

GaDOE Updates

GaDOE.org

September 2016

FROM SUPERINTENDENT WOODS



In last month's letter, I briefly touched on the development of Georgia's state plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) -- the replacement for the law you've probably known as No Child Left Behind.

We're working on that plan now, and gathering feedback to make sure the result is truly for Georgians, by Georgians. Whether you're a parent, an educator, a student or a community member, I encourage you to get involved.

While No Child Left Behind overemphasized the federal role in education, its successor returns much power over many decisions to local schools and districts. For that reason and many more, it is vital that we gather as much public feedback as possible before developing Georgia's plan. Think of it this way: if you come to a meeting, you'll exchange two hours of your time for many years of education policy.

We're hosting feedback sessions all over the state, or you can send an email to essa@doe.k12.ga.us. There will be a survey opportunity, too. Find more information at gadoe.org/ESSA.

Thank you, as always, for your support of Georgia's public schools.

Richard Woods

GEORGIA'S EDUCATION PLAN

Teachers, parents, community members give feedback for Georgia's ESSA plan

More than 160 educators, parents, and community members have attended the Georgia Department of Education's first ESSA public feedback sessions, held Wednesday, August 24 in Evans and Monday, August 29 in Demorest.



Each meeting began with an introduction to the scope of the Every Student Succeeds Act from State School Superintendent Richard Woods, who expressed to attendees how

important it is to gather public feedback as Georgia develops its plan.

"We can't afford to let this opportunity slip," he said. "It may come once in a generation."

The meetings' attendees split into five working groups organized around key ESSA topics: Assessment, Accountability, Educator & Leader Development, Education of the Whole Child, and Federal Programs

to Support Student Achievement. This structure allowed participants to give more in-depth feedback in a conversational setting.



There are six remaining feedback sessions scheduled, in the following counties: Fulton, Muscogee, Dougherty, Laurens, Chatham, and Gordon.

Learn more at gadoe.org/ESSA



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AROUND THE STATE

GA students outperform national average on ACT

Georgia's students showed marked improvement on the ACT in 2016, increasing the state's average composite score and the percentage of students meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, even as the national average decreased and the number of Georgia students taking the ACT went up. Learn more at bit.ly/gadoeACT16.

Renewed commitment to literacy and K-5 foundational skills

In August, the State Board of Education and State School Superintendent Richard Woods signed a resolution reaffirming the state's commitment to literacy and K-5 foundational skills. View the resolution and an op-ed from Superintendent Woods at bit.ly/literacyres.

Georgia teachers win national award for math and science teaching

Four Georgia teachers are recipients of the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Learn more at bit.ly/gadoegreatteachers.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Superintendent Woods visited classes in the Agriculture Pathway at Portal High School in Bulloch County Schools.

ATTENDANCE AWARENESS MONTH

September is **Attendance Awareness Month**, a time to recognize the crucial impact of regular attendance on school success. Throughout the month, districts, schools, and the GaDOE will join in this nationwide effort.

We will join with our partners in the Get Georgia Reading Campaign to recognize the top three elementary, middle, and high schools with a School Climate Star Rating of 4 or 5 that have had the largest percentage decline in the proportion of students missing more than 15 days over the past two school years.

We will also celebrate the top elementary, middle, and high schools that have made the greatest progress in increasing student attendance. Learn more at getgeorgiareading.org/every_school_day_counts.

Improving attendance is a key initiative in the GaDOE strategic plan. We're tracking excused and unexcused student absences and working to decrease the number of unexcused student absences by providing best practices for school systems, promoting a positive school climate, and partnering with Public Health to identify health reasons and resources.

District Spotlight



DeKalb County Schools created this graphic to promote Attendance Awareness Month. In DeKalb, schools, city agencies, community nonprofits, faith-based groups, and businesses are joining forces to raise public awareness, identify attendance gaps, and find solutions to improve school attendance.