



# PARENT ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Issue 2, Winter 2012

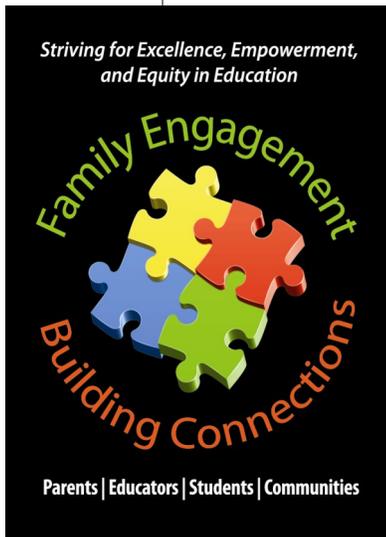
“Taking Great Strides to Achieve Success”

## “Taking Great Strides to Achieve Success”

### Inside this issue:

Testing Tips	2
Conference Details	2
Fathers and Sons	3
Grandparents in Academics	3
Georgia Parent Leadership Awards	4

Special Point of Interest:  
2012 Family Engagement Conference



February 16-18, 2012



Dr. John D. Barge,  
State School Superintendent

As the new semester begins, our teachers, administrators, support staff and students are all back in their schools and classrooms. As you know, the second half of the school year can many times be the most challenging time of the year, and we need your on-going support. The Georgia Department of Education is currently engaged in many initiatives that will boost student achievement and strengthen teacher quality in our state.

I recently had the opportunity to meet with U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in Washington, D.C. to discuss our vision for implementing a new accountability system, called the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI).

The CCRPI will allow teachers to return to doing what they do best – teaching and discovering what ignites a passion for learning in our students. From my years of experience in education, I have seen too many students who were able to successfully pass tests but were not college and career ready. We are focused on changing that culture throughout the

college and career ready. I encourage you to become familiar with all of these important initiatives and to discuss them with other parents, your child's teachers, and school-level administrators. What lies ahead in the next few months will have a profound impact on your child's educational experience, and we need you to be a key part of it.

I thank you for your hard work and continued dedication to helping us better prepare our students for the challenges that await them in the global economy. Together, we will realize our vision of *Making Education Work for All Georgians*.

Sincerely,

Dr. John D. Barge



state. The multifaceted CCRPI will measure the success of our schools and our students on much more than a single test.

With the implementation of the CCRPI, along with the new Common Core Georgia Performance Standards and the Career Pathways initiatives, we are paving the way for our students to truly be



## Conference Reminder & Details



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 conference theme is:

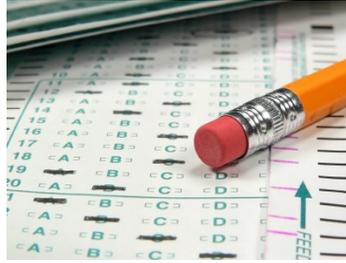
***Building Connections:  
Striving for Excellence,  
Empowerment and Equity  
in Education***

There will be over 750 parents and educators coming together at this event. More coverage about the conference will be available in the spring newsletter.

This conference is a collaboration between the Georgia Department of Education and Georgia PTA.



## Helping Your Child With Test-Taking



You can be a great help to your child if you will observe these do's and don'ts about tests and test taking:

- Explain that tests are yardsticks that teachers, schools, school districts and even states use to measure what and how they teach and how well students are learning what is taught. Most tests are designed and given by teachers to measure students' progress in a course. The results tell the teacher and students whether they are keeping up with the class, need extra help or are ahead of other students.
- The results of some tests tell schools that they need to strengthen courses or change teaching methods. Still other tests compare students by schools, school districts or cities. All tests determine how well a child is doing in the areas measured by the tests.
- Tell your child that occasionally, he will take "standardized" tests. Explain that these tests use the same standards to measure student performance across the state or even across the country. Every student takes the same test according to the same rules. This makes it possible to measure each student's performance against that of others.
- Do encourage your child. Praise her for the things that she does well. If your child feels good about herself, she will do her best on a test. Children who are afraid of failing are more likely to become anxious when taking tests and more likely to make mistakes.
- Do meet with your child's teacher as often as possible to discuss his progress. Ask the teacher to suggest activities for you and your child to do at home to help prepare for tests and to improve your child's understanding of schoolwork.
- Do make sure that your child attends school regularly. Remember, tests reflect children's overall achievement. The more effort and energy your child puts into learning, the more likely it is that he will do well on tests.
- Do provide a quiet, comfortable place for studying at home and make sure that your child is well rested on school days and especially on the day of a test. Children who are tired are less able to pay attention in class or to handle the demands of a test.
- Do provide books and magazines for your child to read at home. By reading new materials, a child will learn new words that might appear on a test. Ask your child's teacher for lists of books for outside reading or get suggestions from your local library.
- Don't get upset because of a single test score. Many things can influence how your child does on a test. She might not have felt well on test day or she might have been too nervous to concentrate. She might have had an argument with a friend before the test or she might have been late to school because the school bus got caught in traffic. Remember, one test is simply one test.
- Don't place so much emphasis on your child's test scores that you lose sight of her well being. Too much pressure can affect her test performance. In addition, she may come to think that you will only love her if she does well on tests.
- Do help your child avoid test anxiety. It's good for your child to be concerned about taking a test. It's not good for him to develop "test anxiety." Test anxiety is worrying too much about doing well on a test. It can mean disaster for your child. They can become very self-critical and lose confidence in their abilities. Instead of feeling challenged by the prospect of success, they become afraid of failure.

### After the Test

Your child can learn a great deal from reviewing a graded exam paper. Reviewing will show him where he had difficulty and, perhaps, why. This is especially important for classes in which the material builds from one section to the next, as in math.

Discuss the wrong answers with your child and find out why he chose the answers. Sometimes a child didn't understand or misread a question. Or, he may have known the correct answer but failed to make his answer clear.

You and your child should read and discuss all comments that the teacher writes on a returned test. If any comments aren't clear, tell your child to ask the teacher to explain them.

Permission to reproduce:  
U.S. Department of Education.  
*Helping Your Child with Test-Taking-  
Helping Your Child Succeed in  
School.* Washington, DC. (available  
online at <http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/succeed/part9.html?exp=0>)

## Fathers and Sons: The Impact of Male Involvement



among fathers who remain actively involved in their sons life, despite not living in the same household.

Fathers and sons share a special bond that mothers are not capable of providing. Fathers are able to help their sons develop their self-identity and have a healthy outlook of their gender. Research has also shown when a father is involved, their son is also less likely to get into trouble with the law as they get older and become adults. They are also more likely to graduate from school and raise healthy families of their own. This is often a result of males taking on certain positive aspects from their father and learning how to apply what they've been taught to their everyday life.

males role models cannot have an impact. Uncles, cousins, grandfathers and close friends of the family can provide beneficial male influence and involvement. In addition, there are also meaningful programs available for young males to acquire mentors, such as the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America organization.

Fathers are a powerful resource in our society and continue to have a dynamic impact on their sons. The importance of male involvement should not be underestimated because fathers and other positive male role models have the ability to enrich and strengthen our families, communities, organizations, and schools.



Research has proven that boys with fathers who are active in their lives have fewer behavioral problems and an advantage, socially and academically, over boys with distant or no relationship with their father. This proves to be true even

Under certain circumstances, single mothers adapt to raising their sons alone because the biological father may not be able to be as involved in their son's life, but that doesn't mean other positive



### PARENTS, DID YOU KNOW...

There are four key ingredients to successful playtime between parents and children: education, inspiration, integration and communication.

### Tips for Keeping Violence Out of Your Home

These are a few proactive tips to follow if you do not want your child to become desensitized to violence:

- ▶ Be aware of the music your son/daughter listens to on a regular basis.
- ▶ Limit the amount of violence your children are exposed to on television and at the movie theatre.
- ▶ Establish a rule that violent video games are not allowed in your home.
- ▶ Observe your child's behavior while playing with friends to watch for signs of violent practices.

## Including Grandparents in Academics and Homework

Most would agree that grandparents take pride in seeing their grandchildren do well in school. Although the preliminary work may be done by parents, grandparents are able to contribute much towards the development of their grandchildren.

Grandparents can help their grandchildren succeed in school by helping them develop good study skills and habits, self-confidence, and a love for learning. In many cases, grandparents help care for their grandchildren afterschool. During this time,

there is much to be gained by supporting their grandchild's learning at home through homework. The main purpose of homework is to help children practice, reinforce, or expand important skills that they learn during the school day. Many children think of homework as a punishment rather than a tool being used to help them retain what they learn at school.

Instead of allowing the homework process to become a struggle, grandparents can help their

grandchildren view homework in a less negative image by helping them organize the work that needs to be done, providing snacks and periodic break time in between studying, practicing patience and leaving room for adaptation according to their grandchild's personality.

By doing these things, grandparents will be able to help their grandchildren take responsibility for their own learning, develop good problem solving skills, and enjoy it all in the process.



All members of a family can offer support for children's learning and academic performance. Generally, children with a good support system are more likely to excel academically and socially.



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

**Children's Dental Health Month**  
February, 2012

**Parent Leadership Month**  
February, 2012

**National Black History Month**  
February, 2012

**National PTA Founders Day**  
February 17, 2012

**National Nutrition Month**  
March 2012

**Dr. Seuss Read Across America Day**  
March 2, 2012

## Program Staff

**Michelle Tarbutton Sandrock,**  
Parent Engagement Program Manager  
msandrock@doe.k12.ga.us  
404-232-1148

**Lakeita Servance,**  
Parent Engagement Specialist  
lservance@doe.k12.ga.us  
404-656-2633

**Outreach Programs Division**  
1862 Twin Towers East  
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive, SE  
Atlanta, GA 30334



### 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>

## 2012 Georgia Parent Leadership Award Winners!

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and the Georgia Parent Teacher Association (GA PTA) created the Georgia Parent Leadership 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. This award was also designed to inspire all parents to use their unique talents, no matter how big or small, to **lead** the way in building positive outcomes for all children.

The award recognizes the many skills and talents of Georgia's parents, particularly as they exhibit

their leadership through any or all of the National PTA Standards for Family - School Partnerships.

The Parent Leadership Award winners were chosen not only based on their demonstrated talents, but also on how their work has benefitted the entire school community on behalf of all children. Six Georgia Parent Leadership Awards will be given each year; hence, schools will continue to have an opportunity to participate in this recognition program.

The following nominees were selected to receive the 2012 Parent Leadership Award:

- ▶ **Tyler Barr**, Mirror Lake Elementary School, Douglas County Schools
- ▶ **Juli Hall**, Sara Harp Mintor Elementary School, Fayette County Schools
- ▶ **Susan Dodson**, Timothy Road Elementary School, Clarke County Schools
- ▶ **Elizabeth Caldwell**, Jasper County Middle School, Jasper County Schools
- ▶ **Krysia Suttles**, East Paulding High School, Paulding County Schools
- ▶ **Dennis Holsey, Sr.**, Hancock Central High School, Hancock County Schools

The winners of this award are parents or caregivers who have contributed to the school community in a way that is bigger and beyond themselves. As part of their award, they will be afforded opportunities throughout the year to share their many recognized talents by promoting and assisting with parent engagement activities at the state level. We are proud to congratulate our 2012 award recipients!

