

"Successfully Engaging Georgia's Parents"

PARENT ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

FALL 2014

"ESTABLISH A ROUTINE"

It's that time of year again. School is back in session! Whether this is your student's first year attending school or their last, the first few weeks can be a lot to take in. (Especially for us as parents, when we realize how quickly the time is rushing past – my daughter just began her freshman year of college!)

As your student settles back into his or her routine, or begins a new one, it is equally important for you to establish a routine of a different sort: a routine of communication with your student's teacher.

While juggling work, parenting, and all your other obligations, I

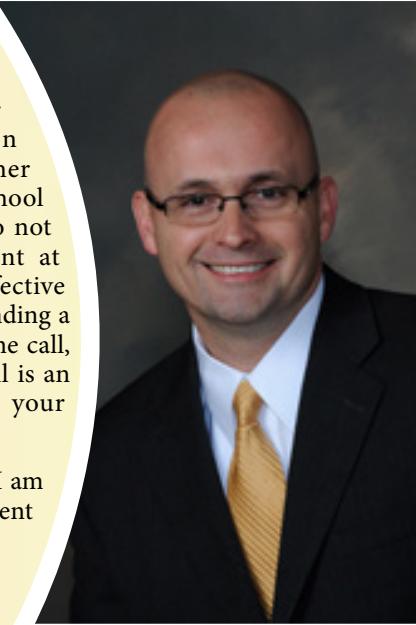
know it can be difficult to find enough hours in a day. Fortunately, you have an ally in your efforts to remain actively involved in your student's education – their teacher. By maintaining open, honest, and regular communication with him or her, you can always play an active role in your student's education.

If you feel as though your student needs help grasping a particular topic, express that to their teacher. Likewise, make sure it is easy for them to approach you with any concerns they may have. Listen to your student's teacher, take their suggestions and advice, and expect the same respect in return.

-DR. JOHN D. BARGE, STATE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

As the school year progresses, I encourage you to maintain weekly or monthly communication with your student's teacher and stay up to date on school events. Remember, you do not always have to be present at the school to maintain effective communication. Simply sending a text, making a weekly phone call, or writing a monthly email is an important investment in your student's education.

Enjoy the start of the year. I am wishing you and your student the best year yet!



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN THE FIELD

This is a series of articles written for parents by parent involvement coordinators.

"Listening for Change"

Sometimes the most significant and meaningful family-school partnerships are those sparked by a simple thought from a parent or guardian. Too often schools focus on their own interests instead of listening to families in order to understand their needs and develop genuine partnerships to support student learning.

As the parent involvement specialist at an elementary school, I planned a variety of informational meetings and events for parents and guardians. Among the regular attendees at these events was a grandmother who served as the primary caregiver for her two grandchildren. During a particular meeting held to gather ideas to help parents and guardians support student success, this grandmother shared that she would enjoy the opportunity to meet with other grandparents from the school. With more grandparents playing an active role in the lives of their grandchildren,

she thought it would be helpful to create a group for grandparents to share ideas and experiences in order to learn from each other about supporting their grandchildren in school.

Thanks to her input, a new group was established at the school, "Parents Who Are Grand". The group met regularly to receive information and resources to help grandparents assist their grandchildren's academic success. Perhaps the most meaningful result of these meetings was the ability for grandparents to connect with each other and provide support and inspiration for one another as they raised their grandchildren.

One grandparent had an idea, which led to a new opportunity for other grandparents that positively

impacted the children in their care. Therefore, I encourage all parents, guardians and grandparents to please remember that your suggestions and feedback, big or little, are needed to establish effective, meaningful, rewarding family-school partnerships and produce significant results in our schools!

Karen Aylwin
Parent Involvement Specialist
Paulding County School District

Are you a family engagement professional interested in sharing your story with parents? Please contact Nate Schult, Parent Engagement Specialist, at nschult@doe.k12.ga.us.

Stories of Success



Don't forget!

November is Parent Engagement Month!

Every year the state of Georgia recognizes the month of November as **Parent Engagement Month**, and schools across the state highlight the role parents play in a student's education. Additionally, the third Thursday in November is **National Parental Involvement Day**. This is a day for all parents to consider how they can get more involved in the education of their children.

To assist parents in the process, the Georgia Department of Education provides **Get the facts...get connected...GET INVOLVED!**

resources for parents and schools to encourage parent engagement. Each year, we also release an updated **Parent Engagement Month calendar** that provides specific activities for parents to do with their children at home each day in November to support learning and academic achievement. While we encourage parents to use these materials particularly during Parent Engagement Month, parents can also utilize them to engage in meaningful conversations and positive interactions with their children throughout the year.

Every student in Georgia should have a strong support system that values and encourages educational achievement and there is no one that can support this effort better than parents.

Be sure to visit our Parent Engagement Month page (tinyurl.com/nhhzpw6) in mid-October for updated 2014 materials. And check out the Parent Engagement Program's Twitter and Facebook pages every day during November for Parent Engagement facts, activities, and ideas!

SEPTEMBER 20, 2014

National Family Day – This day encourages families to make "family dinner" a regular and important feature in their lives.

OCTOBER 23, 2014

Lights on Afterschool – This day calls attention to the importance of afterschool programs for America's children, families, and communities so children are not left unsupervised at home.

NOVEMBER 1, 2014

Family Literacy Day – This day calls on families to read with each other in order to showcase the importance of family literacy programs.



NOVEMBER 20, 2014

National Parental Involvement Day – This day is a call to action for parents to commit to being an active part of their child's education.

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Vision Statement

The Parent Engagement Program believes that parents, schools, families, and communities working together can create meaningful partnerships that ultimately lead to significant gains across the board in student achievement.

Have a Question?

AskDOE

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