



*“Successfully Engaging Georgia’s Parents”*

# PARENT ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2014

## *“LET’S CONTINUE TO PLAY A ROLE”*

The last few years have been exceptional for Georgia’s students. High school graduation rates have increased, more Georgia students are taking and passing Advanced Placement (AP) exams, and Georgia is exceeding the nation in growth in both participation rates and passing rates on those exams. This level of progress is impossible to achieve without active and engaged parents supporting our students and teachers.

I have always believed that parent engagement is paramount for student success. After traveling all over

Georgia and witnessing firsthand the impact engaged parents have on students, that belief is stronger than ever. I was honored to participate in the “I CAN Play a Role” campaign launch last month at the state capitol and to join with thousands of parents across the state pledging to play a role in their child’s education.

This spring, I watched my daughter accept her high school diploma. I cannot express how thankful I was, as she walked across the stage, to have played a role in her education through the years. Parents, my wish for you is to experience the joy of

that moment. I want you to have the pleasure of watching your children succeed in school and reach their highest potential.

I want to thank you for giving me the great honor and privilege of serving the students and parents of this state. I look to the future of education in Georgia with great optimism because I know our parents and families are dedicated to playing a role in the success of our students. I wish you and your family a happy and healthy holiday season!

*-DR. JOHN D. BARGE, STATE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT*



## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN THE FIELD

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

### *Stories of Success*

#### *“What Can We Do?”*

As a district parent involvement coordinator, I work with our Title I schools to ensure that parents know to become a valuable part of their child’s academic success. The question often arises from parents, ‘What can I do?’. In elementary school, parents and families are coming to the school on a regular basis. By middle school, parents may not be a visible, but they are still attending meetings and programs. Unfortunately by high school, parent engagement is limited as parents often feel that they do not need to be as involved anymore.

How do we get parents engaged at all levels? First, we listen to what they have to say. All of the schools in my district are school-wide Title I, so it is important that we listen to our parents and get their input about the programs and activities. Surveys are such a critical tool in understanding the needs of our parents and families and to improve the opportunities for parents to be involved. We realized that some parents do not have positive school experiences;

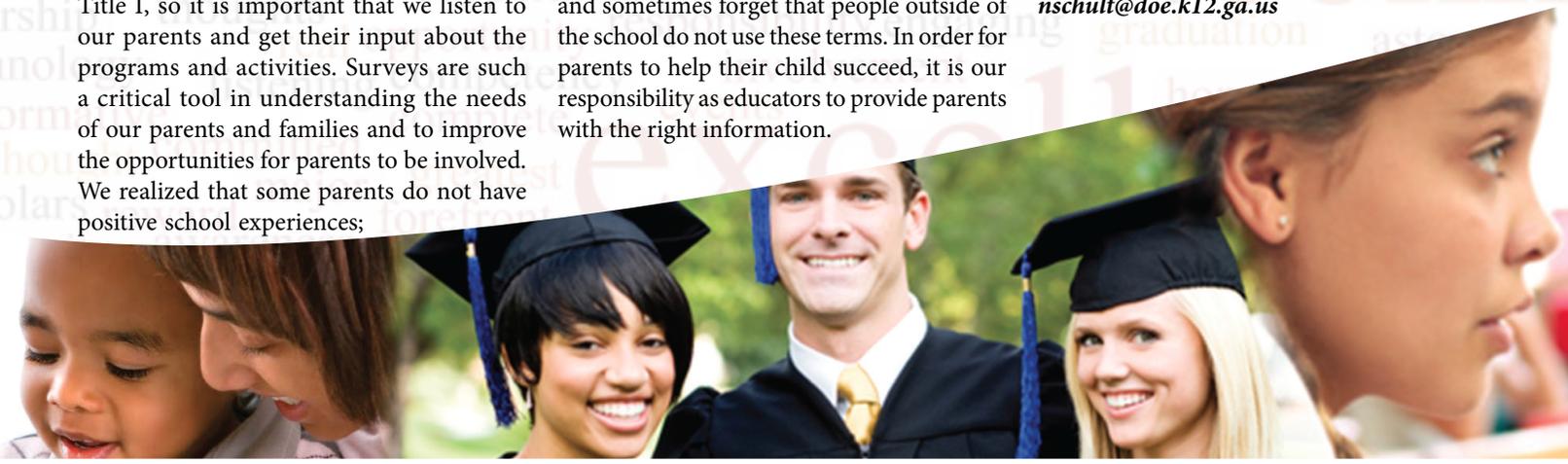
therefore, holding meetings and workshops away from the school campus became a major objective. We must go out into the homes and community to meet our parents and talk with them. Parents, you are a vital part to maximizing academic achievement.

Secondly, we want our parents to be comfortable and not feel intimidated by school personnel. I have never met a parent or family member who did not want their child to be successful, but some may not feel comfortable asking for help or know how to provide assistance. One way schools can be less intimidating is to use language that is understandable and avoid education jargon. As educators, we live in a world of acronyms and sometimes forget that people outside of the school do not use these terms. In order for parents to help their child succeed, it is our responsibility as educators to provide parents with the right information.

As parents, what can you do? Do not be afraid to ask your child’s school and teacher questions. Be sure to communicate frequently with the school’s parent involvement coordinator. Voice your concerns by completing surveys, providing feedback and attending meetings or workshops. Most importantly, get involved in your child’s school.

**Mary Ann King**  
District Parent Involvement Coordinator  
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*Are you a family engagement professional interested in sharing your story with parents? Please contact Nate Schult, Parent Engagement Specialist, at [nenschult@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:nenschult@doe.k12.ga.us)*



# Get to Know: Georgia's Statewide Longitudinal Data System

The Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) is a free tool that collects individual student data to help parents, teachers, and schools improve achievement levels. With engaging graphs and charts, SLDS presents important student information in a way that makes it easy for parents and educators to pinpoint student strengths and weaknesses overtime.

SLDS empowers parents by giving them 24-hour access to their child's statewide assessment and Lexile score history as far back as the 2006-2007 school year. Additionally, parents can access online instructional resources that are directly

aligned to Georgia course standards. This allows parents to give their child extra practice on standards where there are opportunities for growth, or to accelerate students who can work on standards that are above their current course level. Parents can also utilize SLDS information to facilitate meaningful discussions during teacher conferences.

Once your child's district has enabled the SLDS Parent Portal, parents can access it from a link within their school's Student Information System (SIS). This allows access to SLDS without having to remember any additional web addresses, logins, or



passwords. For the parents' convenience, help documents are posted on their school's SLDS Parent Portal, and district trainings are also available. For more information on how to log on to your school's SLDS, contact your child's teacher.

## JANUARY 8 - 14, 2015

### **National Letter Writing Week** –

This week was set aside to help people remember how satisfying it is to both write and receive a handwritten letter, so parents are encouraged to get out the pens and paper and write letters with their children.

## JANUARY 29, 2015

**National Puzzle Day** – This day promotes parents solving puzzles with their kids and teaching them how to think “outside the box”.

# Save the Dates

## FEBRUARY

**Parent Leadership Month** – This month is celebrated to expand opportunities for parent leaders to participate in meaningful parent leadership activities at the local, state and national levels.



## FEBRUARY 11, 2015

**National Inventors Day** – This day celebrates the birthday of Thomas Edison by encouraging parents to create new things with their children.

## Program Staff

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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

404-656-2800 ❖ [askdoe@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:askdoe@doe.k12.ga.us)

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