Hello, and welcome to the new edition of the GaDOE newsletter. Since taking office as Georgia’s School Superintendent on Jan. 13, 2015, I have been focused on improving outcomes for K-12 students and championing policies that are child-focused and classroom-centered.

Six weeks into office, I understand one important fact -- none of this will happen without your help. Whether you are a parent, student, educator, administrator, member of the business community or another stakeholder, you play a key role in Educating Georgia’s Future. I want to hear from you. I encourage each of you to share your ideas and concerns with me. Let me know what’s going on in your school and your community that impacts our children and teachers. You are an important member of this team, and the key to making a difference.

My email address is state.superintendent@doe.k12.ga.us. Please reach out and share your thoughts at any time. I am here to provide Georgia’s students with the best educational opportunities possible, and to provide support to our teachers, administrators, and parents. I want to hear what you have to say.

State School Superintendent Richard Woods, with a handful of GaDOE employees, spent last Friday loading a car with boxes and bags. There were paints and pencils and scissors, easels and glue sticks and boxes of hand sanitizer. Loaded up, the car headed to Fairington Elementary in DeKalb County, which had been damaged by fire. When Superintendent Woods heard what happened, he asked GaDOE employees to donate supplies. “These are our students,” he said.

“Serving them is the whole reason we’re here.” When he arrived at the school, he spoke with the kindergarten students whose classroom sustained the most damage. One by one, they told him what they’d lost. Crayons. A pencil case. All items chosen with such care by 5-year-olds, in the last summer days before school begins. Later the students sat with the Superintendent in the middle of the pile of boxes, each choosing something special just for themselves, to replace what they’d lost. “That's the kind of moment that makes it all worth it,” Superintendent Woods said.

“I'm grateful to the GaDOE employees and all others who have donated and come through for this school. I hope these students have a wonderful finish to their kindergarten year, and I hope we contributed to that a little bit.”

Superintendent Woods was joined on his visit to Fairington Elementary by State Board of Education member Lisa Kennemore and DeKalb Superintendent Michael Thurmond.

Read a longer version of this story at www.gadoe.org, under “News & Announcements”
New traditional/discrete math options
The State Board of Education has approved new
traditional/discrete math course options. Starting
with the 2015-16 school year, high schools will be
able to offer integrated or traditional/discrete math.

Surveys conducted by the State Board of Education
and Regional Educational Service Agencies found
that many educators desired a choice between
integrated and traditional/discrete math. Public
comment on the new courses was largely favorable.

2015 AP Honor Schools named
Superintendent Woods has named 609 Advanced
Placement (AP) Honor Schools.

The 2015 AP Honor Schools were named in five
categories, based on the results of 2014 AP
courses and exams: Challenge, Access & Support,
Merit, STEM, STEM Achievement, and Humanities.

Find a full list of 2015 AP Honor Schools at
www.gadoe.org under “News & Announcements.”

AASD partners with Tanzanian students
Students at our Atlanta Area School for the Deaf teamed up
with Mwera Secondary School in Tanzania to learn marketing
skills. Featured in the Achievers International blog.
bit.ly/1Dfazkv to view.

Teaming up to nix vegetable waste
Students at Dalton Public Schools’ Brookwood School
team up with Morris Innovative High School to research and reduce food waste. Featured in the

The power of grandparent volunteers
Tift County Schools published a wonderful story on
Abalene Fore, a grandparent who’s been volunteering
in schools since 1959. These days, Fore spends two
days a week in Tracy Ingram’s K5 classroom, helping
students at Len Lastinger Primary learn to read.
From Ingram: “The children feel like they have won the lottery when they get chosen to spend time with
Mrs. Fore during Center Time. They just bloom right in front of you.” Read the whole story, which focuses
on the impact of grandparent volunteers, at
bit.ly/1EQyJTq.

“Great days are ahead as we expand our
agricultural programs.” - to FFA members Feb. 24

“Only working together can we achieve our goal of
teaching each child based on their individual needs.”

“We need to personalize education, not standardize.”

Have news for GaDOE Updates?
Email Meghan Frick at mfrick@doe.k12.ga.us