

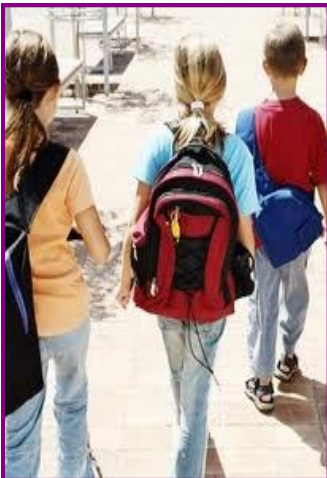
# Parent Engagement Newsletter



## How Was Your Day?

Every day parents ask their children how their day was at school. Consider asking some of these questions to learn even more about their school day.

- ◆ What did you like best about today?
- ◆ What’s your homework plan for the day?
- ◆ What do your friends think of the new teacher?
- ◆ Was there anything that was really hard for you today?
- ◆ Did the teacher call on you today?
- ◆ You haven’t mentioned math class lately, how’s it going?
- ◆ Did your teacher explain that homework problem?



## Capturing the Excitement



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

*Dear Parents,*

It is my pleasure to welcome back students and their families for another exciting school year in Georgia. As schools open their doors around the state, it’s fun to think back to my first days as a new teacher being handed the keys to my classroom with a fresh

student roster and a heavy stack of textbooks. The building hummed with energy and excitement as each student and educator arrived with a determination to achieve his/her personal best.

I invite parents and students across the state to capture that excitement from the first days of school and use it throughout this year to reach your personal best. Take some time to sit down with your child to develop goals for the year, including ways you can actively support and encourage your child’s success. Use these goals throughout the year to remind your child to set high goals

and keep track of your child’s progress.

When I travel to schools across the state during the back-to-school season, I enjoy seeing students who are eager to learn and reach new heights. I know we will see the same level of excitement for the coming year as we partner together to make education work for all Georgians.

Sincerely,

Dr. John D. Barge  
State School Superintendent

## Family Engagement in the Field: Stories of Success

*This is the first in a new series of articles written for parents by parent involvement coordinators.*

### “It Only Takes A Few”

School is where children spend the majority of their time. It is the connection point between learning and growth. I realized the need to create opportunities for parents to be part of that connection. These opportunities allowed me to talk with parents to learn about their interests and concerns while encouraging them to engage other parents. These small connections led to stronger bonds throughout our school.

It starts by building relationships with parents. I

began with parents I knew from elementary school and the community. I showed them I was interested in not only the welfare of their children, but theirs as well. The key was to pair the parents’ interests to the needs of our school.

At first there were only two or three parents who expressed any interest. One critical parent was worried about wasted spending in public schools, so I encouraged her to review the budget and give me suggestions. A retired grandmother volunteered to help her grandchild read. This led to her tutoring a small reading group, which inspired other parents to volunteer. This effort resulted in

increased reading comprehension scores across the school.

There was a time when the attendance at Open House was less than ten percent. Last night we saw over 1200 excited and engaged students and parents. More families come to our school each day, which means there are more opportunities to create new relationships .

- Tammy Johnson, Title I  
Parent Liaison  
Tapp Middle School

*Are you a family engagement professional interested in sharing your story with parents? Please contact Nate Schult, Parent Engagement Specialist, at [nschult@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:nschult@doe.k12.ga.us)*

# Solving the Motivation Formula

**F**iguring out what motivates our children academically can be as challenging as solving an advanced calculus problem. There is danger in simply blaming a student's poor performance on a lack of motivation. Remember there are athletic teams, socializing with friends, fashion trends, music and even video games competing for your child's attention. Therefore, solving the motivation formula can sometimes be a simple matter of addition and subtraction.

Encourage your child's interest in school by emphasizing the successes

and creating additional opportunities for them to have positive experiences. Give praise for their efforts not just their achievements.

Also try to reduce or minimize the distractions and possible negative beliefs about school that your child sees or hears.

Use the following tips from the National Association of School Psychologists to encourage your child to be excited about learning and build an interest in school.

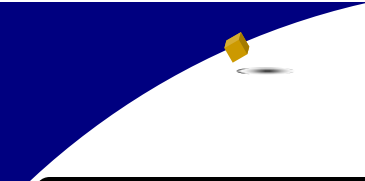
- Maintain a set routine for school work
- Plan family activities that

encourage learning, such as visits to the library, museums, or parks

- Avoid excessive rewards as they cause children to undervalue their accomplishments alone
- Praise your child for both trying hard and for being successful
- Limit things that interfere with learning
- Talk with your child about career interests and how school is related to a career
- Tell your child that you think learning is important

**Parents**, help your child succeed in school this year with these study strategies for you and your child.

- ◇ Create a quiet study zone
- ◇ Keep a calendar for all assignments and tests
- ◇ Review notes and handouts on a daily basis
  - ◇ Show an ongoing excitement and interest towards school
- ◇ Communicate with the teacher on a regular basis



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

**Hispanic Heritage Month**  
September 15—October 15

**National Family Day**  
September 23

**Family Health & Fitness Day**  
September 28

**World Teacher Day**  
October 5

**National Stop Bullying Day**  
October 9

**Walk to School Day**  
October 9

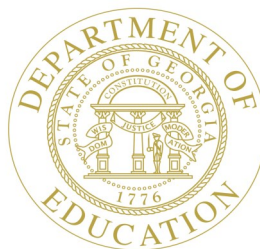
**National Red Ribbon Week**  
October 23—31

## Program Staff

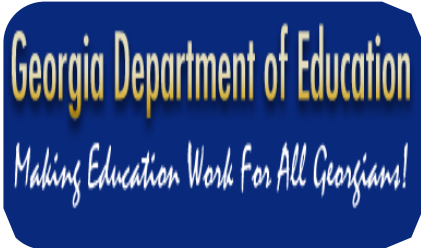
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**Vision Statement**  
The Parent Engagement Program believes that parents, schools, families, and communities working together can create meaningful partnerships that ultimately lead to significant gains across the board in student achievement.



**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!

**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>