

# GaDOE Updates

Educating Georgia's Future

April 2015

## FROM SUPERINTENDENT WOODS



There is a lot of good news in Georgia education right now. In the last month, two great educational leaders in our state have brought national attention to Georgia.

Dr. Philip Lanoue, superintendent of the Clarke County School

District, was named National Superintendent of the Year.

And Dr. Vickie Reed, Murray County superintendent, was named a "Leader to Learn from" by *Education Week*. I'm thrilled for both of these leaders. It's an honor to say that these nationally recognized superintendents are from Georgia -- but more importantly, this is good news for our kids.

Strong leadership is essential as we work to personalize education for all of Georgia's students. And just like Dr. Lanoue and Dr. Reed, the strongest leaders are the ones who listen. As the State Department of Education leaders, we need to listen to students, parents, teachers, staff, business and community members, and integrate their feedback into our decisions and processes.

As always, I invite you to share your ideas and concerns -- my email address is [rwoods@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:rwoods@doe.k12.ga.us) -- because I want to provide that listening leadership at the state level. But it all starts at the local level, and I'm proud these great local leaders are serving Georgia's kids.

## AROUND THE DEPARTMENT

### School Climate Star Ratings released

The first-ever School Climate Star Ratings, which are based on discipline data; attendance data; and parent, student, and personnel surveys from the 2013-14 school year, have been released. Research has shown that a school's climate -- its culture -- impacts student achievement. Learn more at [www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org) under "News & Announcements."

## Student Art at the Capitol

### STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

For a month each year, Georgia's Capitol Hill is flooded with art. The annual Capitol Art Exhibit, sponsored by the Georgia Art Education Association (GAEA), brings a display of student works to the Capitol. Student contributors range from elementary to high school, sculptors to sketch artists.

Each work joins a rich tradition dating back to the early 80s. Since then, the exhibit has shared "the exceptional, creative ability of Georgia's students," according to GAEA representatives.



Superintendent Woods recently spoke to students whose work was displayed, telling them the event was a perfect example of the value of arts in education. "This is why I am an advocate for art education, and why my administration is prioritizing the arts," he said.

"Integrating arts instruction helps us to meet students at their level, to meet them where they learn."

The showcase comes with a unique twist: each student who enters is required to write to their legislative representatives.



This serves as a form of art advocacy and a lesson for students on the democratic process. It's a meaningful experience for all of the participating students, organizers say -- as is the entire experience of the exhibition.

"Art is the class that I most look forward to each day," said North Gwinnett High senior Alexandra Sorto. "To be exhibited just validates my love for this subject."

Read a longer version of this story at [www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org), under "News & Announcements"

## FROM GEORGIA VIRTUAL SCHOOL

### A statewide day of professional learning

On April 25, over 250 faculty members, administrators, and support staff of the Georgia Virtual School will gather for the semi-yearly Professional Learning Symposium (PLS) to be held at Kennesaw State University.

This one-day event brings online teachers into a face-to-face environment for learning, networking and training. This will be the 19th consecutive PLS. Attendees will learn about new processes and strategies of the program, listen to presentations about online learning across the nation, and make individual plans within their department for improving instruction to the over 24,000 students that enroll in our program each year.

The administration at GaVS is positive this spring's PLS will continue to be one of the best professional development opportunities to online teachers as it increasingly meets and exceeds the results of other virtual schools within the state and nation. GaVS will conduct another PLS in October to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the program that has served more than 70,000 students across the state.

Any Georgia public school student can take courses through GaVS. For more information, visit [gavirtuallschool.org](http://gavirtuallschool.org).



## QUICK QUOTES FROM SUPT. WOODS

**“Our students are the ones** who live with our decisions. We must take the time to listen.”

More: <http://bit.ly/1aNP0j4> or scan QR code



**“Our children are not widgets** or manufactured parts, so we have to personalize education for them.”

More: <http://bit.ly/1BJ5wGn> or scan QR code



## GA's Public Schools in the News

### Murray County's Reed a 'Leader to Learn From'

Murray County Superintendent Dr. Vickie Reed is one of 16 educators named in Education Week's annual Leaders to Learn From report, chosen for incorporating student concerns in district decisions. To read, visit [leaders.edweek.org](http://leaders.edweek.org)

### Q&A with Superintendent Woods

In the spring edition of the Georgia Association of Educators' KNOW Magazine, find an extensive Q&A with Superintendent Woods. To read, visit <http://bit.ly/1ECWCRN>.

## AROUND THE DISTRICTS

### Georgia's National Superintendent of the Year

A Georgia school leader has been recognized as the nation's top superintendent. Dr. Philip Lanoue, superintendent of the Clarke County School District, was named National Superintendent of the Year by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) in March. Lanoue has served as Clarke County's superintendent since 2009. Superintendent Woods said: "I'm proud to say that the best superintendent in the nation is from Georgia! I know students will benefit from Dr. Lanoue's influence for years to come."



Superintendent Woods with National Superintendent of the Year Dr. Phil Lanoue

### Have news for GaDOE Updates?

Email Meghan Frick at [mfrick@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:mfrick@doe.k12.ga.us)