

ROSWELL

What to do when kids struggle in school

By John Ruane

Living in Roswell for more than 10 years, there were a few things that were crystal clear about the people in the community. It's a very family-oriented area where most parents *really* want their children to get a good education.

In north Fulton high schools, a new math program was introduced around 2000, which has been described as a catastrophe for students and teachers. A few years later, a newer math program was introduced, but parents and administrators were still frustrated by this program. Parents were upset by the amount of help their

kids needed just to keep up and administrators were seeing falling test scores. So this year, an even newer math program is being introduced, and everyone has their fingers crossed.

But math is only part of the problem. High school teachers continue to receive students in their classrooms whose reading and comprehension levels are poor. Those students will struggle in most classes because they can't read well enough to understand the subject matter.

Many of those struggling students find themselves on the doorstep of Academic Solutions on Shallowford Road in Marietta, where they receive tutoring to try to keep pace with their class, or more accurately, catch up. In 1998, Bob Hoyer and his wife, Jennifer, founded the tutoring center and are now working with students from more than 40 different schools in the area. The staff at Academic Solutions works with children who come from public and private schools, ranging from elementary students up

through high school.

In Hoyer's work, he talks with students, parents and teachers daily, getting feedback from each about the problems they face. He hears it all and has a pretty good perspective on the issues facing north Fulton's educational system.

For us, the day we met Hoyer has proved to be one of the greatest blessings of our lives. We had our twins enrolled in a difficult-to-get-into and purposely small private school, where some of the teachers attempting to implement an accelerated curriculum weren't capable of teaching the courses, which resulted in our students struggling, along with many others, as we learned from a host of parents.

We made the mistake of keeping them there for two more years, until we learned that Bob Hoyer offered a home schooling program, run right out of Academic Solutions.

Within six months of attending the school, our twins' reading and math scores shot up drastically. They started to feel happy again. The stress was falling off their shoulders, instead of walking out of school each day grumpy and unhappy, they exited Academic Solutions with a smile on their respective faces, telling us all about their day with the teachers, whom they liked very much. And all of a sudden reading wasn't a chore. They were reading 500-page books, for the joy of it.

If the Fulton County Board of Education along with private school superintendents are serious about educating students in grades k-12, they would be wise to bring in Bob Hoyer to establish educational programs that will benefit the entire student population and help all who want to work to achieve success.

It worked for my kids, and they are entering high school this year fully prepared.

John Ruane lives in Roswell.