

GaDOE Updates

GaDOE.org

Back to School 2016

FROM SUPERINTENDENT WOODS



Over the last several weeks, more than 1.7 million students have entered Georgia's public schools - from kindergarteners just starting their journey, to high school seniors ready to take the next step.

They'll be welcomed by more than 113,000 dedicated teachers. As Georgia's School Superintendent, I want to take a moment to personally welcome every one of our students and teachers back to school. I offer my best wishes to each of you for a safe, successful year of learning.

There is so much going on in Georgia that is great for students. This year, we have the opportunity to continue improving learning for our students as we work to create Georgia's state plan responsive to the Every Student Succeeds Act (the replacement for the federal law commonly known as No Child Left Behind). I encourage you to visit gadoe.org/ESSA and stay tuned for more information. There will be many opportunities to provide feedback and help shape the future of Georgia education.

To our parents, students, teachers, leaders, and community partners -- I cannot thank you enough for all you do. Have a fantastic year, everyone.

Richard Woods

GEORGIA'S EDUCATION PLAN

Q&A: Georgia's ESSA Plan

Georgia is currently working on a state plan to address the Every Student Succeeds Act, the replacement for the federal law commonly known as No Child Left Behind. ESSA allows states and local schools/districts to make many education decisions, rather than responding to overreaching federal requirements.

Where is Georgia in the process of developing an ESSA state plan?

We've brought together an *Advisory Committee* of 40 individuals representing state organizations and agencies, and six *Working Committees* of five GaDOE staff members and 15 stakeholders each. The Working Committees are charged with gathering public feedback and developing Georgia's draft state plan for submission to the Advisory Committee. Initial meetings were held in July.

How can I get involved?

We've scheduled meetings across the state where educators, parents, students, and all interested members of the community can provide feedback. There will also be a survey opportunity for individuals who can't make it to a meeting. See page 2 for more details.

Why is it important to share my feedback on Georgia's ESSA state plan?

The Every Student Succeeds Act transfers power over many education decisions back to states and local schools/districts. Georgia's state plan will address standards, assessments/testing, school and district accountability, and special help for struggling schools and students. Providing feedback through a meeting or survey allows you to join us in shaping the future of Georgia's education system.

Learn more at gadoe.org/ESSA



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GEORGIA'S EDUCATION PLAN

Save the date for ESSA meetings

Members of the public are invited to provide feedback on Georgia's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan at the following meetings across the state. View specific locations and details for each meeting at bit.ly/ESSAinGA. We hope to see you soon at one of the meetings!

- August 24: Columbia County
- August 29: Habersham County
- September 1: Dougherty County
- September 14: Fulton County
- September 19: Muscogee County
- October 12: Laurens County
- October 13: Chatham County
- October 17: Gordon County

ESSA survey opportunity forthcoming

For individuals who are unable to make it to an in-person ESSA meeting, there will still be an opportunity to provide feedback on the direction of Georgia's education system through an online survey. Subscribe to email updates from the Department of Education at bit.ly/gadoenewsletter, and you'll be notified when the survey is sent out.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Students at Woodland Middle School (Fulton County Schools) receive a warm welcome from faculty and staff as the school year begins. Photo shared by @WoodlandVoice with the #GAFirstDay hashtag.

AROUND THE STATE

Georgia Milestones scores increase for most subjects

Student scores for the 2016 administration of the Georgia Milestones Assessment System show increases in most subject areas. The percent of students achieving the 'Proficient Learner' level and above increased for 23 of the 32 tests. Learn more at bit.ly/16milestones.

8 high-stakes tests eliminated, teacher evaluations revised

In response to Senate Bill 364, the State Board of Education voted to approve a new rule that reduces the weight of test scores (student growth measures) in the Teacher Keys Evaluation System (TKES) and Leader Keys Evaluation System (LKES), eliminates eight high-stakes tests, and more. Learn more at bit.ly/responsibleaccountability.

CTAE graduation rate rises to 94.9%

The graduation rate for students involved in Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) has risen to 94.9 percent in Georgia -- a strong indicator of the relevance of these programs and their impact on student outcomes. This represents a six percent increase in the 2015 graduation rate for CTAE pathway completers, up from 88.9 percent in 2014.

JOIN OUR CONVERSATION

Have a great photo, video, or update from the first day of school? Share it with us using the #GAFirstDay hashtag on Twitter.