

# GaDOE Updates

EducatingGeorgiasFuture.org

November 2015

## FROM SUPERINTENDENT WOODS



It's Parent Engagement Month in Georgia, a time when we recognize the enormous impact of involved parents on the success of all students. Research shows that when schools and families support each other, all students achieve at higher levels.

Children with involved parents tend to achieve more -- but their children aren't the only ones who benefit. All children at the school are affected.

Often, the hard work these parents put forth goes unnoticed and unappreciated -- because it happens in the quiet, out of the spotlight, in small moments helping with homework or reading a story at night or volunteering in class. It's those small moments, repeated throughout the life of a child, that can change the course of a student's future.

If you'd like to learn more about Parent Engagement Month or the GaDOE's Parent Engagement program, visit this link: [bit.ly/gadoeparents](http://bit.ly/gadoeparents).

And to all of Georgia's parents -- thank you, for the hard work you've done in small moments. It makes all the difference to your child, and the children of our state.

*Richard Woods*

## PARENT ENGAGEMENT MONTH

*Our Parent Engagement staff asked parents to share their best "Get Involved" moments.*

"After seeing her dad in school getting straight As, my daughter wanted to do the same."

**-William Benningfield**

"My best Get Involved moment was teaching my son how to read. To me, reading is the most important skill one needs in life."

**-Jennifer Castro**

"[Helping my child with projects] allowed me to learn as she taught, instead of me being the teacher."

**-Elaine Mathews**

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

### 'Change' can start small, impact many

When Remington Youngblood gets home from school, there's not much extra time for watching TV. Instead, the 14-year-old catches up on emails, takes a few calls, maybe plans out a meeting for the next day.

"I probably have, like, 20 reminders in my phone right now of things that I need to be doing," says the **Lambert High School** freshman.



Remington is the founder of Change 4 Georgia (C4G), an entirely student-run community service organization with about 100 members, all middle and high school students.

In its early years, C4G -- helmed by a fifth-grade Remington -- focused solely on giving back to soldiers and veterans. Now they've expanded that focus to just about anything you can imagine: food drives, reading to preschoolers and managing a student veteran scholarship are just a handful of examples.

"Service has always been a big part of my life," Remington says. "It always makes me feel good knowing I could do something to help someone else."

That's true of the organization's other members, too -- and none of them let their age slow them down.

"It doesn't matter what age you are," says C4G member Royce Dickerson, a junior at Lambert. If it's going to make an impact...it's worth putting in the time and effort to make it a reality."

*To read a longer version of this story, visit [educatinggeorgiasfuture.org](http://educatinggeorgiasfuture.org) and click "Student Spotlights."*



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## AROUND THE DEPARTMENT

### GaDOE hires Economic Development Liaison

Richard Goble will serve as GaDOE's first Economic Development Liaison, working to strengthen relationships with business and industry and create workforce development resources for educators and partners. Goble brings 30 years of business, education, and military experience to the role.

### Gardner named GaVS Teacher of the Year

English instructor Kelly Gardner is the 2015-2016 Teacher of the Year for Georgia Virtual School (GaVS). Gardner holds bachelor's and master's degrees in secondary English education and has 13 years of teaching experience in the face-to-face classroom and online.

### Superintendent names new parent advisers

Superintendent Woods has appointed eight new parents to serve on his 2015-2015 Parent Advisory Council. To view a full list of PAC members, visit [bit.ly/gadoePAC](http://bit.ly/gadoePAC).

## ADDRESSING TESTING

Superintendent Woods released a statement Oct. 27 regarding the U.S. Department of Education's recently-announced Testing Action Plan. Read it in full at [bit.ly/gadoetesting1](http://bit.ly/gadoetesting1).

"I am pleased that the President and U.S. Secretary of Education see what we at the state and local levels have seen for years: we test way too much. As I stated early on in my term, we must balance accountability with responsibility. That is why several months ago I called for a testing audit to determine ways we could eliminate unnecessary testing at the state and local levels. In the days ahead, my team and I will look over this proposal and move forward with recommendations to provide relief from over-testing."

## AROUND THE DISTRICTS

### Savannah's Heater is national honoree



James Heater, principal at Ester F. Garrison School of Visual and Performing Arts (Savannah-Chatham County) is one of seven principals nationwide to receive the Terrel H. Bell Award for Outstanding Leadership.

The award honors outstanding school leaders and the vital role they play in guiding their students and school to excellence, often under challenging circumstances.

Heater is Georgia's second Terrel H. Bell recipient. Dr. Traci Jackson, principal of Shirley Hills Elementary in Houston County, was honored in 2011.

## SOCIAL MEDIA VOICES



"In-house STEM field trip, High Touch High Tech, visits Gr. 1"

River Eves Elementary  
(@RiverEves)

"6 National Champs with FFA proficiencies from Georgia!"

@JohnChip-Bridges



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