

Welcoming Environments: Is Your School Family-Friendly?



A Presentation Introducing Georgia's Family-Friendly Partnership School Initiative

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Switching Places: What if You...

- Had three little children and no child care?
- Didn't have a car or change for the bus?
- Didn't speak English and there was not a interpreter at the school?
- Were a grandparent raising a child and found the school environment is intimidating?
- Had a husband/partner who expects you to be at home in the evening?
- Did poorly in school and think your child's problems are your fault?
- Had to work Monday nights when the PTA always has it meetings?
- Saw the PTA as a snobby "in crowd" that ignores people who don't dress a certain way, speak English well, or live in a "nice" neighborhood?



Switching Places: What if You...

- The school is difficult to find within the community?
- The school does not encourage parents to volunteer?
- The parking is limited and there are not designated parent/visitor spaces?
- There is not a person designated to work with parents and address their concerns?
- It is difficult to get an appointment with the principal?
- The building does not reflect the diversity of the school population?
- You have been ignored or treated rudely by the school secretary?
- There is not a system in place to communicate school news and events with families regularly?



Today's Agenda

➤ Why

- Family-Friendly Self-Assessment
- Statistics and Research

➤ What

- Partnership Schools Overview
- National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships

➤ How

- Georgia's Virtual Family-Friendly Partnership Schools

➤ Questions



How Family-Friendly Is Your School?

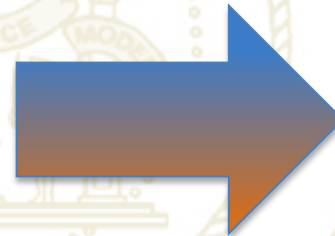


How Family - Friendly Is Your School?

Part of the Georgia Family - Friendly Partnership School Initiative

Before viewing the Georgia Virtual Family - Friendly Partnership Schools, take a minute to complete this self assessment. *How family - friendly is your school?* In column one place a check mark beside the items you feel represent your school. Then, after viewing the Georgia Virtual Family - Friendly Partnership Schools review your choices. *Do you still think your school is family - friendly in those areas?* Now using column two place an X beside the items you would like to improve or implement in your school.

- | | 1 | 2 |
|---|---|---|
| 1. The school is easy to find within the community and the front entrance of the building can be easily identified. | | |
| 2. The front of the school depicts a welcoming environment that naturally makes families and visitors feel accepted and at ease. | | |
| 3. The school provides various guest badges upon sign in representing either a parent, a volunteer, or a visitor. | | |
| 4. The front office staff is friendly and helpful. They assist and recognize visitors immediately, as well as answer the phone and treat visitors politely. | | |



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Did You Know...

that these are the children in your schools?

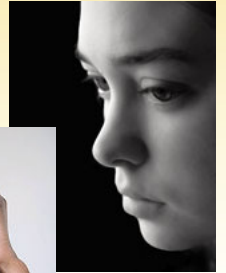


- According to the National Center for Children in Poverty at Columbia University, more than 74 million children (birth to age eighteen) live in the United States.
- Of those more than 74 million children, about 42% live in low-income families.



What Does That Mean?

- Low-income = unable to afford basic necessities.
- **31 MILLION = Low-Income**
- Poverty can impede a child's ability to learn and contribute to social, emotional and behavioral problems.
- **14 MILLION ≤ \$40,000**
- Sadly, the number of children in poverty has been rising steadily since 2000.



HOW DO WE GET FAMILIES INVOLVED?

Change the MINDSET!



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Core Beliefs

- Parents have dreams for their children and want the best for them.
- All parents have the capacity to support their children's learning.
- Parents and school staff should be equal partners.
- Responsibility for building partnerships between school and home rests primarily with school staff, especially school leaders.

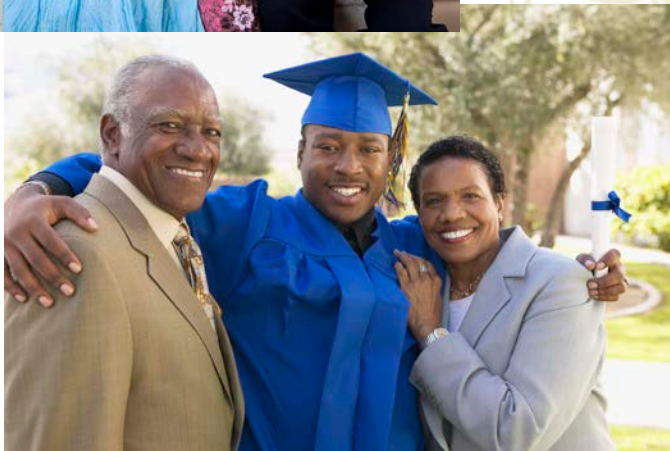


**Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships*, by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies (New York, NY: The New Press, 2007).



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Parents Are More Likely to Become Involved When:



- Parents understand that they **SHOULD** be involved.
- Parents feel **CAPABLE** of making a contribution.
- Parents feel **INVITED** by their school and children.

(Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997)



Why Welcoming Environments?

According to the book *Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide for Family-School Partnerships* by Anne Henderson, Karen Mapp, Vivian Johnson, and Don Davies (2007) **welcoming environments** provide parents with a reciprocal relationship where not only do they feel that they belong to the school, but the school belongs to them.



Where is Your School?

When it comes to partnering with families and the community, how does your school rank?

There are four levels of achievement when defining schools based on partnership:



- * Partnership School
- * Open-Door School
- * Come-if-We-Call School
- * Fortress School



Partnership School

Bridging the Gap and Connecting to the Parents of Children in Your Schools...



All families and communities have something great to offer—we do whatever it takes to work closely together to make sure every single student succeeds.



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Five Categories

There are five categories that help indicate your particular type of school:

1. Building Relationships
2. Linking to Learning
3. Addressing Differences
4. Supporting Advocacy
5. Sharing Power



Partnership School:

1. Building Relationships



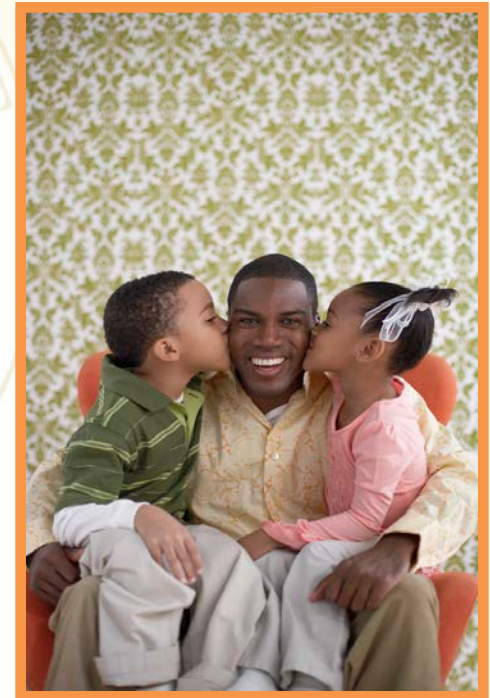
- Family center is always open and full of interesting learning materials to borrow
- Home visits are made to new families
- Activities honor families' contributions
- Building is open to community use and social services are available to families



Partnership School:

2. Linking to Learning

- All family activities connect to what students are learning
- Parents and teachers look at student work and test results together
- Community groups offer tutoring and homework programs at the school
- Students' work goes home every week, with a scoring guide



Partnership School:

3. Addressing Differences



- Interpreters are readily available
- Teachers use books and materials about families' cultures
- PTA includes all families
- Local groups help staff reach parents



Partnership School:

4. Supporting Advocacy

- There is a clear, open process for resolving problems
- Teachers contact families each month to discuss student progress
- Student-led parent-teacher conferences are held three times a year for thirty minutes



Partnership School:

5. Sharing Power



- Parents and teachers research issues such as prejudice and tracking
- Parent group is focused on improving student achievement
- Families are involved in all major decisions

- Parents can use the school's office equipment (i.e. phone)
- Staff work with local organizations to improve the school and neighborhood



PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships



The focus is not what schools should do to involve parents – it is what parents, schools, and communities can do **together** to support student success.



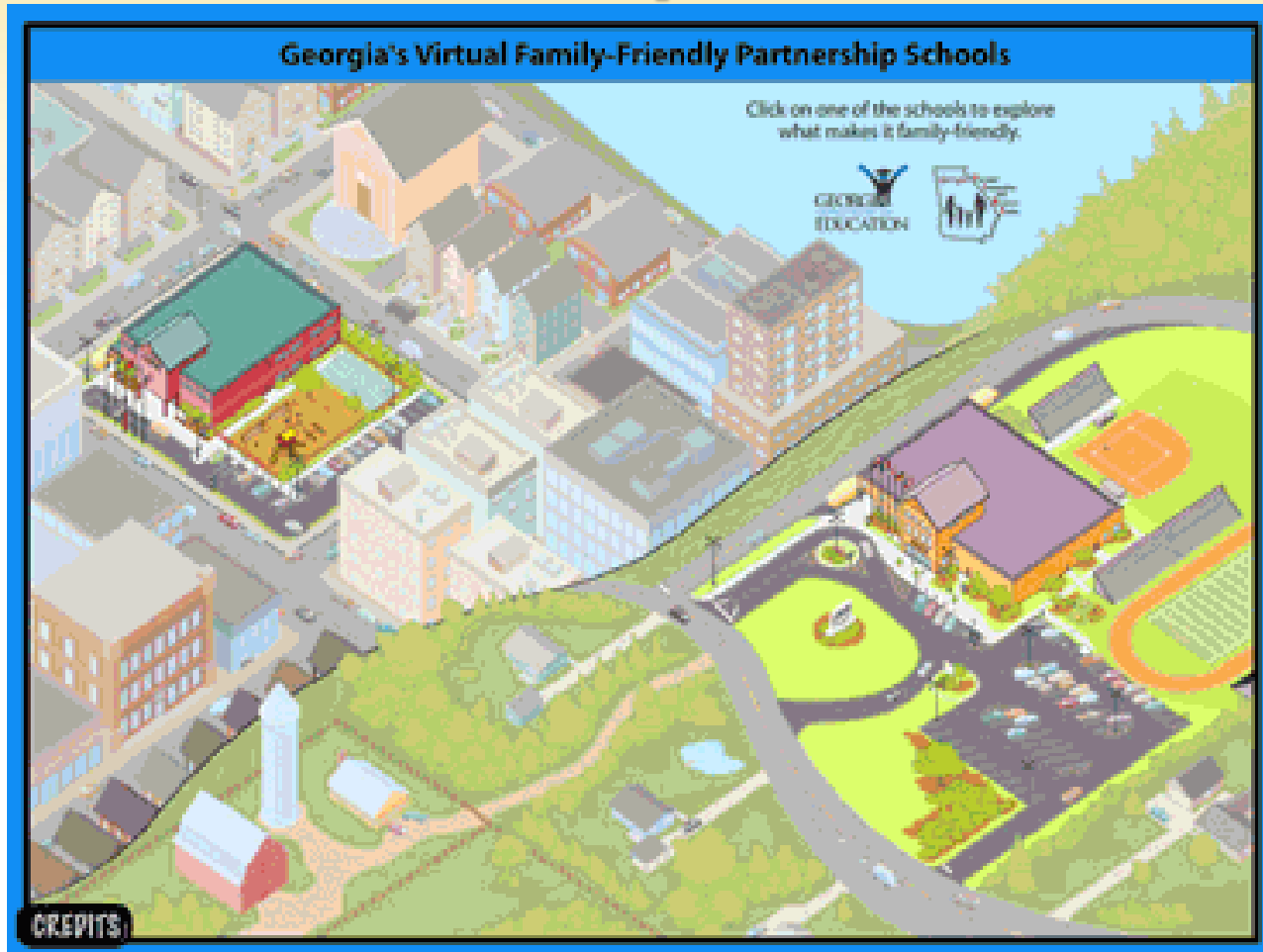
Welcoming All Families into the School Community



Families are **active** participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.



Georgia's Family-Friendly Partnership Schools



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Where to Start: Data Based Decision Making



Family - Friendly School Parent Survey

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For the following questions, please circle the answer that you agree with the most:

I feel welcome and accepted at my child's school.	YES	NO	NOT SURE	DOES NOT APPLY
I enjoy visiting my child's school.	YES	NO	NOT SURE	DOES NOT APPLY
The school has parking spaces for parents.	YES	NO	NOT SURE	DOES NOT APPLY
I am able to find my way easily around the school.	YES	NO	NOT SURE	DOES NOT APPLY
The school has opportunities that allow me to meet and speak with the staff at my child's school.	YES	NO	NOT SURE	DOES NOT APPLY
My child's principal and assistant principal are available and easy to approach.	YES	NO	NOT SURE	DOES NOT APPLY
I am comfortable going to the front office when visiting my child's school.	YES	NO	NOT SURE	DOES NOT APPLY
The school's front office staff is nice, polite, and helpful.	YES	NO	NOT SURE	DOES NOT APPLY
The school has a translator for non-English speaking families when needed.	YES	NO	NOT SURE	DOES NOT APPLY
The school provides written materials in languages other than English for non-English speaking families.	YES	NO	NOT SURE	DOES NOT APPLY



Family - Friendly Partnership School Walk - Through

Part of the Georgia Family - Friendly Partnership School Initiative

School Name: _____ City, State: _____

Type of School (Please Circle): Elementary Middle High

At this school, I am a (Please Circle All that Apply): Parent Teacher Administrator Staff Community Member Other

For the following, please circle the box that you observe during your walk-through:

SA – Strongly Agree; A – Agree; N – Neutral; D – Disagree; SD – Strongly Disagree

WELCOMING ALL FAMILIES

Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

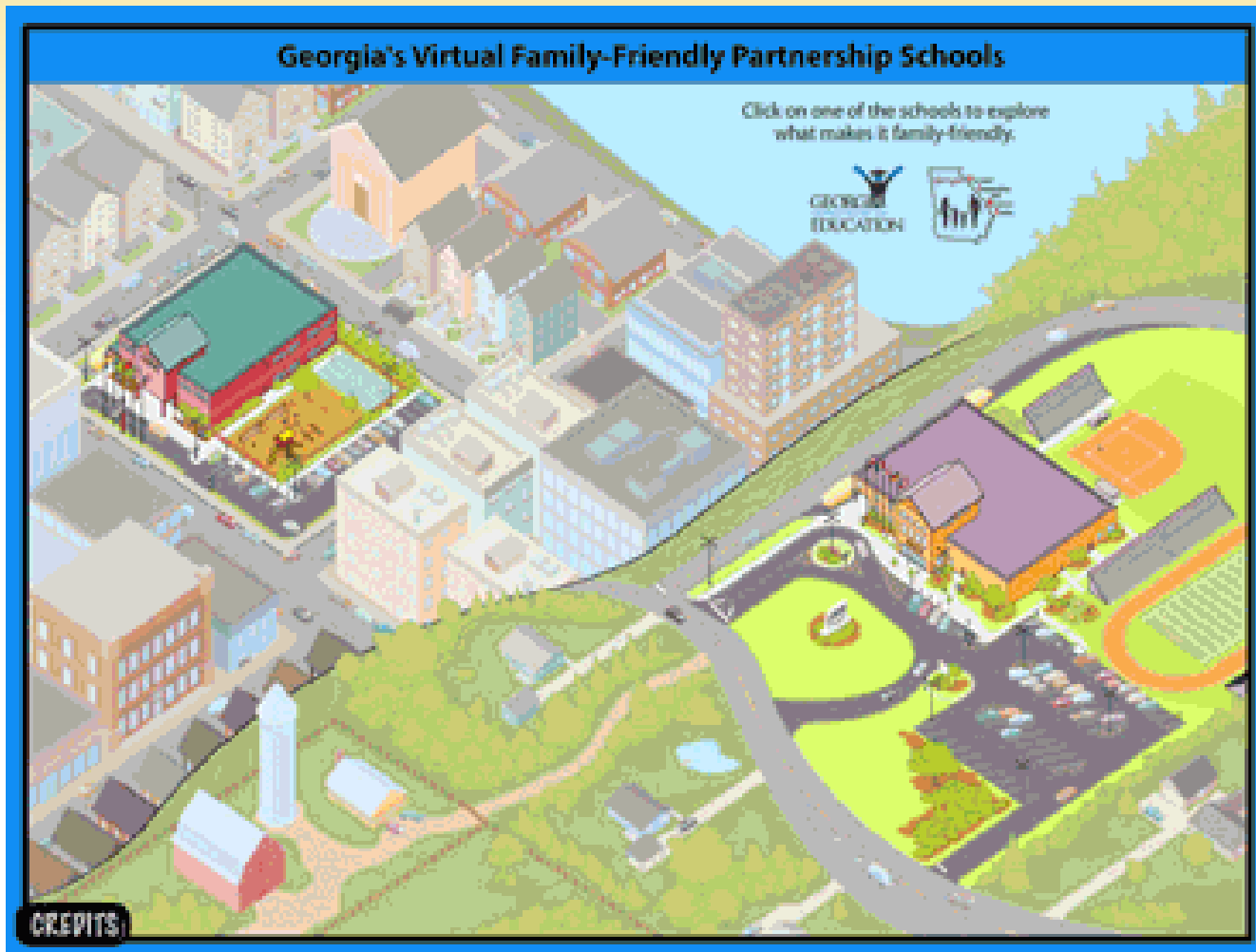
"Parents report that a welcoming process creates a sense of belonging. Not only do parents feel that they belong to the school, but they also feel that the school belongs to them." (2)

There are dedicated parking spots for parents at the front entrance of the school.	SA	A	N	D	SD
The school provides opportunities for parent training and education.	SA	A	N	D	SD
The front office staff is helpful and friendly to all visitors	SA	A	N	D	SD
The school has established support networks that are available to parents.	SA	A	N	D	SD
The school uses home visits to share information with families.	SA	A	N	D	SD
The principal is open and available to parents to discuss various issues and schedule meetings.	SA	A	N	D	SD
The school makes it easy for parents that do not speak English to participate in activities or receive information over the phone or in person.	SA	A	N	D	SD



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Let's Put the Tool to Use!



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Are you a Georgia Family – Friendly Partnership School?



Apply for the Award!



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It's On the Website...



No Child LEFT BEHIND

College and Career Ready Performance Index

WAIVER Application



- By State
- By District
- By School

Press Releases

Release Date	Title
3/27/2012	Georgia Teacher named National Online Teacher of the Year Finalist
3/23/2012	2012 Governor's Honors Program (GHP) Finalists Selected
3/20/2012	Focus Schools
3/14/2012	GEORGIA PRIORITY SCHOOLS
3/8/2012	Marietta Center for Advanced Academics Designated as Georgia's First Official STEM School

Click the First Search Option: Parent Engagement Program

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It's On the Website...

The screenshot shows the Georgia Department of Education website. The header includes the department logo, the name "Georgia Department of Education" with the tagline "Making Education Work For All Georgians!", a search bar, a language selector, social media links, and a photo of Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent. The navigation menu includes Home, Students, Parents, Teachers, Business & Industry, and Contact Us. The main content area is titled "Parent Engagement Program" and features a sidebar with a menu of programs, a central text block with images of parents and students, and a right-hand column with contact information and links to various resources.

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Georgia Department of Education > School Improvement > Federal Programs > Parent Engagement Program

Parent Engagement Program

Alternative Education Program

Federal Programs

GAPPS Analysis

Governor's Honors Program

Professional Learning

School Improvement Services

Teacher and Leader Effectiveness

Contact Information

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Parent Engagement Programs' Links

Georgia's Family-Friendly Partnership School Initiative

Best GET INVOLVED Parent Videos

Information for Parents

Parent Engagement Month 2011

Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council

PIC Meetings: Minutes and Materials

Presentations

Modules and Workshop Templates

360-Degrees of Family Engagement Series

Parent Engagement Resources

External Partners

Parent Engagement is an ongoing process that increases active participation, communication, and collaboration between parents, schools, and communities with the goal of educating the whole child to ensure student achievement and success.

The research is clear that when schools and families support each other, students of all backgrounds and various abilities achieve at higher levels. As a part of Title I, the Parent Engagement Program at the Georgia Department of Education is focused on working with our partners in local school districts and the community to provide parents with the best opportunity and resources to help their child succeed in school. The goal of the Parent Engagement Program is to increase student achievement by engaging and empowering parents, and other stakeholders, to become actively involved in their children's education across all grade levels. To achieve this goal, the Parent Engagement Program:

1. Develops and delivers communications to parents and families on the factors that influence student success.

Family – Friendly Partnership School



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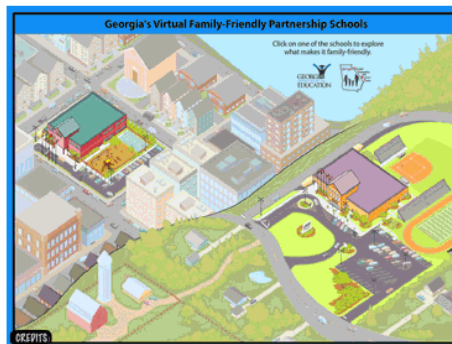
Georgia Department of Education > External Affairs and Policy > AskDOE > Georgia's Family-Friendly Partnership School Initiative

AskDOE

- Charter Schools
- Communications
- Excellence Recognition
- Governmental Affairs
- Policy
- State Board of Education

Georgia's Family-Friendly Partnership School Initiative

A partnership between Georgia Department of Education and Georgia Parental Information and Resource Center (GA PIRC)



Why Create A Family-Friendly Partnership School?

According to the book *Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide for Family-School Partnerships* by Anne Henderson, Karen Mapp, Vivian Johnson, and Don Davies (2007) welcoming environments provide parents with a reciprocal relationship where not only do they feel that they belong to the school, but the school belongs to them. Therefore, this sense of belonging motivates parents to be more active in their children's education, which in turn ultimately has a positive impact on student achievement!

Welcoming Environments:

- Make students want to learn!

Contact Information

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Handouts

- [Georgia's Family - Friendly Partnership School Awards!](#)
- [Welcoming Environments Overview Powerpoint](#)
- [Welcome Letter](#)
- [Workshop Handout](#)
- [Workshop Survey](#)
- [Parent Survey - English](#)
- [Parent Survey - Spanish](#)
- [Walk-Through Exercise](#)
- [Elementary Scenarios](#)
- [Middle-High Scenarios](#)



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Questions



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