

# PARENT ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Issue 1, Fall 2011

"Successfully Engaging Georgia's Parents"

## "Making Education Work for All Georgians"



**Dr. John D. Barge,  
State School Superintendent**

As parents and students are adjusting to a new, exciting school year, I'm happy to say there is a reason to be hopeful about the progress Georgia's schools are making. Our new vision is to *Make Education Work for All Georgians*. That means that our education community must help each other to ensure that our public

schools work for our students, teachers, parents and community members.

You have done an incredible amount of work over the summer by promoting high standards for your children and preparing them for this academic year. But, it is no longer enough for us to just promote higher standards. We now have to promote expectations that all of our students will be college and career ready. Preparing students to be college and career ready is their ticket to success in the 21st century economy. The challenge is to stay focused on helping your children reach their full

potential, and particularly on closing the achievement gap that still leaves far too many students falling behind. There is much work ahead of us, but work that must and can be done.

As we begin the fall season, I want to thank all of our hard-working teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, and you, our involved parents and families, for all the efforts made on behalf of Georgia's students.

Sincerely,

*Dr. John D. Barge*

Dr. John D. Barge,  
State School Superintendent

## 2012 Family Engagement Conference

*Striving for Excellence, Empowerment,  
and Equity in Education*



February 16-18, 2012

The Parent Engagement Program is happy to announce Georgia's first statewide family engagement conference that's inclusive of *all* parents, educators and parent professionals across the state. The theme of this conference is

***Building Connections:  
Striving for Excellence,  
Empowerment and Equity  
in Education.***

This conference is a collaboration between the *Georgia Department of Education* and *Georgia PTA*. Parents, educators

and community members are invited to attend. If you're a parent at a Title I School and interested in attending this event, please talk to your Parent Involvement Coordinator or principal for more details.

The four targeted strands that will be addressed are:

- ▶ Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Parental Involvement Compliance
- ▶ Research-Based Best Practices for Family Engagement

- ▶ Parent Leadership and Skills Building
- ▶ Student Support and Achievement Resources for Parents

Participants will have the opportunity to meet national keynote speakers and presenters at this event.

The conference will be held in Athens, GA at the Classic Center on February 16-18, 2012. Registration is open!

For more information, please visit:  
[http://tinyurl.com/  
FamEngagement2012](http://tinyurl.com/FamEngagement2012)

## Positive Parent Pledge: Small Steps to Success

by Niecy Frazier



If you are the parent of a preschool child, you likely face challenges when it comes to temper tantrums. At times it can be difficult to teach your child right from wrong and give balanced correction. This commonly occurs around the ages of two or three. The important thing to remember is to help your child understand *why* his or her behavior is unacceptable in a calm and dignified manner.

Toddlers tend to experiment to see how far they can push limits, and allowing your child to do what you have clearly forbidden sends a confusing message. The key is to be firm and consistent. In time, your child will learn that screaming is not the way to get what they want.

### PARENTS, DID YOU KNOW...

Within days, an infant is accustomed to his mother's voice and prefers it over that of a stranger.

**"If I were able to give my children any gift to sustain them in life, I believe I might give them passion for what they do. For if they can live from the heart, they will surely touch the sky."...**

Steve Goodier

Education is the key and driving force in this world today. Building a positive environment around yourself, builds an even bigger driving force around everyone else. Parents have the ability to positively educate their children for future success, but in order to build that positive surrounding, they must make a pledge as parents. Every year there is a new wave of children that will enter the world we all know of as "society" and they will eventually embark into the world of education not knowing what the road ahead may entail.

As parents, we commit to our daily responsibilities whether it's household tasks, career objectives or other personal endeavors. We all have a commitment and a priority to something. The social media networks have captivated a number of people and they make that a part of their daily commitment and priorities; therefore, we should be able to allow ourselves to make a commitment and set priorities for our child's education.

I am challenging you to make your "**Positive Parent's Pledge**" this school year and continue to build

the momentum of being an involved parent, which can lead to great success.

There are so many misconceptions about what positive parent commitment looks like. Your commitment can be big or small, daily or weekly, monthly or yearly. Whatever the case may be, we as parents have an even greater impact on our child's future. Yes, parent involvement has a broad scale of objectives; however, it's important to think "**outside the box**" on everyday opportunities to get involved. Positive parent involvement does not stop with volunteering, it can also be as small as:



### Being positively involved.

For younger children, ask your child how was their day at school? What did they learn? Was there something they learned that they are unsure about? Utilize drive time in the car to discuss these topics. For older children, support and talk about their passions. Ask them what are their goals for the next 3 years? These daily questions equate to

active engagement as a parent.

### Being positively involved.

Utilize common known games to build up family activity and academic excellence. Example: UNO, Jenga

### Being positively involved.

Share your parent goals with your children so that they can have a share in helping you reach your goals. Show and tell them that you appreciate their advice.

### Being positively involved.

Make the night about your child; have them teach you what they are learning or what they foresee in their future.

### Being positively involved.

Show your energy and passion about a topic of discussion.

### Being positively involved.

Reach out; get to know the parents of the children in your child's circle, sports events, etc.

These are just a few examples of how parents can remain involved in their child's success and education. Remember the "**Positive Parent's Pledge**" when engaging in activities with your child and continue striving for academic excellence. As you make a positive parent's pledge, you will begin to see the growth in your child and that parent engagement has no limits.

Positive Regards,

*Niecy Frazier*

Niecy Frazier,  
Parent Leader

## How to Prepare for Parent-Teacher Conferences



If you go to your parent-teacher conference prepared, you and the teacher will be able to get more out of the meeting. To get started, here are a few suggestions for how you can prepare:

### Make your presence a priority.

You will not be able to benefit from a parent-teacher conference if you are not there. If you experience difficulties with

being able to attend the meeting at the scheduled time, make arrangements to meet with your child's teacher at a more convenient time or schedule a phone conversation.

### Make a list of discussion topics.

If you have specific questions or concerns, now is the time to address those concerns and get answers. It helps to make a list instead of relying on your memory. Make a modest list to ensure that you have adequate time to have your questions answered. If you have additional questions, you can always schedule a follow-up conversation.

### Remain open-minded.

Making assumptions is the worst thing one can do when entering a parent-teacher conference. Start every meeting with a clean slate and do not allow rumors you may have heard about the teacher effect your outlook or approach. In the end, you will be able to accomplish more.

### Stop talking and listen.

After addressing your concerns, give the teacher an opportunity to respond without interruption. You may learn about a number of things happening at the school that you were not previously aware of. If you hear something that rings an alarm or that you don't understand, ask for clarification after the teacher is done. By using these tips, you will have a more enjoyable conference.

### PARENTS, DID YOU KNOW...

**November is PARENT ENGAGEMENT MONTH!**

Governor Nathan Deal has proclaimed November as **Parent Engagement Month!** Parent Engagement Month is a time for all parents to consider how they can get more involved in their children's education.

A **calendar** is being offered as a free resource to remind parents of ways they can play a critical role in the education of their children. Three specialized calendars have been developed for the parents of elementary, middle and high school students to engage in meaningful conversations and positive interactions with their child(ren) daily. To obtain copies of the calendar, contact the Parent Engagement Program.

## Do I Encourage Independence In My Child?

As hard as it may be, it is essential to encourage independence in children. As they grow from infancy to adulthood, their success depends on your support of their transition through each stage. Independence plays a major role in that success and it can be quite a challenge for both parent and child.

Engage in this self-analysis to determine if you are promoting and supporting independence in your son or daughter:



Do I attempt to solve every problem for my son or daughter or do I encourage them to try and figure out a solution?

Do I always run to the rescue when my son or daughter forgets their schoolwork or do I allow them to experience the natural consequences behind such action?

Do I allow my son or daughter to make mistakes or do I strive for perfection?

Do I strive to support my son or daughter's decision to engage in positive activities that do not involve me?

Do I assign daily and weekly chores to my son or daughter so they can share some of the responsibilities of household management?

If you answered yes to most of these questions, you are promoting and supporting independence in your son or daughter.



The Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia Parent Teacher Association have created **an 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. Nominations for the Georgia Parent Leadership Award are only accepted during Parent Engagement Month, and winners will be honored during Parent Leadership Month in February at the Georgia Family Engagement Conference. Schools must nominate parents for the award. The deadline for nominations is **Wednesday, November 30, 2011**.



## **Remember to block off these important dates!**

**Georgia's Parent Engagement Month**  
November, 2011

**National Young Readers Week**  
November 7-11, 2011

**American Education Week**  
November 13-19, 2011

**National Parent Involvement Day**  
November 17, 2011

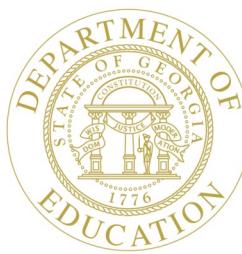
**National Family Week**  
November 20-26, 2011

**National Card Playing Day**  
December 28, 2011

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## **Vision Statement**

The Parent Engagement Program believes that parents, schools, families, and communities working together can create meaningful partnerships that ultimately lead to significant gains across the board in student achievement.

## **Calling All Parents!**

Have an idea to contribute to the newsletter? Send your parent involvement ideas and articles to us through your **Parent Involvement Coordinator** or e-mail us directly. If your idea or article is published, your name will appear in the newsletter!

**Have a Question?**  
**AskDOE**  
**404-656-2800**  
**askdoe@doe.k12.ga.us**

## **We're on the Web!**

[www.gadoe.org/parents.aspx](http://www.gadoe.org/parents.aspx)  
[http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/tss\\_title.aspx?PageReq=ParentEngagement](http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/tss_title.aspx?PageReq=ParentEngagement)

## **Succeeding As a Single Parent**



A single parent family is a family where there is only one parent acting in a dual-parent role and one or more children living together in a home atmosphere, versus a family that has two parents living in the home.

Many times single parents discover they are capable of doing more than they ever thought possible. Initially, it can be a challenge to manage your time and energy while trying to instill strong principals, values, and academic effort into the lives of your children. At times, you may have to sacrifice your "me time" or relaxation to accomplish household tasks or get your

children ready for the next day.

Balancing a job or a career while being a single parent is no small task, and a support system can prove to be very helpful. To accomplish this, many have found it useful to develop a close network of friends and extended family through which each can help the other meet the various needs and demands of their children. It also helps to delegate age-appropriate chores to the children so they can learn to assume some responsibility for their individual care and needs. It is up to the parent to determine their child's ability to do this.

Many single parents have found it valuable to create a solid schedule with predictable routines and stick to it; however, flexibility is key because unexpected issues may arise that requires immediate attention.

As with two parent household, single parents are responsible for providing tender love and care to their children and despite challenges, many single parents have accomplished this while remaining actively engaged in their child's education across all grade levels. You are to be commended!