



AGENDA

GSBA/GSSA Conference Draws More Than 900 Educational Leaders to Atlanta



Gwinnett County students Natalie Abreu, above, and Diana DeGarmo, left, thrilled audience members with their grace and talent. Wofford College President Dr. Benjamin Dunlap, far left, held listeners captive with the tale of his “Personal Odyssey” of education.

In This Issue...

- GSBA President Sadie Dennard writes about her trip to England that focused on their system for funding education. See page 3.
- See pages 4-5 for important information from the Governor and State Superintendent of Schools on upcoming Community Conversations on excellence in education. Be sure your voice is heard!
- Warren County Board Member Gwen Tucker is the focus of our Board Member Profile. See page 6.

Q In December 3-4, the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) and Georgia School Superintendents Association (GSSA) welcomed 900 school board members and superintendents to Atlanta, setting record attendance levels for the associations’ annual conference. The pre-conference training sessions also set attendance records. Over 225 new board members attended the New Board Member Orientation on December 1-2. Another 600 board members and superintendents attended the annual E. Freeman Leverett School Law Seminar December 2.

The first session of the conference opened spectacularly with performances by two Gwinnett County students, **Natalie Abreu** and surprise guest **Diana DeGarmo**, who was the runner up on the *American Idol* television series last year.

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From GSBA's President Sadie Dennard



During the first week in December, I had the opportunity to represent GSBA on a study trip to London, England. I was initially torn as to whether I should accept because the trip coincided with our Winter Conference. I went, and I'm glad I did.

Our State Superintendent Kathy Cox, in collaboration with the British Council, planned this opportunity for several Georgia educational leaders to visit the UK. The purpose of this trip was to examine the progress that the UK has experienced through their reform initiatives with a particular focus on public education funding and accountability.

This was an excellent opportunity to observe and think through different reform strategies that the British believe have resulted in higher student achievement and greater operational efficiencies. We were also looking with a keen eye, at the possible implications of these efforts for us here in Georgia.

We visited several schools in both urban and rural settings. I went to two of 76 primary schools in the London Borough Towers Hamlets – Old Palace and Osmani Primary School. This area of London is densely populated with a school on nearly every corner. The schools were solidly built late Victorian schools. The head teachers at both schools were extremely knowledgeable of the instructional needs of their students who were roughly 98 percent of Bangladeshi origin with 60 percent at each school receiving free or reduced priced lunches. Most of the teachers were foreigners educated outside of England. They were using the computer lab model with two dedicated computers in each classroom.

Outside of Ipswich, England's oldest Anglo-Saxon town, we visited Howard Middle School. This middle school drew its students from a large housing complex where it was located. The school was for 5th grade through 8th grade.

How it Works:

The national government has established the salary schedule for teachers, adopted a national curriculum and set the standards that each student must achieve. Eighty percent of the funding for schools comes from

the national government, with the balance supplemented through local taxes.

Each borough has a local education authority (LEA). They are similar in structure to our department of education and act like our RESA's. The LEA provides for professional development, handles human resources and the personnel functions for hiring most teachers. The schools and support buildings are owned by the LEA.

Then at each individual school decisions are made. With the curriculum and standards in hand, the head teacher and Governing Body set school policy, develop and implement the budget and focus on student achievement. If desired, each school can hire an accountant to assist with the fiscal planning and operations of the schools. Each school is managed

by the head teacher and the Governing Body. This volunteer body is comprised of parents, community leaders and representatives from the local LEA. The Governing Body hires the head teacher and delegates the authority or responsibilities the head teacher will oversee. All staff selections are handled at the school level to include what types of teachers are needed based on student needs. The budget is developed at the school level and approved by the LEA. Did they know about unfunded mandates...yes they did. Did I mention that the head teachers also teach?

Accountability is addressed through an annual inspection of each school to assess performance against the national curriculum and pupil tests and performance tables.

They have never had school boards in England. Implementation of the Governors was a major step in their reform movement for local control. Head teachers felt strongly that they and the Governors were best prepared to assess the cost to educate their students and how to maximize the appropriated resources. They don't say that it's more work, but a different set of accountabilities for school leaders.

Funding was the primary focus of our discussion. The British have been very targeted in their efforts to bring resources directly to the schools. Several members of our study group are on the Governor's QBE Funding Task Force. Of course that group is looking at the merits of the QBE formula...defining excellence in education and examining issues of equity. Hopefully, this exposure and learning opportunity will help to inform our thinking about the direction Georgia should be taking in providing the resources to ensure that every child receives a high quality public education. **GSBA**



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What is Educational Excellence?



Governor Sonny Perdue

*By Governor Sonny Perdue
and State Superintendent of Schools Kathy Cox*



State Superintendent of
Schools Kathy Cox

In September 2004, the Task Force on Education Finance was appointed by Executive Order to review the current Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula and to devise a new framework for the future financing of public education. State Board Member Dean Alford was selected to lead the Task Force effort and the Department of Education was entrusted with the task of holding a series of listening sessions with stakeholders on the front lines about how we can best define educational excellence.

Members of the Task Force and the public have been challenged to begin viewing education as an investment. The return on that investment is student achievement, and that return needs to be maximized. To that end, we believe that the state's expectations ought to be at the level of excellence, not merely "basic" like the current formula indicates.

The purpose of the Community Conversations on Education Excellence is to give parents, educators, students, and citizens an opportunity to help define educational excellence. Ideas generated during these discussions will be used as guidance for the Task Force.

The first community conversation will take place on January 27, 2005. Twenty-five schools located across the state will host parents, educators, stu-

dents, business leaders, elected officials, and community members. The schools will be linked via satellite to facilitate the statewide discussion. Locations of host schools are posted at www.ie2.org. (Editor's note: The sites are also listed on the next page. Find the site most convenient for you to attend.)

The evening will commence with a 30-minute program that will be broadcast via Georgia Public Television.

Governor Perdue will open the broadcast by sharing with participants his reasons for initiating the statewide discussion. Participants will be asked to work in small teams to discuss and recommend what the state's educational goals ought to be. The purpose of the discussion is to define educational excellence for Georgia in terms of student achievement.

We want to ensure that every citizen in the state has an opportunity to participate in this exercise of defining excellence in Georgia education. Those who cannot attend the conversations in person can e-mail comments or watch the event online. Check www.ie2.org for further information on these options. Be a part of history! Mark your calendar and plan to participate in Georgia's community conversations on educational excellence. **GSBA**

*Investing in Educational
Excellence: A Series of
Community Conversations
January 27, 2005
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Investing in Educational Excellence: A Series of Community Conversations *Sites for Conversations*



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155 Highway 49 West
Milledgeville, Georgia
31061
(478) 453-6429

Camden County High School

1585 Laurel Island
Parkway
Kingsland, Georgia 31548
912-729-7318

Chattahoochee High School

5230 Taylor Road
Alpharetta, Georgia
30022
770-521-7600

Cherokee County High School

930 Marietta Highway
Canton, Georgia 30114
770-479-4112

Colquitt County High School

1800 Park Avenue
Moultrie, Georgia 31768
229-890-6181

Dodge County High School

5911 Oak Street
Eastman, Georgia 31023
478-374-7711

Hardaway High School

2901 College Drive
Columbus, Georgia
31906
706-649-0748

Marietta High School

1171 Whitlock Avenue
Marietta, Georgia 30064
770-428-2631

Peachtree Ridge High School

1555 Old Peachtree
Road
Suwanee, Georgia 30024
678-957-3100

Ridgeland High School

2478 Happy Valley Road
Rossville, Georgia 30741
706-820-9361

Rutland High School

6250 Skipper Road
Macon, Georgia 31216
478-784-3120

Sandy Creek High School

360 Jenkins Road
Tyrone, Georgia 30290
770-969-2840

Sprayberry High School

2525 Sandy Plains Road
Marietta, Georgia 30066
770-578-3200

Stephens Co. Middle School

Eastanollee School Road
Eastanollee, Georgia
30538
706-779-2211

Thomson High School

1160 Whiteoak Road
Thomson, Georgia 30824
706-595-9393

Tift County High

One Blue Devil Way
Tifton, Georgia 31794
229-387-9700

Tri-Cities High School

2575 Harris Street
East Point, Georgia
30344
404-669-8200

Troup County High School

1920 Hamilton Road
LaGrange, Georgia 30240
706-812-7957

Union Grove High School

120 East Lake Road
McDonough, Georgia
30252
678-583-8520

Winder-Barrow High School

272 North Fifth Avenue
Winder, Georgia 30680
770-867-4519

Georgia Public Broadcasting

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Atlanta, Georgia 30318
(404) 685-2400 or
(800) 222-6006

**Choose the site
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**Doors will open at
6:15 p.m. for
priority seating**

**The program will
begin at 6:45 p.m.**


State News



Brad Bryant

— Georgia Board of Education member and GSBA Past President Brad Bryant has been elected to the Board of Directors of the National Association of State Boards of Education.

— GSBA President Sadie Dennard has been elected as a trustee of the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE) Foundation, along with former Governor Joe Frank Harris, DTAE Commissioner Mike Vollmer, and other leaders from business and education.

— Cobb County Schools is one of only two school systems in the United States to receive district wide accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Fulton County is the only other school system to do so. “Cobb is truly a community with a passion for learning,” SACS CEO Mark Elgart said. 

Board Member Profile

Gwen Tucker



Gwen Tucker, a veteran board member in Warren County, enjoys mentoring students such as Jacobian Cowins, pictured above. Jacobian, who has been working with Ms. Tucker since he was in elementary school, proudly reported to her this year that he is on the sixth grade honor roll at his school. In addition to her many duties on her local board, Ms. Tucker is currently serving on the QBE Funding Task Force Committee.

GSBA: Which school system do you represent?

Gwen Tucker: Warren County Schools in Warrenton.

GSBA: How long have you been a school board member? Gwen Tucker: 20 years

GSBA: What are you reading right now that you would want to share with others?

Gwen Tucker: "The Stress of Organizational Change" by Price Pritchett. With "stress" being the cause of a lot of "ills" in today's society, we need to learn how to handle the stress of change and moving in the "fast lanes."

GSBA: What's the best advice you would offer on being an effective school board member? What's the best advice you have ever received?

Gwen Tucker: The best advice I could offer on being an effective board member is to listen to both sides of a story before reaching a conclusion on an issue.

The best advice I've ever received is to let it be known that a board meeting is a meeting for the public, but not a meeting of the public. The public is our stakeholders and should be heard, but procedures must and should be followed. Meetings shouldn't be allowed to get out of control.

GSBA: What or who inspires you?

Gwen Tucker: As a board member, I'm inspired when I see and/or hear of children excelling and doing their best. Right now, I'm especially inspired and proud of a young lady who is a graduate of Warren County High and a member of my church family who graduated December 10 magna cum laude from Georgia Southern University.

GSBA: How much of your time is spent on fulfilling your responsibility as a school board member?

Gwen Tucker: Our regular monthly meeting usually lasts anywhere from two to three hours. Recognizing and understanding the role of school board members can actually limit the time you spend in the school system as a board member. However, there is quite a bit of time spent on reading, because we have a superintendent that believes in keeping the board informed. Of course, this doesn't include my work mentoring students or my work with the QBE Task Force and other activities I'm involved in as a board member.

GSBA: What kinds of activities and/or programs are you involved in as a school board member and as an elected official in your community?

Gwen Tucker: I'm a member of GSBA's Governmental Operations Committee and the Nominating Committee. I was among the first group to participate in Leadership GSBA. I also served on the GSBA Strategic Planning Committee. I'm currently serving on the Governor's QBE Funding Task Force Committee. Locally, I'm a member of the Warren County Strategic Planning Group and a member of Leadership Warren.

Continued on page 7...

GSBA: When the term “accountability” is used today, what does that mean to you?

Gwen Tucker: Accountability as a board member means being responsible for the educational welfare of the children by putting in place high quality standards and expectations for all involved, including parents. It means holding them responsible for their actions and expecting nothing but the best.


GSBA: What program or activity related to your role as a school board member are you most proud of?

Gwen Tucker: I’m most proud of Freeman Elementary becoming a Georgia School of Excellence and all our schools achieving AYP goals.



GSBA: How does GSBA serve you as a school board member?

Gwen Tucker: GSBA assists all board members by offering excellent training workshops and by keeping local boards informed of changes in education, both legal and instructional. **GSBA**



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GSBA “Standards for Local Boards of Education”

Boards that have already achieved and verified compliance with the Standards, and have distinguished themselves in additional key areas of organizational structure, are designated as School Boards of Distinction. The following boards have submitted the appropriate materials to be designated as School Boards of Distinction.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Camden County (2002) | Grady County (2002) |
| Fulton County (2002) | Thomas County (2004) |
| Houston County (2004) | Dawson County (2004) |
| Carrollton City (2003) | Habersham County (2004) |
| Gainesville City (2003) | Tattnall County (2002) |
| Jefferson City (2002) | Floyd County (2003) |
| Cherokee County (2003) | Harris County (2002) |
| Gordon County (2004) | Turner County (2004) |
| Pulaski County (2004) | Ware County (2003) |
| Coweta County (2004) | |

The following boards of education have verified their compliance with GSBA’s “Standards for Local Boards of Education.”*

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| *Appling County | Jefferson City |
| Atlanta City | Jefferson County |
| Baldwin County | Jones County |
| Banks County | *Laurens County |
| Barrow County | Lee County |
| *Ben Hill County | Lincoln County |
| Bibb County | Long County |
| Bleckley County | Lowndes County |
| Bremen City | Lumpkin County |
| Bulloch County | Macon County |
| *Camden County | Madison County |
| Candler County | *Marion County |
| *Cartersville City | McDuffie County |
| Catoosa County | *Meriwether County |
| Cherokee County | Morgan County |
| *Clarke County | Muscogee County |
| *Clay County | Newton County |
| Cobb County | Paulding County |
| Coffee County | *Pulaski County |
| Colquitt County | Randolph County |
| *Commerce City | Richmond County |
| Coweta County | Rockdale County |
| Dalton City | *Screven County |
| *Dawson County | Stephens County |
| DeKalb County | *Taliaferro County |
| Dougherty County | Tattnall County |
| Elbert County | Taylor County |
| Emanuel County | Terrell County |
| Fayette County | *Thomas County |
| *Floyd County | *Thomaston-Upson County |
| *Fulton County | Troup County |
| Franklin County | Towns County |
| Gainesville City | Twiggs County |
| Glascocock County | *Turner County |
| *Gordon County | *Vidalia City |
| *Grady County | Washington County |
| *Greene County | *Ware County |
| Griffin-Spalding County | Wayne County |
| Gwinnett County | White County |
| *Habersham County | Whitfield County |
| *Harris County | Wilcox County |
| *Hart County | Worth County |
| *Heard County | |
| *Houston County | |
| Jackson County | |

* Boards with an asterisk, have submitted Form C, “Re-Certification of Compliance.” Boards of education in compliance with the Standards must recertify every two years that they remain in compliance.

*Annual Conference,
Continued from page 1...*

The keynote speaker, **Dr. Benjamin Dunlap**, president of Wofford College in South Carolina, kept the audience enthralled with his speech, "Educating for Life: A Personal Odyssey." Dr. Dunlap gave a poignant and often colorful description of his boyhood school days and school yard buddies.

The conference also included mini general sessions by **Dr. Jeffrey Williams**, GSSA's research director, who presented information on the outlook for funding for Georgia's school systems. Another mini session featured Twiggs County Superintendent **Dr. Wanda West**, Gwinnett County Associate Superintendent **Cindy Loe** and Gainesville City Superintendent **Dr. Steven Ballowe**, who presented a panel discussion on closing the achievement gap.

At the Awards Luncheon on Friday, the Governor made a few announcements regarding upcoming education initiatives. A number of awards were also given: the GSBA Beacon Awards honoring five news media organizations that have gone above the call of duty to report school news; GSBA Boards of Distinction Awards (see the related photographs in this issue of *Agenda*); and the 2005 GSSA Superintendent of the

Congratulations to the 2005 GSBA Boards of Distinction



The Coweta Board of Education accepts its Board of Distinction plaque from GSBA President Elect Carroll Gay. From left is: Steve Bedrosian, Superintendent Blake Bass, Dr. Marihope Troutman, Mike Sumner, Carroll Gay, Smith Pass (who also serves as GSBA Treasurer) and Brian Roy.

Year Award, which went to **Alvin Wilbanks** of Gwinnett County Schools.

Friday's activities concluded with a series of special interest clinics that ranged in topic from SACS standards and study circles to school construction and child obesity.

Throughout the day, conference attendees also had an opportunity to visit a vast array of exhibits, always a popular part of the annual conference.

The conference concluded on Saturday morning with the antics of **Greg Risberg**, who had a lot to say, in humorous fashion, about how we communicate with each other on real levels and superficial levels. **GSBA**




Dr. John Bemby (who also serves as GSBA District 13 Director) accepts the Board of Distinction plaque on behalf of his fellow Pulaski County Board of Education members.

Continued on page 9...

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The Gordon County Board of Education accepts its Board of Distinction plaque from GSBA President Elect Carroll Gay. From left is: Superintendent Mike Stanton, Chad Steward, Brenda Null, Jerry Casey (who also serves as GSBA District 7 Director), Wanda Davis (holding plaque), Scott Williams and Carroll Gay.



The Houston County Board of Education accepts their plaque from Carroll Gay. From left are: Gillis "Skip" Dawkins, Pamela Greenway, Carroll Gay and Griff Clements.



The Dawson County Board of Education accepts their plaque from GSBA President Elect Carroll Gay. From left are: Cecil L. Bennett, Elaine Wilson, Superintendent Michael D. Lupo, Doris Cook, William Wade, Carroll Gay, B. J. Farley, Roger Slaton and Gerald Swafford (front).



The Habersham County Board of Education accepts their plaque from Carroll Gay. From left are: James Weidner, Richard Martin, Dianne Gallagar, Carroll Gay and Sylvia Palmer.



The Turner County Board of Education accepts their plaque from Carroll Gay. From left are: Superintendent Ray Jordan, Tony Land, Sam McCard, Sam Brown, Carroll Gay, Danny Godwin and Francis Office.



Accepting their plaque from Carroll Gay are members of the Thomas County Board of Education from left: Cecil Stewart, John Stephenson, Kay Streets, Carroll Gay, Glenn Abrams and Kevin Reid.



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Publication Policy

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You are invited to submit articles of 1,500 to 2,000 words dealing with topics of current interest to school board members. The editor reserves the right to determine whether the article is appropriate for the readership. Send manuscripts to Laura Reilly, *Agenda* Editor, Georgia School Boards Association, 5120 Sugarloaf Parkway, Lawrenceville, GA 30043.

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The mission of the Georgia School Boards Association is to ensure excellence in the governance of local school systems by providing leadership, advocacy and services, and by representing the collective resolve of Georgia's 180 boards of education.

Upcoming Meetings/Events

January 2005

27 Statewide Community Conversations on Excellence in Education - See pages 4-5 in this issue of *Agenda*

February 2005

7 GSBA Workshop: Key Actions of the Board in Improving Student Achievement, Cordele, GA
8 GSBA Workshop: Board Chair Workshop, Cordele, GA
10 GSBA Districts 2, 6 and 8 Legislative Visits, Atlanta
11 GSBA Workshop: Personnel Issues and Student Discipline, Savannah, GA
12 GSBA Workshop: Board Chair Workshop, Savannah
15 GSBA Districts 3, 7 and 12 Legislative Visits, Atlanta
22 GSBA Districts 13 and 14 Legislative Visits, Atlanta
28 GSBA Workshop: Key Actions of the Board in Improving Student Achievement, Lake Lanier

March 2005

1 GSBA Workshop: Board Chair Workshop, Lake Lanier
2 GSBA Districts 4 and 5 Legislative Visits, Atlanta
7 GSBA/GSSA Day at the Capitol, Atlanta
7-11 School Board Member Appreciation Week in Georgia
15 GSBA Districts 9 and 11 Legislative Visits, Atlanta

April 2005

5 GSBA District 3 Meeting, Columbus, GA
15 NSBA Annual Conference & Delegate Assembly, San Diego, CA


Update on GSBA eSolutions

— There are 95 school systems subscribing to eLaw, which has been updated to reflect changes from the 2004 legislative session.

— There are 65 school systems subscribing to GSBA ePolicy.

— Currently, the following boards are using GSBA eBoard:

- Georgia Board of Education
- GSBA Board of Directors
- GSBA Worker's Compensation/Risk Management Fund Board of Trustees
- Banks County BOE
- DeKalb County BOE
- Floyd County BOE
- Forsyth County BOE
- Gordon County BOE
- Harris County BOE
- Jefferson City BOE
- Paulding County BOE
- Valdosta City BOE

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