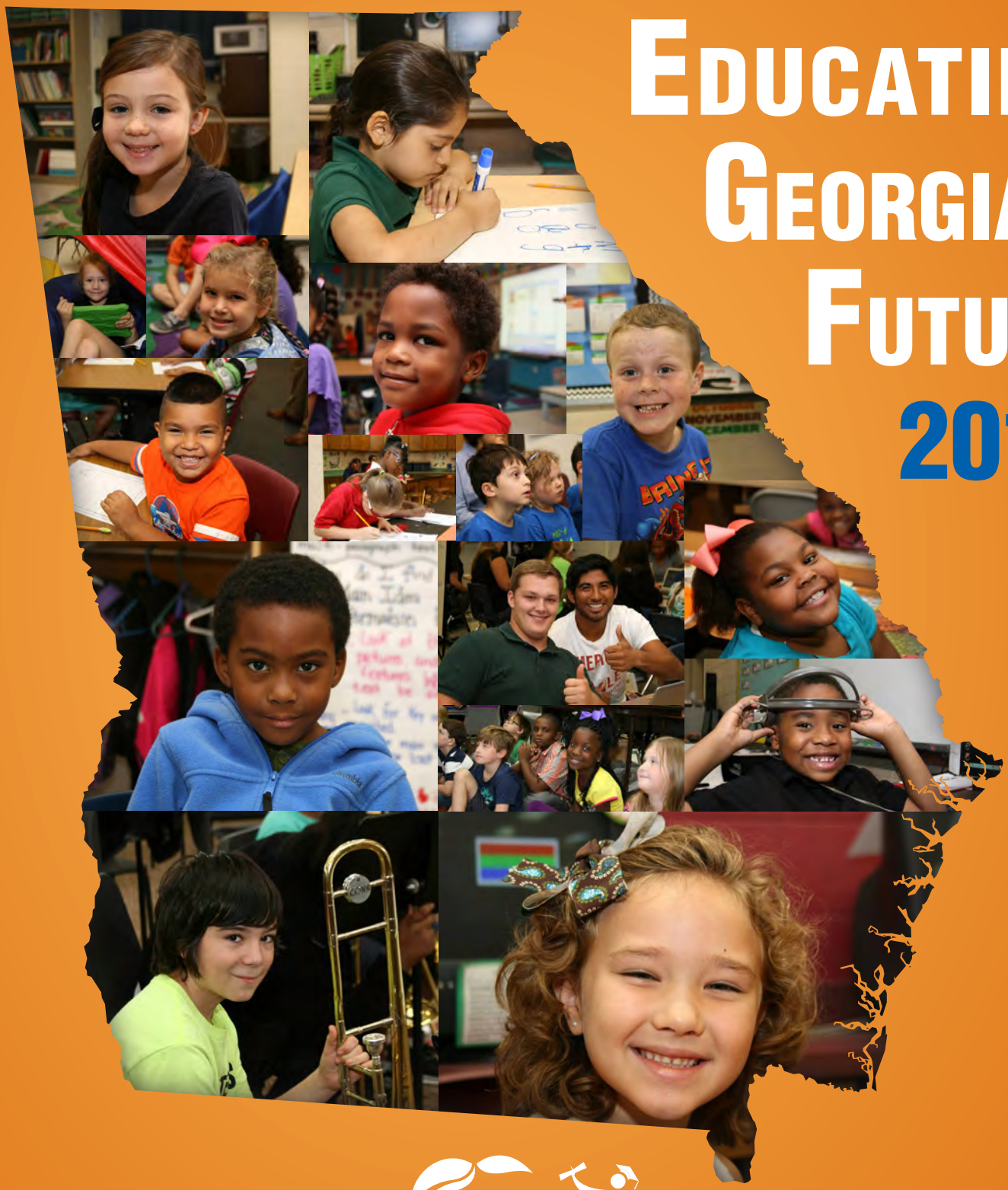
Georgia Department Of Education



Educating Georgia's Future 2015

Georgia Department of Education

Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent

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Richard Woods, *Georgia's School Superintendent*

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> We can only move education forward by working together. And as we work collaboratively, we must keep the focus on students, implementing **child-focused**, **classroom-centered** policies.
>
> — **Richard Woods**, *Georgia's School Superintendent*

GEORGIA K-12 EDUCATION: THE BASICS

1.7+
million students are served by Georgia public schools

2,264
total public schools In Georgia

10.2%
receive Special Education services

5.5%
have limited English Proficiency

60%
rely on school-provided transportation

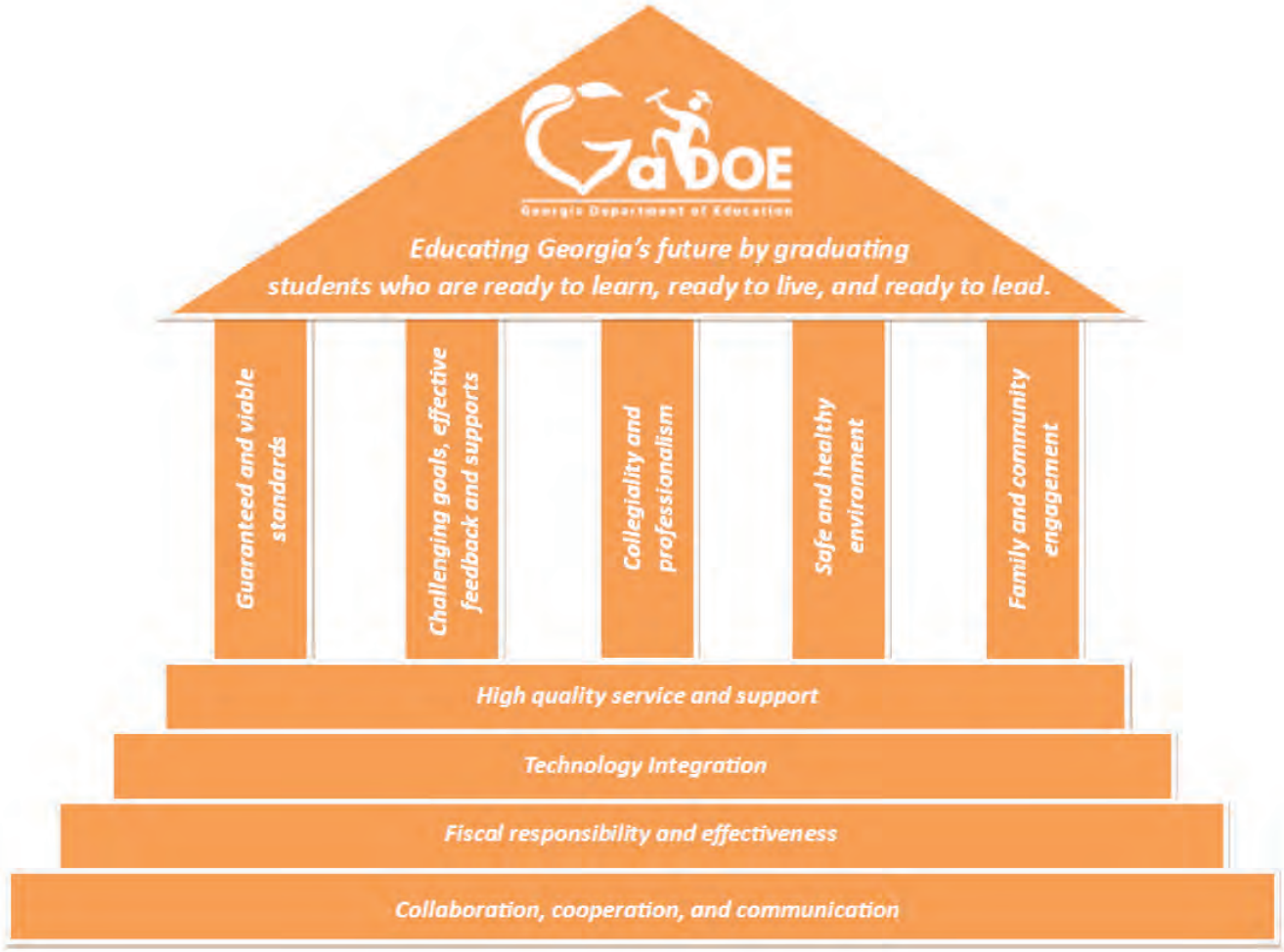
60.6%
are eligible for free or reduced lunch

112,177
teachers in Georgia's public schools; 43.9% of those hold a master's degree

OUR FOCUS

Georgia is poised to become a national educational leader in pursuing and implementing child-focused and classroom-centered policies. Although federal legislation has proven to be a catalyst for education reform throughout the nation, the rights and roles of students and teachers have been overshadowed by rapid implementation of new systems and mandates.

In short, the federal role has restricted Georgia's flexibility and authority in the area of public education and limited educators' ability to respond to local student needs. With an increase in collaboration at the state level and a push for greater flexibility at the federal level, we are engaging educators, school leaders, and other stakeholders to ensure that students in Georgia's public schools graduate *ready to learn, ready to live, and ready to lead*.



OUR VISION

Learn

Providing flexibility for educators, so they can personalize learning by setting challenging goals and providing feedback and supports.

Live

Giving students the learning opportunities, tools, and knowledge necessary to experience a high quality of life as adults.

Lead

Creating an education system that fosters soft skills, civic awareness, learning by doing, teamwork, innovative thinking, and real-world relevance.

- Provide opportunities
- Balanced
- Multiple approaches
- Whole child

OUR MISSION

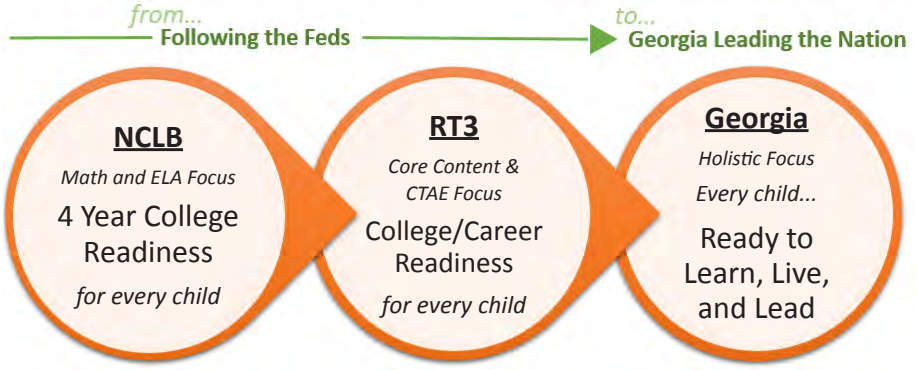
Offering a Holistic Education to Each and Every Child in the State

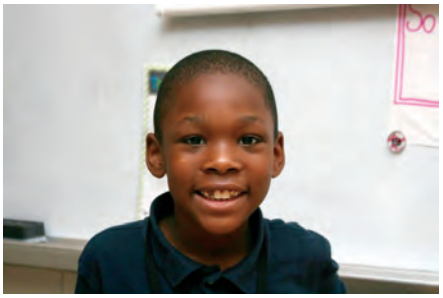
- GaDOE is the only statewide organization charged with educating every child
- Beyond every subgroup and data point, there's an individual child with a name

> The **main function** of the Georgia Department of Education is to **provide service and support** to districts, school leaders, and teachers...placing a greater emphasis on the quality of resources over the quantity.
>
> *— Georgia Department of Education Strategic Plan*

DEFINING A NEW READINESS

We are providing multiple avenues for success via traditional colleges and universities, technical schools, apprenticeship programs, and military service. Students are individual works of art, not manufactured parts, and teachers need flexibility to personalize education for each and every child.





GEORGIA: LAND OF LEADERS

Mark Wilson
Morgan County Schools
National High School Principal of the Year, 2009

José Espinel
Cobb County Schools
National Future Business Leaders of America President, 2015

Philip Lanoue
Clarke County Schools
National Superintendent of the Year, 2015

Otha Thornton
Richmond Hill, Georgia
National PTA President, 2014

Laurie Barron
Coweta County Schools
National Middle School Principal of the Year, 2013

Sheila Kahrs
Barrow County Schools
National Middle School Principal of the Year, 2010

Andy Paul
Oglethorpe County Schools
National FFA President, 2015

B

in teaching financial literacy to high school students from the Center for Financial Literacy

A

in teaching the civil rights movement from the Southern Poverty Law Center (one of three states)

1 of 2

states offering an International Skills Diploma Seal

1st

state in the nation to adopt Career Pathways requirements for all high school students

3

National School Counselors of the Year

5

point increase in students' average SAT scores in 2015, even as the nation dropped

2nd

among Southern states for ACT scores in 2015

5

National Principals of the Year

3rd

ranked nationally for rate of African American high school seniors scoring 3, 4, or 5 on Advanced Placement Exams

15th

ranked nationally for Advanced Placement test scores

"As Georgians — parents, educators, students, stakeholders — we are committed to the success of our students. As we continue to **personalize, rather than standardize, education**, the opportunities available for our kids will multiply."

— Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent

TEACHING

There are excellent, innovative teachers in Georgia's schools—but in many ways they've been constrained by an excessive level of paperwork and an emphasis on testing that monopolizes instructional time.

It's State School Superintendent Woods' stance that teachers are professionals and should be treated as professionals. As much as possible, teachers should be freed from the burden of excessive paperwork so they are free to teach their students.

Allowing teachers to teach is what's best for Georgia's students. That's why we support a decreased emphasis on testing, a more diagnostic model of assessment, and measured, responsible accountability.

44 percent of Georgia teachers leave the profession by year five.

OUR EFFORTS

Tiered observations. We're working to allow modified implementation of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES). Highly effective teachers will receive fewer observations, freeing up administrative time to work with new and struggling teachers.

Seeking teacher feedback. Our *Teacher Advisory Council* brings together educators from all over the state, with experience in varied content areas and student populations, to advise the GaDOE and Superintendent Woods on the impact of state policies in the classroom.

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Relevant, personalized professional development. We're untethering professional development so teachers can complete it on their own time, with a chance to dig deeper when they want to know more—through modules, videos, in-person trainings, online toolkits and more.

Supporting great teachers. The *Georgia Foundation for Public Education* awarded grants to every district-level *Teacher of the Year*, funding future innovation in their classrooms.

> I have to **build positive relationships** with each of my students if I am going to have any impact. My presence in the classroom should not only encourage but also challenge **each of my students** to reach success.
>
> *— Ernie Lee, 2016 Georgia Teacher of the Year*

MOVING FORWARD

Creating a beginning teacher toolkit. This resource will gather information on standards, accountability, assessment and instructional resources in one easy-to-access place for new teachers.

Measured, responsible accountability. It's our goal to move beyond a pilot into full modified implementation of the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System, and we'll continue to evaluate the system and make revisions where necessary.

More quality resources as teachers implement standards. We're working to increase the percentage of standards with at least two or more vetted resources in the *Teacher Resource Link* (TRL), so teachers have the support they need to deliver standards.

Surveying beginning teachers to find the root causes of turnover. Forty-four percent of Georgia teachers leave the profession by year five, and we want to understand the root causes of that issue. We're developing a survey for teachers to identify the reasons educators are leaving the profession early in their careers.

OUR PRIORITIES

Giving teachers autonomy to do what's best for their students. We need to trust that Georgia's teachers know their students and can determine the best way to deliver the standards to them.

Hearing educator voices and bringing them into decision-making. When we listen to teachers and take time to find out how education policy is affecting students and educators on the front lines, we will make better policy.

A measured and targeted approach to accountability. We have enough hammers in our toolkit. We need more rulers that give teachers, students and schools meaningful feedback.

Superintendent Woods visited Barbara Landreth, one of Georgia's longest-serving teachers, for *Teacher Appreciation Month*.

May typically plays host to Teacher Appreciation Week—but this year, it was *Teacher Appreciation Month* in Georgia.

LINKS TO USE

Proclamation: bit.ly/gadoeTAM

Column: bit.ly/gadoeteachers

Teacher Resource Link: bit.ly/gadoeTRL

112,177
Total number of teachers in Georgia

56
Number of teachers on GaDOE's Teacher Advisory Council

35.3%
Percentage of Georgia teachers with 11-20 years of experience in the classroom

55
Years of experience held by Georgia's longest-serving teacher

INSTRUCTION

The students in our classrooms are our greatest opportunity, and it's our job to provide instruction that prepares them for whatever lies ahead. The GaDOE's role in that process is to provide support.

We will develop Georgia-owned, Georgia-grown, guaranteed and viable standards that are appropriate and fully vetted. We'll support teachers with excellent instructional resources and professional learning as they create interesting, inviting classrooms to incorporate those standards.

We do all this with one overarching goal: creating an environment that prepares students to live, learn, and lead. On these pages, you'll learn about the efforts and innovation improving instruction in Georgia's classrooms.

Teachers in all districts gave input on the science & social studies standards revision.

OUR EFFORTS

Adding science and social studies expertise. To bolster support of all content areas, Superintendent Woods added two state-level positions, one in science and one in social studies—areas that previously operated with a single-person staff.

Providing options in math. In response to parent, educator, and student feedback, high schools are now able to offer either integrated OR traditional/discrete math courses.

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Encouraging standard algorithms. Superintendent Woods wrote an op-ed clarifying that Georgia standards explain what students should know, but not how they arrive at the answer—and that what many have labeled "Common Core" methods for teaching math are not mandated by the state.

Creating multiple paths toward graduation. *House Bill 91*, passed in 2015, provides a path toward a diploma for any student who has met all graduation requirements except passing one of several graduation tests which are no longer required. For his sponsorship of HB 91, GaDOE gave Rep. Brooks Coleman the *Superintendent's Impact Award*.

> As we work collaboratively, we must keep the focus on students, directly addressing the challenges they face. We need a **strong focus on the fundamentals** and policies that are genuinely classroom-centered.
>
> *— Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent*

MOVING FORWARD

Ensuring guaranteed and viable standards. The rollout of any new standards should include professional learning for teachers, quality resources for every standard, field-tested items, and testing blueprints—all provided by the start of the school year for the first year of implementation.

Providing multiple paths to graduation. We're working to expand graduation options through diploma seals and other initiatives and, through our Project Student Success, working to improve graduation outcomes for students with disabilities.

Recognizing the crucial role of school counselors. We're working to increase capacity for school counseling, and working with members of the House study committee on school counseling.

Developing an optional universal screener. We're creating universal screeners (for optional use) to help schools and districts identify and support students in the early grades who have gaps in their learning.

THE PROCESS OF STANDARDS ADOPTION

Teacher, parent, and stakeholder surveys. Teachers, parents, and all community members are invited to complete surveys on the current standards.

Working and advisory committees. Educators, business and industry leaders, and community members come together to revise standards based on public feedback.

Public feedback. The public is invited to comment on the newly revised standards.

Board adoption. Taking all public feedback into consideration, the State Board of Education votes to adopt the new standards.

The GaDOE worked with partners to provide a copy of the U.S. Constitution to every Georgia fourth grader, at no cost to taxpayers.

GaDOE staff held a backpack drive in 2015, collecting and delivering backpacks full of supplies for students all over the state.

LINKS TO USE

Math options: bit.ly/gadoemathoptions

Standard algorithms: bit.ly/gadoemath

Constitution PDF: bit.ly/gadoecivics

120,000

Copies of the U.S. Constitution provided for Georgia fourth graders

17,000+

Number of students who have received high school diplomas as a result of House Bill 91

1,310

Number of teachers who participated in Math Summer Institutes hosted by GaDOE in 2015

20,281

Total number of survey responses received during review of science and social studies standards

LITERACY

Right now, only 34 percent of Georgia's third graders are reading proficiently by the end of the school year – and that's a problem. When students don't read proficiently, they're missing the building blocks on which all other educational attainment is built.

Through the *Get Georgia Reading Campaign*, Georgia's leaders are coordinating efforts across organizations and agencies to solve this problem. We're zeroing in on four pillars – access, learning climate, teacher preparation and language nutrition – offering comprehensive services that we know are predictors of literacy achievement. There's one common goal: by 2020, all children in Georgia will be on a path to reading proficiently by the end of third grade.

Only 34% of Georgia's third graders are reading on grade level.

OUR EFFORTS

Adding literacy expertise. Dr. Caitlin Dooley, who has a strong background in K-5 education and literacy, was hired as Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction for GaDOE.

Expanding positive learning climates in schools. Children are better able to learn when they are in a safe, positive, and supportive environment. GaDOE is working to support positive learning climates through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and through the School Climate Star Rating, which gives stakeholders a look at the culture of a school.

Providing a book for every pre-kindergarten and kindergarten student. GaDOE spearheaded an effort, with other state agencies, to use remaining *Race to the Top* funds to send a book to every pre-kindergarten and kindergarten student in the state of Georgia.

Raising awareness of the importance of reading. GaDOE is a proud partner of the *Get Georgia Reading Campaign*. Superintendent Woods has continued to spread the word about the importance of reading through a video message to students and by participating in *National Library Card Month*.

> It is an absolute priority of my administration to make sure students are reading proficiently by the end of third grade. **Without reading proficiency, students are limited** in every other content area.
>
> *— Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent*

MOVING FORWARD

Developing a statewide literacy plan. We're identifying communities, targeting resources, and enhancing professional learning to increase literacy.

Providing targeted, high-quality resources. We're working to facilitate strategic partnerships and provide high-quality professional learning and technical assistance to support literacy instruction for all teachers.

Providing books for Georgia students. We're identifying opportunities, through grant and donor funding, to get books in the hands of Georgia's kids.

PROVIDING RESOURCES

Helping parents prepare their kids — via text. Parents of four– and five-year-olds can text *GAREADY4K* to *313131* to receive free tips on enhancing literacy and preparing children for pre-k and kindergarten.

Making it easier to read over the summer. Each year, we provide resources for summer reading — from customizable book lists to free digital books. This helps students avoid the "summer loss" that can happen if no learning takes place during the summer months.

Learning from each other— in collaboration. The *Get Georgia Reading* campaign collects resources, best practices and stories of success from each of its partners. Visit getgeorgiareading.org/stories to learn about literacy innovation—and what's working.

Eliminating the word gap. We're partners and supporters of the *Talk With Me Baby* initiative, which encourages parents to talk more with their babies — a simple action that, research shows, has a long-lasting impact on literacy.

The GaDOE spearheaded an effort to provide every pre-kindergartener and kindergartener with their very own book.

Superintendent Woods made a video encouraging Georgia's students to remain active readers during the summer.

LINKS TO USE

Get Georgia Reading: getgeorgiareading.org

Talk With Me Baby: talkwithmebaby.org

Summer Reading: bit.ly/gadoesummer

4x

Increase in the likelihood a student will drop out of high school if they cannot read by third grade

21%

Percentage of fourth graders from low income families in Georgia who could read at or above grade level (2013)

100+

Agencies and organizations participating in the Get Georgia Reading Campaign

100,000

Books delivered this year to Georgia pre-kindergarteners and kindergarteners — every child got their own book

GEORGIA'S FUTURE WORKFORCE

It's essential that Georgia's students are prepared after high school, no matter what their next step is—college, the military, or immediately beginning a career. Georgia's *Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education* course offerings, and the new Educating Georgia's Future Workforce initiative, leverage partnerships with industry and higher education to ensure students have the skills they need to thrive in the workforce of the future.

Students are studying everything from energy to finance to human services. They're experiencing careers firsthand through hands-on instruction and work-based learning opportunities. And we're partnering with business and industry to make sure Georgia's students are ready for the opportunities that await after high school.

89% graduation rate for students who complete a CTAE Career Pathway

OUR EFFORTS

Facilitating career exploration. Georgia's Career Pathways allow students to explore a career field of their interest, giving them a firsthand perspective and preparation for the future.

Building relationships with business and industry. In 2015, we hired the first GaDOE Economic Development Liaison to help strengthen relationships with business and industry. We also added a new CTAE director, Dr. Barbara Wall, who is well-versed in building industry partnerships.

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Georgia Department of Education

Recognizing international competencies. We created the *International Skills Diploma Seal*, which serves as a signal to employers that a graduate demonstrates a strong interest in international business and policy.

Bringing all stakeholders to the table. In the fall of 2015, our CTAE division hosted 12 *Partners Educating Georgia's Future Workforce* meetings all over Georgia to connect schools, businesses, parents, and community leaders with CTAE opportunities.

> It is through experiences that students are able to put **academic knowledge to practice**. Often, **CTAE is the 'hook'** that keeps students in school and serves as the impetus for them to graduate.
>
> *— Dr. Barbara Wall, GaDOE CTAE Director*

MOVING FORWARD

Developing tools for schools and communities. GaDOE and other state agencies are refining a *Pathways to Prosperity* toolkit to make economic development resources accessible to educators and business partners.

Visualizing economic development needs. Our technology staff is creating an interactive map that will show business and industry needs, and Career Pathway completers, in every Georgia county.

Helping parents and students plan. We're creating one-page documents that show the progression from each Career Pathway to the University System of Georgia or Technical College System of Georgia.

STUDENT WORK THROUGH CTAE

Gilbert Elementary students in Walker County grow hydroponic basil in their agriculture program, which they sell to the local Pizza Hut for their pizzas.

High school students studying Early Childhood Education are working with preschool students to develop early literacy skills.

Construction students are involved in *Habitat for Humanity* projects, developing hands-on-skills while serving and giving back to the community.

Students studying healthcare are researching public health issues and examining data.

Students are competing, learning to work as teams, learning how to win and how to lose, learning how (and why) to become leaders, experiencing life beyond their school, home, and community, and earning positive recognition through student organizations like *Future Farmers of America*.

The Governor's *High Demand Career Initiative Report* examines high-demand industry sectors and proposes innovative ways to address workforce challenges.

GaDOE's CTAE Division made a video spotlighting Georgia's 17 Career Clusters.

LINKS TO USE

EGF Workforce: georgiasfutureworkforce.org

HDCI Report: bit.ly/govHDCI

CTAE Video: bit.ly/gadoeCTAE

61%
Percentage of high school students involved in CTAE statewide

56.8%
Percentage of middle school students involved in CTAE statewide

22,000
Industry credentials earned by Georgia students in Fiscal Year 2015

180
Number of local school systems offering CTAE courses

FROM STEM TO STEAM

The research is clear: our children need more STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) in their education. Occupations in these fields are growing at a faster rate than any others. Meanwhile, students need the soft skills provided by the fine arts, which accommodate different learning styles and strengths and give kids the opportunity to become creative, critical thinkers.

That's why we're working toward a more blended approach. STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, *Arts*, and Math) matches the essential competencies of STEM with a focus on the fine arts, producing well-rounded, deeply engaged students. Blend the problem-solving creativity of STEM with the arts, and you've got a student who's ready to take on the future.

Students who take 4 years of art & music score about 100 points higher on the SAT.

OUR EFFORTS

Adding fine arts expertise. Jessica Booth was hired as the first Virtual Fine Arts Specialist for GaDOE. Previously, there were no fine arts positions at the state level.

Recognizing excellence in STEM. Our STEM Schools program provides certification to schools that have an excellent integrated, project-based STEM curriculum.

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Expanding virtual fine arts opportunities. We're working to update and expand the fine arts offerings of our Georgia Virtual School, so students in all areas of the state have access to fine arts opportunities.

Providing more computer science options. We've continued to develop more computer science courses, and students can now take a computer programming course to satisfy a math, science, or foreign language credit.

> The **arts teach creativity, communication, critical thinking** and collaboration and allow students to interpret meaning and make personal choices in their learning.
>
> *— Jessica Booth, GaDOE Virtual Fine Arts Specialist*

MOVING FORWARD

Developing STEAM guidelines. We're developing guidelines so schools providing an excellent, blended STEAM education can receive certification.

Equipping teachers to teach STEM. We're partnering with Code.org to provide computer science professional learning for Georgia teachers.

Providing arts resources. We're developing resources for teachers who want to blend fine arts into the core content areas.

Participating in the Governor's Arts Education Taskforce. GaDOE will be working to implement Taskforce recommendations and elevate the importance of the arts.

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES FROM STEM SCHOOLS

At Cowan Road Elementary in Griffin-Spalding Schools, students work with the local parks and recreation department to solve engineering problems associated with a park adjacent to the school.

At the Center for Design and Technology at Lanier High School in Gwinnett County, students use computer projects and competitions as anchors for all instruction, and teachers move students within three-hour blocks depending on their academic needs and their project design.

HALLMARKS OF HIGH-QUALITY ARTS EDUCATION

A sequential, in-school fine arts program taught by a certified fine arts teacher, with after-school extensions of learning in the arts like marching band, art club, or STEAM club.

Students are exposed to experiences in the arts in the local community, in order to learn how to be a future patron of the arts.

During *Arts Education Week*, teachers and students shared their fine arts moments with the *#ArtsEdWeekGA* hashtag.

Superintendent Woods wrote an article for HUB Magazine about Georgia's computer programming course options.

LINKS TO USE

HUB article: bit.ly/gadoecompsci

GA Art Ed. Association: bit.ly/gadoeGAEA

Georgia Virtual School: bit.ly/gadoevirtual

18
Total number of STEM schools certified by GaDOE (as of publication date)

8
Number of U.S. Department of Labor "ten most-wanted employees" with STEM degrees

20,000
Number of people employed in creative (arts-related) industries in Georgia

$29b
Revenue generated by creative industries in Georgia

TESTING

Starting with the 2014-15 school year, the Georgia Milestones assessment system replaced the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) as the main statewide assessment for Georgia students. Georgia Milestones sets a clearer signal of students' academic performance, compared to the CRCT, which set some of the lowest expectations in the nation for student achievement.

This is a step, but there is still work to be done. Our focus is on developing an assessment system that is diagnostic rather than punitive, and forming a relationship between testing and accountability that informs instruction and fosters innovation.

Over 300 Georgia teachers participated in standard-setting for Georgia Milestones.

OUR EFFORTS

Advocating for more responsible testing. Superintendent Woods has maintained communication with the U.S. Department of Education and other policy-makers, requesting a more measured approach to testing and accountability.

Securing student privacy. GaDOE appointed a Chief Privacy Officer to ensure the protection of student privacy as schools continue to adopt and utilize technology and social media in the classroom.

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Auditing existing testing. We initiated a review of all standardized tests— federal, state, and local— taken by students in each of Georgia's school districts.

Reducing student testing. We gave school districts the option to eliminate some Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), reducing the overall number of tests Georgia's students take.

> Instead of a 'measure, pressure, and punish' model that sets our students, teachers, and schools up for failure, we need a **diagnostic model that personalizes instruction**, empowers students, involves parents, and provides real feedback.
>
> *— Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent*

MOVING FORWARD

Reducing testing redundancies. We'll use the results of our testing audit to provide tools for districts to reduce testing by identifying tests with duplicate purposes.

Responding to stakeholder feedback. We reached out to stakeholders following the first administration of Georgia Milestones and made changes based on their feedback—including the addition of scratch paper and calculators.

Technology-enhanced items. Beginning in the 2016-17 school year, Georgia Milestones will feature technology-enhanced items which will reduce the number of test questions and move testing away from simple "A, B, C, and D."

Evaluating Student Learning Objectives. We're putting together a SLO taskforce composed of classroom teachers and other representatives to examine ways to streamline the SLO process and make it a more natural part of instruction.

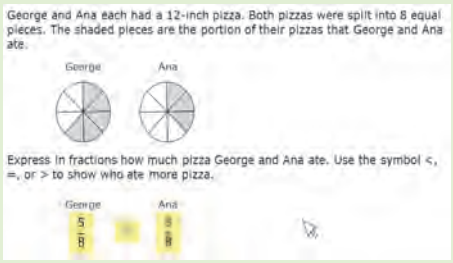
ABOUT GEORGIA MILESTONES

Not just multiple choice. Students have the opportunity to explain their answers through a selection of Constructed Response and Extended Response questions.

A national comparison. Georgia Milestones is not a national test, but it includes a selection of norm-referenced questions which provide information on a student's performance relative to students nationwide. These questions do not impact student scores; they are provided for parent and educator information.

Writing assessed at all grades. Writing is now incorporated throughout the testing program rather than individual tests, streamlining the testing system and reducing the number of tests students take.

Superintendent Woods sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan expressing a desire for more responsible testing.



Constructed Response questions on Georgia Milestones allow students to show how much they know.

LINKS TO USE

Letter to Sec. Duncan: bit.ly/gadoeESEA

SLO reduction: bit.ly/gadoeSLO

Assessment: bit.ly/gadoetesting

$4.5m

No-cost services provided by Georgia's testing vendor following content errors and disruptions in 2015

300

Teachers involved in standard-setting for Georgia Milestones

3

Achievement levels possible for the CRCT

4

Achievement levels possible for Georgia Milestones, better capturing and identifying the progression of student learning

ASSISTING STRUGGLING SCHOOLS

Giving struggling schools the tools they need to improve is an essential function of the Georgia Department of Education. It's our job to provide an equitable education to every student in Georgia. To do that, we must offer the resources and support necessary to help underperforming schools succeed.

GaDOE supports schools identified as Focus and Priority based on academic performance, graduation rate, or gaps in achievement between the school's lowest-achieving students and the state average. In response to the Opportunity School District proposed by Governor Nathan Deal, State School Superintendent Richard Woods charged the Department with expanding supports, making sure all struggling schools had the resources to succeed.

38 schools were removed from Focus/Priority status in 2015.

OUR EFFORTS

Structured Support. School and District Effectiveness Specialists work directly with school and district leadership to identify areas for improvement in Focus and Priority Schools, and establish a plan for making those improvements.

Mentor Schools. We've facilitated opportunities for principals to partner with the principal of a demographically similar school that has seen success in improved, sustained achievements. Schools can learn a lot from each other—these partnerships allow principals to work together and share ideas.

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Professional Development. GaDOE provides professional learning opportunities specifically for struggling schools, giving them a chance to identify specific areas for improvement and strategies to address them.

Empowering parents. Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT) help parents learn exactly where their child is in comparison to academic standards, where their child needs to be by the end of the school year, and how they can help support their child's learning outside the classroom.

> In my view, the Georgia Department of Education's role in this proposal is simple: it's our job to make sure **schools aren't failing in the first place**.
>
> *— Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent*

MOVING FORWARD

A cross-divisional plan. We're developing a comprehensive plan involving curriculum, special education, internal technology, assessment, CTAE, and School and District Effectiveness to target efforts and pull schools off the Opportunity School District eligibility list.

Better professional learning. We're working to improve the professional learning we offer to educators - enhancing the quality, personalization, and relevance and better matching professional development to its intended outcome.

HELPFUL DEFINITIONS

Priority Schools are among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the state, based on academic performance or graduation rate over a three-year period.

Focus Schools are among the lowest 10 percent of Title I schools in the state, based on gaps in achievement between the school's lowest-achieving students and the state average over a three-year period.

Opportunity School District-Eligible Schools qualify under the proposed Opportunity School District legislation, which defines "persistently failing" schools as those scoring below 60, for three consecutive years, on the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI). GaDOE will also offer support to these schools, providing professional learning and some additional funding, to make sure all struggling schools are getting the support they need.

CCRPI refers to the College and Career Ready Performance Index, the accountability system Georgia developed as part of its Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver.

Academic-Parent Teacher Teams help parents and teachers become committed partners in kids' academic success.

The GaDOE Strategic Plan outlines our steps to offer expanded support for struggling schools in Georgia.

LINKS TO USE

Our Position: bit.ly/gadoeonOSD

Priority/Focus Removal: bit.ly/gadoePF

School Improvement: bit.ly/gadoeSI

40

Schools that have signed up for the Mentor Schools program, with more to come

32

GaDOE School Effectiveness Specialists serving schools as they work to make improvements

39

RESA School Effectiveness Specialists serving schools as they work to make improvements

30

Academic Parent-Teacher Teams have been trained by GaDOE and by 2014-15 cohort teams

COLLABORATION

Where we stand: We believe it's only possible to move education forward by working together. We are working to foster relationships, strong communication, and meaningful collaboration in the best interest of Georgia's students.

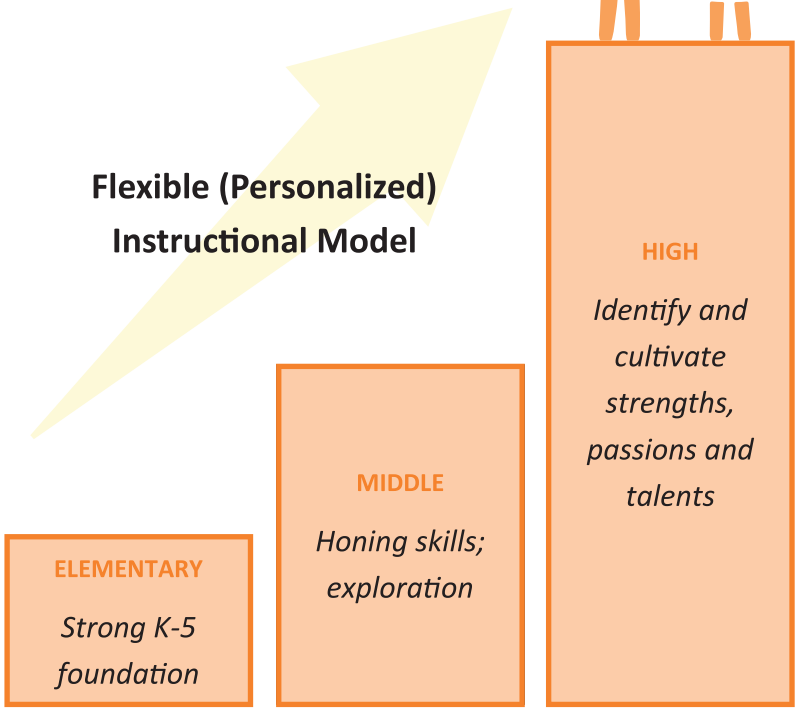
the YMCA
GaDOE is working with the Georgia YMCA to provide civics-related resources and opportunities for our state's social studies teachers.
DPH
GaDOE is working with the Georgia Department of Public Health to get students moving during the school day, through Georgia SHAPE and the Power Up for 30 program.
GET GEORGIA READING
GaDOE is a partner in the Get Georgia Reading campaign, which addresses literacy through a common agenda.
AMERICAN LEGION
GaDOE is working with the American Legion to provide copies of the U.S. Constitution for all Georgia fourth-graders.
GaDOE
Georgia Department of Education
The GaDOE is focused on collaboration with other organizations on behalf of students.
Advisory Councils
GaDOE works with advisory councils of teachers, parents, students, and superintendents to gather feedback on state policies.
Georgia Council on Economic Education
GaDOE is working with GCEE to provide copies of the U.S. Constitution for all Georgia fourth-graders.
RESAs
GaDOE is working with Georgia's 16 Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) to provide professional learning and localized supports for teachers and schools.
Georgia COUNCIL for the Arts
GaDOE is working with the Georgia Council for the Arts to assess the arts opportunities available to Georgia students in different regions of the state.
C O D E
GaDOE is working with CODE.org to provide computer science-related professional learning and resources to Georgia teachers.

Graduation

The core of what we do is making sure more Georgia students are graduating from high school *ready to learn, live, and lead* — which affords them the opportunity to move on to postsecondary education, the military, or directly into a meaningful career.

72.5%
State graduation rate (2014)

78.8%
State graduation rate (2015)



ONE DIPLOMA — MULTIPLE PATHS TO GET THERE

Expanding credit flexibility. For example, students can now receive math, science, or foreign language credit for computer science courses.

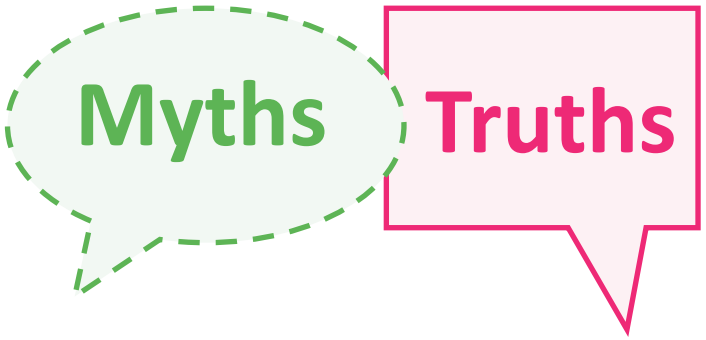
Focusing on the needs of students with disabilities. Our statewide plan to increase the graduation rates of students with disabilities includes targeting resources and support to the fifty most struggling districts as well as partnering with the *National Dropout Prevention Center*.

De-emphasizing tests. Eliminating unnecessary tests frees students from the former "one-size-fits-all" approach to graduation.

Strengthening CTAE and increasing dual enrollment. Students who complete a CTAE career pathway have a 89% graduation rate. Participating in *Move On When Ready* expands options and opportunities for our students.

Ensuring a strong foundation of the fundamentals. Our efforts to get students reading on grade level by third grade and on grade level in math by fifth grade will pave the path for future success

> More **personalized instruction**, coupled with multiple paths for graduation, **ensures a strong pipeline** leading to post-high school opportunities for our students.
>
> *— Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent*



There are many "myths" in Georgia education. You may have heard it said that Georgia's public schools are last in the nation, or that the state tells teachers how they should teach their students. Here, we've taken some common education myths and broken down the facts.

MYTH

Georgia's public schools are "last in the nation"

Truth Leading states in SAT scores have fewer than 10% of their students take the test; Georgia has over 80%

Many people believe this because of one statistic alone – SAT results. What's rarely discussed is that over 80% of Georgia's students take the SAT, where the leading states in SAT scores have fewer than 10% of students taking the test. That's not an excuse for lower results, but the percentage of students taking the test has an impact on overall results.

MYTH

Georgia's graduation rate is among the lowest in the country even though the requirements are the same for all states.

Truth Georgia has some of the strictest graduation requirements in the country

While the methodology used to calculate graduation rates is now the same across the country, the requirements to get a high school diploma vary from state to state. Georgia has some of the strictest requirements in the country. Many other states have different expectations for certain types of high school diplomas. Georgia only has one, so all students must meet the same requirements. Because of that, Georgia does not stack up well against other states' graduation rates.

MYTH

The state tells teachers what and how they must teach students.

Truth When it comes to curriculum, the state requires the *what* – the *how* is decided at the local level

The state only sets the requirements for what standards schools must teach students. Teachers have broad flexibility as to how they teach students the state standards. School districts, not the state, make decisions about the curriculum that will be used for their schools. The curriculum addresses the *how*; the standards address the *what*.

To **move Georgia education forward**, we must always act in the best interest of students. With students in mind, we join hands and work together. We support **classroom-centered, common-sense policies**. We work to strengthen the teaching profession, enhance literacy, and promote a blended STEAM curriculum. We advocate for responsible testing and accountability.

All of this, we do with **one thing in mind: the 1.7 million students** who are our foremost responsibility and greatest opportunity.

Georgia Department Of Education

Educating Georgia's Future 2015

GaDOE
Georgia Department of Education

Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent

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