



9th Grade Parent Meeting

GT Block and Flex Fridays

Agenda

GT Block

- GT Block Description and Purpose
- Logistics of the GT Block
- Meet the Teachers
- Communications, Absences and Help
- Grades
- Projects

Flex Fridays

- Description and Purpose
- Schedule
- Sign Up Process

Parent Involvement

- How to volunteer to help

Pathway Department Chairs

JP Denato
Engineering



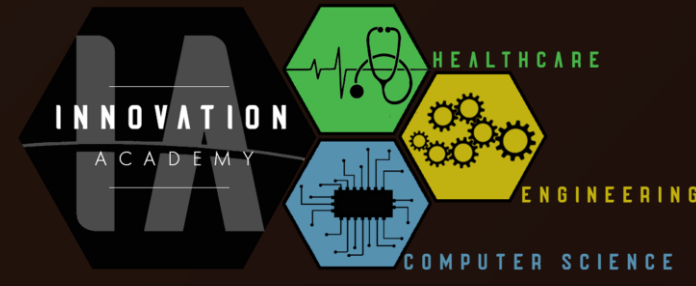
Cara Dawes
Health Science



Zabby Heying
IT



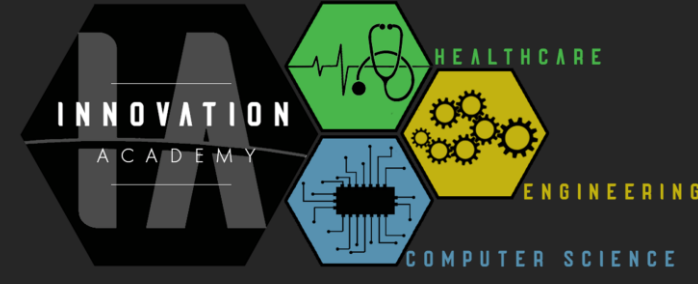
What is the GT Block?



The GT Block course is based on a cross curricular, project-based framework designed by the CEISMC group at Georgia Tech specifically for Innovation Academy.

This unique course combines the three CTAE departments within IA: Information Technology, Engineering and Health Science.

Purpose of the GT Block



- Students in the GT Block course learn and explore the fundamental skills in all three pathways so that they can discover their major pathway at IA. They will be asked to declare a major pathway in December.
- The GT Block course also immerses students in true cross-curricular, design thinking projects while simultaneously earning course credit for all three introductory courses.
- By earning three credits, they also will have to opportunity to complete multiple pathways if desired.

Meet your GT Block Teachers - Periods 1/2



Mr. Rodin, ENG

rodind@fultonschools.org



Mr. Beck, HS

beckw@fultonschools.org

Ms. Thornton, IT

thorntonc1@fultonschools.org



Mr. Mobley, ENG

mobleyj@fultonschools.org

Mr. Fouts, HS

foutsj@fultonschools.org

Mr. Vacca, IT

vaccam@fultonschools.org



Meet your GT Block Teachers - Periods 3/4



Mr. Rodin, ENG

rodind@fultonschools.org

Mr. Beck, HS

beckw@fultonschools.org

Ms. Thornton, IT

thorntonc1@fultonschools.org



Mr. Money, ENG

moneyp@fultonschools.org

Dr. Chann, HS

channa@fultonschools.org

Mr. Vacca, IT

vaccam@fultonschools.org



Meet your GT Block Teachers - Periods 5/6



Mr. Denato, ENG

DenatoJ@fultonschools.org

Mr. Coyle, HS

coylek1@fultonschools.org

Mr. McGee, IT (long term sub)

mcgeeb@fultonschools.org

Meet your GT Block Teachers - Periods 7/8



Mr. Money, ENG

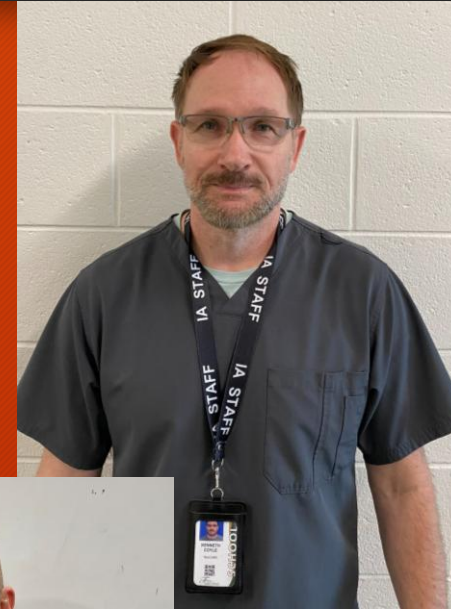
moneyp@fultonschools.org

Mr. Fouts, HS

foutsj@fultonschools.org

Mr. Widmann, IT

widmannng@fultonschools.org



Mr. Rodin, ENG

rodind@fultonschools.org

Mr. Coyle, HS

coylek1@fultonschools.org

Ms. Thornton, IT

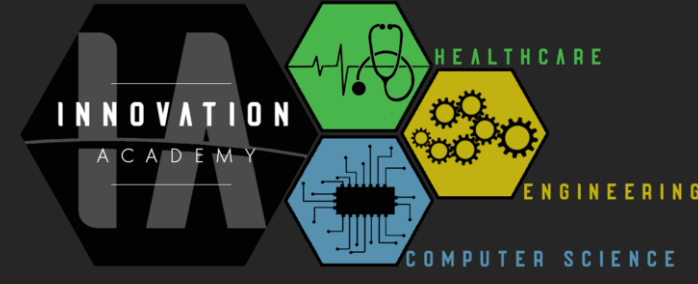
thorntonc1@fultonschools.org



GT Block in Action



Logistics of the GT Block



- GT Block meets for two class periods each day.
- Students will have three GT Block teachers, one from each of the three departments. They will rotate between the three teachers. Students typically see one teacher each day or week, but classes have the flexibility of combining to work on projects. The rotations will vary by unit.
- Example schedule:
 - Monday: Combined classes in a classroom hub
 - Tuesday: HC class
 - Wednesday: ENG class
 - Thursday: IT class

How does my child know where to go?

The current rotation schedule will be posted in Canvas, will be written on whiteboards in the classrooms and communicated to students each day.

The order for rotation is as follows:



You can expect weekly emails that will include the week's topics and rotation. The weekly emails will start on Monday.

Communicating with Teachers

- When emailing a GT Block teacher, please CC the other two teachers in the pod.
- Teachers will respond within 48 hours.
- We encourage you to set up a Parent Canvas (Observer) account so that you can keep up with new student announcements, rotations and assignments. Instructions for setting up this account were included in the Beacon last week.

Additional Help

My child doesn't understand an assignment or needs additional help. What should they do?

1. Ask the teacher in class.
2. Email the teacher via Outlook.
3. Wednesday morning tutoring from 8:15 – 8:45
 1. IT in Room 253
 2. HC in Room 147
 3. ENG in Room 184
4. Flex Friday tutoring from 8:55 – 10:10



Absences

Students should check Canvas for the current rotation and any missed assignments.

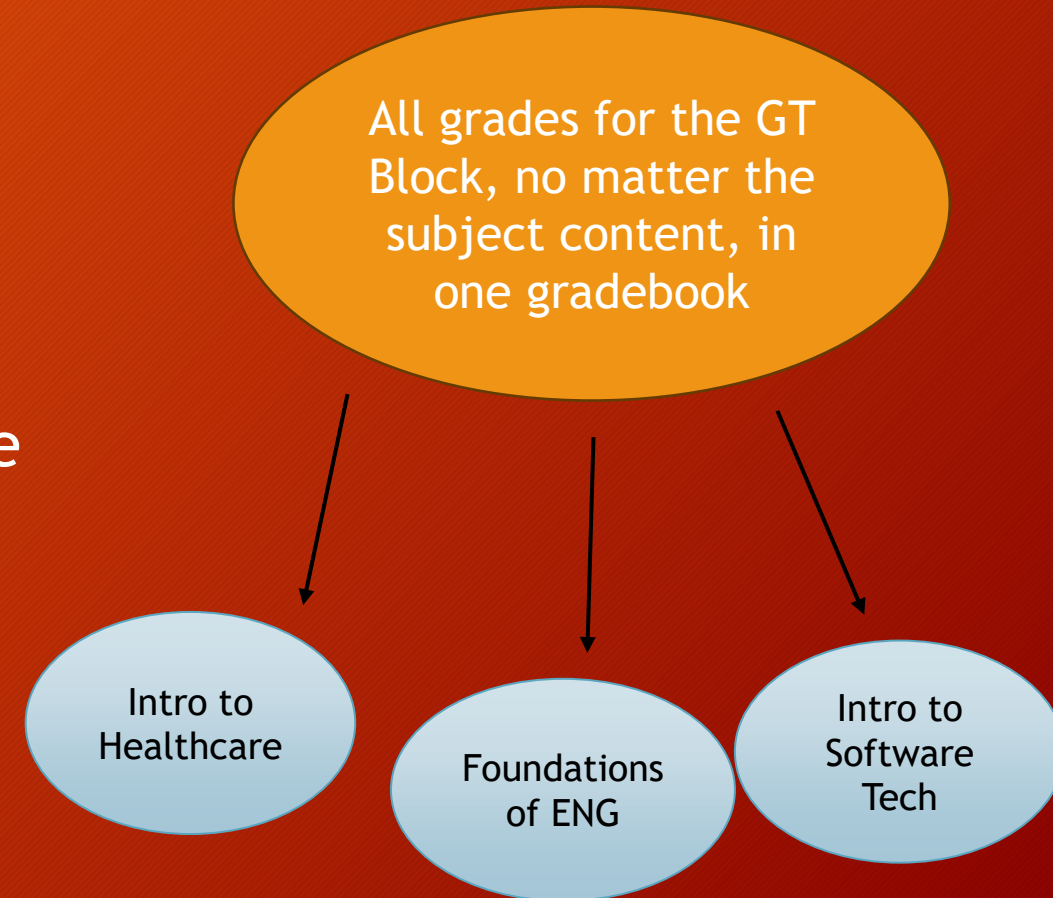
Students should join in when they return from an absence with the current rotation.

Students should email if they have questions about work that was missed and should CC the other two teachers.



Grades in the GT Block

- The GT Block embeds three courses within it.
 - Introduction to Software Technology
 - Foundations of Engineering
 - Introduction to Healthcare Science
- Students will earn one course grade in Infinite Campus each semester. That course grade will be used for all three embedded courses on the transcript.



Grades in the GT Block

Example:

Your child earns a 95 (A) as the grade at the end of the fall semester.

The Fulton County Schools transcript will show

- 95 (A) in Intro to Software Technology
- 95 (A) in Foundations of Engineering
- 95 (A) in Intro to Health Science

The course listed on your student's schedule is the main course taught by their Day 1 teacher. This gradebook is shared by all three GT Block teachers.

Projects in the GT Block

Major grades in GT Block will be group projects.

New project descriptions and rubrics will be loaded in Canvas.

Projects require a lot of supplies and equipment. We encourage you to pay the project fee on the IA website (\$50).

This QR code will take you to the Online Payment page. We appreciate that so many of you have already contributed!!



<https://tinyurl.com/eupxvvuu>

Questions to ask your Student about GT Block

- What did your class do for the unit kickoff?
- What will the end of the unit project look like?
- Which teacher were you with today? How does what you did in class today tie into the project?
- How is it working with your group?
- What is your role in your project group?
- Which part of the project or unit is most interesting to you?
- How or where does healthcare/engineering/information technology fit into your project?
- Does anything about this project make you interested in a pathway you weren't before?



FLEX FRIDAY

Flex Fridays

- Flex Fridays are extended, hands on learning experiences in Engineering, Information Technology, and Health Science
- Designed to deepen pathway skills and real-world problem solving
- 9th graders rotate through multiple pathways in the fall before declaring a pathway in December
- Part of the Innovation Academy Magnet Seal requirements
- Students earn 6 Flex Friday credits per semester
 - Each Flex Friday includes:
 - Morning workshop: 1 credit
 - Afternoon workshop: 1 credit
 - Up to 2 credits can be earned each Flex Friday

9th Grade Flex Friday

How It Works

During the fall semester, 9th grade students explore multiple pathways before declaring a pathway in December

August 28: 9th Grade Flex Friday Kickoff

- All 9th grade students attend campus
- Students rotate through workshops in:
 - Engineering
 - Health Science
 - Information Technology
- Students learn:
 - What each pathway offers
 - What Flex Fridays look like
 - How Flex Friday workshops operate
 - Students earn 2 Flex Friday credits for attending

Friday, August 28th

		FLEX FRIDAY SCHEDULE ★ FRESHMAN ★
TIME	ACTIVITY	
 8:55 – 9:30	Auditorium ALL 9th graders. Pathway leaders introduce Flex Friday	
 9:35 – 10:05	Async in Hangar or Tutoring time	
 10:10 – 11:40	Session 1	
 11:45 – 12:30	Lunch	
 12:35 – 2:05	Session 2	
 2:10 – 3:40	Session 3	
 3:45 – 4:15	Auditorium CTSO pitch; Signing up for your two additional Flex Fridays	

All Freshman are required to attend for the whole day.

Additional Flex Fridays

- **Additional Required Flex Fridays**
- After the kickoff, students attend 2 additional Flex Fridays during the fall semester
 - Students choose which dates to attend
 - Students must attend two different pathway days
 - Examples:
 - IT and Engineering
 - Engineering and Health Science
 - IT and Health Science
 - This helps students make an informed pathway decision

How Students Sign Up

INNOVATION ACADEMY

Date Selection

- Students use SignUpGenius to select two Flex Friday dates
- Confirmation emails are sent to students and parents

Workshop Selection

- Students select morning and afternoon workshops through the event website
- Login information will be provided
- Ms. Taylor will visit all GT block classes to review:
 - How to access the website
 - How to sign up for workshops
 - Flex Friday expectations



Fall 2026 Flex Friday Schedule

AUG

8.7
Regular School Day
All Students

8.14
Empathy Friday/Club Fair
All Students

8.21
IA PD Day
No Students

8.28
9th Grade Kickoff Flex Friday
9th Students

SEP

9.4
IT Flex Friday
IT Pathway Students

9.11
HS Flex Friday
HS Pathway Students

9.18
ENG Flex Friday
ENG Pathway Students

9.25
County PD Day
No Students

OCT

10.2
IT Flex Friday
IT Pathway Students

10.9
ENG Flex Friday
ENG Pathway Students

10.16
Cultivate
Half Day for All Students

10.23
HS Flex Friday
HS Pathway Students

NOV

11.6
Regular School Day
All Students

11.13
ENG Flex Friday
ENG Pathway Students

11.20
HS Flex Friday
HS Pathway Students

11.27
Thanksgiving
No Students

DEC

12.4
IT Conference
IT Pathway Students

12.11
IA PD DAY
No Students

12.18
Last Day of the Semester



How are IA PD days different from Flex Fridays?

- No students on campus.
- Due dates for asynchronous work can and will be Friday at the end of the day because all students are asynchronous.
- No tutoring/test make up center on campus.

FCS INNOVATION ACADEMY ASYNCHRONOUS SCHOOL DAYS

Flex Friday Asynchronous Days

Students who are not a part of the required pathway will be asynchronous at home.

This is considered a school day and dedicated work time is needed.

IA Professional Development Asynchronous Days

All students at IA are asynchronous at home.

This is considered a school day and dedicated work time is needed.

Work will be posted by teachers on Thursday on Canvas. Teachers will inform students in class on Thursday what their asynchronous work will be.

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Deadlines for assignments are Sunday evening at 11:59pm.

Deadlines for assignments are Friday evening at 11:59pm.

Tutoring available for all students from 8:55 - 10:15 on all Flex Fridays along with the Make Up Test Center during Tutoring Hour/Morning Session.

No tutoring available on these days.

COMPONENTS OF FLEX FRIDAYS

TUTORING TIME, WORKSHOPS, HOUSE TIME

TUTORING TIME

- All teachers will host tutoring time from 8:55 - 9:55 on all Fridays.
- Students sign up for tutoring sessions on our event site.

Pathway Workshops

- Students will select two pathway workshops in the morning, and afternoon based on their interest.
- These pathway workshops are designed for the students to get a hands-on experience within each pathway.

House Time

- Students are placed in cohorts of 20 - 25 students that will meet for 45 minutes during their Flex Friday.
- The IA Pathway Student Leadership Team will lead a variety of activities—including team-building exercises, games, and pathway-focused events—to foster a strong sense of community and culture among our students.
- House time will also serve as a peaceful pause in the day, offering students a chance to recharge and refocus during Flex Friday.

Parent Collaboration

We are deeply appreciative of your commitment as a parent of an Innovation Academy student. As you know, engagement with our Business and Community Partners is a keystone to the actualization of our vision for Innovation Academy.

We are looking for ways to get our student prepared and equipped for the workforce. We hope that your company can dedicate time to helping our students! We are relying on all parents to help support the internship program and beyond, so when your students are seniors, they will also have opportunities from our overall community in their field of interest.

FCS Innovation Academy Volunteer Form '26 - '27





IA has an active
LinkedIn account!
Please take a
moment to follow us.

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/fcs-innovation-academy>

