns with a priority in SCDA's strategic plan.

With the final measure of its third organizational goal, Ignite has committed to tracking the placement of Ignite's Work-Based Learning students after high school graduation with precision (i.e., Ignite will not rely on a report generated by the state; instead, the Ignite partnership will work with students and employers to get them to "opt in" and report on successful placements, and Ignite will delegate professional staff to this task).

A final innovation example is not a new best practice, but it is one of the most successful CCA initiatives that Ignite has studied at more than nine academies, and Ignite planners are determined to become a state leader with its own work ethic assessment program. 135 employers validated and prioritized Ignite's list of nine critical work ethic characteristics (Attendance, Critical Thinking, Teamwork, Appearance, Attitude, Productivity, Communication, Cooperation, and Respect) through Ignite's 2018 Regional Needs Assessment. 58 respondents (nearly half) cared so much about these characteristics that they wrote individual

follow up guidance. These employers form the core of Ignite's work ethic assessment development team (a short-term, ad hoc, governing board committee of business partners that will report to the CEO, work with the governing board, and will also include faculty members), and many of them also volunteered to become Work-Based Learning partners. There is no better way to learn work ethic than to WORK. Once the work ethic assessment model is adopted by the governing board, the CEO and principal will collaborate and provide business-driven professional development to Ignite's faculty about how to assess these work ethic characteristics, which will appear on every student's report card each semester in every Ignite class, whether it is an academic class or a CTAE elective. Students who want to enroll in the WBL learning program will have to score very well on their subjective work ethic assessments as a pre-requisite to "learning by earning."

### **Grade Levels, Enrollment & Student Focus**

Ignite College and Career Academy will be a center of innovation and achievement for the students of the Sumter County region. Starting with a single district partnership in Year One, Ignite's planners envision (and have already achieved significant progress towards) serving students from several neighboring counties. Beginning with student access, Ignite will blend seamlessly with the public schools it serves. All students will have an equal chance of enrolling. In 2021, with the opening of its new facility, Ignite will have enough space to serve any interested student from Sumter County, as well as a significant number of commuters from as many as six other districts.

Students will enroll in Ignite simply by registering for the courses taught there. All students will be guided through counseling and advisement during middle school to complete a six-year Individual Graduation Plan. That plan will be driven by Ignite's partnership with YouScience. All Sumter students will take the YouScience assessment in 8th grade and as often as they want for the next ten years. The resulting 30+ page report, combined with Ignite's in-house counseling and volunteer career coaches from business and industry, will encourage students to think big: find a career they are interested in, learn how to qualify for that job, imagine what success will do for them, and "go for the prize." Ignite's emphasis on work-based, project-based and applied learning will "turn on the relevance factor" for students, who will then decide to take ownership of their own educations. This pattern has long been observed at CCAs across Georgia, and Ignite's planners have brought these lessons home in their efforts to define Ignite's mission and culture.

The career coach program mentioned above is but one example of how the community will support Ignite's students. This program will help middle and high school counselors and students. Ignite planners have identified a new best practice at Greene College and Career Academy (GCCA) that has trained a cadre of more than 20 retired professionals and others with private sector experience to work with all CCA students in tandem with the middle and high school counselors. The program allows a student and his family to have access to all relevant documents and options for each individual student - including YouScience results - on a smartphone. The end result is one-stop access to see and improve a student's 10-year, strategically-developed and vetted college-to-career plan, which includes dual enrollment. 70 Ignite business partners have already volunteered to support students through organized counseling and mentoring programs, and Ignite's planners are tasking these volunteers to undergo planning and training beginning in January 2019 to serve as Ignite Career Coaches begin in Year One (2019-2020).

Students, faculty and counselors from elementary and middle schools will tour Ignite, hosted by Ignite's Student Ambassadors. Students in middle and high school will also go on field trips to Ignite business partners, and Ignite's Career Fairs every fall and spring will take place at business locations and at the school. All students will realize that places of work are also places of learning, and Ignite's recruiting program will include an emphasis on Work-Based Learning (job shadowing, internships and apprenticeships). 31 of Ignite's business partners have also agreed to host academic and CTAE teachers from all grades K-12 in summer externships. These eye-opening professional development opportunities over the summer months have a transformational effect on a teacher's practices in the classroom, and therefore on students as well.

CCAs tend to be assertive implementing innovations, and Ignite will be no exception. Ignite will be the first college and career academy in Georgia to design and implement the following best practices that are guaranteed to have a positive impact on students:

Ignite's teachers will receive professional development about how to influence young people to become public and private sector leaders. The training will be conducted by the University of Georgia J. W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development's "Career Leadership Smarts" program to enhance youth leadership and workforce skills (a program that is also funded by the Technical College System of Georgia). Ignite will propose that this training program become a CTAE Pathway upon approval by the Georgia Department of Education.

In a separate initiative leveraging Fanning's expertise, Ignite will adapt the curriculum Fanning designed for UGA's College of Engineering students as the basis for a new Entrepreneurship pathway that can be reviewed and approved by the Georgia Department of Education and added to the state's approved list of CTAE Pathways.

Embracing and adapting existing CCA best practices, and in addition to the career coach program, Ignite will add the following additional, innovative student support program. Like the CCAs at Hutchings and Lanier, Ignite will have a restaurant and a bank (at a minimum) staffed and run by students; however, Ignite's new facility will be in the center of the region's most successful industrial park, which is a minimum of six miles from any other bank or restaurant in Americus. Ignite's student-run businesses will have a significant professional clientele.

### **Student Support and Structure**

Ignite will have a dedicated, 120,000 square foot facility on an 8-acre campus when it opens in August 2021. Ignite's curriculum plan includes 55 secondary CTAE pathways and aligned dual enrollment offerings in 16 Career Clusters that will be available to student by then. Ignite will operate as a "small learning community" that encourages and supports its students with a variety of innovations and services. One of the innovations well into planning is to replicate the volunteer career coach program that Ignite has benchmarked from the Greene CCA. The Greene CEO has trained a cadre of more than 20 retired professionals and others with private sector experience to work with all CCA students in tandem with the middle and high school counselors. The program allows a student and his family to have access to all relevant documents and options for each individual student - including YouScience results - on a

smartphone. The end result is one-stop access to see and improve a student's 10-year, strategically-developed and vetted college-to-career plan, which includes dual enrollment. 70 Ignite business partners have already volunteered to support students through organized counseling and mentoring programs, and Ignite's planners are tasking these volunteers to undergo planning and training beginning in January 2019 to serve as Ignite Career Coaches begin in Year One (2019-2020).

Students will try hard, but they will also win big. Ignite will have Signing Days for apprentices, for students who graduate and accept job offers from Ignite business partners, and for students who earn college scholarships. Students will produce their own news program inside the school, and will also manage their own school-owned (and monitored) social media accounts to spread good news and to help market programs and events.

Ignite's governing board has adopted five academic goals and three organizational goals, and the following excerpted goal is a good example of how Ignite will focus on meeting student needs. Academic Goal 5 is a "Dual Credit" goal. It reads, "From a baseline established in Year One (2019-2020 School Year), the percentage of Ignite CCA students earning two Carnegie Units by passing a single dual credit class (a CTAE course with embedded academic standards) and any aligned End of Course assessment will increase by a minimum of 2% over the prior year's results." Georgia has promoted dual credit classes assertively since 2013, and Ignite's curriculum pathways include two new pathways that offer academic and CTAE credit pairings. The first is the Therapeutic Services - Emergency Medical Responder Pathway, which is paired with Biology. The second is the Food Animal Systems Pathway, which also can be paired for dual credit with Biology. Earning two credits in a single course is intended to (and will) give interested students a boost toward earning their credits toward graduation faster, and it will also free up their schedules in their senior year to focus on dual enrollment, WBL, or capstone projects of their own design – giving them additional ownership and control of their own educational and career plans.

### **Evaluation and Cycle of Improvement**

All Ignite's goals are data-driven (see Mission, Goals and Need above), establish a baseline, expect Ignite to achieve annual increases, and calculate increases from the prior year's results (as opposed to from the original baseline, which would be less rigorous). The improvement plan documents the steps that Ignite's managers, stakeholders and governing board will take to review performance and ensure continuous improvement. Progress towards meeting all goals will be tracked and reported no less than annually by the CEO, who reports directly to a 13-member, autonomous, majority-employer Board of Directors.

Forms submitted with Ignite's grant application include a Planning and Implementation Timeframe and an Evaluation and Improvement Plan, and both of these forms document how and when these locally-approved goals and measures will be tracked and reported to the state and to all local stakeholders. Ignite will also generate quarterly reports for the Technical College System of Georgia.

Ignite is one of two CCAs in Georgia that have already formally partnered with Infinite Campus to create and pilot a dedicated relational CCA performance database. The database is referenced in Ignite's operational MOU and in a Letter of Commitment by Infinite Campus attached to the grant. Unlike year-to-year CCRPI measures (which tend to change frequently

and lose value as baselines), the Ignite database will track all student and stakeholder interactions - customizing fields, queries and reports – in such a way that baselines, trends, and cross-indexed records can be tracked and reported with precision over any period of time. If this innovation is embraced by TCSG statewide, it will finally be possible to report at the state level – merely by running a simple macro program - statistics like how many students graduated from CCAs; how many were dual enrolled by semester (across TCSG and USG); how many were employed by business partners after graduation; the average GPA of all CCA students; how many credit hours, certificates and diplomas are earned by CCA students annually; what impact CCAs are having in communities and statewide on dropouts, the graduation rate, and unemployment; and many other returns on investment. This innovation will also help students access better data as they plan and enhance their Individual Graduation Plans.

Ignite will also have data-sharing commitments for regular communications with the Technical College System of Georgia's Office of College and Career Transitions (OCCT) to complete data analyses related to all aspects of Ignite's performance. Upon receiving the GCCAP grant award announcement, Ignite will also sign a state-authored MOU with TCSG to outline these commitments.

Ignite will repeat its custom, regional employer needs assessment in Year Three, will survey students, parents and business partners annually, and will share the results of those surveys with the Board of Directors and all relevant stakeholders. Ignite's CEO and Board of Directors will use this data to adjust and improve the academy's programs, processes, policies and curricula. The development of a five-year strategic plan during Year Two will include focus groups to identify a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat (SWOT) analysis of risks and root causes/barriers to any students, and it will also study the feasibility of enhancing and opening programs in response to the data collection that will follow in Year Three. Ignite's best practices will be shared with stakeholders and communities interested in forming CCAs, and Ignite will report and improve the overall performance of its students and programs through annual program reviews overseen by the CEO and the Board of Directors.

Finally, Ignite will pursue TCSG certification as a College and Career Academy after completing two years of performance, following a state process partially authored by AdvancED (the parent organization of the SACS accrediting agency). When Ignite is mature enough (typically after two full years of successful performance and even more impressive partnership development), Ignite's governing board and partners will actively pursue serving as a replication model for other communities.

### **Plan to Increase Student Achievement**

Connecting students to Ignite's 55 secondary and dual enrollment pathways/programs will require a focus on innovations in management and student support and services. Tracking the above goals and successfully implementing the two-year plan will require data-driven innovation, and of Ignite's comprehensive list of 15 major innovations, one in particular speaks to Ignite's ability to track and report student achievement: Ignite is partnering with K-12/Infinite Campus to create and pilot a dedicated relational CCA performance database. The database is referenced in Ignite's operational MOU and in a Letter of Commitment from Infinite Campus.

In essence, with the guidance of Ignite's CEO and Principal, the governing board, and the new

position called Leadership and Professional Development Manager, Ignite will exhibit the best characteristics of an innovative Professional Learning Community (PLC). As a College and Career Academy, of course, Ignite will also find a way to integrate business partners into professional development. Perhaps the most direct method of connecting faculty and business leaders will be summer externships. 31 Ignite business partners have already agreed to offer externships to academic and CTAE teachers. Business partners will also influence faculty through each CTAE program's advisory committees, and the planning at those committees will take place most often at the business site, not at the school. All exposure to business environments will influence the work of faculty in Ignite's classrooms and labs, and therefore with Ignite's students.

Business leaders will also be the very best experts to help teachers fully appreciate and implement Ignite's work ethic assessment program. 135 employers validated and prioritized Ignite's list of nine critical work ethic characteristics (Attendance, Critical Thinking, Teamwork, Appearance, Attitude, Productivity, Communication, Cooperation, and Respect) through Ignite's 2018 Regional Needs Assessment. 58 respondents (nearly half) cared so much about these characteristics that they wrote individual follow up guidance.

### **District Flexibility Performance Contract**

The Sumter County School District (SCSD) has been an approved SWSS System since 2016 with a performance contract between the State Board of Education and the local Board of Education allowing certain state laws, rules, and guidelines to be waived for the system in exchange for greater accountability for increased student performance. The county's location as an economic hub in southwest Georgia makes SCSD's Ignite College and Career Academy a prime foundation for creating a regional partnership, and that effort will continue; Ignite's partners have made several well-received presentations, including public meetings with the boards of education in Dooly and Macon counties and presented to the Regional Education Service Agency with seven Superintendents in attendance. Nevertheless, Sumter County Schools supports creating Ignite as a single district CCA, and will abide by the contract rules and regulations by providing flexibility within each of the indicated areas. Using the waivers approved, Ignite will be able to negotiate with qualified instructors who may not have earned state-required certification, the flexibility to modify bell schedules and seat time (extremely important for dual enrollment and work-based learning), and the flexibility to design innovative curricula, including dual credit. The SWSS amendment to include Ignite was approved by Sumter County Schools, the State BOE, and GADOE in 2018.

### **Budget**

An operational Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in 2018 by the Ignite College and Career Academy's Board Chair and funding partners: One Sumter Economic Development Foundation, Inc.; the Sumter County School District Superintendent, and the Presidents of South Georgia Technical College and Georgia Southwestern State University.

Ignite's budget submitted with the grant lays out the expected use of the cash portion of GCCAP grant funds, which are proposed to be spent mostly on equipment, supplies, professional development, CEO and governing board training, and marketing. This operational budget documents includes in-kind contributions of cash, time and materials

worth \$8,437,600 million from 102 businesses, government and nonprofit partners who submitted 10-year Letters of Commitment with signed checklist. The cash portion of TCSG's grant will leverage a local cash and in-kind operational investment of \$36,298,400 – a return of nearly 242 times the state's cash investment. Also note that the CEO salary, other Ignite leadership and all teachers are paid for 100% by local funds with no grant investment needed. Ignite is already a "sustainable" college and career academy partnership.

Not reflected in the in-kind budget is cash already spent by One Sumter during the last two years of planning, including costs of travel to and from CCAs, consulting, and hospitality for public meetings. That investment prior to the grant period is \$72,000. The in-kind budget does include \$45,000 budgeted by One Sumter for start up costs prior to Ignite's 2021 opening.

Ignite will be a catalyst of economic innovation. Ignite and South Georgia Technical College have agreed in the MOU that SCSD will hire and SGTC will certify high school teachers who meet their SGTC's SACS-driven instructor qualifications to serve as adjunct faculty and teach dual enrollment at Ignite. This innovation will support Ignite's three academic goals to increase students passing the Accuplacer (some with grant funded preparation in Years One and Two) and registering for dual enrollment courses in ever-increasing numbers. Leveraging hundreds of high school students attending college who never thought that would be a possibility, who may be the first in their families to earn college credit and earn a "high demand" job, will impact families and the entire community. Grant funds will also be used to fund innovative practices including (but not limited to): Professional Learning Community among secondary and post-secondary faculty, Professional Learning Community among middle school/secondary/post-secondary counselors, integrating the YouScience assessment into GCCA's counseling and advisement program, and marketing Ignite CCA to student and adult stakeholders. Grant funds will also help Ignite access the professional development and instructional modules from the Ford Next Generation Learning program.

The state's \$3 million bond investment will leverage local investment of \$6,700,000.

### **Timelines**

Ignite's new 125,000 square foot facility will open in August 2021. Ground will be broken in a formal ceremony this June, and drawings will be finalized before that. Ignite's Planning and Implementation Timeframe for Years One and Two lay out the tasks to be completed by the end of 2020. Equipment grants are being submitted in May for equipment to be installed in the summer of 2021. The CEO Job Description has been finalized, and the position will be advertised once all funding agreements are in place (as early as this summer). The Ignite governing board has a committee focused on the CEO Search. An Endowment committee drafted a Memorandum of Understanding that was approved in March and early April by all funding partners that allows One Sumter to act as the foundation and fiscal agent for private/donated funds, and to invest those funds. The governing board is meeting monthly to oversee all planning toward the successful opening and staffing of Ignite.