

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

The Department of Education recently launched "Georgia's Future. Now!" as a way to unite efforts to improve student achievement and tell the story of the successes in public schools. We have a lot of changes coming down the pike – from Common Core Georgia Performance Standards to new teacher and leader evaluations to

Career Pathways for high school students. But what's lacking is the ability to communicate in crystal-clear terms the vision, goals and solutions, along with our many accomplishments. The "Georgia's Future. Now!" movement will help us tell that story. For instance, many people don't know that Georgia was a key player in the development of the Common Core, and now we're joining nearly every other state to create an equal playing field across all state lines. We've taken the best research available and combined it with local input from educators across the state to come up with the Teacher and Leader Keys Evaluation System. Teachers

need multiple measures with deeper meaning to improve performance – not a checklist of satisfactory or unsatisfactory. And we've added Career Pathways, inspired by business and economic forecasters, so our students can all be college and career ready. We will align our offerings with critical areas and reward graduates with skills needed to get high-paying jobs. It's time to stop tearing down public education and start building it up. Go to GAFutureNow.org, download our toolkit and help us spread the message.

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. 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.



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

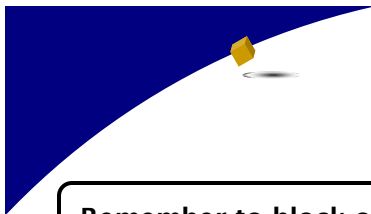
school a place of trust, safety, and a resource to students, parents, and the community at large. The first National PTA Standard for Family-School Partnerships is centered on welcoming all families. It acknowledges that families should be active participants in the life of the school and feel welcomed, 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



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
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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>