



Georgia's School Superintendent Richard Woods' Education Policy Positions

Collaboration

- Will reach out and meet with the Governor's office, members of the State Board of Education, and the General Assembly.
- Will reach out to state education groups and to education stakeholders.
- Relationships need to be repaired and, in some cases, even started.
- Committed to strengthening this critical partnership between the Governor's office, the State Board of Education and the State School Superintendent. Only working together can we move education forward in Georgia for the betterment of our students and the teaching profession.
- Will conduct a series of Teacher Focus Groups and Community Town Hall events across the state to listen to the concerns and ideas of our students, parents, and teachers.
- Will work to restore and strengthen the buy-in and faith in our public education system.

Child-Focused and Classroom-Centered

Math

- One of the greatest challenges our students have faced for the past several years is in the area of math.
- Parents and math teachers have great concerns about having only the integrated approach.
- Too many waivers being submitted to the state board regarding students who struggled with the integrated math approach or transferred from another state that used the traditional discrete math approach.
- Appreciate the cooperation and collaboration the Governor's office and State BOE have shown on this issue.
- Set to allow our schools to offer traditional discrete math courses or integrated math courses, and to finally address the challenges our individual students and teachers face at the high school level.

Common Core

- Committed to the idea -- as are the Governor and State BOE -- that our students deserve the very best standards; proposed revisions are a step in that direction. Public comments show that concerns remain -- especially by our teachers -- and more revisions need to take place as we hear from educators throughout the state.
- Consistent in my belief that we should not throw the “baby out with the bathwater” but also consistent in stating that Georgia must retain the authority to make changes as necessary -- this authority is what the State Board and I will continue to exercise in a measured approach that best benefits our students and teachers.

Science and Social Studies Standards

- Agreement with Governor and State BOE that our Science and Social Studies standards must be Georgia-owned and Georgia-grown.

Foundational Standards

- Will establish and define foundational standards for K-5 that ensure our students have a firm footing for academic success.
- One basic foundation we must emphasize is identifying reading deficiencies early and providing professional development to equip all elementary grade teachers to meet the needs of these students (also a shared passion of First Lady Sandra Deal).

Graduation

- For many of our kids, academic success has not only been eroded by a weak foundation of the fundamentals, but also a one-size-fits-all approach to the path to graduation.
- Applaud the Governor’s push for Computer Science to count as a 4th year core math or science credit.
- Will work with State Board to expand this concept by allowing courses such as financial literacy and other Career, Tech and Agriculture courses to count as core credit toward graduation.
- Will look at offering a wide range of diploma seals -- from Career Pathways to AP and honors course completion -- to personalize education.
- More options lead to a more relevant education, and in turn to a higher graduation rate for our state.

Testing

- Our students and teachers are suffering from an overemphasis on test scores.
- Will aggressively seek ways to lessen this burden.
- Calling on members of the General Assembly to explore ways to diminish that burden and will work closely with GaDOE staff to develop the most effective diagnostic testing system possible.
- State Board has acted responsibly by calling for a moratorium on the use of student test scores in the teacher effectiveness calculation and in students' course grades.
- Will continue working with them on this issue by asking for a one-year moratorium on the use of test scores in the CCRPI school-grading measurement.

Teacher Evaluation

- Will look at how we measure the effectiveness of our teachers to ensure it is fair and benefitting our kids.
- Administrators are struggling with the paperwork and demands on time caused by the new evaluation tool.
- Will work to free up these administrators to focus on teachers entering the profession or those who continue to struggle in the classroom, while allowing our great teachers to teach and treating them as professionals by allowing content- or grade-level peers from surrounding schools or school systems to provide these teachers with real professional feedback.
- Will work to ensure we find the right balance between accountability and responsibility.

Funding

- One of the greatest constitutional responsibilities we have is providing the funds to support a quality education for every child.
- Applaud the Governor's and General Assembly's commitment to this constitutional obligation with the sharp increase in education funding last year.
- Will work with all parties to ensure that as many dollars as possible flow into our classrooms to directly support the success of our students.
- Our state can only keep our number-one business ranking by ensuring that we continue to move forward together in the area of economic development.
- A critical part of this is creating a funding formula that provides every child with access to a quality education -- whether it be a child in Tift County or one in Forsyth County.

Communication

- Will work to strengthen our partnerships with the Governor, State Board, teachers, students, parents and education groups.
- Will reach out to the business community to show a commitment in action instead of just words.
- Plan to launch a public awareness campaign to highlight all the initiatives taking place in our schools across the state.
- The campaign will feature a strong digital presence, including a webpage dedicated to telling the success stories of our students, teachers, communities and schools.
- Committed to making this a long-term, sustainable campaign to keep the lines of communication open.
- This public awareness campaign will focus on the success stories of our students and teachers in education all across Georgia.
- Will be *listening* to what our students, teachers, administrators and parents have to say about what is taking place in our schools.
- Will host various advisory councils, community roundtables and town hall meetings in all communities across the state.

Conclusion

Georgians have a history of pulling together to meet our challenges head on. With great challenges come great opportunities. There are no greater opportunities than the 1.7 million students and 100,000+ teachers in our classrooms every day. With a collaborative effort, real communication, and the pursuit of classroom-centered and child-focused policies, we can realize the full potential of our great state.