

AGENDA

The Newsletter of the
Georgia School Boards Association
Volume 6, Number 1

We Believe in Public Education



Making Reform a Reality

The A+ Education Reform Act of 2000 has taken hold of the entire education community. With all of the changes to rules, regulations and processes that the Act has or will require, school boards across the state have been left with myriad questions regarding implementation. You can't just flip a switch to reform an education system, but there are ways to make the transition less painful. One way is through good information.

The GSBA 2000 District Meetings were the conduit for helping school board members know and understand where things are on the reform continuum. "We put together a program to explain the reform measure," said GSBA Executive Vice President Gary Ashley. "I feel confident that the individuals who participated in these meetings left much better informed on the Act. That was the goal of our District Meetings."

Starting in early September and running through October, GSBA District Directors and GSBA staff conducted 13 meetings in each of the Association's districts. (Districts four and five combined their meeting.) This year, board members had the added convenience of being able to register online to attend the meetings, and to even receive detailed directions to meeting sites via the Internet.



Left: A training session, "Implementation of School Advisory Councils," was held at all District Meetings this Fall. Two hundred twelve board members representing 60 different boards participated in the sessions and received three hours of training credit.

Traditionally, the District Meetings have been a time for school board members to meet with their peers at the regional level to learn about legislative initiatives or other important educational topics. A few years ago, GSBA added a training component to the District Meetings, whereby board members could receive a portion of their annual, required training at a special workshop held just prior to the meeting. Participation in this compo-

nent continues to grow. In addition, GSBA Districts 1, 4, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 14 held elections for the position of GSBA District Director. (See "Association News" on page 13 for a complete listing of election results.)

This year's program offered participants the opportunity to hear from a number of officials and/or experts about various aspects of the A+ Education Reform Act of 2000. The program included:

- **Mike Vollmer**, director of the newly established Office of Educational Accountability, who set the record straight as to what his department will do and how they will go about their work.
- **Sam Harben** and **Phil Hartley**, Harben and Hartley Law Firm, discussed arising legal issues on which school board members need to be well-informed, including new evaluation requirements set forth by the A+ Education Reform Act.

● **Various members of the Governor's Education Reform Study Commission Implementation Task Force**

brought participants up-to-date on the work of the Task Force.

- **Gary Ashley** and GSBA Legislative Specialist **Don Rooks**, presented information on GSBA's legislative program, the roles and responsibilities of local board members and GSBA regarding the A+ Education

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Through the District Meetings, I think we were successful in making the leap from ideology into reality in reforming our education system," said Gary Ashley, "Around the state I see the willingness and determination to make strides in improving education, raising student achievement and addressing accountability."

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From the Executive Vice President...



Gary Ashley, GSBA
Executive Vice President

The report came flying across my desk. Once again a “concerned” group did a survey about Americans’ perceptions regarding public schools. This particular survey was conducted by “Family Life Magazine” and was released in September 2000. The news was not new. Anyone who has been in education for any length of time knows that on the whole, Americans tend to think negatively about schools and education in general, but much more positively about their own children’s school. This survey showed the same thing. People have greater confidence in their local schools and their confidence wanes as the subject of school performance and education gets further from their back yards.

If most folks believe their local schools are doing such a good job, then how can they also believe that

schools and education in general are failing? If all of the students in the local school are performing well, then how can students be doing poorly as a nation?

It is all about perception. With the public’s attention being focused on education by politics, it’s important to remember that while we recognize the need to continually improve, there is no cookie cutter approach to public education or helping children learn.

We all know that there are many schools that seem to have to scratch and claw their way to the next level of achievement. Others seem to be able to keep pace and/or even improve with much greater ease and accomplishment. Among the differences in such school systems, there are characteristics of the high achieving school systems that others can emulate to improve their own schools.

The catch phrase, “Think Globally, Act Locally” gets at the heart of the issue. High achievers see the big picture. Kids today need to have the same kinds of skills as yesterday, but they also need additional skills to become the leaders of tomorrow. We have a global economy now. At the same time that we are looking beyond our local boundaries, we need to look within and examine what students in our own schools need in order to be ready and successful in adult life.

Another characteristic of high

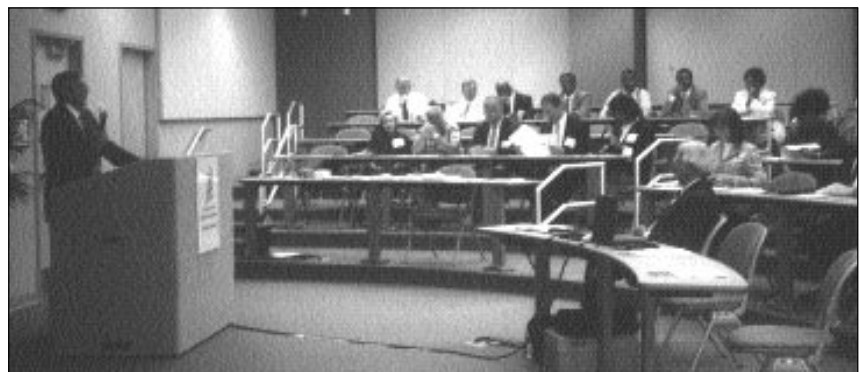
achievers is to become well informed on the issues. It is this component— being better informed— for which our District Meetings were aiming. To assist board members, superintendents, administrators and legislators in gaining a deeper understanding of education reform in our state. I’m proud of my Georgia colleagues on this score because I believe that we’ve come a long way with the A+ Education Reform Act and the perceptions we had to overcome to get where we are today. A lot of us had to pull our heads out of the sand and take stock, but we did and our schools will be better for it. ▲

All of the participants of the 13 meetings we held around the state are better informed because of their attendance. These individuals, regardless of their role in the local school system, can now better “Think Globally, Act Locally” to help achieve the common goal of improving schools and raising student achievement.

continued from cover...

Reform Act, and the Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights.

“Through the District Meetings, I think we were successful in making the leap from ideology into reality in reforming our education system,” said Ashley. “Around the state I see the willingness and determination to make strides in improving education, raising student achievement and addressing accountability. Because of my solid faith in Georgia’s school boards, I know we can move our state’s educational governance structure forward as we implement the A+ Education Reform Act of 2000.” ▲



Above: Attendance at the 13 District Meetings was at an all time high with 1,097 participants. Five hundred twenty of those participants were board members. The program focused on implementing the A+ Education Reform Act of 2000 and other legislative and legal issues.

From the President...



Tricia Smith
GSBA President

“ try to get people to see what I have... When you run a computer company, you have to get people to buy into your dreams.” Steven Jobs certainly had a dream when he created Apple Computer along with a few others. Now the directors, officers and staff of the Georgia School Boards Association are not only buying into Jobs' dream, but into one of their own.

With the donation of iBook

computers by Apple to our Board of Directors, we are embarking upon a technological journey, the end of which is unknown. The potential promise is greater than I can imagine at this time. The path chosen was determined at an annual retreat of the Board about five years ago. We felt the need to be computer literate, that the status quo must be changed for our officers and directors, and that our leaders must set higher goals for themselves. Gary Ashley and the staff at GSBA brought our vision to fruition through many hours of hard work and the belief that the Association was headed in the right direction.

The New Millennium Leadership Program is not only the donation of very nice computers to the Board of Directors. It is a leadership initiative designed to improve the decision-making process by the Board and, in turn, we hope to improve student achievement in Georgia. It is a model of governance integrating with technology to become more

effective and, hopefully, this model will be emulated throughout the state, perhaps even the nation. It is a desire by your Board and GSBA to explore faster and better means of delivering information, providing training opportunities, and communicating with board members across our state.

With the introduction of House Bill 1187 during the General Assembly of 2000, the need for quick and clear communications was more evident than ever before. The changes in the bill were occurring almost daily and many of those changes were quite significant. Never before had the urge to provide laptop computers for our Board been greater. Never had the need for this type of rapid communication been more glaring. Fortunately, Gary Ashley was in the process of negotiating with Apple and the vision came together this past summer. What an exciting adventure it has been for all of us!

continued on next page...



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On August 23, 2000, the Board of Directors met at the GSBA offices to find a conference room looking more like mission control at NASA than a meeting space. The Apple support personnel were wonderful and, fortunately, very patient, possessing a good sense of humor.

To the credit of the board members, everyone made a serious effort to familiarize themselves with Apple technology. We had fun and the excitement and the will to learn was palpable. Our second training experience was held recently and we look forward to the third date in December.

There are also expectations built into our leadership training. Each director had to consent to three days of training, to check their e-mail regularly, and to take three online training courses. Of course, there is also a brainpower commitment that runs throughout the time commitment.

The New Millennium Leadership

Program holds such great promise for all of us. Now we will be able to communicate more quickly and effectively than ever before. Now you will be able to respond to our surveys and inquiries rapidly so your thoughts and opinions can be fully considered. The Board of Directors will be able to make decisions in a more timely manner with full confidence and conviction that those decisions are based on the input of many of our fellow school board members. We are grateful to Apple for their generosity and comprehension of our vision.

In the future, this initiative will deeply impact all school board members in Georgia, not just the GSBA Board of Directors. You will have an opportunity through this effort, to train online, to be heard more quickly, and to receive information almost immediately. Our impact as advocates for public education will be enhanced in ways we cannot yet comprehend. I encourage every school board to find the

means to provide computers and training for each school board member. Technology is here to stay and the longer it takes you to get on board, the longer it will take you to catch this train. As Michael Soule said in *Conservation for the 21st Century*, "Since we have no choice but to be swept along by (this) vast technological surge, we might as well learn to surf." Surfs up!▲

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New School Law Guide is a "Must-Have" Resource

Over the course of its 50-year history, GSBA has continued to seek new ways to serve school boards and the school systems they govern. During the past year, Harben and Hartley Law Firm and GSBA teamed up to create a brand new legal resource that will become the "must-have" educational legal resource in Georgia. *The Guide to School Law in Georgia* was written for those who serve, or aspire to serve, as members of local boards of education in Georgia, their superintendents of schools and the thousands of other professional educators who administer the day-to-day operation of public schools in our state. The book will be available for purchase at the GSBA/GSSA Annual Conference in Atlanta in December and also by mail order.

The 17-chapter book is packed with information that spans the governance and operations of school systems, from the board room to the classroom. The book will replace GSBA's Legal Reference Manual and some of the monographs on various aspects of school law which have been published by the Association for many years. School board members and administrators have indicated for some time that, while the Legal Reference Manual has been an excellent

resource for many years, they needed and wanted a single volume which was easy to use and would supply answers to their most frequently asked questions about school law. Take a look at a few of the questions addressed throughout the book

1) What are local school councils and what authority and responsibilities do they have?

2) What are the duties and authority of the board chair?

3) Must an individual be a professional educator in order to be a superintendent?

4) May the board vote in executive session on matters which legitimately may be discussed during an executive session?

5) What information is required to be in the minutes of a meeting of the board?

6) What requirements does state law impose on local boards of education to adopt student discipline policies and codes of conduct?

7) How are Title VI, Title IX and Section 504 enforced by the federal government against school districts?

8) Can athletes or students participating in extracurricular programs be subjected to different rules with regard to drug and alcohol testing?

9) What is the legal basis for analyzing issues relating to the relationship between religion and the public schools?

10) What are the requirements of the resolution calling for a SPLOST?

These are but 10 of the hundreds of questions found in *The Guide to School Law in Georgia*. Annual supplements will keep the information current and in tune with any new or changed laws, rules or regulations. While the book is not meant to be a substitute for legal counsel, many school board members and school system administrators will find it to be an invaluable tool in their daily professional lives.

And as a postscript...you will find the answers to the questions above on pages 8-12 of this newsletter! (While the answers include endnote numbers, the endnotes themselves have not been included in this article.)

continued on page 8...

The following boards of education have verified their compliance with the "Standards for Local Boards of Education."

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Bremen City
Bulloch County
Camden County
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Making a Conference Work for You

The GSBA/GSSA Annual Conference is a prime opportunity for school board members, superintendents and other educational leaders to “get the scoop” on the top educational issues facing our state. Not only do conference attendees have the opportunity to hear from Georgia’s top decision-makers and nationally renowned speakers, but they also can discuss, listen and learn from peers. Below are listed a few ways that board members can be sure that they are getting the most out of a conference and that they can communicate the importance of attendance at a conference.

1. Communicate what you’ve learned at the conference, regardless of where it was held. Current trends, opinions, facts and quotes are newsworthy. Also, giving special attention to your local problems – and what you’ve learned about them – is quite significant to the news media and other community groups.

2. Be prepared. Do not apologize for the cost if you are questioned about it. But do be ready to answer these questions if they crop up: What did this conference cost your board members compared to the total budget? What is the cost of this in-service training for you as a school board member compared to the district’s in-service training as a total? What is the cost compared to the money your district will gain or save from ideas you got at the conference? Check the dollars and the percentages and you will discover that it is relatively small.

And, as elected officials, setting policy and goals for a multimillion dollar school district, are you expected to operate in a vacuum? Of course not, but while you are answering this question, don’t be defensive – just lay out the facts. What you learn at the conference may easily save your district thousands of dollars . . . but more impor-

tantly, you’re trying to do a better job for your community by learning. That’s the purpose of conferences.

3. Take time to review the entire program carefully and thoroughly. Make notes for yourself and map out your time at the conference so that you allow time for informal discussions, because this is where some of the best thoughts and ideas are born.

4. Plan which workshops you will attend by knowing which will have the most benefit to your district. If there is more than one person attending from your district, get together and try to get the widest possible exposure to the available programs and seminars. Also, be prepared to take notes of various speakers and presenters.

5. Be sure to visit the exhibits and gather literature of significant products and services. Give yourself enough time to cover the entire display, to take notes and to ask questions.

6. It is also a good idea to keep a daily log of what you did each day, because when you return you will be surprised at what you have covered. This will also be a handy reference to substantiate your positive participation in the conference.

7. If more than one board member from your district is attending, make one person responsible for summarizing notes, speeches, literature and other items before you leave the conference.

8. When you return home, the various findings should be typed and summarized in a succinct written report. Make copies of the report for other board members, administrators and key audiences in the community.

9. Have copies of the report available for the public at the next

board of education meeting. Be prepared to respond to the news media on what the board members learned regarding local problems.

Finally, remember that conferences are for educational leaders at all levels to receive the background and understanding needed to deal with current problems. The most effective school board members are informed board members. Your participation needs no apologies.

Adapted from Municipal Management Bulletin published by the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and an article published by the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education. ▲

Interesting Education Facts From the Census Bureau

The public information office of the U.S. Census Bureau supplied the following facts and figures:

- As of 1998, the U.S. had 5.9 million teachers, up from 4 million in 1983. This total includes 590,000 who teach at the pre-kindergarten levels, 2 million in elementary schools, 1.2 million in secondary schools, 380,000 in special education and 920,000 in colleges and universities.

- More and more children are getting an early start on their formal schooling. In October 1998, more than half (52 percent) of three- and four-year-olds were enrolled in school, up from 10 percent in 1964. African American three- and four-year-olds were more likely to be enrolled than White children in this age group (59 percent compared with 51 percent). All told, the number of children enrolled in nursery schools in 1998, 4.6 million, was 10 times higher than the number enrolled in 1964.

Look up the Census Bureau’s website for more facts and figures: www.census.gov.

Answers to "School Law" questions

continued from page 6...

1) School councils are an integral part of the A+ Education Reform Act of 2000. According to the Act, the mission of school councils is to "bring communities and schools closer together in the spirit of cooperation to solve difficult education problems, improve academic achievement, provide support for teachers and administrators, and bring parents into the school-based decision-making process." School councils are to provide "advice, recommendations, and assistance and represent the community of parents and businesses," but the Act explic-

itly reaffirms that "the management and control of public schools shall be the responsibility of local boards of education."¹⁴ In creating local school councils, the Act specifically abolishes their historical predecessors, local school trustees.

2) The primary duty of the board chair is to preside during all board meetings.⁵ In serving as presiding officer, the chair seeks to ensure that the board's business is handled orderly, efficiently and, hopefully, civilly. While the chair has no greater power than any other member of the board, the chair has all of the power and authority of any other member during a meeting, including the right to make or second

motions, participate in the debate and vote.

The chair of the board, sometimes referred to as the president of the board,⁶ signs minutes along with the superintendent, who acts as secretary to the board,⁷ after the minutes have been approved. Similarly, the chair also signs contracts on behalf of the board, attested by the superintendent.⁸ The local board by policy may delegate other responsibilities to its chair, such as the authority to convene a special or an emergency meeting of the board, to serve as board spokesperson on particular occasions or when answering questions from the media or the authority to appoint committees.

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3) **No. The Education Code**

authorizes the Professional Standards Commission to define acceptable business and/or management experience as an option to the minimum educational certificate required to qualify for appointment as school superintendent.⁴ The Commission will determine the eligibility of an individual for such a permit only when a specific board requests it. When requested, the Commission will review the specific individual's business and/or management experience and determine whether that individual qualifies for an appointment as superintendent.⁵

4) **The board is prohibited**

expressly by the Act from voting on personnel matters in executive session. However, the board is permitted to vote to acquire real estate during an executive session and to keep that action secret until the real estate has been acquired or the transaction abandoned. Also, during a closed meeting, the board may authorize its attorney as to settlement negotiations or similar decisions concerning pending or potential litigation.³¹

5) **The minutes at a minimum**

must contain the names of the members of the board who were present at the meeting, a description of each motion or other proposal made, and a record of all votes. In the case of a roll-call vote, the name of each person voting for or against a proposal must be recorded, but in all other cases, it is presumed that the action taken was approved by each member in attendance unless the minutes reflect the name of the persons voting against the proposal or abstaining from voting.⁴² The names of members voting to close a meeting under the Open Meetings Act must be included. The board decides by policy or practice what additional information to include in its minutes. For example, the board may include discussion or debate made by individual board members, although the law does not require this. The names of the members who made a motion and who seconded that motion are not required to be included in the minutes, but often are.

6) **Each local board of education is**

required to "adopt policies designed to improve the student learning environment by improving student behavior and discipline. These policies shall provide for the development of age-appropriate student codes of conduct containing standards of behavior, a student support process, a progressive discipline process, and a parental involvement process."⁷² While the State Department has available models, local boards of education are not required to adopt those models. In developing these policies and codes of conduct, boards of education and schools should be careful not to create unintentional restrictions on the discretion of school administrators and tribunals to deal with the unique requirements of each situation.

7) **The United States Department**

of Education is responsible for enforcing these three nondiscrimination statutes against educational agencies, including public school systems, that receive federal financial assistance. This is done through the Office for Civil Rights, a department of the United States Department of Education. OCR will receive complaints from individuals contending that a particular school system is violating one of the nondiscrimination statutes. It will investigate the complaint, determine whether there is, in fact, a violation and attempt to resolve the violation through an agreement with the school system. In situations where that is not possible, OCR has the authority to initiate an administrative proceeding which eventually could result in a school system losing its federal funds.⁹ OCR also has the authority to conduct what are called compliance reviews where it chooses a school district or several school districts and does a broader investigation to determine whether there is compliance with the statute as it relates to the operation of the school system as a whole or a particular aspect of the operation of the school system (such as student discipline or grouping of students).¹⁰ At times, OCR investigations or compliance reviews can be as time consuming, expensive and complicated as any lawsuit. Clearly, the potential

consequences, the loss of federal funds, may be even more devastating to a school system than the result of any given lawsuit. For that reason, consultation with counsel familiar with the requirements of the law and the procedures of OCR itself is often advisable for school districts experiencing these investigations.

8) **The United States Supreme**

Court approved a random, suspicionless drug testing policy for use among the athletes of an Oregon school district where the local board had developed a carefully crafted policy with substantial procedural protections based upon evidence suggesting that student athletes were leading participants in a growing drug culture among students.³⁰ Noting that athletes have a decreased expectation of privacy, that the use of drugs by athletes may result in substantial health risk to themselves and others, and that positive results initially led to counseling and not discipline, the Court found that any fourth amendment right of the student was outweighed by the legitimate interest of the school district. Perhaps most important to the Court's consideration was the fact that students voluntarily participated in the athletic program and, with clear notice of the drug testing policy, could be held to have consented to the drug testing policy as a condition of participating in the athletic program. A number of school districts have attempted to expand this holding to a broader group of students and broader group of circumstances, but there exists no legal authority in Georgia which would clearly authorize drug testing policies for students beyond the facts described in the Supreme Court decision.

9) **The first amendment to the**

United States Constitution begins: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." The meaning of these clauses and the relationship between them has generated public controversy, lawsuits, legal debate and numerous court decisions.

Continued on page 12

Georgia School Boards Association Georgia School Superintendents Association



2000 Annual Conference
December 1-2, 2000, at the
Renaissance Waverly Hotel in Atlanta

The new millennium has dawned and public education is in the spotlight in local, state and national arenas. In addition, Georgia has embarked on new reform measures that promise to raise student achievement and the performance of our schools. Effective leadership will be critical to the success of any improvement effort. GSBA and GSSA have developed this program to assist you in your role as an educational leader in the new millennium.

Pre-Conference Training Opportunities

New Board Member Orientation

Wednesday, November 29

- Noon •Registration Begins
- 1:00 p.m. •Introductions and Overview
- 1:10 p.m. •Duties, Responsibilities and Authority of the Local Board of Education
- School Law
- Student Accountability
- A+ Education Reform Act of 2000
- Superintendent Evaluation/Board Assessment
- 5:30 p.m. •Adjourn first day

Thursday, November 30

- 8:00 a.m. •Perspective on the Day
- 8:10 a.m. •Communication as a Board & Board Member
- 10:30 a.m. •School Finance
- 12:00 p.m. •Luncheon
- 1:00 p.m. •The Board's Role in School Finance
- 4:30 p.m. •Review and Perspective
- 5:00 p.m. •Adjourn

E. Freeman Leverett School Law Workshop

Thursday, November 30

- 8:30 a.m. Welcome and Introductions
- 8:45 a.m. School Board Member Ethics
- 9:15 a.m. HB 1187: Personnel Evaluations/Background Checks
- 9:45 a.m. Open Meetings Act: Hiring the Superintendent
- 10:15 a.m. Break
- 10:30 a.m. Special Education Issues
- 11:15 a.m. Religion in the Schools: Prayer and Current Issues
- 11:45 a.m. Lunch
- 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. School Board/Superintendent Session
- 1:00 p.m. School Board Attorneys' Session Business Meeting
- 1:15 p.m. Survey of New Georgia Rules of Professional Conduct
- 2:15 p.m. Break
- 2:30 p.m. Trial Practice: Affirmative Action
- 4:30 p.m. Adjourn

Registration/Housing

Registration: Deadline for conference registration is November 20, 2000. Cancellations must be in writing and postmarked no later than November 20, 2000. A \$15 handling fee will be charged for all cancellations.*

Include only one check for all registration fees and remit registration form and check to:

GSBA Registrar
5120 Sugarloaf Parkway
Lawrenceville, Georgia 30043

Questions concerning registration may be directed to: Karen Hodges
at **1-800-226-1856** or **770-962-2985**

Register online at www.gsba.com

Housing: You are responsible for making your own hotel reservations. Remember to state that you will be attending the GSBA/GSSA Annual

Conference to obtain special rates.

Renaissance Waverly Hotel
2450 Galleria Parkway
Atlanta, GA 30339
770-953-4500

Sheraton Suites, Galleria - **770-955-3900**
Embassy Suites, Galleria - **770-984-9300**
Doubletree Guest Suites - **770-980-1900**

* An administration fee of 50 percent may be charged for cancellations received after November 20, 2000.



Conference Agenda

Friday, December 1, 2000

7:30 a.m. Coffee Available in Exhibit Area
 8:00 a.m. Registration Exhibit Area Opens
 9:00 a.m. First General Session
Governor Roy Barnes
Clarice Chambers, NSBA President
 10:00 a.m. Break and Tour of Exhibits
 10:15 a.m. Second General Session
Harvey Alston
 11:15 a.m. Break and Tour of Exhibits
 12:00 p.m. Awards Luncheon
 1:30 p.m. Exhibits Open
 1:45 p.m. Special Interest Clinics
 2:45 p.m. Break and Tour of Exhibits
 3:00 p.m. Special Interest Clinics Repeat
 4:00 p.m. Tour Exhibits
 4:45 p.m. 50th Anniversary Reception

Saturday, December 2, 2000

7:30 a.m. Coffee Available in Exhibit Area
 8:00 a.m. Exhibit Area Opens
 8:30 a.m. Breakfast General Session
Patricia Russell-McCloud
 9:30 a.m. Break and Tour Exhibit Area
 10:00 a.m. Final General Session
C. Richard Yarbrough
 11:15 a.m. Conference Adjourns

issues. Russell-McCloud is a graduate of Howard University Law School and also has studied law at Harvard University. She has served as a senior managing attorney for the Federal Communications Commission in Washington, D.C.

For nearly 40 years, **Dick Yarbrough** labored on the corporate side of the fence – first for BellSouth Corporation and then with the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games. For his efforts, PR WEEK, an industry publication, recently named him one of



The 100 Most Influential Public Relations Practitioners of the 20th Century. Now Yarbrough has a new career as a syndicated columnist with no shortage of strong opinions on a variety of subjects including education. ▲

Conference Speakers

Governor Roy Barnes continues to show his own brand of determination to see that Georgia's public schools are the best they can be. While he recognizes that change is not always easy, he also has stood ground on making the hard decisions today from which our students now and in the future will benefit.

Governor Barnes has always sought input from a diverse cross section of the educational community to assist him in drafting education legislation. Now, he has sought input from an ever-widening group to ease the implementation of the A+ Education Reform Act of 2000.

Harvey Alston has taken his personal, proven message "Be the Best" to millions of people. His unforgettable words of individual responsibility for achievement have



Harvey Alston

improved spirits, spurred growth, changed lives. His powerful, soul-searching presentation uplifts people to a higher standard, a level where people strive only for the best. Alston's background includes being a teacher, high school football coach and a university director of student financial aid.

Patricia Russell-McCloud is known as a spellbinding professional orator. Her dynamic delivery is rooted in a



foundation of research and statistical data which provides her listeners with a great deal more than accurate information. She has an acute analytical ability to identify and substantively address

Special Interest Clinics

On Friday afternoon, conference attendees can choose from this exciting line up of special interest clinics. New this year are two "mini-general sessions" that will be 90 minutes long and will be offered only once during the afternoon.

Mini General Sessions - to be offered only once...

● Administrative Issues of the A+ Education Reform Act of 2000.

Superintendents and others on the school system's administrative team face a sea of change. This session will help set the superintendent and his team on the right course in complying with the Act and state rules.

● Legal Issues of the A+ Education Reform Act of 2000.

Educational leaders face myriad implementation challenges and requirements of the Act. This session looks at the legal issues surrounding the board of education's compliance with the new law.

continued on page 12...

10) The resolution calling for the SPLOST referendum must be carefully prepared; the amendment requires that it contain:

- (1) The specific capital outlay projects to be funded, or the specific debt to be retired, or both, if applicable;
- (2) The maximum cost of such project or projects and, if applicable, the maximum amount of debt to be retired, which cost and amount of debt shall also be the maximum amount of net proceeds to be raised by the tax; and

(3) The maximum period of time, to be stated in "calendar years or calendar quarters and not to exceed five years."¹⁹

The language of the resolution and the ballot prepared from it commits the school system as to what use can be made of the proceeds of the sales tax. It is extremely important that the board of education consult with an attorney knowledgeable about SPLOST issues and have the attorney prepare the resolution and lead the school system through the process of presenting the issue to the voters. ▲

State News

● As the A+ Education Reform Act of 2000 began to hit home, the Governor's Office recognized right away that school systems and school boards needed additional information and other resources in order to implement the Act. To help, the Governor appointed an Implementation Task Force. The following individuals are serving on the task force:

- Chris Carpenter, Governor's Office
- Roy Conley, Department of Audits
- Dr. John Culbreath, Dougherty County Superintendent
- Bill Gambill, Office of Finance and Technology
- Cathy Henson, Georgia Board of Education
- Sylvia Hooker, Fairmount Alternative School
- Ron Jackson, Office of Planning and Budget
- Dr. Crawford Lewis, DeKalb County Schools
- Wendy Martin, Albany Technical
- Dr. Allene Magill, Forsyth County
- Dr. Davis Nelson, Georgia Department of Education
- Ron Newcomb, Governor's Office
- Dr. Hall Rogers, Georgia Department of Education
- Dr. Tom Upchurch, Partnership for Excellence in Education

- Alvin Wilbanks, Gwinnett County
- Dr. Jeffrey Williams, Consortium

● In October, Governor Roy Barnes sent a letter to each teacher in Georgia's public schools to congratulate them on a successful start to a new year and to solicit their comments and suggestions on resources and programs needed in the schools. The letter also pointed out that the Education Reform website (www.ganet.org/governor/education) has been updated and he encouraged teachers to use the site for information. The letter also included a list of commonly asked questions about education reform, which is also posted to the website.

● In August the Georgia Public Service Commission split the 912 area code into three area codes. Generally, those who are in the northern portion of the old 912 area code (Macon) will have a 478 area code. Those who are in the southwest portion of the old area code (Albany) will have a 229 area code. And those who are in the southeast portion of the old area code (Savannah) will keep the 912 area code. For now, callers can still use the 912 area code, but in August 2001 the new area codes will take effect. ▲

Clinics

continued from page 10...

Regular Clinics - to be repeated...

● **Education and Its New Role in Economic Development.** With education reform comes huge changes and challenges. Learn about the impact on education of workforce development, seamless education and business partnerships and how these issues might affect employment opportunities.

● **Boost Student Achievement Through Better Risk Management.** A review of board policies and how they can be revised to reduce liability and protect school assets. Effective risk control policies can help a system in many ways, including boosting student achievement.

● **Getting Volunteers and Parents Into the School.** Learn about an inexpensive and simple way to dramatically increase volunteerism and parental involvement in your schools. Hear one system's success story and share your success story.

● **Communicating with GSBA and the Board of Directors.** Find out about how GSBA has improved its service by expanding its communications capabilities. Find out about the new tools that are available to you now.

● **Improving Superintendent and Board Relations.** A good relationship between the superintendent and the board is critical to the success of a school system. Learn ways to improve this relationship to increase its value.

● **SPLOST Renewal.** There are several options that surround the issue of continuing SPLOST through voter approval. Critical timing and other important factors are discussed.

● **Social Problems Affecting School Climate.** Society's problems can become the school's problems. This session examines ways that schools are affected by society's ills. ▲

Association News

● GSBA Districts 1, 4, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 14 have elected new District Directors. The following were elected by their respective districts:

- District 1: **John Neighbors** (Emanuel County) takes office in January 2001 to complete the unexpired term of Tony Tyson which runs to June 30, 2002

- District 4: **Susan Cobleigh** (Decatur City) took office in September to complete the unexpired term of Brad Bryant which runs to June 30, 2002

- District 8: **Marissa Lewis** (Wayne County) will take office in January 2001 to complete the unexpired term of Virgil Carter which runs to June 30, 2003

- District 12: **Ted Stone** (Jones County) will take office in July 2001 for a three-year term

- District 13: **Wanda Barrs** (Bleckley County) will take office in January 2001 to complete the unexpired term of Bob Willis which runs to June 2001, as well as a new three-year term running from July 2001 to June 30, 2004

- District 14: **Brad Shealy** (Brooks County) will take office in January 2001 to complete the unexpired term of Hal Henderson which runs to June 30, 2004

● The following members of the GSBA Board of Directors have been named to serve on the Georgia Board of Education Liaison Committee:

- **Tricia Smith, GSBA president**

- **Zenda Bowie, GSBA president elect**

- **Brad Bryant, GSBA vice president**

- **Doug Church, GSBA District 9 Director**

- **Gary Ashley, GSBA Executive Vice President (Ex-Officio)**

● January 8-12, 2001, will be proclaimed School Board Member Appreciation Week in Georgia. January is National School Board Member Appreciation Month.

● The GSBA Finance and Risk Management staff has "moved back

home." In August, the group left its location at an office on Satellite Boulevard in Duluth and moved into temporary buildings at the GSBA headquarters on Sugarloaf Parkway. The Claims Management Staff will remain at the Annex in Duluth and their phone numbers are the same. The Finance and Risk Management staff can be reached by calling GSBA at (770) 962-2985 or (800) 226-1856.

● GSBA Director of Finance and Risk Management Lee Gaby has been appointed to serve on the Education/Georgia State Patrol Liaison Committee on behalf of the Georgia Association of Pupil Transportation.

● The GSBA 1999 Progress Report, "Governing 21st Century Schools," won the Award of Excellence from the National School Public Relations Association. This is the third consecutive year that GSBA has won this prestigious award for a publication. ▲

Staff Listing

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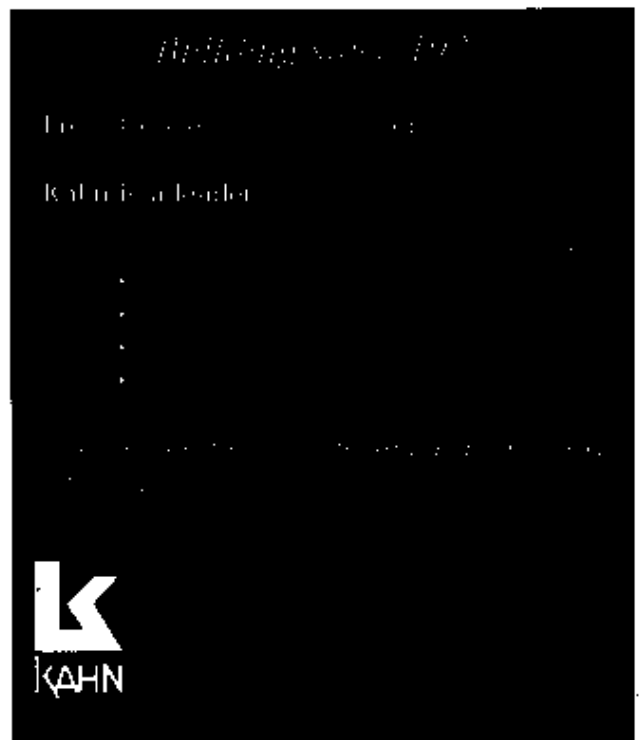
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Surviving a 56-School Disaster

By GSBA Director of Finance and Risk Management Lee Gaby

In a recent workshop with a group of school business officials, the question was asked, “What’s your idea of the worst-case scenario for your school system.” A quick answer from one of the participants was, “56 schools all being damaged at the same time by a hurricane.”

Even if your system is not one of those with 60 or 70 schools, you could still be part of a 56-school disaster. Disasters that stretch over a large geographic area involving multiple school systems are certainly possible. It has happened at different times in the so called “tornado alley” that seems to run up the Chattahoochee River Basin, and no place in Georgia is really immune. Catastrophe was narrowly avoided two years ago when Hurricane Floyd threatened to come ashore along our coast. Several school systems that were not directly in harm’s way still felt the effects from evacuation and emergency use of school gymnasiums.

There are bound to be added costs in situations where tornados, ice storms and persistent rain wreak havoc over a multi-county area. The extent to which your school system is able to minimize unexpected costs will depend on whether your board policies establish an effective pre-loss risk management program and the extent to which your staff has “super-sized” the system’s property insurance plan.

The road to survival and full recovery begins well in advance of a disaster when you adopt a board policy authorizing pre-event relationships with key contractors. Agreements for student transportation, roof covering, water extraction, supplies, security services, temporary repairs and public adjusting services should be considered.

A school board can set policies that promote superintendent and

staff training for emergency planning and crisis management. The Georgia Emergency Management Agency now offers safety training through a series of statewide conferences, regional workshops, and presentations provided at the request of local communities. A local agency or school may request any of the following programs:

1. **Building A Prevention Strategy (3 hours)**
2. **Community’s Role in School Safety (1 hour)**
3. **Contemporary Issues in Georgia Schools (1 hour)**
4. **Crisis Response and Recovery (3 hours)**
5. **Emergency Management for Schools (8 hours)**
6. **Emergency Operations Planning for Schools (3 hours)**
7. **School Bomb Threat Management (1 hour)**
8. **Visual Screening in the School Setting (1 hour)**

The State of Georgia, many large corporations and GSBA have created self-insurance programs that attempt to address disasters planning and recovery in innovative ways.

As the hurricane season passes and before the icy winter descends, consider taking a careful look at your property disaster programs. Your board policies and actions can build confidence that survival and full, speedy recovery will occur in the event of any worst-case scenario.

The task of “super-sizing” your system’s property insurance policy rests upon the superintendent and staff. The school board can be assured that a formal review process has taken place if it calls for a report addressing these 16 coverage design points:

1. **comprehensive property schedule**
2. **expanded definition of property**
3. **inclusion of trees, plants, shrubs**
4. **inclusion of unscheduled locations**
5. **true blanket protection**
6. **replacement cost provisions**
7. **coinsurance provisions**
8. **deductible and self-insured retention provisions**
9. **extension for debris removal and demolition**

10. **extension for ordinance or law enforcement**
11. **extension for water damage**
12. **extension for excavation, grading, foundations**
13. **extension for inadvertent error or omissions**
14. **extension for flood and earth movement**
15. **extension for business income and extra expense**
16. **extension for utility services and consequential loss**

The school board can also help protect against reduction of the system’s valuable human resources by ensuring that policies exist to encourage staff to maintain appropriate controls, including personal protective equipment, for unfamiliar or hazardous work situations. Supervisors who may have tendencies to “push the envelope” may raise the expense of a disaster by exposing employees to unseen chemical and biological risks.

Your school system’s interests must be properly managed in a disaster situation and that may require the services of a person who has already experienced a similar situation. Simply raising expectations for property loss recovery from the school system’s insurer and relying on insurance brokers may not be appropriate. The insurer and its agent may become overwhelmed with claims. The school board can provide assistance to the superintendent and staff by authorizing the engagement of independent claims consultants and/or public adjustors. These professionals can help your system avoid delays when claims adjusters become tied up or are difficult to track down. Identifying overlooked expenses, making proper requests for reimbursement and skillfully negotiating depreciation are a few of the responsibilities that the school system can transfer to a professional.

continued on page 15...

Recent insurance bidding results have provided strong indications that property insurance premiums will increase dramatically for schools in all parts of the state. Obtaining the "bells and whistles" needed to disaster proof your coverage plan could be much more costly. Some insurers may be unwilling to add flood protection. Your school

board should encourage the superintendent and staff to take extra measures now to stay abreast of changing insurance market conditions. They need your support to focus energy and resources on important pre-loss activities. The State of Georgia, many large corporations and GSBA have created self-insurance programs that attempt to address disasters

planning and recovery in innovative ways.

As the hurricane season passes and before the icy winter descends, consider taking a careful look at your property disaster programs. Your board policies and actions can build confidence that survival and full, speedy recovery will occur in the event of any worst-case scenario. ▲

National News

● The National School Boards Association (NSBA) conducted an e-mail survey of Federation Members to identify issues affecting local governance. The most common "themes" running throughout the responses they received were:

1. **Accountability (standards and testing).**
2. **Alternative systems (charter schools and vouchers).**
3. **Alternative governance (state and/or mayoral takeover).**
4. **Greater state control over:**
 - a) **curriculum (standards/testing)**
 - b) **the system of school funding**
 - c) **local expenditures of state funds.**

● The College Board reported in August that the average SAT scores on the math portion for the 2000 test were the highest they've been in 30 years. At 514, the average math score this year is three points higher than last year. The average verbal score remained stable at 505 for the fifth year in a row. The College Board also reported that this year's test takers were a more diverse group than ever before. More than a third were first-generation college-bound students. More than half were women, and more than 34 percent were nonwhite.

● Associated Press reporter Carolyn Thompson filed a story in September 2000 about a new high school in Niagara Falls, New York. According to the story, the \$80 million facility is the first school in that state to be built with private funds. Using a so-called "lease-back" arrangement, the Honeywell

Corporation and other private investors built the school and will lease it to the school district for 30 years for about \$4.8 million a year. Under New York's school construction formula, the state will reimburse the school district about 83 percent of the district's cost. After the 30 years is up, ownership transfers to Niagara Falls. The unusual arrangement required a special act of the New York Legislature.

● The following are reports and resources that may be of interest to school board members and superintendents:

— The U.S. Department of Education developed an online resource for and about rural schools. The website, known as "Navigating Resources for Rural Schools," is at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ruraled>.

— The Center on Educational Policy has published a booklet called "Do You Know the Good News About American Education?" The booklet updates and adds data to the monthly issue briefs produced by the Center in 1998-99. It highlights areas where American schools have improved since the early 1980s, when many states began to undertake major education reform. You can access this booklet online at <http://www.ctredpol.org/pubs/booklets.html>.

— A new report by the Urban Institute for the U.S. Department of Education says that the e-rate is helping to close the digital divide. The e-rate provides discounts of 20 to 90 percent on telecommunications, Internet access and internal connections to schools and libraries.

The poorest schools are eligible for the deepest discounts. The full report, "E-Rate and the Digital Divide: A Preliminary Analysis from the Integrated Studies of Educational Technology," can be accessed at www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/eval/elem.html#technology. — In a recent study, the Public Agenda attempted to find out what teachers really think of their profession, and to compare their views with those of the administrators who hired them and college graduates who chose different careers. "A Sense of Calling" addresses six major concerns about the teaching profession:

- 1) **Are new teachers demoralized and uncommitted?**
- 2) **Are talented young people avoiding the profession?**
- 3) **Is money the problem?**
- 4) **Is certification the problem?**
- 5) **Is teacher preparation the problem?**
- 6) **Do working conditions undermine teacher performance?**

A web summary of the report is available at: <http://www.publicagenda.org/specials/teachers/teachers.htm>.

— The Center on Education Policy has released "School Vouchers: What We Know and Don't Know - And How We Could Learn More." The report is meant to raise the level and lower the volume of debate and help focus policymakers, parents and education officials on what is understood about voucher programs and what questions remained unanswered. A copy of the report is available at the Center's website: www.ctredpol.org ▲

Please return the first copy to GSBA at the address below.

Registration Form

2000 GSBA/GSSA Annual Conference

December 1-2, 2000

Use this form or register online at www.gsba.com.

Pre-Conference Training Opportunities

New Board Member Orientation
Referred to Below as: NBMO
Track I and Track II
 November 29-30, 2000

GSBA E. Freeman Leverett School Law Seminar
Referred to Below as: School Law
Track I, Track II and Track III
 November 30, 2000

Make room reservations directly by calling the Renaissance Waverly Hotel in Atlanta at 770-953-4500. If there are no available rooms at the Waverly, call the Sheraton Suites, Galleria (770-955-3900) or the Embassy Suites, Galleria (770-984-9300).

Schedule	8 a.m.	10 a.m.	12 p.m.	2 p.m.	4 p.m.	6 p.m.
Wednesday (Nov. 29)				NBMO - Track I <small>*Note* New board members must take both Tracks I and II. Veteran board members may take either track.</small>		
Thursday (Nov 30)	NBMO - Track I <small>(Attorneys, Board Members and Administrators)</small>		NBMO - Track II School Law - Track II <small>(Board Members & Administrators)</small>			School Law - Track III <small>(Attorneys Only)</small>
Friday (December 1)	GSBA/GSSA Annual Conference					
Saturday (December 2)	GSBA/GSSA Annual Conference					

School System/Organization:

Name: _____	NBMO		School Law			GSBA/GSSA Annual Conference \$225	Total
	Track I \$80	Track II \$80	Track I \$80	Track II \$80	Track III \$120		
Title: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Name: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Total
Title: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Name: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Total
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Title: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Registrations received after November 20 and all walk-ins are an additional \$15. **Grand Total: \$** _____
 Cancellations must be in writing and postmarked no later than November 20, 2000. A \$15 handling fee will be charged for all cancellations. A 50 percent administration fee may be charged for cancellations after the deadline of November 20 has passed.

Publication Policy

Agenda is published six times a year by the Georgia School Boards Association as a service to its member school boards. GSBA is a nonprofit organization for the state's 180 local school boards, which have joined together voluntarily to improve public education through cooperative effort. The articles published in each issue represent the ideas or beliefs of the writers and are not necessarily the views of GSBA, except where specifically stated.

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.

Gary Ashley, Executive Editor
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Laura Reilly, APR, Editor

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FAX: 770 962-5392
FAX: 770 962-1546

GSBA's Web Site: www.gsba.com

Superintendent Searches

GSBA is assisting in superintendent searches for the following school systems. If you are interested in any of these positions, call GSBA for information on application procedures.

Searches Underway

School System	Application Deadline
Peach County	November 17, 2000
Jasper County	December 1, 2000

Mark the Dates

GEORGIA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION CALENDAR

NOVEMBER:

- 1 Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (GPEE) Regional Meetings - Atlanta
- 5-6 Leadership GSBA - Crowne Plaza, Macon
- 13 GSBA Board of Directors New Directors' Orientation - GSBA Office, Lawrenceville
- 9 State Board Meeting - Twin Towers, Atlanta
- 19-25 American Education Week
- 29-30 GSBA New Board Member Orientation - Renaissance Waverly Hotel, Atlanta
- 30 GSBA E. Freeman Leverett School Law Seminar - Renaissance Waverly Hotel, Atlanta
- 30 GSBA Board of Directors Meeting - Renaissance Waverly Hotel, Atlanta

DECEMBER:

- 1-2 GSBA/GSSA Annual Conference - Renaissance Waverly Hotel, Atlanta
- 12 Large Systems Meeting - Fulton County Schools Boardroom, Atlanta
- 14 State Board Meeting - Twin Towers, Atlanta
- 14 GSBA Legislative Workshop VI - Macon, Georgia

JANUARY 2001:

- 8-12 Georgia School Board Member Appreciation Week
- 12-14 RTC (Southern Region Executive Directors) Meeting - Key West, Florida
- 18 GSBA FRN Pre-Planning Meeting - GSBA Offices, Lawrenceville
- 25 GSBA Board of Directors Meeting - State Capitol, Atlanta

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Lawrenceville, GA 30043

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