

AGENDA

We Believe In Public Education



GSBA Steadfast in Protecting Constitutional Rights of Boards

Following a lengthy and detailed meeting of the GSBA Board of Directors in South Atlanta February 9, the board voted unanimously to support the "framework" of the substitute to House Bill 1187. GSBA Executive Vice President Gary Ashley and Legislative Specialist Don Rooks covered the major revisions contained within the language of the substitute bill. The lengthier substitute bill addresses more favorably many of the points and concerns raised by local boards in the original bill. (A "GSBA Analysis of the Substitute to House Bill 1187" is available on GSBA's website.)

From the meeting, came the following statement from the Board: "The Georgia School Boards Association supports the Governor's initiative and the basic framework for reform contained within the substitute to House Bill 1187."

Ashley said, "Our board is taking a responsible stand on the issue of education reform. Many of the changes being called for in the Governor's bill will place hardships on some local systems and will require some tough decisions from many more. We do not take any of those concerns lightly or without careful thought. Still, we know that progressive educational reform will require uncomfortable change for all of those charged with the responsibility to govern local school systems. We want to be a part of progressive improvements to public education and we want to be part of the dialogue and obvious refinements that will be necessary to implement the Governor's reform package. That is why we have voted to support the basic 'framework' contained in the substitute to House Bill 1187," Ashley said.

"The Board felt that supporting the substitute version of HB1187 was in the best interest of local boards of education in Georgia," continued Ashley. "This is not to say that there are no concerns, specifically funding issues, with the bill. However, the Board believes that overall the education reform package can improve student achievement and

increase accountability for local systems."

The Board's action on the bill was but one in a series of steps the Association has undertaken to represent local boards' legislatively on HB1187. GSBA spent months at the table with legislators and authors of the bill to represent "the collective resolve" of school boards across Georgia.

Right away GSBA knew that one section of the legislation in particular would be problematic for school boards—the original language used to describe the authority of school councils. GSBA's Board of Directors and leadership team met to go through the original bill and develop language to offer the Governor's team as a substitute that the Association could support. The Board of Directors felt strongly that GSBA wanted to be on the side of supporting improving education in the state—if critical parts of the legislation could be changed.

GSBA's team continued to communicate with the Governor and key sponsors of the bill. Throughout the process, GSBA's only priority was to work for the best interests of all school boards. "We knew then and we know now that not every local board of education would be happy with everything contained in the legislation," said Ashley. "But we also know that this reform movement is too important not to be a part of the solution."

As of press time, HB1187 passed the Senate after lengthy debate. Because the Senate and House passed different bills, the legislation now goes to conference committees (assuming the House does not agree to accept the Senate version) appointed by the Lieutenant Governor for the Senate and by the Speaker of the House for their chamber. Eventually, a recommendation from the conference committees will be voted on by each chamber and the bill will be sent to the Governor for his signature. GSBA will continue to provide input on the legislation while it is in conference committee. ❧

The Newsletter of
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Wachovia Full Page Ad

From the Executive Vice President...

Online Communication a Necessity in Effectively Sharing Information

By Gary Ashley

Gary Ashley
GSBA Executive Vice President

GSBA has embraced the power of technology. The use of the Internet and computers has become second nature. When I became GSBA's Executive Vice President nearly 20 years ago, we spent a great deal of time with typewriters! Now they seem scarce.

Never has it been more apparent that our communication efforts must focus on using the latest tools than during the 2000 Georgia General Assembly. GSBA spends an enormous amount of time in personal meetings with our legislative leaders to discuss face-to-face the ramifications of legislation on school boards in Georgia. This facet of our communications hasn't changed. But when we attempt to communicate the latest happenings at the Capitol to superintendents and board members across the state, we can no longer rely on the mail. This isn't because we have lost faith in the post office, but because once the information is packaged, sent and delivered it probably is old news at that point. And with legislation such as the Governor's A Plus Education Reform Act of 2000, that simply doesn't do us any good.

The Governor's A Plus Education Reform Act offers the perfect example of why technology has become more important in the communication process. GSBA has had to use our website to organize and communicate all of the action surrounding this bill. All of this reminds me that as we talk about taking students to the next level in achievement, we must also take ourselves to the next level of using the wonderful and powerful technology that is at our fingertips.

I prefer to look at today's technology as tools added to our arsenal of communication methods. We still use personal meetings, phones, fax machines and newsletters. But we now have the power of instant communication via the web and e-mail.

If you have not done so, please take a few moments after you finish reading this newsletter to look at the comprehensive nature of our reporting on the

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From GSBA's President...

Diversity of GSBA Board of Directors Provides Excellent Representation

By Y.N. Myers, Jr.

Y.N. Myers, Jr.
GSBA President

Over the course of the past couple of months, the GSBA Board of Directors has met to expressly discuss and decide as an Association what our position would be on HB1187, the A Plus Education Reform Act of 2000. I want to digress a moment and talk about the members of your Board of Directors and where they come from.

I want to draw attention to the fact that your board represents a cross section of school boards – and walks of life. The GSBA Board of Directors is a diverse group representing men and women ethnically, socially and philosophically. We have retired individuals and professionals from diverse fields such as law, construction, religion, non-profit charity and some who have been “work-from-home parents.” We have those who have been a school board member for more than 15 years and some less than five. We have those who hail from school systems of more than 90,000 students and those who represent systems of less than 5,000 students.

There's no doubt about it, this board is a representative sample of school boards across Georgia. So, when the Board decided to meet to decide the course we would take on HB1187, it was with all of these viewpoints and experiences on the table that we deliberated.

We remained mindful that GSBA's mission statement clearly says that GSBA is meant to represent the collective resolve of school boards across the state. This became very important as we began to look at the nuances of this bill. For every person at the table, there were concerns about funding, or governance, or some other issue coming from this legislation. But we had to think instead of the bigger picture of what this legislation could mean for Georgia and the governance structure of public education in our state.

We developed what we considered appropriate changes to the bill that would make the bill workable

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“The Governor's A Plus Education Reform Act offers the perfect example of why technology has become more important in the communication process. GSBA has had to use our website to organize and communicate all of the action surrounding this bill.”

—Gary Ashley

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Executive Session: Legal Issues for Board Members

By Harben & Hartley
GSBA General Counsel

Sovereign and Official Immunity Remain Alive and Well in Georgia

Georgia law continues to provide considerable protection for local school districts, board members and school employees from suits by parents or other persons who contend that a school employee negligently caused a student or other person to be injured, thereby entitling them to money damages. This protection, known as either sovereign or official immunity, is found in our state's constitution at Article I, Section II, Paragraph IX. The present language in the constitution was inserted by a 1992 amendment, although the concept of sovereign immunity is as old as the early English common law.

Sovereign and official immunity are legal bars to suits brought under state law in which claims are made that school employees who have the duty or responsibility to make decisions prudently and with due care not to cause injury to others have been negligent, the direct result of which caused injuries or damages to others. "Sovereign immunity" protects the local school district and the board of education, as well as

school officials sued in their official capacities, while "official immunity" protects school officials or employees sued in their personal or individual capacities.

However, our state constitution provides that school employees may be sued for damages if they act "with actual malice or with actual intent to cause injury in the performance of their official functions." The constitution does not define the terms "actual malice" or "actual intent" to cause injury. Of course, some examples are obvious: a teacher who, in anger, slaps a child is acting with either actual malice or actual intent to cause injury. But what about a teacher who intentionally fails to supervise students on the playground because she sneaked off to the cafeteria for a cup of coffee? If a student is injured, perhaps due to lack of supervision, is the teacher liable for damages or does official immunity protect the teacher? (This issue is important to boards because in most school districts school employees are covered by the board's insurance policies.)

A most interesting recent Supreme Court of Georgia case examined the terms "with actual malice or with actual intent." The case involved a coach sued by a student who claimed he was injured when the coach made him work as discipline for damaging school property. The facts are these: a high school student participated in a "senior prank" during the evening hours. The prank will not be unfamiliar to

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AUTHORS:
SAM S. HARBEN, JR.
PHILLIP L. HARTLEY

PUBLISHED BY:
THE GEORGIA SCHOOL
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Scheduled for publication in the Spring of 2000, this guide will provide a comprehensive resource for school board members, administrators, educators and attorneys to the law which govern our public schools in Georgia. The book will be organized by topics with a question and answer format which will explain in lay terms the essential laws which every school board member and school administrator must know in order to govern our public schools. There also will be available a yearly update service to keep your guide up-to-date.

Order your copy today and save! Use the order form at right, or order online at www.gsba.com. Send no payment now. Orders will be billed upon shipment of merchandise.

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some local boards. A few students released live chickens into the school through a window that had been left unlocked. Other students went to the football field, obtained a gasoline can from a storage shed, and poured the gasoline into the center of the football field in an effort to make the figure “ninety-five”, which was the year these seniors graduated; the students then lit the gasoline. Their identities were discovered later and the students were disciplined. As part of the discipline, the principal directed the two students implicated in the football field incident to report to a coach to work after school each day for a week as punishment for damaging the football field. The students were told that if they did not do this, they would not be allowed to participate in graduation exercises. One of the tasks assigned by the coach was to cut grass with a pair of household scissors. This student offered to buy gasoline for the weed eater and use it instead, but the coach refused and insisted that he cut grass with the scissors. The student later claimed he was given “rusty old household scissors” and claimed that he was made to cut weeds with these rusty scissors for over an hour with no rest breaks. As a result, the student had blisters on his hand and, as he alleged, his wrists were swollen when he arrived home. His mother took him to the emergency room where he was given a brace and pain medication; this relieved him of further work, although the student contends the coach made fun of him for wearing the brace on his wrist.

Of course, the student sued the coach, contending the coach acted with “actual malice or with actual intent” to cause injury. The issue before the courts was whether the coach was protected by official immunity.

The Superior Court granted summary judgment in favor of the coach on the grounds that the coach was protected by official immunity. However, on the first level of appeal, the Court of Appeals reversed. The Court of Appeals apparently was affected by the behavior of the coach who taunted the student at school after the student acquired a brace. The student testified the coach called him a “pussy” for wearing the brace and made scissor cutting motions with his hand directed at the student in front of other students. The student also testified that the coach had engaged in “constant badgering” of him, even before the senior prank. The Court of Appeals believed that this behavior, including the choice of rusty, dull scissors for cutting the weeds and refusing to allow the student to buy gas for the weed eater to make his task easier, may be found by a jury as an indication that the coach “had more on his mind than having the weeds cut....” As the

Court of Appeals stated, if a teacher previously engaged in bullying behavior and intentionally devises a punishment that is not only demeaning but has the potential to hurt the student, then this conduct may be found to be acts with actual malice or with actual intent to cause injury and not protected from suit by official immunity.

However, the Supreme Court of Georgia granted an appeal and reversed the Court of Appeals in a September, 1999, decision (*Adams v. Hazelwood*, 271 Ga. 414). The Supreme Court held that in the context of official immunity, “actual malice” requires a deliberate intention to do wrong. Actual malice, according to the Supreme Court, “requires more than harboring bad feelings about another.” Even if the coach had ill will toward the student, these feelings must be combined “with the intent to do something wrongful or illegal.” The Supreme Court reasoned that to hold otherwise would mean that official immunity could be pierced “solely on the basis of the defendant’s rancorous personal feelings toward the plaintiff....” The Court refused to equate “actual malice with ill will.” The Court concluded that the evidence showed that the football coach devised the particular punishment to teach the student a lesson but did not know that the student would be injured by the punishment. Unless there was evidence that the coach deliberately committed a wrongful act or an act with a deliberate intent to harm the student, then official immunity protected the school employee and the suit should be dismissed.

There have been other cases in which plaintiffs have attempted to argue that official immunity should not apply because there was no actual malice or actual intent to cause injury. In the prior cases, the Court of Appeals found no evidence of an actual intent by an employee to injure a student. In one such case, a parent sued because a teacher grasped the face of their disruptive child momentarily to insure the child was looking at the teacher; another case concerned a teacher who instructed a student to make an effort to traverse monkey bars even though the student told the teacher she did not believe she could do so. In a 1998 case, the Court of Appeals determined that football coaches were aware there was a tradition of initiating freshman players by the veteran players and failed to prevent it from happening, although a particular student was injured when the horseplay apparently got out of hand. The Court concluded, as in the other cases, there was no evidence of actual malice or intent to harm.

A board of education might well conclude that the supervision or discipline of students in several of these

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Executive Session continued from page six...

cases, including the weed cutting case, reflect a lack of common sense or good judgment on the part of school employees. Certainly, school employees who fail to live up to their professional duties and responsibilities may be subject to discipline by the board or school administration. The Supreme Court has simply made clear that lack of common sense or, for that matter, unprofessional behavior on the part of a school employee, is not the same as actual malice or actual intent to cause injury. While school employees, as well as the school district itself, are afforded great protection from suits for damages, school employees are not immune from discipline, including termination, for reckless, unwise and unprofessional conduct which result in a student being injured.

School board members need to be reminded that there continues to be an effort, led largely by the plaintiffs' bar, to weaken or repeal sovereign and official immunity and to permit litigation for negligence acts which cause student or third party injuries. GSBA will continue to be alert for any such effort to repeal this valuable protection for school boards and their employees. ❧

Legislative Alert:

Presently pending in the General Assembly is HB 1076, introduced by Martin of the 47th, Bordeaux of the 151st and Allen of the 117th. This bill, if passed, will waive sovereign and official immunity for the torts of school employees and allows school employees to be sued in state court, with the right of a plaintiff or plaintiffs to recover damages up to \$1,000,000 for any one person or \$3,000,000 per occurrence if school employees are found negligent. The bill also would allow suits to be filed based on occurrences that took place from January 1, 1999. School board members must let their legislative delegations know how they feel about this proposed radical change in Georgia law.

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Association News

• Vescia DeMeritte has joined the GSBA staff as policy analyst effective February 14. Ms. DeMeritte hails from the Minnesota School Boards Association where she served as special assistant to management/policy services.

“We feel very fortunate to have Ms. DeMerritte join our team,” said GSBA Executive Vice President Gary Ashley. “She will provide invaluable assistance to our growing policy services division.”

Ms. DeMeritte holds a Juris Doctor degree from William Mitchell College of Law and a bachelor of science degree in business administration from the University of Phoenix. In addition to her extensive experience in educational policy and general law, she also served in the U.S. Navy for ten years.

• The GSBA Nominating Committee has met to narrow the field of qualified candidates to serve as GSBA officers. Under GSBA’s bylaws, the GSBA Past President serves as chairman of the committee. At the committee’s meeting on February 24, 2000, the following individuals were selected as nominees to hold office.

President Elect – Zenda Bowie (Fulton County)

Treasurer — Deloras Moon (Jones County)

Vice President – Brad Bryant (DeKalb County)

The nominees will be presented at the Delegate Assembly on June 23. At that time, delegates will elect officers for the 2000-2001 year. Members of this year’s Nominating Committee are:

- Ron Hopkins, Chair, Jefferson City
- Marjorie Washington, McIntosh County - District 1
- Myrlene Sheffield, Baker County - District 2
- Linda Parker, Muscogee County - District 3
- Frances Edwards, DeKalb County - District 4
- Emmett Johnson, Atlanta City - District 5
- Alfred McNair, Troup County - District 6
- Tommy Boggs, Dalton City - District 7
- Robert C. Willis, Brantley County - District 8
- Paul Kreager, Forsyth County - District 9
- Debbie Brooks, Columbia County - District 10
- Svea Bogue, Clarke County - District 11
- Rachel Rumph, Peach County - District 12
- Sharon Turner, Wheeler County - District 13
- Eddie Daniels, Sr., Crisp County - District 14

• Ted Stone, chair of the Jones County Board of Education and former GSBA president, represented GSBA by participating in a joint project of the National School Boards Association and the American

Association of School Administrators. The project included a one-day work session where school board members and superintendents came together to identify and come to agreement on the respective roles of board members and superintendents in the eight areas contained in NSBA’s “Key Work of School Boards.” The eight areas are: vision, standards, assessment, accountability, resource alignment, climate, collaborative relationships and continuous improvement. The work of the group will form the basis for a joint NSBA/AASA publication on the topic.

• GSBA’s Deputy Executive Director Gil Parrish is serving as a keynote speaker for NSBA’s “Making the Technology+Education Connection: A Briefing for School Leaders.” The technology conference, held on February 11-13, 2000, and again on March 10-12 in Scottsdale, Arizona, focused on how technology can help students achieve and assist education leaders. ☎

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News Briefs

Classroom Connection to Internet Continues An Upward Pace

Virtually all public schools are now connected to the Internet and classroom hook-ups have increased 20-fold since 1994. According to *Internet Access in U.S. Public Schools and Classrooms: 1994-1999*, released today by the U.S. Education Department's National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), the percentage of public schools connected to the Internet has increased each year. Internet access in schools increased from 35 to 95 percent and classroom connections increased from three to 63 percent from 1994-99.

During the same period, public schools also upgraded their network connections and the speed at which they are able to connect. By 1999, schools were six times as likely to use faster dedicated-line networks (63 percent) or other high speed technologies (23 percent), than simply dial-up connections (14 percent).

In addition, the ratio of students per instructional computer with Internet access decreased from 12 to nine from 1998 to 1999, although differences remain across schools with different characteristics. For example, medium-sized and large schools had more students per computer with Internet access than small schools, nine and 10 students compared to six students. And schools in cities had more students per computer with Internet access (11) than schools in rural areas (7). Schools with the highest concentration of poverty had 16 students per instructional computer with Internet access, compared to seven among schools with the lowest concentration.

"We need to continue our efforts to ensure that all schools and students have equal access to the vast network of information on the Internet," U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley said. "Because technology can improve student performance and provide the competitive skills necessary for future success, it is critical that we provide a link for those in the smallest towns to the largest cities."

Other survey findings include:

- While 74 percent of classrooms in low-poverty schools are connected to the Internet, only 39 percent of classrooms in high-poverty schools have Internet access; and,
- Forty-eight percent of schools with the highest concentration of poverty indicate that state and federal government programs were their primary source of support, compared to 14 percent of schools with the lowest concentrations of poverty.

The NCES survey was sent to a nationally representative sample of about 1,000 public elementary and secondary schools in the fall of 1999. ❧

Note: Report is based on a news release by the US DOE.

GSBA PLANNER

March 2000

- 3-6 AASA Conference
San Francisco, CA
- 9 GSBA Board Chair Workshop
Red Top Mountain St. Park, Cartersville
- 22 Leadership GSBA
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Macon
- 31 NSBA Delegate Assembly
Orlando, Florida

April 2000

- 1-4 NSBA Delegate Assembly and Annual Conference
Orlando, Florida
- 27 GSBA Ex. Committee Meeting
GSBA Offices, Lawrenceville
- 27 GSBA Gov. Operations Committee Meeting
GSBA Offices, Lawrenceville

May 2000

- 11 GSBA Workers' Comp and Risk Management Funds' Trustees Meeting
GSBA Offices, Lawrenceville
- 19-20 GSBA Board of Directors Retreat
Callaway Garden, Pine Mountain

June 2000

- 21-22 GSBA New Board Member Orientation
Hyatt Regency, Savannah
- 21 GSBA Board of Directors Budget Meeting
Hyatt Regency, Savannah
- 22 GSBA Policy Workshop
Hyatt Regency, Savannah
- 22 GSBA Communications Workshop
Hyatt Regency, Savannah
- 23-24 GSBA Summer Conference and Delegate Assembly
Hyatt Regency, Savannah
- 24 GSBA Board of Directors Organizational Meeting
Hyatt Regency, Savannah
- 24-27 NSBA Student Achievement Conference
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Workers' Compensation Insurance and Risk Management Services

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Think GSBA Workers' Compensation Fund and Risk Management Fund for Cost Control and Individualized Programs and Services

Look Closely at Employee Injury Risk and Alternatives for Reducing Cost



The risk of illness and injury due to conditions at school is a major source of concern for school boards and superintendents across Georgia. Both students and employees suffer when risk management programs are ineffective, but the cost of employee injuries is much higher than many officials realize.

While sovereign immunity reduces the burden on school systems for many student injuries, the liability for employee injuries is almost absolute. Under Georgia's Workers' Compensation Act, a school employee is entitled to extensive medical and disability income benefits that must be paid entirely by the school system.

Cost of Employee Injuries Five Times Greater Than Student Injury Expense

On a per pupil basis, the cost to provide workers' compensation benefits averages approximately \$24 annually for all school systems. Besides the obvious costs for medical treatment, work related injuries and illnesses also produce added administrative costs and reduce productivity. Various studies have shown that the "hidden" cost of employee injuries may be many times greater than the visible costs. It is safe to say that occupational risk is costing Georgia school systems more than \$30 per FTE on average annually.

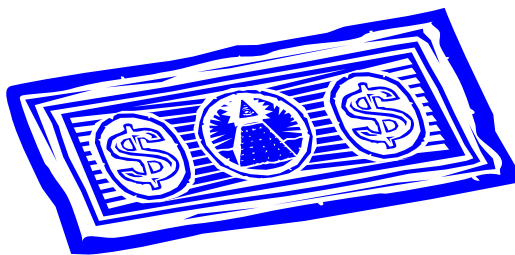
In contrast, school systems only spend around \$5.50 per FTE to pay for injuries to students. This includes the expense of automobile and general liability insurance. Even after adding the cost of catastrophic accident insurance for athletics and the amount parents pay on average for medical insurance, deductibles and uninsured expenses, the cost of occupational risk far exceeds student injury costs.



Schools Use Self-Insurance to Manage Risk and Reduce Costs

Self-insuring work-related risks has long been seen as the most effective means for school boards to control and reduce costs. When a school system self-insures, it generally becomes more aware of expenses and the techniques that can be employed to prevent injuries and mitigate losses.

More school boards are using self-insurance in Georgia than they did ten years ago, but the trend has slowed in recent years. From 1992-1996, there was a very rapid increase in self-insurance. Two statewide group self-insurance plans were started during this period and almost all of the systems with FTE greater than 12,000 implemented self-insurance programs. As regulatory conditions improved in the latter part of the 1990s, school officials found that several insurance companies were willing to aggressively underwrite their risks with few restrictions or specific safety requirements.



GSBA Offers Assistance in Risk Management

School boards that want help self-insuring can turn to GSBA and its risk management staff. Larger systems will receive advice and assistance to ensure that their individual plan includes all the elements necessary to comply with state requirements and fully meet obligations to employees. GSBA's Risk Information Manager can provide a variety of services to help staff gain deeper insight from the reams of claims data that may be generated. Professional opinions of actuaries and claims auditors can be obtained at a savings to the school system. A risk improvement consultant can be assigned to work with administrators and school staff.

One of the easiest ways for small and medium sized systems to benefit from GSBA's experience is by joining the GSBA

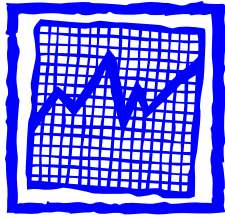


Workers' Compensation Fund. GSBA works closely with a claims manager, insurance broker, attorneys, and many other specialists to simplify the entire process of self-insurance. Cost savings are achieved for members by spreading losses across a large group and negotiating price discounts for high quality services. GSBA's team of risk control specialists works closely with members to design, measure and recognize successful safety programs. Through the Fund, members can obtain safety equipment grants, back injury prevention training, technical consulting and staff development workshops.

After more than seven years of operation, the Fund has succeeded in lowering injury rates, contribution levels and medical costs without resorting to the kind of drastic "managed care" programs that commercial insurance companies have adopted.

Self-Insurers Control Cash and Claims

Occupational injuries may require years of medical treatment and disability income payments. A primary objective of self-insurance is to control the cash flow and claims management during this period. Schools systems that self-insure retain the money that insurers would otherwise collect for their investment purposes. They may use their own staff to administer benefits or employ one of the licensed third party administrators for this purpose. In a group self-insurance plan, money is collected for the upcoming year from members based on certain individual risk characteristics and an estimate of all losses and expenses for the group. At the close of each fiscal year, an actuarial study is performed to determine the ultimate liabilities of the members based on actual injuries and illnesses. The results of this study may indicate the need for an increase in the claims reserves or an amount that can be returned to the members.



The GSBA Workers' Compensation Fund has operated for almost eight years without ever having to assess its members for losses that exceeded the annual projection. In addition to maintaining a significant fund balance, over \$2 million has been returned to members in the form of dividends and special projects undertaken by the group. Approximately \$10 million or one third of the total amount contributed by members is earning interest until it is needed to pay claims.

School systems that do not self-insure or belong to a group self-insurance plan are often paying lower insurance premiums for short-term liability protection. However, they may be overlooking opportunities for long-term savings and improved care of injured employees. ❧



As of February 7, 2000, the following boards of education have joined previously announced boards in verifying their compliance with the "Standards for Local Boards of Education."

- Harris County
- Screven County
- Tattnall County

Georgia School Boards Association

SUMMER CONFERENCE AND DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

June 23-24, 2000 Savannah, Georgia
Pre-Conference Training Opportunities June 21-22

Make plans now to attend the GSBA Summer Conference and Delegate Assembly. And don't forget about your last opportunities of the fiscal year to fulfill your annual training requirements by attending the GSBA Policy Workshop, Communications Workshop or the New Board Member Orientation. Registration packets will be mailed soon or you can register online at www.gsba.com.

Call the Hyatt Regency today and make your reservations. Don't forget to mention that you're attending the GSBA conference.

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800-426-7866	800-HOLIDAY



Today's Superintendencies Reflected in New Evaluation Instrument

What is evaluation?

It is the process of gathering information that will help improve future performance of school personnel, programs and operations.

Why does an effective school board evaluate?

To determine the degree to which the established goals of the school board are being or have been met.

What are the board evaluation responsibilities?

In general the school board has three evaluation responsibilities, to evaluate:

- Staff (superintendent)
- School programs and operations
- Itself

Give some reasons why school boards evaluate the superintendent.

- Determine whether or not the school system is achieving stated educational goals.
- To judge the work of its executive officer—superintendent.
- To obtain information as to the effectiveness of programs, policies and school personnel.
- To aid in deciding whether programs and personnel are accountable in terms of dollars spent.
- To assist boards in reviewing, revising and updating existing policies.
- To provide an opportunity to give encouragement and commendation on work well done.
- To provide an opportunity for self-appraisal of superintendent's own skills.
- To replace opinion with facts.
- The state law requires that all personnel including the superintendent be annually evaluated.

The present superintendent evaluation instrument used by a majority of school boards was recently revised, how does this affect the evaluation process?

All school boards agree and establish evaluation criteria with the superintendent at initial employment and annual reviews. The evaluation criteria can be modified to match the board's goals. This minor 2000-

revised instrument reflects suggestions from local board members and local superintendents to better match the existing educational goals in Georgia and does not affect the evaluation process, but it does enhance the process of improvement.

When was the last time the superintendent evaluation instrument was revised?

This is the first time since its original development in 1986.

What are some of the revisions?

First the instrument is based on continuous improvement, addressing the superintendent's need for improvement and the board's support for improvement. Second, the rating scale was changed to reflect the continuous improvement concept. Third, the other changes reflect changes in duties, technology utilization, and programmatic requirements.

Can local boards modify this revised instrument?

Yes, to address any agreed upon evaluation criteria with the superintendent.

When is the effective date of this instrument and must local board only use this instrument?

Local boards and superintendents must decide when and how they will use any formal evaluation instrument. The state requirement is that superintendents be evaluated annually and that local board members must be trained in the evaluation process, not on what instrument is used.

How can local board members and superintendents receive a copy of the revised instrument?

Through GSBA's website: www.gsba.com.

What impact does the proposed education reform legislation have on this evaluation instrument?

New legislation will require that the superintendent evaluation instrument be reviewed and revised after the legislation becomes law. As the educational structure changes, new policies and program goals will change; therefore, the evaluation of the superintendent who administers the programs will have to change.



Superintendent Evaluation Instrument Revision Committee

Co-Chairs

Gary Ashley, GSBA Executive Vice President

Marguerite Cline, Consultant

Committee Members

Board Members:

Zenda Bowie (Fulton)

Mike Christopher (Cherokee)

Mike Jones (Greene)

Superintendents:

Wendell Clamp (Newton)

Beauford Hicks (Dooly)


Allene Magill (Forsyth)

GSBA Staff

Billy Johnson & Gil Parrish


Continued from page fourteen...

What assistance is available from GSBA to assist local boards of education with the superintendent evaluation instrument?

- GSBA Standards
- Evaluation training
- Individual Board training sessions
- Board self-assessment evaluation
- On-line policy review 

President's Message continued from page three...


for most school boards. Of course we also realized that the bill might still contain potential problems for some school boards. The Board came to a consensus, however, that the remaining issues would be ones that would be worked out over time through the legislative process.

In the end, the Board felt strongly that it properly upheld its duty to represent the collective resolve of school boards. After all, your board is a perfect cross sampling of well-intentioned, well-informed individuals who care about what is best for public school students in Georgia. 

Executive vice President's message continued from page three...

education reform package via *Capitol Watch Online*. Just go to our website (www.gsba.com) and click on the button that says, "*Capitol Watch Online*." If you don't have a computer readily available, I urge you to go to a school or public library and see for yourself the information available on this bill from GSBA's website.

At every step in this bill's evolution, GSBA has been there. We've reported on what the legislators have said, what changes have been made to the bill and what we expect to happen. We've also posted all statements and testimony we've given regarding the bill.

We chose our website as the tool to communicate about HB1187 because it was the only feasible choice and the most effective one. I'm convinced that using technology to its fullest potential is the only way to go in communicating what GSBA's members need to know. I've staked my leadership of GSBA on putting our Association on the cutting edge, and the use of technology is no exception. 

What's Available on GSBA's Capitol Watch Online?

- Daily reports of action during the 40-day Georgia General Assembly.
- Analysis of each new piece of education legislation introduced. The analysis includes a summary of the bill, explanation of its affect on existing laws, and points to consider about the bill.
- Direct links to the full text of any piece of education legislation.

When a new report is posted, GSBA sends an e-mail message alerting members. To be added to this service call GSBA.

NSBA Conference Ad - pick up on last issue

Publication Policy

Agenda is published bimonthly 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.

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GSBA's Web Site: www.gsba.com

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Superintendent Searches: The Status of GSBA's Process

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

<i>School System</i>	<i>Application Deadline</i>
Glynn County	March 10, 2000
Evans County	March 31, 2000
Clarke County	March 31, 2000
Haralson County	April 7, 2000
Rockdale County	April 14, 2000
Colquitt County	Deadline has passed.

In the Selection Process

Monroe County



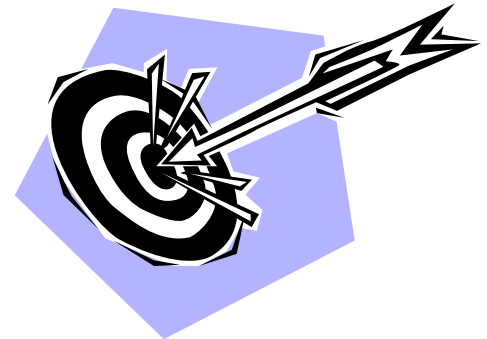
See page 13 for information on the Summer Conference and Delegate Assembly and pre-conference training opportunities!

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