

Dr. Nakia Simmons Cotton

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EDUCATIONAL LEADER

I am a collaborative and solution-driven leader with K-12 experience of proven success in driving unprecedented growth and learning in client-facing, management, consulting, and customer-facing roles. I am an educational leader who has demonstrated excellence in cross-collaborative projects, professional development, and program design and management, guiding partners in the educational system to propel equitable student growth and achievement. I am instrumental in establishing and maintaining solid relationships with partners to promote learning and data-driven results. I am adept at integrating technologies and formulating expert teaching strategies, incorporating multiple modalities and adult learning theories, to design, lead, and transform instruction. I am a strategic planner and trainer adept at overseeing emerging trends, supporting district initiatives, improving instructional practices, building partnerships, and securing deals ranging from \$ 800 to \$10,000.

I successfully implemented technology solutions by developing products and programs with PCG and Edupoint Edtech organizations to streamline processes and audit and monitor Section 504 programs and special education services. I flawlessly oversaw and rolled out two separate online platforms, Goalview and Synergy SE, from initial paper to creation, design, testing, piloting school feedback, professional development, and implementation to 116 schools with 100% efficacy

— Areas of Expertise —

Program & Curriculum Development | Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) | Data-Based Decision Making | Consulting Service Business Development | Onsite Technical Support | Educational Best Practices | Adult Learning Principles | Technology Integration | Distance Learning Solutions | Customer Experience | E-Learning | Professional Development | Educational Technology | Differentiated Instructions | Instructional Design | Virtual Teaching | Strategic Direction | IDEA & Section 504 Compliance | Residential & Mental Health Services | Literacy/Reading | Multi-tiered System of Support | English Speakers of Other Languages

Technological Skills: BetterLesson platform, Office 365 (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), Google, Zoom, Canva, Blackboard, Wix, Website Design, Padlet, Moodle

Professional Experience

Clark Atlanta University

P12 Program Director and Assistant Professor

Educational Leadership

Atlanta, GA

2024-Present

- Led the design and implementation of the P12 Educational Leadership Program, ensuring alignment with state (GaPSC) and national standards.
- Collaborated with the New Leaders Fellowship to integrate leadership development initiatives into the program, enhancing the preparation of aspiring school leaders.
- Developed and delivered graduate-level courses focused on leadership theory, educational policy, and organizational management in diverse school settings.
- Facilitated partnerships between the Educational Leadership Department and local school districts, creating opportunities for student internships and field experiences.
- Mentored and advised graduate students, guiding them through completing capstone projects and research on school leadership and improvement.
- Conducted research on effective school leadership practices, focusing on the impact of leadership on student achievement and school culture.
- Served on academic and administrative committees, contributing to the continuous improvement of the P12 program and broader departmental initiatives.
- Presented findings at national conferences and published research in peer-reviewed journals, contributing to educational leadership and diverse learner leadership.
- Coordinated professional development workshops for educators in collaboration with New Leaders Fellowship, focusing on equity-driven leadership and instructional excellence.
- Engaged in community outreach to recruit a diverse cohort of aspiring educational leaders into the P12 program.

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Kennesaw State University

Kennesaw, GA,
2024-Present

Part-Time Faculty, Inclusive Education

- Served as Part-Time Faculty in Inclusive Education at Kennesaw State University, delivering instruction aligned with program goals in diversity, equity, inclusion, and culturally responsive pedagogy.
- Designed and facilitated undergraduate/graduate-level coursework focused on inclusive practices, co-teaching models, differentiated instruction, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- Employed evidence-based strategies to support pre-service and in-service educators in meeting the diverse needs of learners, including students with disabilities and English learners.
- Integrated state and national standards (e.g., InTASC, CEC, and Georgia PSC standards) into course design and student assessment.
- Developed and evaluated performance-based assessments to measure candidates' pedagogical effectiveness and inclusive practice competencies.
- Provided mentorship and feedback to teacher candidates during field experiences and practicum placements in urban and suburban school settings.
- Collaborated with departmental faculty to align course content with accreditation requirements (e.g., CAEP, PSC) and university learning outcomes.
- Utilized learning management systems (e.g., D2L Brightspace) to deliver hybrid and fully online courses, ensuring accessibility and engagement.
- Contributed to curriculum development initiatives supporting the expansion of inclusive education and special education endorsement programs.
- Participated in professional learning communities and diversity-focused faculty development at KSU to enhance inclusive teaching practices.

Cobb County School District

Marietta, GA
2016 - 2024

Supervisor of Special Education Alternative Programs

- Customize instructional plans based on students' needs and coach teachers towards practice change, utilizing data and reporting tools to impact instruction and decision-making.
- Lead succession planning and program development for IDEA in collaboration with partners by developing an inclusive performance culture, setting annual goals, and formulating coaching, consulting, and selection performance plans.
- Monitor observable practices and provide constructive feedback by identifying the implementation progress of key instructional features.
- Direct professional and leadership training/development and administration by leveraging adult-learning methodologies and processes for employers, leaders, and stakeholders.
- Lead developer policies, programs, and curricula for diverse learners through technical assistance, instructional technology platforms, data collection, one-to-one coaching, and research-based resolutions to promote equitable educational outcomes
- Responsible for leading District Section 504, Hospital Homebound, Alternative Programs, and Residential Programs
- Participate in Disability Compliance Reviews and the District's Operational Management Plan for State Audits
- Develop forms, policies, and processes for Section 504 and Special Education programs.
- Attend IEP, MDR, and 504 Meetings with attorneys and advocates
- Participate in treatment and other meetings in the Clinical Residential Setting (Devereux)
- Respond to complaints and resolve disputes and issues with State Agencies and the Office of Civil Rights
- Partner with parents, community, stakeholders, and other districts/school personnel regarding school information and building relationships.
- Hire, evaluate, and supervise personnel and records
- Reported FTE and other data for state, district, and federal reporting
- Design an in-house website page for managed programs
- Complete other school-related duties as a district-level administrator.

Key Accomplishments:

- Led multiple constructive training sessions/programs, resulting in 97%, 100%, 99%, and 96% of coordinators feeling confident in 2021, 2021, 2022, and 2022 surveys, respectively.
- Developed the First CCSD Section 504 Manual and Quarterly Newsletter based on 2021-22 coordinator feedback, garnering 97% and 90% trust as resources to increase program stability and effectiveness.
- Built a TEAMS Technological Platform for Section 504 program managers to facilitate teamwork, information sharing, resource accessibility, and uniformity.
- Achieved set performance goals while coaching and facilitating data discussions and dialogue with leadership

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teams, instructional coaches, educators, and other key stakeholders.

- Differentiated instruction based on audience and led developer policies, programs, and curricula for diverse learners using technical assistance, instructional technology platforms, one-to-one coaching, and research-based resolutions.
- Received acknowledgment as School Counselor Advocate of the Year for the district in 2022.
- Built an inclusive performance culture through annual goal setting, competency, coaching, consulting, modeling, recruitment, and selection performance progress through succession planning, program development for IDEA (Special Education, Section 504, and Alternative Education aligned with federal, state, and local policies in P-12 education
- Designed, developed, and evaluated professional and leadership training using adult-learning methodologies and processes for employers, leaders, and stakeholders
- *Awarded School Counselor Advocate of the Year for the district in 2022*

Renaissance Learning
Educational Consultant (Per Diem)

Wisconsin Rapids, WI
2023-Present

- Led professional development on eduClimber.
- Customized and delivered virtual product training and professional learning that met client needs and exceeded expectations.
- Differentiate training to ensure high engagement and meeting learning goals for adult learners, leveraging adult learning theories.
- Engage in an internal cycle of reflection, feedback, and development (including observations, client evaluations, and coaching)
- Prepare for training engagements by engaging with Renaissance team members, customizing training materials (within specific parameters), learning about the client's needs and goals, etc.
- Document and submit detailed training notes.
- Always present a professional image to clients to ensure optimal customer communication and satisfaction.

Key Accomplishments

- Uncovered and bridged knowledge gaps and training needs by coaching adult learners, leveraging the eduClimber platform, crafting training curricula, and analyzing outcomes.
- Equipped participants with the foundational knowledge necessary to ensure increased understanding of eduClimber.
- Evaluate training impact and efficacy by gathering/analyzing feedback from participants and key stakeholders on training content, framework, and delivery.
- Successfully collaborating with various team members to plan efficient professional development to meet clients' needs.

BetterLesson
Presenter & Coach (Part-time/Contract)

Cambridge, Massachusetts
2022 - Present

- Deliver quality coaching sessions and guidance to individuals while serving as an instructional coach and consultant.
- Finalize and deliver curated training sessions by outlining proper timelines and upgrading training content by receiving and incorporating feedback.
- Evaluate training impact and efficacy by gathering/analyzing feedback on training content, framework, and delivery from KPIs, participants, and key stakeholders.

Key Accomplishments:

- Uncovered and bridged knowledge gaps and training needs by coaching adult learners, leveraging the BetterLesson platform, crafting training curricula, and analyzing outcomes.
- Ensured professional development on culturally responsive practices, social-emotional learning, universal learning design, differentiation, and other topics by curating compelling training sessions.
- Equipped participants with the foundational knowledge necessary to assure excellence by enriching meaningful educational outcomes and obtaining certifications in multiple topics.

Edufaith Educational Services (Contract-Part-time)
Founder & Consultant

Marietta, GA
2020 - Present

- Conduct strategic planning, implementation, professional development, and customized programs for clients.
- Address clients' learning gaps through customized plans by delivering diverse learner professional development, student success plans, program development, and college-career transition services.

Key Accomplishments:

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- Customize, develop, and present professional development for customers that increase knowledge, ensures alignment with educational standards, and promotes educational equity for diverse learners at national conferences, districts, and organizations.
- Optimize revenue/business growth by formulating action plans in services and self-published books.

Gwinnett County Public Schools

Peachtree Corners, GA

Assistant Principal, Interbaccalaurate School

2013 – 2015

- Developed robust strategies and supported professional learning sessions to engage students while overseeing program design and development procedures.
- Applied excellent presentation skills and product knowledge to develop strategies for learning while analyzing results and completing documentation for reporting.
- Incorporated adult learning principles and programs of ESOL, Section 504, Response to Intervention (MTSS), Special Education, and Science to support professional development and growth.
- Partnered with the leadership team to provide instructional coaching and to consult with educators, parents, and stakeholders in a standards-based Interbaccalaurate curriculum.
- Created engaging instructional technology, online content, and various platforms to increase communication and sustain programs
- Collaborated and provided input to Principals, Assistant Principals, Teachers, and school personnel as a content leader
- Partnered and communicated with parents, community, stakeholders, and other school personnel regarding school information and building relationships.
- Served as an Instructional Leader, completed assigned administrative duties, and implemented district policies.

Key Accomplishments:

- Provided instructional coaching and consulted with educators/parents in standards-based Interbaccalaurate curriculum, MTSS/Response to Intervention, Section 504, ESOL, and Science in coordination with the leadership team.
- Achieved 75% learning gain through collaborative planning, constructive-based training, and skill development in science/math by supporting educators via formative data analysis and executing research-based strategies.
- Improved inter-departmental communication and delivered engaging programs by creating engaging instructional technology, online content, and various platforms.

Florida State University

Tallahassee, FL

Special Programs Director

2009 – 2013

- Executed grant management activities for the Individuals with Disability Education and Title III grants to ensure the quality of services and programs with a budget/grant over \$100K.
- Combined experiential training techniques with technological content to boost student achievement.
- Planned, organized, and led 10-20 training sessions and five or more webinars on average with over 100 attendees.
- Established and oversaw ESOL, Section 504, Special Education, and Multiered System of Support/Response to Intervention and Child Study Intervention Team.
- Partnered with the superintendent on professional development to leaders, educators, parents, and stakeholders on programs and curricula in the K-12 setting based on annual strategic goals.
- Delivered professional development and webinars to teachers, administrators, and other school staff, conducted a personnel assessment periodically to determine professional development needs, and trained educators on best practices for Special Education Students, English Speakers of Other Languages, and Section 504 services.
- Acted as the State Department and School liaison regarding complaints, grievances, and mediation.
- Reviewed and approved IEPs, Special Education referral packets, English Language Learner Plans, and staffing folders to ensure completeness and accuracy.
- Conferred with principals, teachers, counselors, and school specialists about ways to facilitate the learning and adjustment of children eligible for Special Education, Section 504, and English Speakers of Other Languages programs.
- Interpreted educational policies, programs, and procedures related to Exceptional Student Education/Response to Intervention and Early Intervention.

Key Accomplishments:

- Restructured intervention, ESOL, and student-with-disability programs using coaching, webinars, data analysis, problem-solving, and best practices for special programs, resulting in a 90% increase in inclusive practices and teacher efficacy.
- Successfully partnered with parents, community, stakeholders, and other school personnel regarding programs,

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services, and students.

- Prepared successful Exceptional Student Education and English Speaker of Other Languages FTE audits by ensuring that all records were accurate and met state and federal requirements
- Fostered an understanding of learning and human development to provide a positive learning environment that supports all students' intellectual, personal, and social development with diverse learners.
- Created Intervention Reports, graphed and interpreted data, psychological reports, and other reports to parents and staff for diverse learners, including MTSS, ESOL, Special Education, and Section 504
- Led transition and College and Career Programs for high school students and career fairs.
- Performed other district duties to ensure that student growth and achievement were continuous.

Tallahassee Community College

Tallahassee, FL

Adjunct Professor

2009 – 2013

- Helped college faculty and staff cultivate, build, and nurture stronger relationships within the College Success department and students to provide better customer service.
- Educated and engaged adult learners at the post-secondary level while catering to various learning styles through assessment data, planned lessons, and instructional technology.
- Attended professional development and department meetings
- Performed other duties as expected

Key Accomplishments:

- Boosted reading scores and educated adult learners through advisement and lesson facilitation via Instructional Technology, collegiate resources, and platforms such as Canva, Blackboard, etc.

Wakulla County Schools

Crawfordville, FL

Educator, Middle, Elementary, Read 180, ESE, Title One

2000 – 2009

- Educated learners and planned lessons using formative and summative assessment data, resulting in increased state assessment scores greater than 70%
- Organized, scheduled, and reinvented the Title I Program and Read 180 Program according to the (No Child Left Behind) and (Just Read! Florida) Act,
- Intensively taught at-risk and ESE students in Reading and other subjects, remediated and prepared students for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment State Test.
- Wrote publications for the school on behalf of the district
- Planned and taught daily classes in reading and language arts, taught and remediated students in the after-school program, Co-taught with teachers,
- Collaborated with teachers regarding the student's reading progress, provided additional reading strategies and suggestions to teachers,
- Planned and Facilitated parent trainings using the statewide PASSPort to Success Program
- Coordinated professional development using adult-learning principles and program implementation of Reading, special education practices, and other topics
- Led the Title One and Special Education Department

Key Accomplishments:

- Increased state assessment scores above 70%, demonstrating adequate yearly progress.
- Nominated for Teacher of the Year Leon County Schools

Educator, Middle, Elementary, ESOL, Alternative Education

Tallahassee, FL

1997 – 2000

- Educated learners through the delivery of grade-level curriculum, resulting in adequate yearly progress
- Collaborated with grade-level teams and used formative and summative assessment data to plan instruction
- Designed and modified curriculum for instruction
- Utilized technology to facilitate learning
- Performed other professional duties as expected.
- Served on the School Spirit, SAC, School Safety, Science, SITE, and Sunshine Committees.

Key Accomplishments:

- Increased state assessment scores above 80%, demonstrating adequate yearly progress.
 - **Recognized as "Teacher of the Month" for October and March.**
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Education & Credentials

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), Educational Leadership and Administration | Clark Atlanta University
Master's Degree, Educational Leadership and Administration, General | Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
Bachelor's Degree, Elementary Education & Teaching | Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
Certification in Reading (K-12) and Exceptional Student Certification (K-12)

Relevant Courses: Essential Tips for Special Education Leaders Webinars | Response to Intervention Strategies for K-12 Schools

Professional Accomplishments:

- 2025 Co-Authored Teaching Exceptional Children Article-Navigating Disability Compliance and Reading Policy Through Sensemaking Strategies
- 2025 Presented at the Florida Council for Exceptional Children, Essential Tips for Special Education Leaders
- 2025 Presented at Georgia CEC GCASE Essential Tips for Educators
- 2025 Presented at the Council for Exceptional Children-Essential Sensemaking Strategies
- 2024 Presented at the Council for Exceptional Children (Essential Tips for Special Education Leaders and Essential Tips for Section 504 Coordinators)
- 2023 Presented Essential Tips at the National Council for Exceptional Children 2023
- 2023 Published Essential Tips for Educators Working with Students with Disabilities
- 2022 Published Essential Tips for Parents of Students with Disabilities
- 2022 Presented Diverse Learner Programs to Parents at Pineview Elementary School, Leon County Schools, Tallahassee, Florida
- 2022 Facilitated a Professional Learning Session: ESOL Strategies at Kennesaw State University's TESOL Conference
- 2021 Guest Speaker Voices with Paula G: Essential Tips for Special Education Leaders
- 2021 Facilitated a Diverse Learner Training to Beyond 12, Oakland, California
- 2021 Presented at Kennesaw State University's TESOL Conference

- 2021 Attended Julie Weatherly's Best Practices in Section 504

- 2021 Published Essential Tips for Section 504 Coordinators on Amazon
- 2021 Published Essential Tips for Special Education Leaders
- 2020 Attended SuccessEd Section 504 Conference
- 2019 Attended SuccessEd Section 504 Conference
- 2019 Introduction to Facilitated IEP Conference with the Georgia Department of Education
- 2017 Published Dissertation Teacher Perceptions of ESOL Sheltered Model in a Metro Atlanta School District
- 2017 Attended LRP Conference Legal Issues with Students with Disabilities, Washington, DC
- 2016 Attended LRP Conference Legal Issues with Students with Disabilities, New Orleans, LA
- 2016 Atlanta Justice Center Mediation Training
- 2015 Mental Health Training
- 2015 SPSS Training Clark Atlanta University
- 2014 Gwinnett County Leadership Training
- 2014 IB Training for Administrators
- 2013 Florida CASE Conference
- 2013 Florida Speech-Language Pathologist Rtl Training
- 2013 Administrator's Management Meeting for Student Service Administrator (Attendee)
- 2012 Administrator's Management Meeting for Student Service Administrator (Attendee)
- 2012 Compliance Research and Education Training with FSU Sponsored Research Grant
- 2012 Compliance
- 2012 Webinar on Response to Interventions with C-Palms Charter
- 2012 Panhandle Area Education Consortium Leadership Conference Attendee
- 2012 Council of Exceptional Student Education Conference Attendee (CASE)
- 2011 AIMS Web for Rtl Training with Leon County Schools

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2010 Rick Lavoie Workshop on Motivating Students Attendee
International Response to Intervention Mini Professional Development with Taiwan
School System Regional Speech/Language Rule Implementation Workshops
National Positive Behavior Support Conference Attendee
Keys to Problem Solving: Response to Intervention Training

2009 Response to Intervention/Problem Solving Train the Trainer

2008 Exceptional Student Certification K-12

2007 Educational Leadership Certification K-12, ESE Matrix Training, Tienet Training, Read
180 Enterprise Training, Six Traits of Writing, Kaleidoscope, Co-Teacher Training

2005 Reading Certification K-12 Wakulla County School Board/Florida State University

2005 Read 180 Training, DIBELS, TOWRE, Gates Mc-Ginnite, DAR, FORPP Training

2004 Reading Coaches Training for Sessions 1-3, SRA Direct Instruction

2003 Passport to Success Training, Wakulla County's Leadership Development II Program

2000 Reading Renaissance Program, Accelerated Reader Program, Harry Wong, "The First Days of School"

1998 ESOL 60-Hour Training