

AGENDA

The Newsletter of the
Georgia School Boards Association
Volume 6, Number 2
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We Believe in Public Education



Conference a History-Making Success

Over 1,000 school board members, superintendents and educational leaders participated in "Leadership in the New Millennium," the GSBA/GSSA 2000 Annual Conference in Atlanta on December 1-2. Prior to the conference on November 29-30, a record number of board members and superintendents attended GSBA's New Board Member Orientation (NBMO) and the GSBA E. Freeman Leverett School Law Seminar.

A centerpiece of the conference was the celebration of GSBA's 50th Anniversary. "GSBA has the reputation for being a can-do organization," said Gary Ashley, GSBA's executive vice president. "I'm extremely proud to serve our Association because our work within the governance structure of public education ultimately serves the children of our state. GSBA's record over the past 50 years is one in which all school board members - past, present and newly elected - should hold a great deal of pride."

The speakers at this year's conference and pre-conference training sessions provided attendees with the information on education reform and legislative changes that will impact how Georgia's public school systems are administered and governed. The following is a recap of what conference speakers had to say about leading schools in the new millennium.



GSBA President Tricia Smith and GSBA Executive Vice President Gary Ashley kick off a special reception in honor of GSBA's 50th Anniversary by cutting a specially decorated cake.

NSBA President Clarice Chambers

Chambers called upon educational leaders to step up to the plate, be accountable and be a "shining exam-



NSBA President Clarice Chambers

ple" to others in leadership positions. She commended the hard work of superintendents and board members for their dedication to all children who come to their schools' doors. Chambers also commented on the difficulty of being a leader. "If you're out to be a leader and you see that no one is following you, then you're just out taking a walk," she said.

Governor Roy Barnes

Governor Barnes repeated his call for school board members and superintendents to make the painful decisions now for what he says will lead to greater student achievement for which future generations will be grateful. The Governor said that for every decision facing a school board and/or administrative team, the first

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From Left: GSBA President Tricia Smith, NSBA President Clarice Chambers, Governor Roy Barnes and GSBA Executive Vice President Gary Ashley.

question asked must be, "Does this improve student achievement?" He says this includes bus schedules as well as curriculum matters. Governor Barnes said educational leaders must not put the interests of adults over those of a child.

complaints," he said.

Another area needing attention is that of recruiting and retaining qualified teachers. The Governor announced his intention to



Pictured Above: The New Board Member Orientation drew over 200 new and veteran board members.

applause when he announced that he has put forth a budget proposal for \$468,936,143 in additional funds for classroom construction. This would be on top of funds for the regular construction program. If passed, the building program would be the largest in the state's history. He also announced a statewide bid system for smaller systems that choose prototype schools for a guaranteed price.

In another applause-getting statement, Governor Barnes said that he had been convinced of the need for paraprofessionals in kindergarten classrooms. He said that if a district has no more than 18 students in a kindergarten classroom, then the state will fund a paraprofessional for kindergarten classes. He estimated the cost at \$68 million.

He also mentioned that the "Promise to Paraprofessionals" program will be continued and that 795 paraprofessionals took advantage of the program to become certified teachers during 1999-2000.



Speaker Harvey Alston, right, got the crowd involved in his message of personal accountability and what it takes to be a success. "H" is for heart. "A" is for attitude. "P" is for people. "P" is for pride. And "Y" is for

On the middle school question, the Governor freely admitted that he is looking for solutions to offering appropriate levels of art, music and P.E. in a total curriculum that focuses on academics. "I'm open to suggestions, but I need solutions not just

set up a system of salary "add-ons" for higher degrees in field, for mentoring new teachers and for performance. He said the plan is "in the works."

The Governor received much



Harvey Alston

Harvey Alston raised the roof with his highly charged presentation "Be Your Best." He challenged attendees to take another look at kids today. "Kids are better than they've ever been," he said. He suggested that before anyone talks about how bad kids are today that they take a better look at what a "crazy" world we live in. He said that problems are solved by loving and caring, and that parents need to stop being playmates to their children.

Patricia Russell-McCloud

At a fast pace, McCloud took aim at leadership. Here are a few of the areas she addressed and some quips from her talk:

- Along with the traditional three "Rs," schools need to be teaching respect, responsibility and rational thinking.
- "To look or to see. To listen or to hear and then to act is the most important choice we make."
- Leaders move from problem solving to innovation.

- "Attitude can move you from 'duh' to 'ahhh.'"
- "Brains are in. Money may not buy happiness, but it will pay for the consultant to solve the problem."
- "That which is measured gets done."
- The story of Noah's Ark has implications for leadership in the new millennium. The story teaches us to not miss the boat, plan ahead, travel in pairs, value all people and build on high ground. "Remember," she admonished, "the Ark was built by amateurs. The Titanic was built by professionals."

Dick Yarbrough

Yarbrough called himself one of public education's biggest fans and said he felt his job at the conference was to say thank you to all attendees for their hard work and dedication on behalf of children.

In his work as a syndicated columnist, he said he is often struck by the fact that people with their own agendas often offer solutions that are too simple for the complex problems sur-



At Right: Georgia Board of Education Chairman Otis Brumby introduces the final speaker, Dick Yarbrough, above, who entertained attendees with homespun common sense.

rounding education. "Special interest groups don't look at the big picture," he said. Yarbrough recounted something his son-in-law, a public school teacher, observed, "It doesn't matter what kind of legislation is passed. It only matters if we get parents involved." ▲



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Award Recipients Honored by School Board Members and Superintendents

At a special awards luncheon at the 2000 GSBA/GSSA Annual Conference, Tom Upchurch, executive director of the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, was recognized as the "Georgia Friend of Education" award recipient for his dedication to improving public education in Georgia. Upchurch has been a teacher, elementary and high school principal and a local school superintendent. In addition to leading GPEE, he also is the chair of Governor Roy Barnes' Implementation Task Force for the A Plus Education Reform Act of 2000. Throughout his career, Upchurch has shown an unyielding dedication to raising educational standards for students and establishing and insisting on accountability at all levels.

GSBA also honored six media organizations for going above and beyond the call of duty to communicate educational issues to the community. Eric Denty of "The Press-Sentinel" was nominated by the Wayne County Board of Education. The Floyd County Board of Education nominated Bill Fortenberry of the "Rome-News Tribune." Agnes Hagin of the "Rockmart Journal" was nominated by the Polk School District. The Thomas County Board of Education

nominated Sandi Snyder-Olson of the "Thomasville Times-Enterprise." "Griffin Daily News" reporter Mike Stucka was nominated by the Griffin-Spalding Board of Education. Clay Wilson of the "White County News-Telegraph" was nominated by the White County Board of Education.

The following school board members received a GSBA Award of Achievement for accomplishing numerous training objectives through the Association:

- Ervin Austin, Telfair County Board of Education
- Paul Drawdy, Wayne County Board of Education
- Debra Graham, Marion County Board of Education
- Darius Harris, Sumter County Board of Education
- Jill McDuffie, Wilcox County Board of Education
- Raymond Johnson, Wilcox County Board of Education

GSBA also commended the following employers for providing an employee time during the work week to serve a local board of education. (The company the individual represents is in parenthesis.)

- Delores E. Cross (Morris Brown College)
- Richard Clarke (Freudenberg-Nok)
- G. F. DiBiase (Fort James Corporation)
- George Flowers (Synovus Wealth



Gary Ashley congratulates Tom Upchurch upon his receiving the Georgia Friend of Education award.

Management)

- Drew Hamilton (State Farm Insurance Company)
- Jack Heard (Mark Heard Fuel Company)
- William V. Hearnburg (Southwire)
- Rick Hudson (Blue Bird Body Company)
- Carolyn Jones (Lockeed Martin Aero-Marietta)
- Paul Glenn Jones, Sr. (True Line Company Land Surveyors)
- Jack Kriesel (Rayonier)
- Barry Lucas (City of Manchester)
- Charles Rooney (Metropolitan Atlanta Crime Commission)
- Brenda B. Schwalls (Farmers & Merchants Bank)
- L. Wesley Smith (Northwest Georgia Bank)
- Carlton Thomas (Three Notch Electric Membership Corp.) ▲

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

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Ben Hill County
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Bremen City
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Camden County
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Cartersville City
Catoosa County
Cherokee County
Cobb County
Coffee County
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Habersham County
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Apple's School Board of Tomorrow Exhibit drew in many conferees. The exhibit showcased the use of technology in a boardroom, front office, back office and in a conference room. At left, a conferee checks out wireless technology. Below, visitors to the exhibit learn that there is now a digital "flip chart." Apple also provided the Cyber Cafe where conferees could check e-mail or surf the Internet during the conference.

GSBA and GSSA appreciate the support of all exhibitors and sponsors. This year's exhibitors offered conference attendees an opportunity to see new technologies, products and services.



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2001 Legislative Priorities: Funding Improvements Sought

The Georgia School Boards Association builds its annual legislative priorities on the basic principle that improving academic achievement must be the top priority of state education. This premise includes support for legislative positions calling for a quality education for all Georgia students, regardless of where they live. It underlies a belief that an appropriate and challenging curriculum should be taught by highly qualified instructors. It recognizes that improving achievement will most likely occur in safe, pleasant classrooms. And it recognizes that some students achieve better in alternative educational set-

tings appropriately funded through the state-local partnership.

With this basis of understanding in mind, the following are presented as GSBA's legislative priorities for the 2001 session of Georgia's General Assembly.

Recommendation:
Increase state funding for Maintenance and Operation.

Rationale

The average amount expended statewide for M&O is over \$450 per FTE; the state amount provided for this expense is only \$295. The difference in funding and cost is a direct

increase in local property taxes; the state rightly should assume more of the cost.

Recommendation:
Increase state funding for capital outlay (for both exceptional growth and for regular entitlements) to the \$150 million level.

Rationale

Laying aside for the moment the additional need for classrooms caused by reduced class sizes, Georgia still is a growth state (25,000 additional students per year). In addition, aging buildings and infrastructure and the need for clean, safe learning environ-

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ments annually create additional capital outlay funding needs. The existing good state-local funding partnership to meet these needs should be strengthened by raising the entitlement levels to \$150 million.

Recommendation
Increase funding to enable all school systems to provide quality alternative education programs.

Rationale
The 2000 A+ Education Reform Act rightly mandates alternative settings for some students, and in doing so requires that disruptive students be educated separately from nondisruptive (or nontraditional) learners. These needed requirements are expensive, and the state-local partnership which funds them should be strengthened by an increase in state dollars for this purpose.

Recommendation
Increase state funds for transportation reimbursement.

Rationale
This position urges the General Assembly to fund transportation to all students one mile or more from the school. In matter of fact, nearly all of Georgia's local boards of education fund transportation to and from school for all students, regardless of where they live! A concern for the safety of students practically mandates this; it is now time for the state to pay its fair share for this initiative designed to enhance student safety.

Recommendation
Reimbursement for training and experience should be based on current year data.

Rationale
For many of Georgia's school systems, locally funding the T & E portion of the first year of a person's employment is a hefty expense.

Technology now exists to eliminate the current one-year lag in this funding, and the state should assume its fair share of the cost by using the most recent employment data available.

Recommendation
Count students for FTE purposes who leave school to attend postsecondary options.

Rationale
Students often leave school for a portion of the day to attend eligible postsecondary options institutions such as colleges or technical colleges. Under current law, the local school system loses FTE funding for the segments they are away, even though the system still must provide for them (teachers, record-keeping, etc.) as if they were actually receiving instruction on the local school campus. To remedy this, the state should provide regular FTE funding for those segments that students are in PSO institutions. ▲

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A Guide to School Law in Georgia

Through a collaboration with the Law Firm of Harben and Hartley (GSBA general counsel) GSBA now offers a brand new resource to boards of education, superintendents, school system administrators and all those who serve public education in Georgia—*The Guide to School Law in Georgia*.

This is the only resource of its kind in existence in our state. It promises to become the daily legal resource for those in administrative roles and a handy reference for others. (*The Guide* is not meant as a substitute for legal counsel.)

The Guide to School Law in Georgia is a hard bound book that encompasses every facet of governing and managing a school system— from boardroom to classroom. *The Guide's* 17 chapters are packed with questions—and the answers—to some of the most pressing issues faced by board members and school system professionals. The chapter headings are:

- Chapter 1 - The Governance Structure of Georgia's Public Schools
- Chapter 2 - The Election of Members to Local Boards of Education
- Chapter 3 - The Organization and Powers of the Local Board of Education
- Chapter 4 - The Local School Superintendent
- Chapter 5 - Meetings and Records of the Board of Education
- Chapter 6 - Hiring, Evaluating and Compensating Employees
- Chapter 7 - Terminating Employees and The Fair Dismissal Act
- Chapter 8 - Civil Rights of Employees
- Chapter 9 - Student Enrollment and Attendance
- Chapter 10 - Student Discipline

- Chapter 11 - Civil Rights of Students
- Chapter 12 - Rights of Students With Disabilities
- Chapter 13 - Religion and Schools
- Chapter 14 - Curriculum and Testing
- Chapter 15 - Budget and Finance
- Chapter 16 - Construction and Other Contracts
- Chapter 17 - Liability and Immunity of School Districts and Employees

Each chapter addresses these subjects by answering specific questions relating to that topic. There are hundreds of questions and answers written in clear, "non-legalese" English.

To aid in ease of use, the book includes an expanded table of contents that lists all of the questions in each chapter. At the end of the book is a subject index to the questions. So, if you know you want information about charter schools, for example, the index will point you to the appropriate questions in the book.

This resource will replace the GSBA Legal Reference Manual that has been so valuable in past years because school board members and school system administrators asked for an easier way to get legal

information. And as laws, rules and regulations change, GSBA will publish annual supplements to *The Guide to School Law in Georgia* insure that the information remains current and correct.

Pricing Information:

1-50 books - \$125 each*

Orders above 50 please contact GSBA for special pricing options.

* Books must be on the same order to qualify for discount.

Shipping and handling additional (see scale below)

Shipping and Handling:

1-3 books - \$7.50 per book

4-6 books - \$4.00 per book

7 or more books - \$3.00 per book

To order your copy online, simply go to www.gsba.com. Once there you can order online or print out an order form and fax or mail as indicated. For additional information contact GSBA at (770) 962-2985. ▲



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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.

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GSBA's Web Site: www.gsba.com

Superintendent Searches

GSBA is assisting in the superintendent search for the following school system. If you are interested in this position, call GSBA for information on application procedures.

Search Underway

School System	Application Deadline
Jasper County	December 1, 2000

Mark the Dates

GEORGIA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION CALENDAR

JANUARY 2001:

- 8-12 Georgia School Board Member Appreciation Week
- 12-14 NSBA Southern Region Executive Directors Meeting, Key West, Florida
- 18 GSBA FRN Pre-Planning Meeting - GSBA Offices, Lawrenceville
- 25 GSBA Day at the Capitol and Board of Directors Meeting, State Capitol, Atlanta

FEBRUARY 2001:

- 2-4 NSBA Leadership Conference, Washington, D.C.
- 4-6 NSBA Federal Relations Network Conference, Washington, D.C.
- 13 Board Chair Workshop, Tifton Rural Development Center, Tifton

MARCH 2001:

- 9 Board Chair Workshop, Redtop Mountain Lodge, Cartersville
- 14 Large Systems Forum Meeting, Fulton County Schools Boardroom, Atlanta
- 15 GSBA Nominating Committee Meeting, GSBA Offices, Lawrenceville
- 24-27 NSBA Conference, San Diego, CA

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