

# GaDOE Updates

Educating Georgia's Future

July 2015

## FROM SUPERINTENDENT WOODS



With summer in full swing, I owe my congratulations to a very special group of students: the 2015 graduates of Georgia's public schools.

Graduation is the end of a chapter and the culmination of years of hard work. It's also a beginning; there is so much more ahead.

Whatever comes next, whether it's continued education, service in the military, or the start of a career, I wish these students the best -- and I ask them to continue learning for the rest of their lives, recognizing that a true education never truly ends.

As one class of students leaves our schools, many more are continuing -- or just beginning -- their journey. To these students I offer a challenge: this summer, keep your mind moving by reading books.

To help students and parents accomplish that goal, we've made a variety of free reading resources available, from free digital books to reading lists customized by reading level. Visit [bit.ly/gadoesummerlearning](http://bit.ly/gadoesummerlearning) to access these resources.

When they don't engage in academic activities during the summer months, students lose academic ground -- but even 15 minutes of daily reading can erase those deficits.

It's an important step toward the graduations, and the new beginnings, of the future.

## Math educators' summer learning



Math teachers get hands-on at one of GaDOE's Mathematics Summer Institutes, which are held all over the state each summer.

## SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

### State Schools celebrate graduations



There are common threads to every graduation -- the tassels turned, the procession across the stage. And, always, there's an undercurrent of pride running through the crowd, pride at what's been accomplished and what's been overcome.

That pride is particularly strong at the graduations of Georgia's state schools for deaf and blind students -- the **Georgia Academy for the Blind**, the **Georgia School for the Deaf**, and the **Atlanta Area School for the Deaf**. These students are overcomers. They've reached a peak that deserves enormous celebration.

"You've had to overcome challenges not all face," State School Superintendent Richard Woods told them. "Because of who you are, you were able to overcome."

Overcoming requires confidence, collaboration, and persistence. But at GAB, GSD, and AASD that's never viewed as an excuse -- it is, instead, an incentive to triumph.

"If you don't think of yourself as disabled and unable, you can do anything you set your mind to," GAB graduate Ashton Young said. "Being blind isn't an excuse. It just means we have to work harder and smarter, and I know we are strong enough."

At each school, hands waved or clapped triumphantly. Students cheered or clapped for their classmates. Graduates filed out, gripping their teachers in hugs.

Each room was full of overcoming -- and full of celebration.

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



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## AROUND THE DEPARTMENT

**Georgia to receive \$4.5 million in free services**  
CTB/McGraw-Hill will provide \$4.5 million in services at no cost to the Georgia Department of Education, following disruptions during the 2015 Georgia Milestones testing. Those services include safeguards to ensure future administrations of the test take place with no similar issues.

**2015 Learning Resources Evaluation Sites**  
Beginning June 22, educators and the public will have a chance to review textbooks and other learning resources for instruction in K-12 Foreign/Modern Languages & Latin and K-12 English as a Second Language (ESOL). Visit [bit.ly/gadoelearningresources](http://bit.ly/gadoelearningresources) to find a site near you.

**Free summer meals for Georgia students**  
Parents and students should be aware that free, nutritious meals are available all summer at locations across Georgia, for all students aged 18 and under. Visit [bit.ly/gadoesummermeals](http://bit.ly/gadoesummermeals) to find a location near you.

**Superintendent Woods on ESEA waiver renewal**  
“I am pleased that Georgia was granted continued flexibility from the overly prescriptive and one-size-fits-all AYP system. However, I am still hopeful that Congress will reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act so Georgia and other states have more flexibility and autonomy...as I continue to review the alignment of our work, I plan to reevaluate our ESEA flexibility waiver after a year.” View the rest of this statement at [bit.ly/gadoewaiver](http://bit.ly/gadoewaiver).

## SOCIAL MEDIA VOICES

“Thanks so much for the words of wisdom, Mrs Landreth! All of us need to think of our own legacy we’d like to leave.”

--@EducatorAnne on Twitter, in response to last month’s feature story

## TEACHER SPOTLIGHT



Angela McDurmon, an Oconee Middle School and adjunct Georgia Virtual School teacher, is one of three PBS Learning-Media Digital Innovators from Georgia, joining a group of only 100 selected teachers nationwide.

Angela says she appreciates the original thinking and creativity of her students, and enjoys using technology to offer engaging activities that improve understanding and promote additional discovery. She is dedicated to empowering and motivating students to become lifelong learners and responsible digital citizens.

Learn more about Digital Innovators at [pbslearning-media.org](http://pbslearning-media.org).

## QUICK QUOTES FROM SUPT. WOODS

**“When I was a teacher** and principal, the students got off the bus and they were like my own. As State School Superintendent, my family has grown quite a bit.”

To the Superintendent’s Student Advisory Council. More: [bit.ly/gadoekids\\_or\\_scan\\_code](http://bit.ly/gadoekids_or_scan_code).



**“Tests have their place,** but we have to re-evaluate why we are testing and how much we are testing.”

To Southwest Georgia RESA members. More: [bit.ly/gadoeevaluate\\_or\\_scan\\_code](http://bit.ly/gadoeevaluate_or_scan_code).



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