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Alumna spearheads award-winning technology project for Jenkins County School System

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Julie Chance, Ed.D. is pictured (left) accepting the Richard B. Lewis Award from Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) President Eugene Kowch, Ph.D.

The [Association for Educational Communications and Technology](#) (AECT) recently named Jenkins County School System (JCSS) the 2017 recipient of the Richard B. Lewis Memorial Award for outstanding technology integration and media utilization programs.

The County's achievement centered on their Innovative Teacher Technology Project (ITTP) that was developed during the 2013-2014 school year. At the forefront of the ITTP project is Georgia Southern University College of Education four-time alumna Julie Chance, Ed.D. ('85,'13,'15,'17).

Chance serves as the Director of Federal Programs and Professional Learning for JCSS. "As the overseer of both of those programs and because we funded ITTP through federal money, it was my responsibility to help develop the program as one of our school improvement strategies," she said.

The Innovative Teacher Technology Project is an instructional technology integration initiative that places an emphasis on a structured system to support the efforts of teachers to transition their classrooms into digital learning environments.

“The thing that is different about ITTP from other instructional technology integration programs is that it was built on the foundation of the professional learning—not on equipment distribution,” explained Chance.

To assist in the creation of a strong learning program for teachers, Chance requested the help of Georgia Southern [Instructional Technology](#) Faculty Charles Hodges, Ph.D.

“Dr. Hodges began consulting with our system four years ago as we began the development and implementation of ITTP,” said Chance. “He has been an invaluable resource for training our teacher leaders to become experts in this field and to continue training all of our instructional staff.”

What began as a voluntary program with 25 teachers participating in the original cohort has grown to 100 percent of the system’s teachers and staff enriched in the project and instructional development. School employees are now meeting to review student data and research based on their content areas and learning how instructional technology can help their students develop inquiry based learning and critical thinking skills.

Chance holds a bachelor’s of social studies education and a master’s and specialist degrees in educational leadership from Georgia Southern. This fall, she became a Quadruple Eagle with the completion of an [Ed.D. in Educational Leadership](#) from the University. Her dissertation is a program evaluation of the Innovative Teacher Technology Project.

“I believe instructional technology is the key to better student engagement and individualized learning,” she explained. “Doing a program evaluation as my dissertation means that the Jenkins County School System will have an evidence-based evaluation of whether their instructional technology integration program was effective. It will also give the school system recommendations for future practice.”

Hodges, along with COE Associate Professor Teri Melton, Ph.D., nominated Jenkins County for the AECT Richard B. Lewis memorial Award, and Hodges says what they have been able to accomplish has “been really impressive.”

“I have worked with other systems, some with more resources, that have not been able to see the same levels of success with technology integration in their schools,” said Hodges. “When I saw the award announcement, it was an easy decision to nominate JCSS.”

For more information about the instructional technology programs at Georgia Southern University’s College of Education, visit <https://coe.georgiasouthern.edu/itec>

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