



PARENT ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Issue 4, Summer 2012

“Successfully Engaging Georgia’s Parents”

“Taking Great Strides to Achieve Success”

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

As most parents do, I find that the summer months are a great opportunity for fun and relaxation for my child. However, I also know that the break can cause students to lose learning momentum before returning to school in the fall. One way to combat that loss is to promote reading throughout the summer months.

Reading is essential to student success. It helps

children, both young and old, keep their minds active in the learning process. Research tells us that students who do not read during the summer may lose a month or more of the reading progress they made in school. When this happens, the progress teachers are able to make at the beginning of the new school year is slowed by unnecessary review. As a school partner, parents can help alleviate this by working with their student’s teacher to create a list of summer reads, encouraging their student to explore books on subjects that interest them and ensuring that your student sets some

time aside each week to read.

I encourage you to start planning early and create a balanced schedule for your children to enjoy the summer break, while still remaining engaged in activities such as summer jobs, camps, or volunteer work. Doing so will help them stay involved in the educational process and allow them to enjoy a healthy mix of academics and fun. Have a great summer and we look forward to seeing you again in August!

Sincerely,
John D. Barge
State School Superintendent



Best GET INVOLVED Parent Moment...

There is no better way to inspire parents to get involved then by sharing other parent’s stories with them. Under this belief, the GaDOE’s Parent Engagement Program began collecting and compiling stories from parents. One story will be published in each quarterly newsletter to be shared statewide.

My best GET INVOLVED moment was when...

Perry Primary School has an open door policy for parents. I’m always welcomed to have lunch with my son and visit his classroom. My best “get involved” moment was “Hot Dog We’re Reading.” The school provided dinner for my family and afterwards we went to our son’s quad to listen to a story being read by his teacher. The purpose of this activity was for the parents to learn how

their child is being taught to read. The teacher explained different strategies used as well as reasonable expectations. It was so enlightening. Even though I am a teacher, each of us has our own style of teaching. It was so beneficial for me to know what terms and techniques my son is familiar with and comfortable hearing at home.

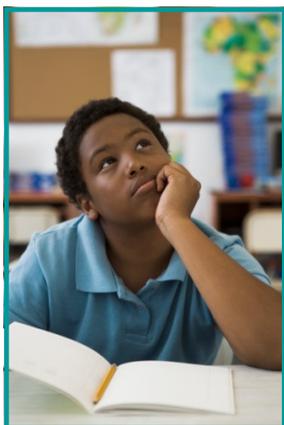
Anonymous Parent

Life After High School Graduation



PARENTS, DID YOU KNOW...

You can encourage growth and independence by modeling the behaviors you want to see in your child.



Great SUMMER Reads for Tweens!

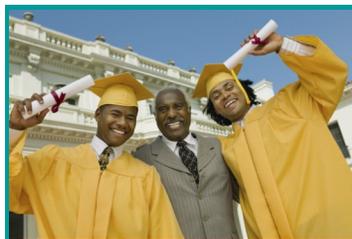
- ▶ **The Akhenaten Adventure**
by Philip Kerr
- ▶ **Chasing Vermeer**
by Blue Balliett
- ▶ **Frindle**
by Andrew Clements
- ▶ **Hatchet**
by Gary Paulsen
- ▶ **Bridge to Terabithia**
by Katherine Paterson
- ▶ **Redwall**
by Brian Jacques

Graduating from high school is a major stepping stone that leads to the pathway of one's future. It is a turning point when most teenagers become legal adults and must start to make decisions that will ultimately affect the rest of their lives. For some, life after high school may consist of going to a community college or university, whereas others may immediately join the workforce, including military service.

The transition to adulthood is a complex process in which teenagers who have been dependent on parents throughout childhood start taking definitive steps to achieve measures of financial, residential, and emotional independence.

The good news is there are a variety of ways to keep students engaged in

Parents may also find the transition to be quite difficult at first, but there are a number of ways to cope with separation anxiety. Parents would never want to make their child feel guilty about going off to school or embarking on a career path.



Many have found the following tips to be helpful in decreasing separation anxiety for parents who are experiencing life after high school graduation for the first time:

- ▶ Stay in touch through social media.

- ▶ Select a new hobby.
- ▶ Reach out for support from other parents whose children have also left for college, military service or the workforce.
- ▶ Enjoy your free time by joining a club.
- ▶ Volunteer with a child or teen organization.
- ▶ Keep a diary so you can have lots to talk about when you are reunited with your son/daughter.

It would be healthy to look at this transition as a period of growth and development. After the realization and acceptance that there is life after high school graduation, parents and students alike can make a successful transition to the next phase in their individual lives.

Keeping Students Academically Engaged Over Summer

As many parents are aware, summer break is quickly approaching! Students will likely embark on a journey filled with trips to the beach along with days spent at amusement parks, while others spend time visiting relatives who live out of town. For many students, this also means no school and no responsibilities. Hence, for parents, it can certainly become a daunting task to keep children and teens engaged in educational activities over the summer.

The good news is there are a variety of ways to keep students engaged in

learning throughout the summer time by doing some of the following:

- ▶ Promote reading and comprehension by visiting the local book store or library with your student and selecting a few books of their choice that can be read throughout the summer.
- ▶ Increase writing skills by suggesting that your student keep a journal of daily events that occur throughout the summer.
- ▶ Visit historical sites, museums, exhibits, and parks to build upon your student's knowledge of history and culture.
- ▶ Practice their math skills by having them complete grade-appropriate math work on a weekly basis.
- ▶ Challenge your student to stay updated with the news by having them read an article from the newspaper or internet and then write about the current event.
- ▶ Apply their knowledge of science by planting a small garden and monitoring its development over the summer time.
- ▶ Volunteer at a local hospital or non-profit organization.

Milk or Water: Still Best Thirst Quenchers by April Reese Sorrow

With so many sports drinks, vitamin waters, energy drinks and specialty teas on the market, consumers may wonder which is best for them. An expert with the University of Georgia says to be wary of them all and that milk and water are still the best thirst quenchers.

"These special drinks are loaded with calories, and we don't need it," said Connie Crawley, a nutrition expert with UGA Cooperative Extension. "There is a time and place for some of these drinks, and having one as a lunch beverage is not appropriate."

Sports drinks

Athletes and exercisers who spend more than an hour working out and sweating profusely may need a boost of electrolytes from a sports drink. "A teenage boy practicing football for three hours a day may need a sports drink, but a child riding a bike for an hour does not," Crawley said. Even juice is not the best choice. It is easy to consume several hundred calories from juice if you drink more than a small glass. Instead, eat the fruit during practice or exercise.

Vitamin water

Vitamin waters and enhanced teas offer extra doses of vitamins and minerals. Drinking a bottle of water with added vitamin C will not ward off a cold, Crawley said. These marketing ploys aren't based on science. "There is a misconception that the more

vitamins you get the better," she said. "You need vitamins, but for the most part you can get all you need from what you eat if you eat a balanced diet. For a few nutrients, you can actually get too much." Fluoridated water is the only mineral water needed. Fluoride helps to build strong teeth and bones. Most bottled water lacks fluoride, so drink water from the tap if your city water is fluoridated. Fluoride supplements are also available from your child's doctor.



Energy boosters

Store shelves offer an array of energy-boosting beverages loaded with caffeine. Once you start drinking these regularly, more is needed overtime to feel the boost. "To increase the effect of these beverages, limit them," Crawley said. "When we take in extra calories through drinks, our brains don't process them like calories from foods," she said. So we don't feel full. We still want to eat the same amount of food, or calories, at our meals and snacks.

"Our bodies are programmed not to metabolize fluid calories the same way as food," Crawley said. "As a method of self preservation, we continue to drink so we

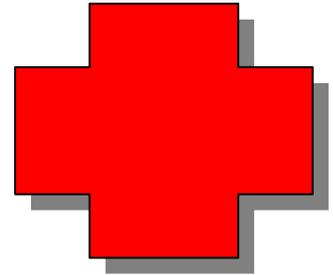
don't get dehydrated. If fluid calories made us feel full, we might not drink enough to keep us hydrated."

Milk and water

Milk and water are still the best drinks. Adults need about eight 8-ounce glasses of liquid a day. If those come from water and two or three cups of milk, you limit the empty calories going into your body. In 1994, the average teenager consumed 64.5 gallons of soft drink per year. In 2002, consumption had decreased slightly, but teenagers were still drinking 21 ounces of soda each day and only 11 ounces of milk. Teenage girls were drinking even less milk, according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

"Children, especially girls, need to drink at least 16 ounces to 24 ounces of milk a day. Once a person reaches adulthood, bones store less calcium. So, kids need to build strong bones during their childhood and teenage years," Crawley said. Set a good example for your kids and give up sodas and specialty drinks. "Cut out 100 calories a day of empty calories from sweet drinks and you will lose 10 pounds a year, as long as you don't add the calories somewhere else," she said. Also look at the nutrition labels. Be aware that some cans and bottles actually hold two to three servings inside. If you drink the whole can or bottle, you will be getting double or triple the calories and sugar listed.

Permission to reproduce:
(April R. Sorrow is a news editor with the
University of Georgia College of Agricultural
and Environmental Sciences.)



PARENTS, DID YOU KNOW...

It is vital to have a basic emergency kit packed and ready in your home. If you don't have one, your child can assist you with putting one together. Visit <http://www.ready.gov/basic-disaster-supplies-kit> to learn more about what you should include in your kit.



FAST FACT:

Obese and unhealthy youth are more likely to have risk factors for cardiovascular disease, such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure; therefore, it's essential to stay active and eat healthy.





Remember to block off these important dates!

National Gingerbread Day
June 5, 2012

World Environment Day
June 5, 2012

Flag Day
June 14, 2012

National Culinary Arts Month
July, 2012

International Picnic Day
July 18, 2012

National Cheesecake Day
July 30, 2012

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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!
<http://www.gadoe.org/Pages/Home.aspx>
<http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Pages/Parent-Engagement-Program.aspx>

Building a Parent Community



Children experience great outcomes when parents can work together with the common goal of helping them do well in school. Positive parenting practices and the relationships that are cultivated with the school community will create better outcomes for everyone involved, namely the school, teachers, parents and community members. There is strength in numbers and parents can truly empower and impact one another.

Some may be apprehensive about reaching out to other parents and developing a network, but there are a number of ways

in which this can be accomplished. Challenge yourself to do one or more of the following:

- ▶ Offer a ride to parents who would like to attend school events but lack transportation of their own.
- ▶ Introduce yourself to other parents you've never seen before while at school events, get to know them and perhaps exchange phone numbers.
- ▶ Reach out to teachers and the school administration to ask what they are looking for from parents— act on it.

- ▶ Talk with parents about their expectations and rules before your child goes to their home for a visit.
- ▶ Encourage other parents to get involved with their child's education and volunteer to explain school policies that you understand but may be unclear to other parents.

In schools and communities where there is a strong parent community, the growth and success of their children are evident. Schools yearn to have parents get involved and play an active role in their child's education and building a parent community is one way to accomplish this.