



Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent
"Making Education Work for All Georgians"

Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council Meeting

Title I Parent Meeting

October 20, 2014

I. Welcome and Introductions

Michelle Sandrock, Parent Engagement Program Manager, extended warm greetings to everyone by welcoming them to the first meeting of the new term for the State School Superintendent's Parent Advisory Council. She introduced herself and explained that this group includes returning members from last year's PAC, but specifically welcomed the new members which include the six 2014 Parent Leadership Award recipients. As stated from their notification letters, members are expected to meet several times throughout the school year with the State School Superintendent to serve as advisors and act as ambassadors to share the information they collect with members of their communities, other families, and schools.

Before introducing Dr. Barge, Michelle informed the group that this will be his only meeting because his term will be coming to an end in January and there will be a new superintendent at the next meeting (which will be taking place on February 2, 2015).

She then went into announcements where she informed the PAC members of the Parent Engagement Month 'I CAN Play A Role' Kick-off event that will be taking place in the State Capitol Building with special guests Sandra Deal, First Lady of Georgia; Dr. John Barge, State School Superintendent; Rita Erves, Georgia PTA President; Gaye Smith, Executive Director of Georgia Family Connection Partnership; PAC Members Jeff Hennesy and Deborah Rogers; and Kristen Bernhard, Commissioner of Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning.

She then introduced the Parent Engagement team: Nate Schult, Parent Engagement Specialist and Keisha Jeffries, Parent Engagement Communications Specialist. She informed the PAC, that because of the special event, Nate would be facilitating the meeting when Michelle leaves early for the event.

Michelle then introduced Dr. Barge who asked all of the PAC Members to introduce themselves.

Dr. John Barge, State School Superintendent, led the PAC members in a round of introductions by asking everyone to introduce themselves, share what district they represent as well as the number of children they have in school. PAC members were also asked to share what they hope to gain from being a part of the group this year, which included a variety of topics;

- Information about the new Georgia Milestones Assessment
- Resources for families
- What the Georgia Department of Education provides for families

- Ideas about what parents can do to be involved outside of the traditional ways
- New family engagement strategies and ways to implement the old strategies
- Networking opportunities
- Information for military families
- How to help parents feel less intimidated
- How to help parents feel empowered
- How to build a sense of unity in the school
- Better understanding of the American school system
- How to make our schools a better place
- Engage parents in unique ways
- Work with the state schools who serve families across the state (large geographic areas)
- How to help all kids, not just the gifted students or lowest achieving students

Dr. Barge thanked everyone for introducing themselves and sharing their ideas for the year. He continued by sharing how he has traveled the state as Superintendent and realizes that it takes parents who are involved, like them, to go to the schools and districts to make a change. He shared that he grew up in a large family that did not have much, but his mother was always very involved and made school important. He also experienced firsthand with his own family and siblings the difference it makes when parents are involved in their child's education and how kids are more successful when there is a caring adult helping them in school. He is worried these days that more parents seem to be more concerned about themselves than their child's education.

He continued by explaining that it is important for schools and parents to understand that everything that the state is doing is connected. The main topics in education, Georgia Milestones, Common Core, TKES, LKES, CCRPI, ESEA Waiver, are all connected. Unfortunately, schools and parents are not always aware of the available resources and tools that the GaDOE provides to assist them. For example, the State Longitudinal Data System is scheduled to go live in November across the state which will provide schools and parents with valuable student data for the past seven years. However, it is up to the schools to push the button to turn on the system. Furthermore, he shared that the state has developed a library of over 15,000 digital resources that are available to schools. However, it is the school's decision whether or not they want to use these resources.

Dr. Barge paused to lead the PAC members to the state capitol in order to attend the Parent Engagement Month celebration, but informed everyone that there will be more time this afternoon to continue this conversation and ask questions.

II. Parent Engagement Month Kick-Off Celebration

A recap video of the 'I CAN Play A Role' can be found here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGchn5XHtw0&utm_content=bufferad766&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer

III. Working Lunch

After the event, the PAC participated in a working lunch where they networked and shared best practices.

IV. Parent Engagement Month Communication Packets

After lunch, Nate Schult handed out communication packets, which consisted of:

['I CAN Play A Role' Pledge Cards](#)

[2014 Parent Engagement Month Calendar](#)

[Best GET INVOLVED Moment Handout](#)

[Get Involved Long Poster](#)

[Best Get Involved Brochure](#)

[Georgia Parent Leadership Award Application](#)

[Thank You Letter to Georgia Parents](#)

['I CAN Play A Role' Campaign Letter](#)

The contents of the packet are available online at the corresponding link.

Michelle Sandrock urged the PAC members to learn the key points to share about parent engagement month and serve as an ambassador. She encouraged them go back to their communities and share the materials in the packets with families, parents, and schools. She also informed them that in addition to November being Parent Engagement Month, National Parent Engagement Day is November 20th. She encouraged the PAC to promote the online pledges as well as the printed pledge cards, because if you just rely on online, parents may forget to pledge. She informed the members of our goal to receive 50,000 pledges during the month of November.

Michelle then referred them to the 'I CAN Play A Role' campaign letter which contained all information about the campaign. Because it is important to engage all parents and families, she informed the PAC members that Spanish versions of the pledge cards and calendar are also available online.

Michelle then briefly touched on the Georgia Parent Leadership Awards. She asked the 6 members who were Georgia Parent Leadership Award Winners to raise their hand so that they could be recognized. She then explained that they are taking nominations for this year's awards, and urged the members to apply. Those who apply will be notified of acceptance in late December. She also encouraged the members to familiarize themselves with the Best Get Involved Moment sheet, the [125 Best Get Involved Moments Book](#), and the [Best Get Involved Parent Videos](#), which the 2010 PAC created. Everything is downloadable and she urged them to take and share everything that is available on the Parent Engagement website.

Michelle informed the group that their role as a PAC member is to be a facilitator and a leader and as such they are required to meet after each meeting with their Superintendent (or designee) and their Title I Director. She strongly urged them to schedule their meeting within the next week to help spread the word about Parent Engagement Month. She then reminded the PAC Members of their commitments:

- Meet with School District Superintendent (or designee) and Title I Director after each PAC meeting
- Speak at a School Board Meeting (at least once this year)
- Present at a school administrator district meeting (at least once this year)

She also informed them that other opportunities for leadership may occur throughout the year and she will contact the group with these opportunities as they arise.

The PAC members were informed that at each meeting they will get a packet containing a cheat sheet of talking points that they can take back to their district. Also to remember if they should have any questions, to contact Michelle Sandrock (msandrock@doe.k12.ga.us) or Nate Schult (nschult@doe.k12.ga.us).

V. PAC Project Workgroups

Michelle then talked about the workgroups informing the group that each PAC has completed a project. During Family Engagement Conference years (every other year) the conference serves as the PAC's project. However, since this was a PIC Meeting year, the PAC members would be completing a different project. In the past the PAC had always completed one project as a whole group, however this year the PAC will be split up into four groups to work on four distinct projects. The GaDOE gave the members a choice to work the project of their choice. The projects are as followed:

- Communications Workgroup –
 - The communications workgroup will help the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and educators across our state better understand a parent's perspective in an effort to increase school to home communication. This group is for anyone who has a creative spirit and enjoys writing, blogging, social media, graphic design or videography. Throughout this year, PAC members in this group will have the opportunity to let their and other parents' opinions and stories be shared by:
 - Developing a resource from conception to conclusion called "What Parents Want Teachers to Know." This resource may include videos, tip sheets, handouts, social media or a combination of various communication methods.
 - Writing blog posts about "What Parents Want Teachers to Know" or other helpful topics for the GaDOE's Parent Involvement Coordinator (PIC) Network Blog, a site dedicated to providing helpful information and resources for PICs around the state. These posts will allow educators to have greater insight on the personal experiences, thoughts, and ideas of Georgia parents.
 - Providing insight on content often looked for by parents on school and school district websites. Information will be shared with Title I school and district personnel to influence future website content to increase family engagement.
- Strategies for Secondary Schools Workgroup
 - The high school workgroup will help educators and parents in Georgia achieve a sound approach towards authentic family engagement in high school. Parents of high school students need to know the right questions to ask and schools need to be prepared to provide parents with the answers and opportunities. This group is for PAC members who are interested in clarifying and strengthening the different roles that parents play throughout high school, while at the same time learning about the critical factors that influence family engagement during this critical stage. Parents with this group may have personal or professional experience working with high school age students and families. PAC members in this group will work together to determine the best methodology to communicate the steps, strategies and systems to strengthen the family-school connection in high school through:

- Developing informational resources for both parents and educators on the best approaches to building family-school partnerships in high school
 - Creating a guide for families to engage in meaningful conversations with their students about high school and post-secondary plans
 - Providing practical insight and advice to assist high schools in keeping parents engaged and to assist parents with strategies to be actively engaged in their child's education

- Parent Leadership Workgroup
 - The parent leadership workgroup will assist the Georgia Department of Education in developing a curriculum to train and build parent leaders in schools. Members of this group will pull together their skills, talents, and knowledge to create a comprehensive parent leadership training program for schools to implement. This program will help build parent's confidence, strengthen parent's capabilities, and increase parent's connections in order to support student learning and impact student academic outcomes. The group is expected to work during and outside PAC meetings to produce a parent leadership manual that will:
 - Establish the foundation, rationale and goals for an engaging parent leadership program
 - Address important elements and core principles to assist parents with an understanding of the school system, educational topics, and student needs
 - Describe the necessary systems and conditions in order for schools to build and sustain parent leaders
 - Outline activities and programs that schools can implement in order to build parent's skills as leaders, ambassadors and advocates
 - Contain additional resources, projects, and ideas for schools and parents to use together in to practice parent leadership skills

- Local PAC Project/Community Engagement Workgroup
 - The local PAC project workgroup will help parent leaders utilize their skills in their school district to bring about change in student achievement through family and community engagement. This group is for parent leaders who have previously taken an active role in their child's school community, have established or the ability/desire to grow their school community connections and want to do more. A significant amount of work in this group will take place outside of PAC meetings. Therefore, PAC members in this group will be expected to work independently (with guidance from the GaDOE) in their communities between PAC meetings and mobilize others in their community for assistance to complete their local project. A brief list of expectations include:
 - Determining an area of student achievement need to address where family and community engagement in the school or district can play a key role
 - Meeting with school principal or key school district personnel to build consensus and share desired project
 - Building a plan of action to include project purpose, description and timelines for implementation
 - Developing a local team to support the work
 - Tracking goals to measure student achievement/family engagement success
 - Sharing project outcome at the May PAC meeting

Michelle instructed the PAC members that although the GaDOE Parent Engagement staff will help them with their projects, they will be the primary facilitators. Therefore, each workgroup was tasked with electing a Chair and a Co-Chair, as well as setting specific deadlines and goals to have completed by the next meeting. Each workgroup then met for approximately one hour.

After the group meeting, each Chair reported their next steps.

The Communications workgroup decided to do a five-minute humorous YouTube video about what parents wanted teachers to know. Their next step was to send in their videos to the Chair and Co-Chair before Thanksgiving.

The Strategies for Secondary Schools workgroup subdivided their group between what parents need and what schools need. Dr. Barge suggested strategizing with their principals to think of some things that may help parents because educators need help from parents as well. From the school side this group is planning to create a framework with already built in programs and grade level orientations.

The Parent Leadership workgroup decided to focus their efforts on how they can get parents more engaged in the classroom. They plan to do this by defining the characteristics of a leader, explaining why a leader is needed, and forming committees and sub-committees. After two weeks they will research best practices. After four weeks they will set-up a conference call where they will establish where they are in the process and what is still needed.

The Local PAC Project/Community Engagement workgroup brainstormed many ideas and decided to focus on the high impact strategy link to learning. This group stated that they would touch base within a week and give Michelle an outline by Nov. 20th.

Before wrapping-up, Michelle stressed the importance of following up with members of their workgroup and completing assigned tasks between the meetings as there is much work to be done.

VI. Wrap-Up

Dr. Barge then wrapped up the meeting by stating that the Parent Engagement Program is a model program for the nation and mentioned that the U.S. Department of Education has recognized the program as a top program in the country. He then reminded the parents that administrators are often times overworked because they are constantly rolling out new tests, standards, etc. Dr. Barge urged them to not be afraid to talk to their administrators because they need parents' help in order to know what direction they need to go in. He urged the parents to tell their administrators how we can make school less intimidating. He closed by fondly stating that he was confident that they will be a great asset to the next superintendent.

The PAC members thanked Dr. Barge for his passion with education and service as our State School Superintendent for the last four years. Michelle Sandrock wrapped up the meeting by informing them of the next meeting's date and briefly mentioning social media and travel reimbursements. Meeting adjourned.