



Social Circle City Schools

# Portrait of a Graduate

August 2024



## **Mission**

Social Circle City Schools empowers students with an excellent and equitable education.

## **Vision**

Social Circle City Schools ensures that every child we serve has access to the knowledge and skills needed to become mindful, productive, and empowered citizens.

*Serving Community.*

*Cultivating Success.*



# Our Why & Theory of Change

Social Circle City Schools' Portrait of a Graduate is designed to set direction and expectation for the learning experience of SCCS students. Our theory of change is that if learning is designed to foster the competencies named in our portrait, then school will be consistently enriching, engaging, and meaningful for SCCS students today and more responsive to the workforce and civic needs of tomorrow. Further, by setting our sights on the development of these key competencies, we believe access and opportunity to the futures our students hope for will be more likely because of the educational experience SCCS delivers. Finally, we believe the Portrait of a Graduate provides a critical bridge between school and community, offering a shared language about our collective work of developing the next generation of leaders, scholars, and neighbors.



## Improve Engagement

We aspire for *all* our students to be engaged in their learning, which requires the careful attention of all stakeholders.



## Align School Design with Community Needs

We recognize that the civic and workforce demands of tomorrow are evolving. How we design learning should, too.

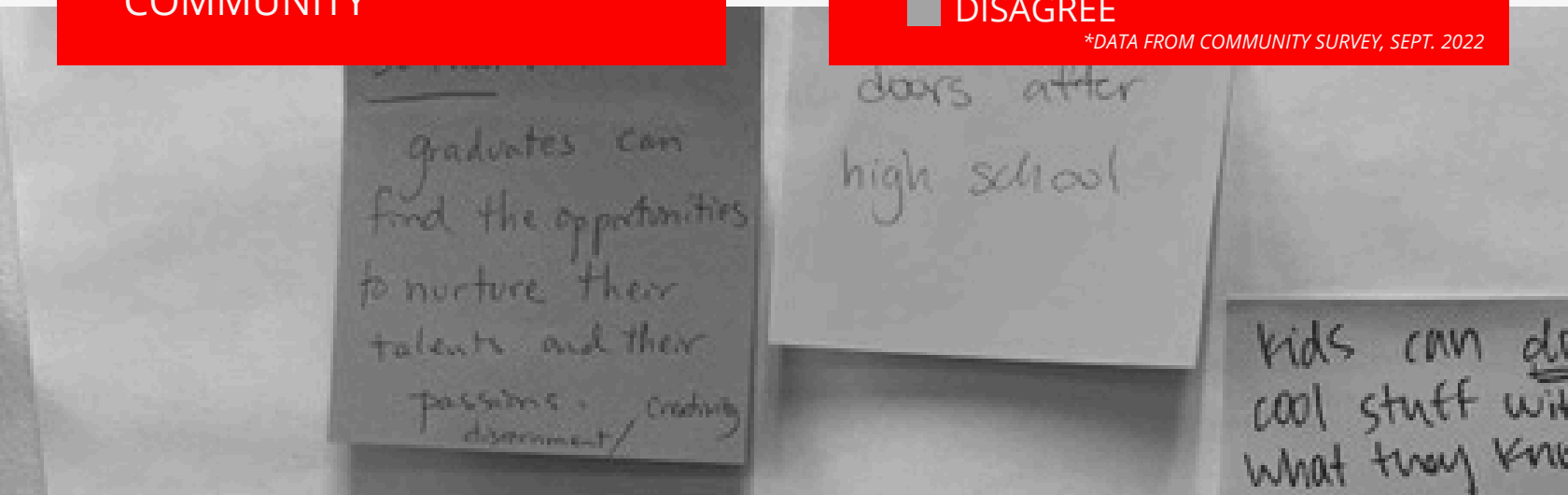
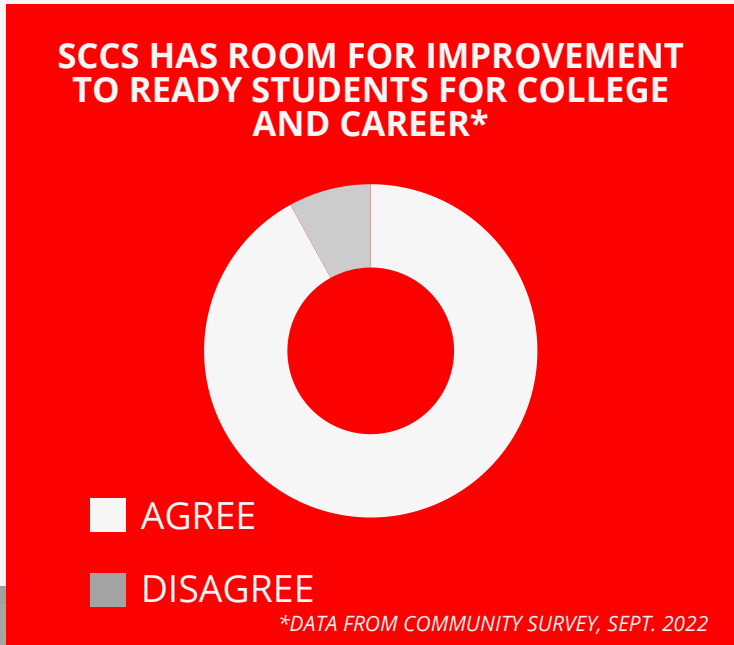
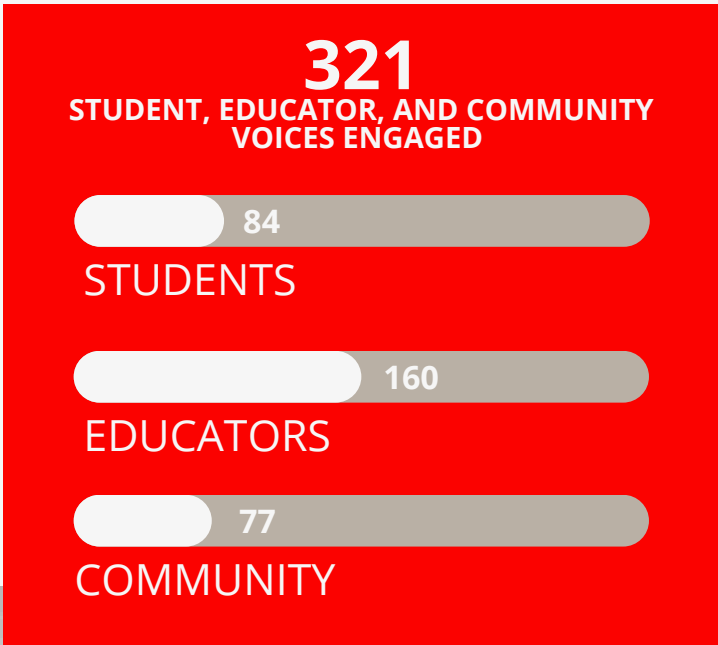


## Unlock Access and Opportunity

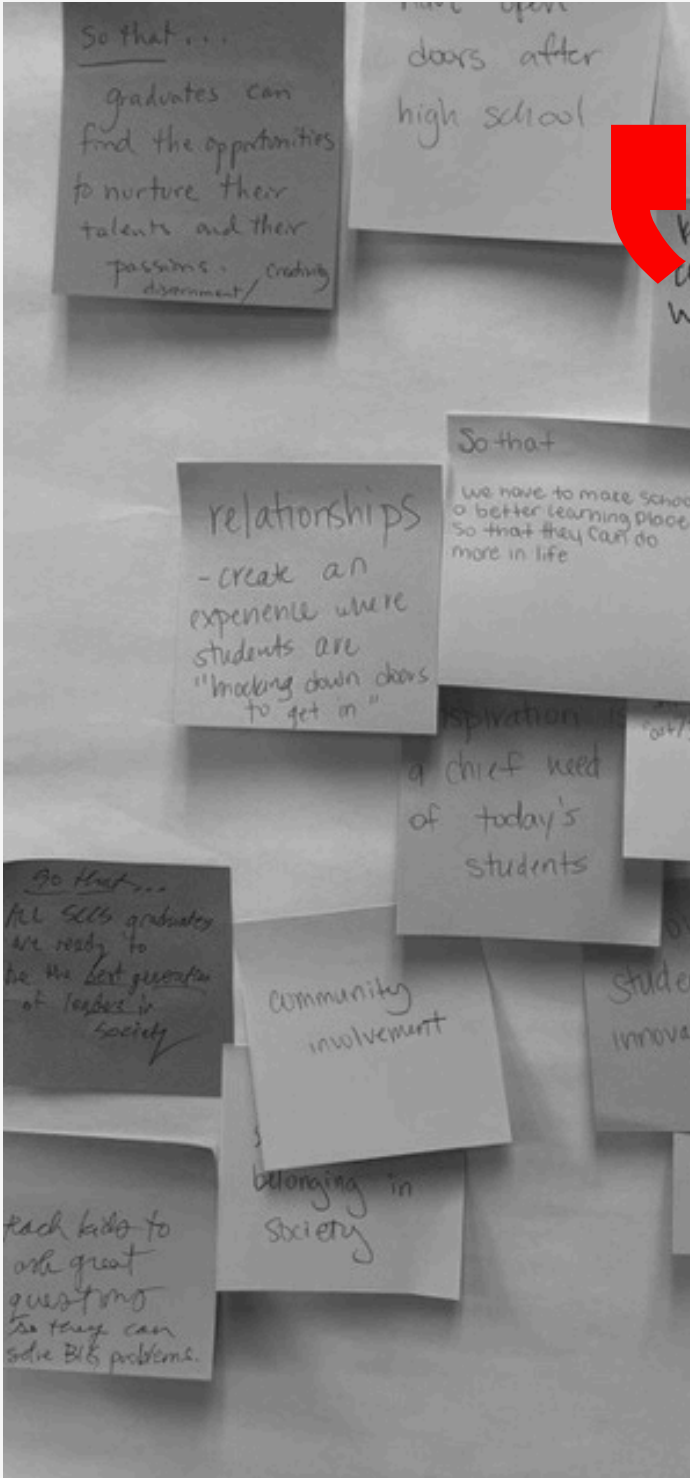
Education is a key in unlocking the futures our students imagine for themselves. The experience we deliver should accelerate, not impede, their progress.

# Our Process

The development of the portrait invited voice, insight, and feedback from students, parents and caregivers, educators, administrators, and business and civic representatives in Social Circle between July and December 2022. The Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement served as facilitators of the design process and convened a representative group of community members to distill meaning from the insights collected from the broader community. Specific data collection methods included a community survey, a community town hall, an invitation for contribution and feedback from student, teacher, and parent advisory groups, and several connection points with central office and school level administrators. The Design Team met twice during the insight gathering phase (August and October 2022) and twice more to revise the draft and develop a plan for strengthening community connections to it (December 2022 and February 2023).



# Our Portrait Should Reflect...



...that we are preparing graduates for a national and global economy. Some will remain in Social Circle, but most will move away--even abroad.

....less emphasis on how to take a standardized test and more focus on the skills our students will need to navigate adulthood.

....that we want well-educated, but also kind humans to graduate from our school system...that the whole student matters.

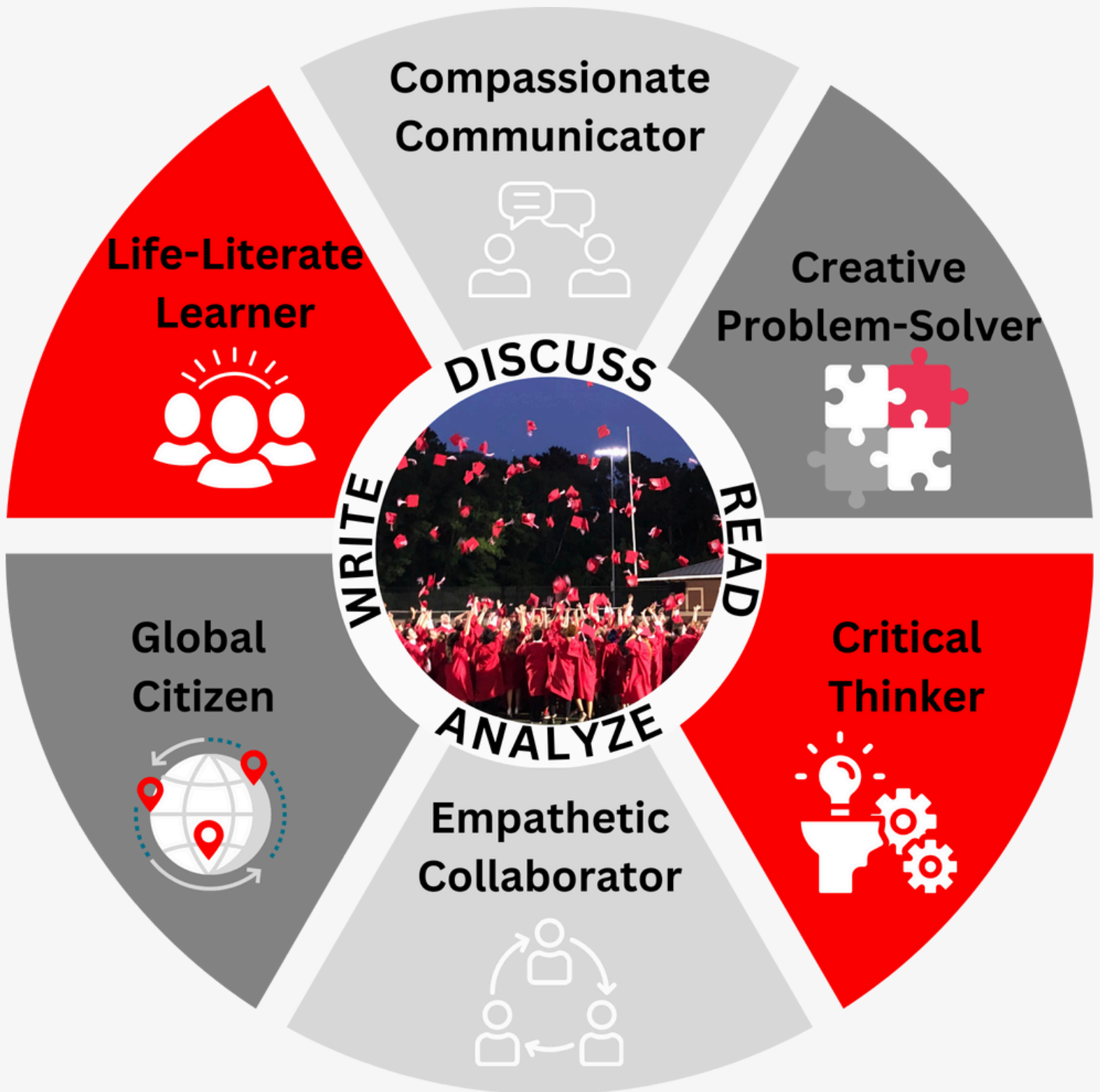
....the essential skills required to navigate rapidly changing environments.

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**Respondent Quotes**  
Community Survey, Fall 2022

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# Our Portrait



We believe every student should be consistently challenged to read, write, analyze, and discuss in all content areas in order to exemplify the characteristics of the Portrait of a Graduate.

# Our Portrait



## Compassionate Communicator

*Writing, speaking, and listening to understand.*

We aspire for our graduates to connect meaningfully and effectively across differences. Compassionate communicators can...

- Adapt communication strategy, style, and medium to task, topic, and audience.
- Present in an audible, concise, and engaging manner.
- Approach the presentation of ideas and responses to the ideas of others in a professional manner.
- Listen to understand, actively seeking to know the perspectives of others.
- Engage in meaningful dialog with others, considering multiple sides and outcomes.

## Creative Problem-Solver

*Resilient. Self-directed. Innovative. Reflective. Observant.*

We aspire for our graduates to navigate a path forward, even if the steps are unclear. Creative problem-solvers can...

- Confidently tackle a problem or challenge with little direction.
- Adapt to problems or situations as they arise.
- Measure and reflect on the progress of self and a group/team.
- Refine or adjust strategy, process, or solution when needed.
- Develop creative solutions and innovations.



## Critical Thinker

*Constructing views through exploration and discovery.  
Analyzing and interpreting information. Applying reason and logic.*

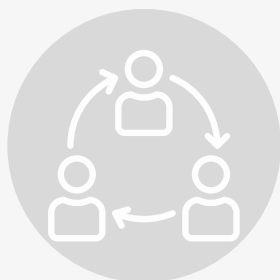
We aspire for our graduates to generate new ideas and challenge existing ones. Critical thinkers can...

- Ask questions that lead to new discovery and learning.
- Develop a point of view and support it with evidence.
- Apply reasoning and logic to develop and organize ideas.
- Differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information (data).

# Our Portrait

## Empathetic Collaborator

*Seeks to know others. Respectful. Constructive. Teammate.*



We aspire for our graduates to build connections and adapt to the needs of others in order to create better ideas, products, or solutions. Empathetic collaborators can...

- Develop generative relationships with others in order to create knowledge, product, or solution development.
- Practice self-reflection, finding new opportunities for growth and learning.
- Give and receive constructive feedback to better self, group, or team.
- Approach collaborations with a desire to learn from the ideas and opinions of others.
- Lead self, group, or team toward shared goals and benchmarks.

## Global Citizen

*Civic-minded. Globally aware. Community leader.*

We aspire for our graduates to acknowledge and understand diverse perspectives, seeking to better their community. Global citizens can...

- Recognize and appreciate different perspectives, cultures, backgrounds, and experiences.
- Reflect on their identity and experiences and how they inform personal beliefs and worldviews.
- Describe the community and the laws, policies, history, and people that shape it.
- Use time, talents, and resources to make positive contributions to the community.



## Life-Literate Learner

*Financial literacy. Leadership of self and others. Tech and media savvy.*



We aspire for our graduates to be ready to meet the challenges and opportunities that await them post-graduation. Specific skills we aim to cultivate include:

**Financial:** Possess and apply personal finance skills, including relationship between credit and interest to investment, savings and debt; understand taxation and its relationship to the economy and the public good.

**Leadership:** Apply social-emotional skills to lead self and others through challenge; achieve goals in pursuit of deeper learning around foundational literacies (reading, math, and writing); organize, plan and prioritize time to be successful in reaching short and long-term goals.

**Technology and Media:** Recognize bias when constructing meaning and differentiating fact from opinion in media; apply proficiency in the selection and use of digital tools to accomplish tasks and support learning; recognize the permanency of online material.



# Becoming Future Forward

How might SCCS begin to move from a vision for the critical skills and dispositions the district *aspires* to cultivate in every graduate toward an implementation strategy for turning the vision into a reality? These recommendations offer key considerations and next steps for district leadership to consider.



## Get clear on the criteria you will use to measure forward progress toward this vision.

Get specific with teachers and leaders about the implications of the POAG for school and district improvement plans, with clear criteria for measuring progress at the school and system level.



## Bring the portrait to life in your daily leadership walk.

System leaders are critical signalers of the importance of the POAG. The questions you ask, the words you use, and the stories you share will all reinforce (or undermine) this collective vision.



## Build team cohesion around the POAG at the district and school level.

Invest in professional learning opportunities that will build team cohesion around the plan to bring system practice into alignment with this system vision. This is a multi-year effort.



## Seek strategic partnerships with business and community leaders.

As the future of work and community needs continue to evolve, continuously seek partnerships that will enable and accelerate real-world opportunities for the development of the skills captured in this portrait.

# Becoming Future Forward



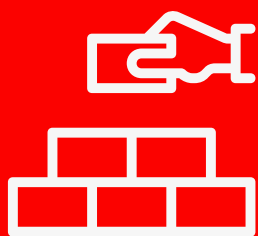
## Start with your "why." Check your actions, plans, and progress against it, and check often.

Invite students, teachers, administrators, and community to frequently touchback to your "why" for building a POAG. Check your progress toward this vision often, and use your "why" to keep you and your team motivated toward improvement.



## Continue to derive value from the Design Team.

Leverage Design Team members to support efforts to cast your POAG vision community-wide. The sticking points in Design Team meetings will likely be sticking points in community dialog, too. Use what you learned to inform future community connections.



## Treat this portrait as *the* foundation for curriculum and instructional design choices.

Translating this vision to reality will require clarity about how teaching, curriculum, and instructional design will evolve to target the development of these skills system-wide.



## Make the POAG visible in your meeting structures and agendas.

From board meetings to grade-level teacher meetings, the POAG should drive understanding about student, classroom, grade-level, school, and system-wide performance. Align precious meeting time to monitoring progress and refining improvement strategies.

# Note of Thanks

A special note of gratitude to the Design Team who supported the development of the portrait by lending their time and talent to the difficult task of distilling meaning from community ideas and insights.



## Commitment to Transparency

To learn more about how the Portrait was developed, visit our website:

[www.socialcircleschools.com](http://www.socialcircleschools.com)



## Design Team

Carrie Booher  
Kathy Boyd  
Brad Callahan  
Jametria Cooper  
Emberly Day  
Andrew Dykes  
Darlene Favors  
Christina Harris  
Mariah McGuire  
Walter Middlebrooks  
Mason Moore  
Dessa Morris  
Taylor Morris  
Angela Porter  
Kimberly Russell  
Stephanie Smith  
Lisa Wolaver

The Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) provided facilitation support in the development of this Portrait.

Learn more about GLISI at [www.glisi.org](http://www.glisi.org)

# Social Circle City Schools

## *Portrait of a Graduate*

