



**The 2014 Georgia
Parent Leadership
Award Winners**

January 11, 2014



The 2014 Georgia Parent Leadership Awards
Many Talents. One Purpose. Student Success.



**Congratulatory Message
 from Georgia's State School Superintendent**

It is a privilege and an honor to have the opportunity to announce the six winners of the 2014 Georgia Parent Leadership Awards. This is truly a special day not only for our parent winners, but for the Georgia Department of Education and our collaborative partner, Georgia PTA, as it is always such a pleasure to recognize our state's remarkable parents with this annual statewide award.

Parents, schools, and communities working together create meaningful partnerships that ultimately lead to significant gains in student achievement and success. The parents honored today have spent countless hours strengthening our public schools and enhancing the lives of all children in their school community by serving as parent-teachers, advocates, organizers, learners, decision-makers, motivators, and liaisons. It is amazing to see the results when parents take on these roles and are empowered with the tools needed to effectively work alongside our educators to ensure that students have what they really need: educators in the home and in the classroom.

While this award only recognizes six of Georgia's finest parent leaders, I want to say a big thank you to all of the parents and families across our state who lead by example, taking on the full-time job of being engaged in their children's education. It is my hope that this award will inspire all parents to use their unique talents, no matter how big or small, to pave the way for *making education work for all Georgians*.

Congratulations to our Parent Leadership Award Winners!

Best regards,

John D. Barge, Ed.D

**Georgia State
 Board of Education**

Helen Odom Rice, *Chair*

Mike Royal, *Vice-Chair*

Mike Long

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Lisa Kinnemore

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About the Georgia Parent Leadership Awards

The Georgia Parent Leadership Awards are annual awards that recognize parents for their outstanding leadership in creating a foundation of support for student achievement and success.

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and the Georgia Parent Teacher Association (GA PTA) created the award to recognize parents across Georgia who utilize their various skills and talents to strengthen our schools and positively impact the lives of our children. The award also hopes to inspire all parents to use their unique talents, no matter how big or small, to **lead** the way in building positive outcomes for all children.

The award recognizes the many skills and talents of Georgia's parents, particularly as they exhibit their leadership through any or all of the National PTA Standards for Family - School Partnerships found on the following page. Parent Leadership Award winners are chosen not only based on their demonstrated talents, but also on how their work has benefitted the entire school community on behalf of all children.

Parent leaders are nominated each November during Georgia's Parent Engagement Month by Georgia's public school personnel. Any caregiver who assumes the responsibility for nurturing and caring for a child's entire well-being consisting of educational, emotional, spiritual, and physical health can be considered. Six Parent Leadership Awards are given each year, and parents representing both Title I schools and Non-Title I schools are eligible to be nominated. While the six state winners for 2014 represent only the elementary and middle school levels, schools are encouraged to nominate parents from all school levels: elementary school, middle school, and high school as research shows parents make a difference in student achievement no matter the age of their child.

Winners of the Georgia Parent Leadership Award are afforded opportunities throughout the year to share their many recognized talents by promoting and assisting with parent engagement activities at the state Title I level.



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What is Parent Leadership?

The essence of parent leadership is that the work is **SUSTAINABLE**.

It will continue to impact the school, its children, and their families once the initial parent leader is no longer at the school leading the way.

Winners of the award are parents or caregivers who have contributed to the school community in a way that is bigger and beyond themselves.

The National Standards for Family - School Partnerships



National PTA. (2008). National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. Washington DC.



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The Many Skills and Talents of Our Parents

A parent exhibits leadership through any or all of the following National Standards for Family-School Partnerships:

1. WELCOMING ALL FAMILIES - Welcomes all families into the school, recruits others to be a part of the life of the school, participates in school events and activities, and connects to what students are learning and doing in class.

Examples: Develops personal relationships, creates a welcoming environment, provides opportunities for all to volunteer, removes economic obstacles to school participation, respects all families and sees the value in what they can offer...

2. COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY - Engages in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning and other events in the school community.

Examples: Facilitates connections among school families, provides information on current issues, uses multiple communication paths to reach all...

3. SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS - Collaborates to support student learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and takes advantage of regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

Examples: Develops families' abilities to strengthen learning at home, helps families to become engaged in the classroom, uses school and student data to mobilize parent action and student support, shares school progress...

4. SPEAKING UP FOR EVERY CHILD - Empowers others to be advocates for their own and other children to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

Examples: Helps others understand the school district in addition to parental rights and responsibilities, builds families' capacities to be effective advocates...

5. SHARING POWER - Participates in decision - making that affects children and families and informs, influences, and creates policies, practices, and programs within the school or educational community.

Examples: Inspires other parents to be leaders, has a voice at the table in school and community decisions that affect children...

6. COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY - Collaborates with community members to connect students, families and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services and civic participation.

Examples: Partners with community groups to strengthen student support, organizes support from community members, links to resources...



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Gail Bouie

West Bainbridge Elementary School, Decatur County Schools

Title I School

Mrs. Bouie set the course for strengthening community support, building parental engagement, and assisting with effective communication between home and school for all stakeholders at West Bainbridge Elementary.

***Allyson G. Matthews,
Principal
West Bainbridge
Elementary School***

When Lillian E. Williams Elementary School in Decatur County closed and merged with the neighboring West Bainbridge Elementary, members of the community of Attapulgus found itself facing a difficult time. Luckily grandmother, Gail Bouie, was determined to not let these circumstances have a negative effect on the students' education or the community as a whole. She took it upon herself to do everything in her power to ease the transition and ensure that there was a positive and welcoming environment for all students, parents, and staff.

As West Bainbridge's Parent Involvement Chairwoman, Gail decided it would be her duty to not let school programs and activities suffer because of the ongoing changes. She coordinated multiple successful school programs, assisted in the implementation of the Positive School-Wide Behavior Plan, began a charter-mentoring program, and took it upon herself to notify all parents of any family events. Additionally, Gail has initiated quarterly town hall meetings where parents, teachers, program directors, and parent involvement coordinators are able to voice concerns, suggest ideas, increase civic participation, and connect families and school staff.

Gail has been a driving force in parent and community support and engagement at the school. Because of Gail, many diverse families, school staff, students and administrators are now beginning to feel more welcomed, valued and connected to each other as a strong united school.

Gail consistently advocates for student achievement and school improvement, not only for her two grandsons, but for all students at West Bainbridge. Thanks to Gail's determination to turn a negative situation into a positive, the students, staff, and parents of West Bainbridge Elementary School are continuing to thrive!



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Kimberly Fisher

Oak Grove Elementary School Fine Arts Academy, Cherokee County Schools

Title I School

If you want something done at Oak Grove Elementary School Fine Arts Academy, it would be a good idea to get Kimberly Fisher on the case. Known as the “go-to” super volunteer, nearly everyone has come to rely on Kimberly as someone who gets things done.

As president of Oak Grove’s PTA, Kimberly has demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities ever since she came to Oak Grove. Between becoming fourth grade room parent, writing the PTA’s online newsletter, recruiting and organizing events, and being an active member of Oak Grove’s School Parent Council, Kimberly always makes parent engagement a top priority.

Kimberly is known to always go above and beyond the call of duty. For instance, to supplement the science curriculum, Kimberly volunteered to coach the Science Olympiad fourth grade team. She not only routinely provided transportation for multiple students whose parents were not able to pick them up after practice, but on the day of the competition she carpooled students and parents to and from the event.

Last January, Kim introduced a student fundraiser called “Penny Wars” - a week long competition where students donated small change and each grade competed to have the highest donation. This past year, the students raised over \$2,000 that was used toward increasing student achievement in various capacities.

Kim’s enthusiasm as a parent volunteer and her positive attitude have been contagious. Because of Kim’s example, there has been an increase in parent volunteers. Although her son Connor will be graduating from Oak Grove next year and is moving on to middle school, Kim has prepared other parents to follow in her footsteps and given them an example of what parent involvement can and should be. By building the capacity of parent engagement at Oak Grove, Kimberly has created a strong prototype that will be in place for years to come!



Parent involvement has increased at an astounding rate this year as compared to last, and no one has had more to do with that than Ms. Fisher.

***Les Conley, Principal
Oak Grove Elementary Fine Arts Academy***



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Mariana Hernandez-Goodwin

Kanoheda Elementary School, Gwinnett County Schools

Title I School

Mariana has repeatedly demonstrated a pattern of going above and beyond to improve the quality of her child's education and also selflessly acted to benefit the entire Kanoheda community.

*Angel Rodriguez,
Parent Instructional
Support Coordinator
Kanoheda elementary
School*

Staff, parents, and students at Kanoheda Elementary School know that when there is a call for help, Mariana Hernandez-Goodwin never fails to answer. Regardless of what is asked of her, if it is for the good of Kanoheda, Mariana lends her help and support.

From encouraging families to be engaged to putting in hours of hard labor to restore a decaying classroom, Mariana truly embraces the concept of Kanoheda being her extended family. Since her son began attending Kanoheda, she has participated in almost every single parent training and learning event.

As the sole parent volunteer for Kanoheda's Parent Support Plan, Mariana personally reached out to over 50 English Learner (EL) families facing the greatest academic achievement struggles. She not only informed them of upcoming events significant to their children's success, but also recounted her own experiences of how the school was able to empower her. Considering the obstacles that prevent Kanoheda's parents from attending school events, this personal and emotional message inspired many families to participate after all other efforts had failed.

Despite the barrier that language has presented, she has communicated with Kanoheda families at every opportunity and has encouraged other parents to become engaged in whatever ways they can. Mariana has represented Kanoheda during multiple media appearances, reaching out to Latino parents and advocating for their involvement. Because of her diligence, parent attendance at school events and meetings has grown exponentially.

Although advocating for Latinos is a passion of Mariana's, she has and will continue to advocate for every child and family that attends Kanoheda!



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Karen Preble

St. Marys Elementary School, Camden County Schools

Title I School

On any given day you can find Karen Preble at St. Marys Elementary School. Although Karen is a “stay-at-home” mom, it would be more appropriate to call her a “stay-at-school” mom - as that is where you will almost certainly find her during the week. Whether she is working with students on improving their Lexile scores, getting coffee for teachers, arranging a reading from “Mr. Grinch” for Family Reading Night, or designing a brochure for St. Marys volunteer program - Karen is always on standby ready to help whenever possible.

In addition to serving as St. Marys PTA President, Karen has served 5 years as the School Council Chairwoman, a school level Title I and SACS committee member, and as a system-wide SACS and Calendar Planning Committee member. Through her thoughtful and innovative ideas, Karen has become a voice of advocacy and change for St. Marys and her community.

While the list is long, one of Karen’s most game-changing contributions to St. Marys was her founding of the Room Parent program, a classroom communication system where one parent is a liaison between the school staff and other parents for school and class wide activities. Karen also created grade specific brochures to help parents understand their students’ needs and the goals for their newly matriculated grade. Thanks to Karen, St. Marys’ parents are now able to learn about the specific expectations for their children and help them successfully navigate their school year.



Karen taps into the talents of parent and community stakeholders to make every school event a success. Karen works tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that every St. Marys’ student fulfills his or her truest potential. She has been a constant presence at St. Marys and will continue to be a force for good in her community!

She motivates parents to take an active role in the education of their children and she challenges St. Marys Elementary School and our entire system to work to ensure the success of every student.

Phoebe Floyd, Assistant to the Superintendent



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Edward Richardson

Floyd Middle School, Cobb County Schools

Title I School

Edward Richardson is a dedicated father who demonstrates passionate advocacy for Floyd students, staff, and parents. His willingness to go above and beyond has made him an invaluable asset to Floyd and the Cobb County community!

*Teresa W. Hargett, Principal
Floyd Middle School*

Known as Floyd Middle School’s number one parent cheerleader - no matter what time of day it is - Edward Richardson can be found actively engaged at every school event. A true public servant, Edward is the chair of the School Council where he engages stakeholders in two-way conversations focused on school improvement and academic achievement for all students.



Although Edward’s list of contributions to Floyd is extensive, his founding of the Floyd Foundation, whose mission is to support and supplement student learning, has been his crowning achievement. In an effort to increase student math practice, the foundation purchased math software that students were able to access at home. In addition, he implemented incentive-based class and grade level competitions, promoted the program on the school’s news broadcast, visited students during lunch and class, and attended math teacher meetings. Because of Edward’s vision and tenacity, Floyd students’ math performance has greatly improved. In fact, sixth grade students showed a 12% increase in their math scores over the previous year.

Edward’s willingness to help is not just extended to Floyd students and families. He also makes a point to ease local elementary school parent and student apprehension about middle school transition by sharing his and his children’s positive experiences at Floyd during school transition events. In addition, Edward actively promotes school visits and volunteerism by fathers. By organizing a Dad’s Club and instating annual “Dad’s Dash and Dine Day” events, Edward constantly seeks ways to increase the presence of fathers in school.

Edward continues to be the gold standard for parent engagement and a model example of how fathers can become engaged in their child’s school and in their community!



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Laura Shyman

Tapp Middle School, Cobb County Schools

Title I School



If you were new to Tapp Middle School in Powder Springs, chances are that Laura Shyman would be the first person there to greet you. Whether it is introducing parents to teachers, giving tours of the school, or recruiting volunteers for school events - you can always count on Laura to help you.

As PTSA Co-President, Laura has made it her mission to ensure that all Tapp students, including those with disabilities, have adequate resources and opportunities. A firm believer in parent engagement, she works tirelessly to educate parents on ways to advocate for their children. Laura has been instrumental in coordinating parent volunteers to support Tapp's Renaissance Academic program which resulted in Tapp recognizing over 2,000 students for their academic and behavioral success over the past two years.

Laura has made it her self-imposed mission to improve and promote student achievement and has spearheaded a multitude of programs to further that cause. One particular program, Tapp Mentors, enabled 6th graders to receive community service volunteer hours for mentoring 5th graders. Not only did the 5th graders make academic gains in math and reading, but the 6th graders' leadership skills were strengthened during the yearlong program. Laura was not only the founder of this program, but she also carpooled the 6th grade students to and from the feeder elementary schools. By creating programs that empower and motivate students, Laura has continued to foster their success and wellbeing.

For her exceptional work as PTSA Co-President, Laura received special recognition from the Mayor of Powder Springs and was honored as the recipient of a Georgia PTA Lifetime Achievement Award.

Laura is a true leader who continuously seeks new ways to ensure that all parents have an opportunity to be involved in their children's education. She has made exceptional contributions to the students, staff, and families of Tapp Middle School and will continue to cultivate an environment where parent engagement can thrive!

As a result of Mrs. Shyman's work, parents in the Powder Springs community are more informed and more engaged. They don't stop being involved at the elementary school, rather realize the importance of support at the middle school level.

***Tammy Johnson,
Title I Parent Liaison
Tapp Middle School***



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What are Your Talents?

For more information about the Georgia Parent Leadership Awards please visit the Georgia Department of Education's Parent Engagement Website at:
http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/tss_title.aspx?PageReq=ParentEngagement



Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent
"Making education Work for all Georgians"

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