

Op-ed by Superintendent Woods: The words that built America – celebrating Constitution Day

Today – September 16, 2016 – is so much more than just another day on the calendar. It is Constitution Day, a time for us to celebrate and learn more about the words that built America, and to share that celebration with our students.

As a social studies teacher, as the child of a military family, and as a proud citizen of the United States, it's my strong belief that we should give our students ample opportunities to learn about the Constitution – the bedrock of our beliefs and values as a nation. It is my commitment that the students of Georgia will carefully study our founding documents, on Constitution Day and throughout the year.

The Georgia Department of Education's [strategic plan](#) sets forth our vision to create an education system that prepares students to lead – fostering soft skills, civic awareness, learning by doing, teamwork, innovative thinking, and real-world relevance and application. Knowledge of our founding documents gives students the foundation they need to become active participants in the civic life of their community, state, and nation.

This year at the state level, we're celebrating Constitution Day in an exciting way. On Tuesday, September 20, we're joining with the Georgia Center for Civic Engagement to present workshops for hundreds of eighth grade Georgia Studies teachers and high school government teachers. These workshops equip our educators with fresh resources and ideas as they teach our students about the Constitution and founding principles of our country.

To Georgia's teachers – in social studies and across all content areas – I'd like to thank you for marking this important occasion with your students. I'd also like to point you toward a few resources that will help you share information about America's founding documents, today and throughout the year:

- [Constitution booklet for elementary students – “The Words that Built America”](#) (also includes Declaration of Independence, Pledge of Allegiance, lyrics to National Anthem, and teacher resources)
- [State social studies resource bank](#)
- [GaDOE Social Studies on Twitter](#)

I know the great teachers of our state will find innovative ways to bring the Constitution and founding documents to life for students – and I'd love for you to share them with us. Post your Constitution Day activities on social media with the hashtag #constitutionweekGA, or send an email to social@doe.k12.ga.us.

To our students, I want to encourage you to learn as much as you can about our Constitution and founding documents and to understand the rights you hold as a citizen of this great nation. I hope you will always be excited to learn more about our nation's history, and to play a role in its future.

To all the citizens of Georgia, happy Constitution Day. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent you in our government of the people, by the people, and for the people.