

GaDOE Updates

Educating Georgia's Future

August 2015

FROM SUPERINTENDENT WOODS



Georgia's school districts have different start dates -- so when you read this, school may have started already, or you may still be looking forward to the first day. Either way, whether you are a parent, student, teacher, or community member, I'd like to wish you a great first day.

As the year begins, I'd like to let you know about a new platform we've created to help schools and districts share their good news. It's called **Educating Georgia's Future**, and it will serve as a place for educators, parents, business leaders, legislators, and community members to come together, learn more, get involved, and share ideas.

I invite you to connect with Educating Georgia's Future on Facebook (facebook.com/GAsFuture), Twitter (@GAsFuture), and online (educatinggeorgiasfuture.org). There, you can learn more about the initiative and find out how you can submit your own good news.

We face many issues in public education, and we're committed to tackling them head-on. But there's also great work happening in classrooms all over Georgia, and we're committed to identifying the educators, students and partners behind that innovation and shouting it from the rooftops.

Thank you for your support of public education, and again, happy first day of school!

SOCIAL MEDIA VOICES

We asked our social media community to recognize the great school and district employees in their lives. Here are a few of the responses:

"Lyons Upper Elementary Principal Tabitha Nobles and AP Rhonda Stone are the best...I love my job because of their support." -GinaBrad Bell, Facebook

"Wayne Flowers and Lisa Godwin helped me realize that there were teachers who invested themselves in their students." -Denise Hall Blackmon, Facebook

"BCES School Nurse Kim Harris...knows the kiddos and the staff and takes care of everyone." -K Ellen Hagan, Facebook

PARENT ENGAGEMENT SPOTLIGHT

3 back-to-school tips for parents

Your children have finished their summer adventures and are transitioning back to rich learning experiences at school. As the year begins, here are some simple ways you can partner with the school to prepare your child for academic success in the new school year.

Attend Orientation Meetings

Some schools hold orientation meetings to give your child a chance to meet the teacher and learn where the classroom is and how to get there. These exposures to new daily routines will reduce your child's anxiety on the first day and help them build a relationship with the teacher. Contact your school to find out if it has an orientation and be sure to attend.

Continue Routines at Home

Good routines at home give your child a sense of security and help them develop self-discipline. By regularly showing an active interest in their education, you emphasize that it's important to be prepared for school and be engaged in learning. Ask about what they did during the school day and any challenges they may have encountered. Set up a designated space and time for homework.

Ask the Teacher

If your children identify academic challenges and you need help in assisting them, consult with the teacher about activities or strategies you can use at home to support your children's learning. Link activities, even recreational ones, to learning.

These tips were compiled by the GaDOE Parent Engagement Program, which is funded by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and strives to increase student achievement by building effective partnerships between parents and schools. For other ways to remain engaged in your child's education follow the program at facebook.com/GaDOEParentEngagement and twitter.com/GaDOEParents.



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STATE SPOTLIGHT

Educating Georgia's Future Workforce

We're launching **Educating Georgia's Future Workforce**, an initiative aimed at increasing Georgia's focus on career education and expanding partnerships with the business community. Major components of the initiative include developing a Superintendent's Business and Industry Advisory Council, offering an International Skills Diploma Seal to students who demonstrate a strong interest in international business and policy, and more.



"Georgia's students must leave our schools with skills that prepare them for higher education or to immediately begin a career," State School Superintendent Richard Woods said. "It's essential that we offer the very best career education available, responsive to the changing economic landscape."

Learn more about the Educating Georgia's Future Workforce initiative at bit.ly/gadoeworkforce.

IN THE CLASSROOM

Reduced SLOs mean fewer tests for students

Beginning with the 2015-2016 school year, students will take fewer tests due to a reduction of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) required for schools to administer. The SLO assessment reduction will reduce the amount of testing in all schools and classrooms, and lessen the financial and human resources burden on all districts. "We have to get back to the business of personalizing, not standardizing, education for our students," Superintendent Woods said. "The fewer standardized tests we have in place, the more our teachers can do what they do best -- teach." Learn more about the reduction of SLO assessments at bit.ly/gadoeSLO.

AROUND THE DEPARTMENT

Supt. Woods seeks student advisers

State School Superintendent Richard Woods is seeking middle and high school students to serve on his fall 2015 Student Advisory Council. These students will meet with Superintendent Woods to discuss the impact of state policies in the classroom, along with other issues related to education, and will serve as the Superintendent's ambassadors to their respective schools. "Students feel the impact of our decisions every day," Superintendent Woods said. "If we are going to develop child-focused, classroom-centered policies, we must hear directly from students." Applications are due August 31, 2015 by 5 p.m. Learn more and access an application at bit.ly/gadoeSAC.

QUICK QUOTES FROM SUPT. WOODS

"There's more to education than one test, given on one day."

At the Georgia Association for Career and Technical Education conference. More: bit.ly/gadoegacte, or scan code.



"What I see driving education is the test and not the child. We have to flip that mentality. I firmly believe that if we're teaching, we're educating and doing what we need to do, the testing will take care of itself."

In the Newton Citizen. More: bit.ly/gadoencitizen, or scan code.



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