

# Parent Engagement Newsletter



## Parent Leadership Month is February, 2013!

This month provides expanded opportunities for parents to share their leadership skills by participating in meaningful parent leadership activities at the local, state and national levels.

We encourage you to talk with your child’s teacher and school principal to learn about ways to get involved in school leadership opportunities. Make your talents, skills, and availability to assist known as a way to benefit all children.



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

It is hard to believe that half of the school year is nearly over. Your hard work does not go unnoticed and thank you for doing everything you could do to ensure your child had a productive and successful first half of the school year. Make sure to use the upcoming winter break for some much needed

family time to relax and recharge. This is because with the second half of the academic year approaching, we are going to need your help even more in keeping our students motivated, focused and confident in their ability to do well. One of our primary goals at the Georgia Department of Education is to ensure that we are providing the students with a proper skills, experiences, and coursework that equips them with the knowledge and capability to be College and Career Ready upon completion of high school. With your help, we have been able to continuously provide students with the academic,

social, and emotional structure they need to be successful in school and in life. It’s important to acknowledge that it is a different world today than it was two decades ago, and in two decades the world will look much different than it does today. Regardless of what the future brings, it is our goal to prepare our students for the abundance of opportunities their future holds. Thank you for your continuous support in helping us to achieve this goal.

Sincerely,

State School Superintendent

## Best GET INVOLVED Parent Moments...



My best get involved moment is when I was invited to participate in school activities during Hispanic Heritage Month, which celebrated the Independence of Mexico and provided information to all families about its history. We had a wonderful time, and the teachers were continuously providing opportunities to better educate the families of Houston County. Many families have benefited from these opportunities and the freedom of our community radiates through this education. It was most appropriate during this month because the freedom of Mexico was to acquire

education, principles and goods for our country. THANK YOU FOR TAKING OUR COUNTRY INTO ACCOUNT!

-David G.,  
Miller Elementary School

My son entered middle school not knowing anyone. It was very hard for him. I told him that I would be at school with him until he became more comfortable with his surroundings. I now volunteer on the parent-teacher board and I think Fort Valley Middle School is a school that goes beyond the call of duty.

- Twana Cook-Willis,  
Fort Valley Middle School

I volunteer 3-4 days a week and loved every minute of it! I do awards, copies, Tuesday folders, and whatever else anyone needs along the way. I have three kids here and I volunteer for all of their classes.

-Mandy Trevino, Eagle Springs Elementary School

Parents, we would love to hear from you! Please submit your Best GET INVOLVED Moment to [lservance@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:lservance@doe.k12.ga.us). Make sure that your story provides details of the event including what happened and who was involved, as well as explains why it was your best GET INVOLVED moment.



## What is Georgia's STEM Program?



### 6 WAYS TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS FROM THE FLU

1. Cover your mouth when coughing.
2. Wash your hands.
3. Ventilate your home.
4. Keep all surfaces clean.
5. If you're sick, stay home.
6. Avoid personal contact with others while you are still contagious.



The Georgia Department of Education is dedicated to preparing students for 21st Century workplace careers by providing high quality educational opportunities in STEM fields. STEM represents the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. STEM education encourages a curriculum that is driven by problem solving, discovery, exploratory learning, and student-centered development of ideas and solutions. The saturation of technology in most fields means that all students, not just those who plan to pursue a STEM profession, will require a solid foundation in STEM to be productive members of the workforce.

Georgia STEM goals:

- ▶ Empower students to become innovators and technologically proficient problem solvers

- ▶ Ensure that all students have access to the appropriate technology conducive to enhancing their learning experiences both in and outside the traditional classroom
- ▶ Increase student 21st century skills and technological literacy by providing students with opportunities to use the technical tools of the STEM industry
- ▶ Guide community understanding of the importance of STEM education and build capacity to sustain a viable STEM educational program to prepare students for work and life in the 21st century
- ▶ Increase Georgia's capacity to provide high quality K-12 STEM professional learning opportunities
- ▶ Nurture partnerships that allow schools and the business sector to join efforts to improve students' STEM-career opportunities
- ▶ Increase the number of students pursuing careers in STEM-related fields and/or post-secondary STEM related education/training

There are currently four schools that have received STEM certification and several "STEM at Home" programs that are designed to help parents start early in helping young ones develop an interest in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. There are numerous games and activities designed to engage every K-5 student. To learn more about STEM and obtain additional resources, please visit [www.gpb.org/fast-forward](http://www.gpb.org/fast-forward).

## Progressive Steps: Help Your Child Overcome Stuttering

Stuttering is a speech disorder that makes someone repeat speech sounds that he or she finds difficult to pronounce. More than half of children who stutter recover naturally and the other half are able to develop fluency with speech therapy programs and techniques they can practice at home with their parents. At times, children are ridiculed for having this challenge which can greatly impact their self-esteem and

academic achievement.

Parents can help their child develop fluency by:

- ▶ Providing a relaxed, unhurried environment. A high-pressure lifestyle can worsen the stuttering.
- ▶ Listening patiently; do not interrupt your child or finish sentences for them.
- ▶ Avoiding the tendency to criticize and correct every statement your child makes.
- ▶ Acknowledging the issue in a positive and supportive way can put your child more at ease. Perhaps you could say "sometimes it is not easy to say what we want."
- ▶ Above all, communicate your acceptance of them.

To obtain more information and guidance on helping your child overcome stuttering, please visit [www.stutteringhelp.org/](http://www.stutteringhelp.org/).

## CCGPS: What Should Parents Know?

The Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) is a state-led effort that provides a set of consistent K-12 academic standards to prepare all students for college and career ready success. Simply stated, these academic performance standards provide clear expectations about what knowledge, skills, and practice students should have and learn at each grade level. Nationally, these standards are referred to as Common Core State Standards (CCSS), but since its adoption in Georgia, these standards are now referred to as CCGPS.

These standards help guide teachers and parents on what they need to do to help students graduate from high school prepared for college or a career. The CCGPS also guides both curriculum (the subject matter taught at each grade level) and assessments (tests that determine the level of learning a student has achieved). Overall, these standards will improve educational outcomes for all students.

Parents are encouraged to look through the common core standards to get a feel for what their children will be learning as they move through school. The following list consists of resources along with their corresponding websites that have been designed to assist parents with understanding CCGPS and

the impact it will have on their child's education:

► **National PTA - Grade-by-Grade Parent Guides for Student Success**

-this resource focuses on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that explore what students should be learning at each grade in mathematics and English Language Arts/ Literacy in order to be prepared for college and careers. The Guide is available in English and Spanish in various formats such as a color or black and white four page version or an abbreviated two page version.

[www.pta.org/4446.htm](http://www.pta.org/4446.htm)

► **Council of Great City Schools - Parent Roadmaps**

-this resource is designed to support parents' understanding of the Common Core State written for grades K-8 in English and K-5 in Spanish. They are similar in some respects to the National PTA Parent Guides, but are more detailed in some areas, and more focused on the progression of student academic achievement over time.

[www.cgcs.org/Page/244](http://www.cgcs.org/Page/244)

► **Military Child Education Coalition**

-this is a publication that describes the benefits CCSS offers to military families as well as other information regarding CCSS assessments and implementation.

[www.militarychild.org/k-12-core-curriculum-standards](http://www.militarychild.org/k-12-core-curriculum-standards)

► **Common Core Georgia Performance Standards**

-this resource helps you understand the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards in their entirety along with model units of instruction and professional development video modules and power points.

[www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/default.aspx)

► **The Hunt Institute and Council of Chief State School Officers - Videos on Common Core implementation**

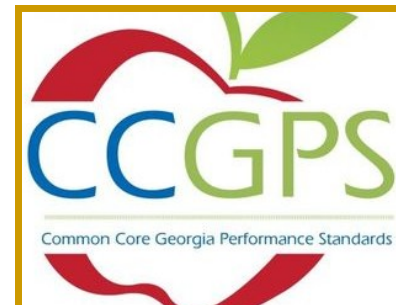
-these videos were developed to help diverse groups such as educators, policymakers, and parents, better understand the breadth and depth of the standards and how they will improve teaching, make classrooms better, create shared expectations, and cultivate lifelong learning for all students. These videos are available by target audience and topic, many of which feature remarks by the lead writers of the CCSS.

[www.ccsso.org/Resources/Digital\\_Resources/Common\\_Core\\_Implementation\\_video\\_Series.html](http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Digital_Resources/Common_Core_Implementation_video_Series.html)

► **Common Core State Standards Initiative**

- this resource provides the final standards, frequently asked questions, resources and a summary of feedback. The official website for the CCSS initiative is:

[www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)



**FAST FACT:**

Georgia was the only state in the nation that saw student growth in 2011-2012 on the SAT, ACT, AP, NAEP, Math, NAEP Reading and NAEP Science Scores!



**PARENTS, DID YOU KNOW...**

Parents who allow their child to play a role in setting their curfew have a higher compliance rate. Discuss the matter with your child and allow him or her to suggest a time and offer reasons for that preference. Take their request into consideration and if your child has proven to be responsible, consider accommodating their wishes if they are reasonable. Punctuality is a part of life, so setting up a curfew isn't just about getting your child off the streets. It's about teaching them a skill that will benefit them long after they leave home.



# The Importance of Having a Family-Friendly School

Do you feel welcome when you walk through the doors of your child's school? Research has shown that welcoming school environments provide parents with a give-and-take relationship where they feel that they belong to the school, and the school belongs to them. This sense of belonging motivates parents to be more active in their children's education, which in turn has a positive impact on student achievement. Parents are encouraged to be present and active in all aspects of their child's learning at both school and home. There are many benefits to having a family-friendly school.

Family-friendly schools:

- ▶ Make students want to learn!
- ▶ Make parents want to attend school functions and volunteer!
- ▶ Make school staff enjoy their jobs!
- ▶ Make community members want to invest in the school!
- ▶ Improve customer service and parent-school communications!

Ultimately, welcoming environments make the

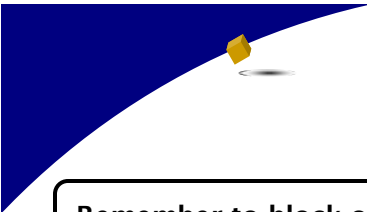
school a place of trust, safety, and a resource to students, parents, and the community at large. The first National PTA Standard for Family-School Partnerships is centered on welcoming all families. It acknowledges that families should be active participants in the life of the school and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to the school staff and to what students are learning and doing in class. All schools are being encouraged to create the type of school climate that makes all families feel welcome. Parents and students benefit when a school is welcoming.

## PARENTS, DID YOU KNOW...

You can learn more about the National PTA Standards for Family-School partnerships by visiting, [http://www.pta.org/files/EducationNation/National\\_Standards.pdf](http://www.pta.org/files/EducationNation/National_Standards.pdf)



Visit <http://tinyurl.com/cg5cxa6> to learn more about Georgia's Family-Friendly School Partnership Initiative!



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

- National Card Playing Day**  
December 28, 2012
- National Volunteer Blood Donor Month**  
January, 2013
- Children's Dental Health Month**  
February, 2013
- Parent Leadership Month**  
February, 2013
- National Black History Month**  
February, 2013
- National Stop Bullying Day**  
February 8, 2013

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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/External-Affairs-and-Policy/AskDOE/Pages/Parents.aspx>  
<http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Pages/Parent-Engagement-Program.aspx>