

*“Educating Georgia’s Future”*

# PARENT ENGAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2015

## *“FREE DIGITAL BOOKS AVAILABLE TO INSPIRE SUMMER READING AND FUN”*

As students approach the end of the school year and the upcoming summer break, I encourage you to make summer reading a priority – and find ways to have fun while doing so. We know that when students continue reading during the summer, they avoid the potential “summer slide” in their reading skills. As children’s first and most important teachers, families play a major role in keeping reading fun and motivating children to read during the summer months.

Summer is a time when children can read what they please, when and where they please. You can help your child find new items to read by visiting the library and making sure you have plenty

of reading material available, whether it be books, newspapers, magazines or informational material to spark the interest of a young reader. Books that teach kids how to make or do something are a great way to get them reading and keep them occupied.

To help parents support their child’s summer reading, the Georgia Department of Education has partnered with the Get Georgia Reading Campaign to provide access to digital books over the summer. The campaign’s purpose is to ensure that all children in Georgia learn to read proficiently by the end of third grade so they can read to learn throughout school and life. In order to ensure that families

have access to books over the summer, the Get Georgia Reading Campaign has partnered with myON reader to provide every child in Georgia with FREE access to a library of more than 8,000 enhanced digital books. The digital book format brings the stories to life and provides audio support that creates a magical experience for children of all ages. You can learn more about this partnership at the following link:

<http://tinyurl.com/pqfxpd6>

Summer leaves extra time for children and families to enjoy fun activities, and it is my hope that all Georgia’s children grow up knowing the magic of a book!

*-MR. RICHARD WOODS, GEORGIA’S SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT*

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN THE FIELD: STORIES OF SUCCESS

### *“Involvement Matters”*

Parent involvement matters - from the fresh-faced Kindergarten student who walks nervously to his classroom or to the senior who has worked hard for years, with the help of his family, to make it one step closer to achieving his dreams. Beginning the day your child is born, involvement matters.

I have found that when working with families, simple incentives make a difference. By giving parents something to work toward, they are generally more motivated to participate in a variety of involvement opportunities around the school. My school, Cumming Elementary, created a successful parent engagement program based on this idea. With the charge, ‘Involvement Matters,’ parents are encouraged to play a positive role in their child’s education in a variety of ways. Some ideas of the ways parents can be involved include chaperoning field trips, volunteering at the school to assist teachers in the classroom or by attending academic events held at the school. Our school also invites parents to visit the Parent Resource Center where they are able to

check out educational materials to use at home with their students. If parents are unable to make it during the school day due to work schedules, they can fill out a request form and materials will be sent home with their student. Engaging with your child at home through educational books or games is a great way to be involved in your child’s education without necessarily having to be at the school to do so. Regardless of the manner in which each family chooses to be involved, we provide red paper tokens to parents each time they are engaged with their student. When ten red tokens are earned, the parent trades them in for a special t-shirt for the student. The students are also eager for their parents to be involved so that a red token will be earned. Receiving a t-shirt is always a reason to celebrate!

It’s not the tangible prize, though, that is most important. The time spent building connections within the school community and with their children is the biggest reward of all. The more often parents are engaged, then the more

committed they are to the school and to the teachers. A successful partnership is established when families feel welcome and comfortable within the school, and it is with this joint effort that academic progress is seen among all children. I encourage all parents to explore the opportunities for involvement available at their child’s school. It will be an investment of your time that always results in great gains.

*-by Katy Gunter  
Parent Involvement Coordinator  
Cumming Elementary, Forsyth County*

For more blog posts, videos, and engaging discussions visit the Georgia PIC Network blog at: [gadoeparentengagement.edublogs.org](http://gadoeparentengagement.edublogs.org)

## WHAT'S INSIDE

*The 2015 Georgia Family Friendly Partnership School Award Winners - 2*

*Save the Dates - 2*

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# The 2015 Georgia Family-Friendly Partnership School Award Winners!

**CAMPBELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
Fulton County Schools

**CENTERVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
Houston County Schools

**CHESTATEE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
Forsyth County Schools

**HARRIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
Gwinnett County Schools

**WARE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL**  
Ware County Schools

Five Georgia schools were selected as 2015 winners of the Georgia Department of Education's Family-Friendly Partnership School Award. The winners were selected because they represent the best in customer service for Georgia families, whether it's on the phone, in the front office or online. The schools have welcoming staff members, comfortable waiting areas, clear signage, and engaging student work throughout the building.

They have easy-to-navigate websites and are forging partnerships with parents to help improve student achievement. The schools also provide unique, engaging, and innovative parent engagement programming that is successful in reaching all families in the school. "The schools that won this award are truly models

for the entire state regarding parent engagement," said Georgia's School Superintendent Richard Woods. "They open the door for other schools to see the positive results that can be achieved when families are seen as true partners in their child's education. I offer my congratulations and thanks to all of the winners and finalists."



To read the award booklet and learn more information about the winning schools, please visit: <http://tinyurl.com/lpuxkqk>

**MAY 18 - JUNE 18, 2015**

*National Smile Month*

Build on the theme of this month by asking students to take a picture of themselves with their biggest and brightest smile, then write about one event they experienced during the school year that made them smile.

**JUNE 5, 2015**

*World Environment Day*

This day is used by the United Nations to stimulate worldwide awareness of environmental issues and encourages preventative action to keep our environment clean and sustainable.

# Save the Dates

**JUNE 14, 2015**

*Flag Day*

This is a day of patriotism, so parents can take the opportunity to hang or display their native flag on their lawns with their children and discuss with them what patriotism means



**JULY 1, 2015**

*International Joke Day*

This day gives parents and children an opportunity to share laughter together by telling their favorite jokes.

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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.*

*Have a Question?*

AskDOE

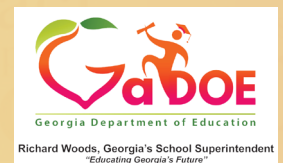
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