

AGENDA

We Believe In Public Education



GSBA At the Crest of the Wave of the Future in Policy Services

In early September, GSBA rolled out a new kind of service that is unique to all of the school boards associations in the country. With this new service, the future of policy manuals is definitely here. No longer do school boards, superintendents or others interested in school board policy have to trudge through hundreds or thousands of pages of a notebook to find a policy. GSBA's new Online Policy Manual puts policies at your fingertips using the latest technology and software specially designed by GSBA for your use.

With the online service, policies are available via the Internet in a fully searchable, easy-to-use format. That might be enough, but GSBA's service – unlike any of the competitor's – offers a rigorous and technical review of policies before the manual is put online. This is to ensure that your policies are up-to-date and are in line with current laws and Georgia Board of Education rules and regulations.

"It is really this technical review that sets our new product apart from any competitor," said GSBA Executive Vice President Gary Ashley. "This product truly revolutionizes the way policy manuals can be used."

Having your policy manual online is an excellent way to make your manual available to the entire staff and to the public. All it requires is Internet access, which is available through most public libraries if not in the home. The search feature of the Online Policy Manual program allows multiple ways to find information – by Code Section, predefined keywords, or a custom search. A user could also search other manuals maintained by GSBA to find out how another system handles certain policy issues.

"For nearly 50 years, GSBA has brought to Georgia's educational community the highest quality services and products," continued Ashley. "The Online Policy Manual service is an excellent example of an Association working for its members."

What about maintenance and quality control once a school system has subscribed to the service?

Because the policy manuals are on the Internet and centrally located at GSBA, any actions that would cause required changes in a school board's policies can be swiftly completed. And there is no need to worry about updating hard copies scattered here, there and everywhere. Your GSBA online policy manual remains up-to-date at all times.

"Aside from the enormous assistance this lends to school system staffers who must continually use a policy manual, or those in charge of keeping the manual and all of the hard copies up-to-date, an online policy manual demonstrates local accountability," said Ashley. "Having the foresight to put a manual on the Internet – a manual that has gone through GSBA's technical review – shows a board of education's willingness to be held accountable for the policies it adopts by making those policies available to the staff and the community via the Internet."

GSBA's Online Policy Manual service is competitively priced and comes with a CD-ROM version you can use off-line. This service can actually save a district money by freeing up staff time needed for policy manual maintenance and requests for policy information. The service eliminates the need for hard copies that quickly become out-of-date and a burden to keep in proper order. All the service requires is Internet access and/or a CD-ROM drive – no additional hardware or software is needed.

To demonstrate the effectiveness of this new service, GSBA has posted on its website a "Sample Policy Manual." Visit the website at: www.gsba.com and click on the button, "Online Policy Manual." Contact GSBA Policy Services Specialist Don Rooks or GSBA Controller Mark Willis by phone or e-mail for pricing and additional information. ☞

The Newsletter of
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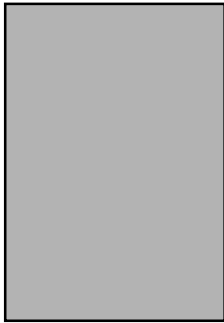
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Special Issue! To bring readers the feature article on a recent interview with the Governor (see page 8), the July/August issue of Agenda was expanded to include September. Our regular publication schedule resumes with the October issue.

From the Executive Vice President...

School Boards Get No Rest From Scrutiny

By Gary Ashley



Gary Ashley

GSBA Executive Vice President



"Citizens from all walks of life are questioning how school systems are governed and how schools are administered. Our supporters and our critics want to be in the loop. They are demanding that public records be just that – public."

—Gary Ashley

Usually during the summer there is a hiatus from news about public education. This summer was different. Along with the extended heatwave we had to endure, we also had to endure the continuous "heat" of the spotlight. Education governance issues have been especially popular. With the Governor's Education Reform Study Commission in full swing and the myriad of safety concerns weighing on the minds of everyone, the media machines have continued to churn out news about public education.

There are a lot of opinions on the kinds of and amount of news space given to the current hot issues in public education. Regardless of your views on that, the level of reporting on the Governor's initiatives and the safety of our schools has shown one certainty: the public is intent on being informed of what is going on in public education— from the boardroom and central office to the principal's office and the classroom.

Citizens from all walks of life are questioning how school systems are governed and how schools are administered. Our supporters and our critics want to be in the loop. They are demanding that public records be just that – public. With legislation passed last year, there is even a push to make all meetings more public and make those officiating the meetings accountable for the business conducted at the meeting.

And there, I've said the word— "accountable." That is what is underlying all of the concerns about public education. Our citizens and the people they elect as legislators all want to know who is accountable for the performance of our schools. Who is minding the store? Almost any news story you see or read regarding public education will ask one of these questions:

- Who will be responsible for what students are learning in the classroom?
- Who will be responsible for the funds spent in the school or the school system?
- Who will decide how students are promoted from grade to grade or from one educational level to the next?
- Who will be responsible for making our schools as safe as possible?
- Who will enforce a discipline code in our schools?
- Who decides what students are expected to

know by the time they graduate?

- Who will be responsible for the funds the community pays into its school system?
- Who will be responsible for showing the community how funds are used?

The list could go on *ad infinitum*. The point is that the questions aren't going away. They are only increasing in number, frequency and urgency. School board members are – and rightfully should be – at the center of this information process. School board members are the elected officials charged with managing and controlling our public school systems. We are the ones on a local level who are ultimately accountable for all of the questions being asked about our schools. That's why we have school board members. They are citizens elected to represent other citizens in governing their public schools. That's why we call it "lay control of public education."

For years we have grappled with the difficulties of communicating accountability to the public. Education is a truly complex "industry" that may not have clear cut boundaries like corporations. That's the way it is supposed to be, however, because public schools belong to the public. A corporation belongs to its stockholders. That shouldn't be an excuse for not communicating accountability. It should give us greater impetus for getting the information out timely and accurately.

GSBA has continued to search for and find new ways to assist local boards of education with communicating how they are holding *themselves* accountable. Our "Standards for Local Boards of Education" has been well-received by school boards, citizens and legislators because of the process it uses to document a board's accountability on a number of levels. Our new "Online Policy Services" is the latest example of your Association working for its members on this vital issue. (See the cover story in this issue.) Everything a board of education does is somehow related to a policy of the school system. Think about the perceptions that citizens hold of a policy manual. As the citizens who have elected their own representatives to the board of education, they feel ownership of the policies that govern their schools.

From that standpoint, it seems logical and appropriate that the policy manual be kept up-to-date and totally available to the public at any time. GSBA's Online Policy Services does just that. There is no other system that is more comprehensive in terms of providing this level of accurate information to the

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From GSBA's President...

Boards Should View Accountability as a Challenge, Not a Chore

By Y.N. Myers, Jr.

As I said in my last message, the Governor says he wants "solutions not excuses." This is becoming the resounding call to all those who are elected officials, whether they govern at a state or local level. Local boards of education must continue to find ways to show that they expect to be held accountable and that they understand the need and desire for people to know all they can know about how their schools are managed.

Accountability can work in strange ways, though. To take this responsibility seriously requires that boards regularly examine their operations. Boards can learn a lot through a self-examination that would be necessary to address accountability at a local level. But public education as an institution still will suffer unless all boards work at demonstrating accountability. In the court of public opinion, those few bad apples can sway a lot of folks.

In a lot of ways, demonstrating accountability is one of those tasks that may not have always been necessary. In yesteryears, the public had more trust in public officials and there wasn't the plethora of news and information media searching for something negative to report. I'm not saying those were the "good old days," just that things have changed. Today, people are much more savvy about how things operate. Public education is just another example. People want to see for themselves that their taxes are being spent wisely, and that students are learning what they should be learning. As our world grows more and more complex it seems that these local issues become more personal for people.

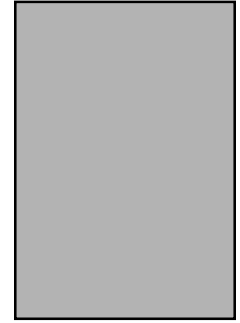
We can grow as an institution from all of this if we choose to see the challenge of accountability as an

opportunity rather than dreading what it means to each of us as a local board of education. This can be our opportunity to communicate more and better information to our constituents. This can signal to parents that we *do* indeed want their involvement in the schools. This can also signal to students that the expectations held for them are coming from all different levels in the system— not just their teacher or parent.

To affect change in an institution requires pervasive participation. If all of Georgia's school boards would take on this opportunity to examine how to demonstrate accountability, then public education as a whole would improve in our state. This is an instance when every player is important to the game. Separately, boards can certainly do a lot to work with their communities and schools. But working together, we can bolster the trust and pride in all of our public school systems. This doesn't mean that we have to address the issue exactly the same way in every system, but just that we all make the commitment to effectively answer the questions surrounding accountability.

As president of GSBA, I have to take a moment to brag about our Association. GSBA has done an enormous amount of work in the past few years to help boards be more accountable. The new Online Policy Services and the program of standards are great ways for boards to demonstrate accountability with information that is already in the public domain. This is not about letting the proverbial cat out of the bag. It's about educating our public about how our school boards operate and under what rules our school systems are managed.

In my book, the better educated our people are about public education, the better our task will be to effectively govern the schools. 🙏



Y.N. Myers, Jr.
GSBA President



"In my book, the better educated our people are about public education, the better our task will be to effectively govern the schools."

— Y.N. Myers, Jr.

At their August 24, 1999, meeting, members of the GSBA Board of Directors continue their work on an official accountability statement. The document, once completed, is meant to assist local boards of education in communicating and demonstrating accountability.

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Executive Session: Legal Issues for Board Members

*By Harben & Hartley
GSBA General Counsel*

Hearing Appeals From Student Disciplinary Tribunals

We have often commented that local school boards have many roles, or wear many hats, while carrying out their constitutional responsibility to control and manage its local school district. A board wears its “legislative hat” when making policies, rules and regulations to govern the operation of its various schools. A local board also has managerial duties, including the hiring of all personnel upon recommendation of its superintendent, determining how its schools are organized, specifying the job descriptions for all employees, constructing and equipping schools, approving the curriculum, establishing a budget, setting the amount of school tax to be levied, and making a host of other governance decisions.

The local board also has significant judicial functions. The board is required by Section 20-2-1160 of the Georgia Code to conduct a hearing on “a matter of local controversy in reference to the interpretation or administration of the school law.” Additionally, the board serves as a tribunal under the Fair Dismissal Act when the termination of an employee under contract is sought or when a tenured educator who has not been reemployed seeks a hearing as to whether sufficient grounds exist to deny the educator continued employment.

A local board also has the duty to act as a “court of appeals” when a student or the parents appeal the decision of a student disciplinary tribunal or hearing officer. In such cases, the board must determine if the decision of the tribunal or hearing officer is supported by the evidence and otherwise complies with the requirements of the Public School Disciplinary Tribunal Act, which is found in the Georgia Code at Section 20-2-750 through 20-2-759. We have noted that some boards may be confused as to the applicable procedures when it acts as a “court of appeals”, since the role of the board is quite different from the other occasions when the board serves as a tribunal. The purpose of this article is to outline the legal requirements which govern appeals to a local board of

education from a student disciplinary tribunal or hearing officer decision.

The Public School Disciplinary Tribunal Act requires a local board of education to appoint a hearing officer or a disciplinary tribunal “of school officials” to conduct a hearing in one of three instances: (1) If a student is accused of an assault or battery upon any school employee; (2) If a student is accused of an assault or battery upon another student, provided the principal believes suspension longer than 10 school days or expulsion is warranted; or (3) If a student on the premises of a school substantially damages school property or the personal property of a school employee or a student when the principal believes the appropriate discipline should be a suspension longer than 10 school days or expulsion. In addition to these offenses, a board by policy may require the use of a tribunal whenever a principal seeks to suspend for longer than 10 days or expel a student for some violation of the student code of conduct. The board’s policy should outline how tribunal members are selected and the procedures which govern a student’s right to a hearing and to appeal a tribunal’s decision to the board. The Act specifically requires the board’s policy to permit appeals to the board when the punishment imposed by a hearing officer or tribunal exceeds 10 days of out of school suspension or expulsion from school.

The Act states that a student disciplinary tribunal will conduct a due process hearing after reasonable notice has been furnished to “all parties”, including the student and his or her parents or guardians. The law also requires the notice to include a statement of the time, place and nature of the hearing, a “short and plain statement of the matters asserted” and the right of “all parties” to present evidence and be represented by counsel. The Act requires that “all parties” have the opportunity to present evidence and to examine and cross-examine witnesses. The term “all parties” in the Act seems to suggest that other parties involved in an alleged violation of the code of conduct have a right to notice and to participate in the due process hearing. Presumably, the reference to “all parties” means the victim of an assault or battery, or the owner of personal property substantially damaged by a student, as well as victims of other student infractions when the incidents are assigned for hearing before a tribunal.

The tribunal must enter a decision in writing within 10 days after its hearing and the decision must

Continued on next page...

be based solely on the evidence presented at the hearing. A copy of the decision just be furnished to all parties. The Act requires each tribunal to cause a “verbatim electronic or written record of the hearing” and to make available that record to all parties”. The Act then provides that a tribunal decision “may be appealed to the local board of education by filing a written notice of appeal within 20 days from the date the decision is rendered.” The superintendent is authorized but not required to suspend all discipline imposed by the tribunal or hearing officer until the board has decided the appeal.

The Act is not clear as to whether “all parties” have the right of appeal. If, for example, a student strikes a teacher, the Act clearly requires a disciplinary tribunal or hearing officer to conduct a due process hearing. Would the teacher have a right to appeal the decision of the tribunal if the teacher were dissatisfied with the discipline imposed by the tribunal? While the Act specifies that “all parties” shall receive notice of the tribunal hearing and have the right to attend, present evidence, receive a copy of the decision and obtain upon request a copy of the “verbatim electronic or written record of the hearing”, the code section reads only that the tribunal’s decision “may be appealed to the local board of education”, without specifying whether this includes “all parties.” However, the Act does provide that when there is an appeal, “all parties” shall be entitled to legal representation during the appeal process and all subsequent proceedings. We recommend that boards resolve this ambiguity by providing clearly in its policy whether the right of appeal is restricted to the student.

When an appeal has been filed, the board is obliged to render a written decision and furnish a copy to all parties within 10 days from the date the board received the appeal, excluding weekends and legal holidays. This is a very short time requirement and often necessitates a board calling a special meeting for this purpose. Apparently, the legislature was concerned that a student may be excluded from school during an appeal for an inordinate time if the superintendent did not find it appropriate to suspend the imposition of discipline during the appeal, unless the board meets promptly to consider the appeal.

The board’s role, like a court of appeals, is limited to reviewing the record and proceedings of the hearing before the tribunal or hearing officer. This “on the record” review means that the board may not receive any additional evidence or testimony not presented to the tribunal; the board is limited to consider only the

evidence presented to the tribunal. Specifically, the board’s role is to decide whether the student’s complaint or complaints about the tribunal proceedings have merit. The student may contend, for example, that the findings of the tribunal as to guilt was based on inadmissible hearsay, or that the student was not furnished with sufficient notice prior to the hearing as to what he or she was accused of doing. The student may also assert that the discipline was too harsh or exceeded board policy. The board’s role in each such example is to review the record and decide whether the tribunal’s decision is supported by sufficient evidence and whether the discipline imposed was appropriate under the circumstances. The Act provides, in short, that “the board may take any action it determines appropriate. . . .”

Although the Act permits all parties to be represented by counsel during the appeal, the law does not require a board to allow the parties or their counsel to appear before the board and argue the reasons why the decision of the tribunal should or should not be affirmed. A board certainly may choose to allow a brief oral presentation by the parties or their counsel or may decide by policy that this will not be permitted. Similarly, lawyers representing the parties may wish to file written legal briefs or position statements. The board may consider these briefs on behalf of one or more parties if the board finds them to be helpful.

The issues in an appeal to a board for decision may fall into three categories: Were the procedures required by the Act which led to the hearing followed? Was there sufficient, legally competent evidence to support the findings of the tribunal? Was the discipline imposed by the tribunal legal and equitable under all the circumstances? If the appeal does not raise but one of these issues, i.e., whether the discipline was not equitable because it was excessive, the board may choose to confine its review to that issue only and should state in its decision that no issue was raised as to the process or procedures which led to the hearing or as to the sufficiency of the evidence. An appeal may entail more issues than punishment, however, and the board should consider each issue stated in the appeal and those portions of the record, recording or transcript of the hearing which will enable the board to decide those issues. On occasion, a parent or student may not specify the issues in dispute and the board may need to review all three categories to determine if the hearing was scheduled, conducted and a decision by the tribunal was reached as to guilt and punishment which is supported by the evidence.



The issues in an appeal to a board for decision may fall into three categories: Were the procedures required by the Act which led to the hearing followed? Was there sufficient, legally competent evidence to support the findings of the tribunal? Was the discipline imposed by the tribunal legal and equitable under all the circumstances? If the appeal does not raise but one of these issues, i.e., whether the discipline was not equitable because it was excessive, the board may choose to confine its review to that issue only and should state in its decision that no issue was raised as to the process or procedures which led to the hearing or as to the sufficiency of the evidence.

GSBA's Associate
Members demonstrate their
commitment to furthering the
work of the Association.

A-Lert Roof Systems
P.O. Box 79, Erie, KS 66733

AAA Modular Buildings
P. O. Box 9083, Columbus, GA 31908

American Chalkboard, LLC
100 Barrett Ind. Blvd., Wetumpka, AL
36092

**Andrews, Hammock &
Powell, Inc.**
2325 Ingleside Ave., Macon, GA 31204

Apple Computer, Inc.
904 Iroquois Trail, Goodlettsville, TN
37072

Aramark Corporation
446 State Rd. 13, Ste. 365, Jacksonville,
FL 32259

Beers Construction Co.
70 Ellis Street, Atlanta, GA 30303

BellSouth Corporation
1155 Peachtree St., Atlanta, GA 30309

**Blue Bird Body Co. National
Bus Sales**
P. O. Box 937, Ft. Valley, GA 31030

E. R. Mitchell & Co.
2875 Bankhead Hwy., Atlanta, GA
30318

**Facility Group/Passantino
and Bavier**
2233 Lake Park Dr., Ste. 450, Smyrna,
GA 30080

First Union National Bank
P.O. Box 740074, Atlanta, GA 30374

Frazier Service Co., Inc.
3286 Buckeye Rd., Atlanta, GA 30341

Georgia Power Company
241 Ralph McGill Blvd., NE, 24th Floor,
Bin 24, Atlanta, GA 30308

Ga. School Equipment
137A North 85 Parkway, Fayetteville, GA
30214

Georgia-Pacific Corp.
133 Peachtree Street, NE, Atlanta, GA
30303

**Gwinnett Chamber of
Commerce**
5110 Sugarloaf Parkway, Lawrenceville,
GA 30043

**H Lloyd Hill Architects &
Assoc.**
222 Main Street, Gainesville, GA 30501

H + M Construction Co.
P.O. Box 200, Jackson, TN 38302-0200

Heery International
999 Peachtree St., N. E., Atlanta, GA
30367

**Hussey, Gay, Bell & Deyoung
International**
P.O. Box 14247, Savannah, GA 31416

Changing The Way Our Schools Are Financed

Governor Roy E. Barnes has presented an ambitious challenge to his Education Reform Study Commission. While acknowledging the dedicated efforts of Georgia's educators, he wants nothing less than dramatic improvements in student achievement.

When the Quality Basic Education Act was approved in 1985, it was a major step forward for Georgia. It still represents an excellent framework, but the funding formula must be modified to meet new educational needs.

Despite the substantial increase in State and local spending for public education in the years following the QBE Act, questions have arisen as to (1) whether the formula provides enough funds for an adequate education, (2) whether the same opportunities are available to every student in Georgia, and (3) whether the present funds are being spent in an effective and efficient way. The Funding Committee is addressing these questions.

The QBE Act authorizes a periodic review of the funding formula, but some of the specific components in the formula have lagged behind the actual cost of providing a Quality Basic Education in accordance with State standards. Local school systems have to pick up the difference, and those systems with a large amount of commercial property per student can carry the added burden more easily than other systems. Although local school systems should have the right to expand or enrich the basic program, the shift in part of the cost of the basic instructional program from the State to the local level has increased the inequities among students throughout Georgia because of the wide disparity in the resources of local school systems. **The provisions in the QBE Act for serving**

every student in Georgia equitably cannot work as intended unless the funding formula is based on a realistic estimate of the actual and necessary cost of providing an adequate education.

At the same time, greater emphasis has been placed on compliance with rules than on the educational results. **The financing plan should be modified to include incentives, targeted assistance, and accountability for improving student achievement.**

The complexity of the funding formula has become an impediment in achieving the goals of adequacy, equity, and effectiveness. Many citizens in various parts of the state believe the formula is unfair to their area. **Simplifying the formula would increase the public understanding that is essential for public support of education generally.**

The increasing importance of technical and adult education calls for a revision in the way these programs are financed. **A funding formula is needed to respond to the number of students being served at each of our technical institutes.**

The continuing growth of Georgia's population requires additional facilities for elementary and secondary schools, technical institutes, and the university system. **The process by which State funds are allocated for specific construction projects should be reviewed, especially with the advent of SPLOST.**

These are the major financial issues being addressed by the Commission. Similar efforts are underway to seek greater accountability, an improved school climate, and a seamless structure in education. Local school boards have an essential role in this process, both individually and collectively through GSBA. We welcome and request your views. 🗣️

Joseph G. Martin, Jr.
Chair of the Funding Committee
of the Education Reform Study
Commission

Something to Think About...

"Paraphrasing the wisdom of the late AFT President Al Shanker, ...when board members/administrators speak poorly of teachers, and when teachers speak poorly of the board and administrators, the major public relations result is that the public believes both of them."

Rich Bagin, APR
Executive Director of the National School Public Relations Association

Association News

• GSBA's reputation as a leader in Georgia's educational community was recently demonstrated by two invitations GSBA's Executive Vice President Gary Ashley received to provide special training to the Georgia Board of Education and the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice.

Ashley was asked to serve as a facilitator and trainer at the Georgia Board of Education retreat held in early September. GSBA's Parliamentarian Dr. Chester Gibson joined Ashley for the training segment. Ashley's presentation focused on the roles and responsibilities of the state board and the state school superintendent and goal-setting. Dr. Gibson presented information on parliamentary procedure.

The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice Board of Directors asked Ashley to assist them with strategic planning. The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice is now technically considered to be a school system in the state. GSBA's Professional Development Specialist Billy Johnson will assist Ashley with the training. (The training had not occurred yet at the time of publication. It was scheduled for late September.)

- GSBA's President Y.N. Myers, Jr., will serve on NSBA's Nominating Committee.
- GSBA Executive Vice President Gary Ashley was appointed to serve on the 1999-2000 Board of Directors, Executive Committee and Management Committee for the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education. Joining Ashley on the Board of Directors are the following school board members: GSBA President Y.N. Myers, Jr., (Richmond County), GSBA President Elect Tricia Smith (Camden County), GSBA Vice President Zenda Bowie (Fulton County), GSBA Past President Ron Hopkins (Jefferson City), GSBA District 4 Director Brad Bryant (DeKalb County), Clarence Billups (Ware County), Susan Knight (Harris County), Mary Sue Polleys (Muscogee County), Louise Radloff (Gwinnett County), Ted Stone (Jones County) and Karen Weaver (Fulton County).
- GSBA District 11 Director Vernon Payne has been invited to serve on the Governor's Professional Standards Committee.
- GSBA District 6 Director Helen Fay Lewis (Carrollton City) has been invited to serve on the Board of Directors of the Georgia Music Educators Association.
- GSBA's Fiscal Year 1999 Progress Report won the National School Public Relations Association's highest honor for publications, the Award of Excellence. GSBA was the only state school boards association to receive such an award from NSPRA this year.

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Executive Session, continued from page five...

We encourage boards in its policy to prescribe a form which parents and students must complete if they wish to appeal the tribunal's decision. The form which direct the parents or student to specify exactly what issues are in dispute. The board's review of the case then may be limited to only those issues specified on the form; this may reduce the amount of time the board needs to spend in reviewing the case and may limit the issues which could be raised on further appeals. Most appeals concern the severity of the punishment, and the board's attention can be focused to just the evidence before the tribunal which concerned appropriate discipline.

The Act also provides that the board's review of an appeal is required to be confidential and "shall not be subject to the opens meetings requirement. . . ." Therefore, any discussion or deliberation of an appeal from a disciplinary tribunal should take place in executive session. The law also specifies that all of the records from the proceedings are not subject to public disclosure, but the board must cause to be prepared a written summary of the proceedings which include a description of the incident and the disposition, but the names of any parties shall not be included. The summary is a public record.

When the board has reached its decision in writing, the board must also advise parents and students in writing of their right to appeal the decision to the State Board of Education by filing an appeal within 30 days of the board's decision. The notice must state that the appeal to the State Board shall "set forth the question in dispute, the decision of the local board, and a concise statement of the reasons why the decision is complained of. . . ." (Section 20-2-1160 of the Georgia Code). The superintendent must send to the State Board within 10 days thereafter a copy of the transcript of the proceedings, all other documents relevant to the case and the decision of the local board.

The superintendent or administrator designated to supervise disciplinary tribunal proceedings and appeals must be familiar with all of the relevant sections of the Code and should seek legal counsel on any possible legal challenge to the sufficiency of the proceedings in order to guide the board through this process. When a student has committed a serious infraction of the student code of conduct which warrants severe discipline, it is unfortunate and difficult to explain when the proceedings are overturned by the State Board of Education or a court because the tribunal or local board failed to follow the procedures required by law. ☞

*Associate Members,
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**M. B. Kahn Construction
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Marriott School Services
14 S. Whisper Ct., Columbus, GA 31909

**Mid America Management,
Inc.**
4935 Soutfork Dr., 2nd Floor, Lakeland,
FL 33813

Nalley Motor Trucks
2560 Moreland Ave, SE, Atlanta, GA
30315

National Gypsum Co.
4250 Grand Teton Parkway, Suwanee,
GA 30024

**National Teacher Associ-
ates, Inc.**
4949 Keller Springs Road, Addison, TX
75001

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6700 Dawson Blvd., Suite 2C
Norcross, GA 30093

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GA 30004

**SIEBE Environmental
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Norcross, GA 30071

**Software Systems Unlim-
ited, Inc.**
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Southern A&E LLC
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30168

**Southern Company Energy
Solutions**
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30308

Spectrum Industries, Inc.
P.O. Box 400, Chippewa Falls, WI
54729

Continued on page 14...

Agenda - page 7

Governor Meets with Execs of Educational Associations

GSBA Executive Vice President Gary Ashley, chairman of a committee representing the executives from the major educational associations in the state, joined his colleagues in a meeting with Governor Roy Barnes in August. The executives and Governor Barnes discussed educational issues rising from the Education Reform Study Commission. "GSBA shares with GSSA, PAGE, GAEL and GAE a number of common concerns regarding education," said Ashley. "The dialogue with the Governor was very useful in that we showed that while the groups agree in some areas and differ greatly in others, we continue to keep student achievement as a central theme." Ashley went on to say that he personally appreciated the Governor's willingness to meet with GSBA to provide information specific to school board members. "The Governor is going that extra mile to communicate with the educational community."

Note: Photos of the Governor are by Rod Reilly, courtesy of PAGE.

Ambitious Goals, Innovative Proposals, Controversial Issues: What Does the Work of Georgia's Education Reform Study Commission Mean to School Board Members?

By Laura Reilly, APR, GSBA Communications Specialist

- "Kids are in Crisis All Around the World"
- "School Dress Codes are a Smart Idea"
- "Feds Must Help Improve the Schools"
- "The Feds Can't Help Improve the Schools"
- "Making the Schools Work"
- "Costing More, Teaching Less"
- "School Reform: Give Teachers a Chance to Improve Education"
- "Businesses Raise Alarm on Schools"
- "Troubled Teens: There are Solutions"
- "Fewer Guns and Drugs Equals Less Crime"
- "How to Act When They Pick on You"
- "SAT Under Assault as Admissions Tool"
- "Reaching Minorities"
- "Minorities Gain but Gaps Remain"

In the list above are headlines from news articles and/or editorials in *USA Today* from September...1989. It is not at all inconceivable, however, that the same headlines could have appeared in *USA Today* or the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* in September 1999. Education is a topic that is debated and debated and debated over again in what sometimes seems to be a cyclical fashion.

On June 7, 1999, the cycle of debate on how to improve education was stopped short with this remark by Governor Roy Barnes to members of the newly established Governor's Education Reform Study Commission:

"I am counting on this group to shake up the educational system as it exists today in Georgia. We have been able to put together a group of people who are both experienced with and devoted to educational issues, and I know that they will be able to develop ideas that will help restore public confidence in our schools."

The phrase, "shake up the educational system as it exists today" stirred much discussion in educational circles. Did the Governor mean that our schools are doing so poorly that there is nothing from the heap to

salvage?

In his first speech to the Commission he referred to public education as Georgia's "Achilles Heel." This also created some angst among those in the educational community. After all, hasn't GSBA and other educational groups promoted the spirit of the Gerald Braces of the world – we're not doing as bad as they say we are? In addition, there were many questions about the whole idea of another Commission on education. What does this all mean to locally elected school boards that are given the rights and responsibilities by Georgia's Constitution to manage and control local schools?

Lots of assumptions have already been made, but as the listing of headlines above demonstrates, it's time to start a new discussion about public education in Georgia. Under the direction of GSBA Executive Vice President Gary Ashley, Deputy Executive Director Gil Parrish and *Agenda* Editor Laura Reilly recently sat

down with Governor Roy Barnes to discuss his views on the governance of education in Georgia and how that fits in with the Commission—to perhaps lend some clarification to what's already been said and what's coming in the very near future.

First, a look back at some of the things the Governor has said about the Commission and its work... In the Executive Order naming the members of the Commission, Governor Barnes called for the Commission to evaluate the reforms implemented under the Quality Basic Education Act, which was

signed into law in 1985 by then Governor Joe Frank Harris. He stated, "It is the sense of the Governor and General Assembly that the citizens of Georgia continue to expect and deserve a high quality public education system which thoroughly equips young people with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed, which is accountable to the people of Georgia, which provides seamless educational opportunities and which is a leader among state education systems..."

In his charge to Commission members at their first meeting on June 7, 1999, he was more specific about his expectations. He cited numerous statistics including test scores that he said, "...scream at us: We're not doing enough! They say, get serious about education! They say, hurry up!"

Along with criticism of the performance of Georgia's public education system, the Governor offered praise and thanks for the progress that has been made. "We have had decades of progress in the schools of Georgia," he told Commission members in June, "achieved through the sweat of hard-working, committed educators, and through the concern and support of parents, business and community leaders and yes, elected officials." But he said, the progress has not gone far enough or fast enough.

Governor Barnes offered these guidelines in his directive to the Commission: "First and foremost our children deserve for us to provide an education that will let them be competitive – not just with children from Seattle and Boston and San Francisco, but also with the children of Seoul and Berlin and Santiago.

"Second, we must create an education that is truly seamless and refuses to allow so many students to fall through the cracks. The red tape and bureaucratic roadblocks and bureaucratic turf guarding that keep students from taking advantage of all that high schools and technical schools and two-year colleges have to offer must be eliminated.

"Third, we must address the very real fear of violence that exists in our schools today.

"And fourth, we must create a public school system that is, once and for all, accountable to the people of Georgia."

Rejecting the notion that education improvement requires additional spending, the Governor called on Commission members to set a swift course for change and provide "bold" innovations and ideas. "What we need is a collection of hearts and minds committed to making a real difference— people who want to create a better brighter future for our children."

In our recent interview the Governor shared his views on the Commission and its impact on education and the governance of education in Georgia. Governor Barnes said he has no intention of upsetting the

balance of the governance structure in public education in Georgia because that "is probably an issue in and of itself." But the Governor added that true reform means not leaving stones unturned, that governance issues would have to be touched upon.

"Basically what I foresee coming on governance is that there should be a big effort to reduce the amount of regulations placed on local school boards and on what local school boards place on local schools. This is what I've called for...that two-thirds of the amount of written regulations need to be streamlined. And the regulations placed on local schools by the local school board also need to be reduced."

The current governance structure in Georgia gets a grade of high C or low B from the Governor. "I think overall we have a pretty good system," said Governor Barnes. "I think we've made some dramatic strides." As examples, the Governor cited the move to appointed local school system superintendents and the requirement that school board members receive annual training. "To make the push from that C to a B-minus, however, requires that we look at things like school-based control."

The Governor acknowledged that the work of the Commission will become more controversial because issues that have been political hot potatoes will not be treated as sacred. For example, Governor Barnes says

The current governance structure in Georgia gets a grade of high C or low B from the Governor. "I think overall we have a pretty good system," said Governor Barnes.

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Structure of the Education Reform Study Commission

Governor Roy Barnes is chairman of the Commission

Committee Chairs are:

- Dr. Tom Upchurch, chairman of the Accountability Committee (Executive Director of the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education and former superintendent of Carrollton City)
- Smith Pass, chairwoman of the School Climate Committee (school board member in Coweta County)
- Joseph P. Martin, chairman of the Funding Committee (former school board member with the Atlanta Public Schools)
- Wendy Martin, chairwoman of the Seamless Education Committee (school board member from Lee County and NSBA Southern Region Director)

Be sure to keep a watch on GSBA's website for the latest news on the work of the Education Reform Study Commission. GSBA reports on all meetings of the Commission and its Committees.

Continued on page 15...



As of September 1999, the following boards of education have joined previously announced boards in verifying their compliance with the "Standards for Local Boards of Education."

- Bleckley County
- Cherokee County
- Coffee County
- Colquitt County
- Dalton City
- Franklin County
- Greene County
- Lee County
- McDuffie County
- Wilcox County
- Worth County

*Executive Vice President's Message,
Continued from page two...*

public. GSBA offers a technical review process of local board policy manuals that is unprecedented and unmatched. We stand behind each policy manual that we have reviewed and revised. By including their policy manual on our website, it offers board members and citizens an opportunity to perform specialized searches for policies on topics in which they are interested.

GSBA's Online Policy Services communicates accountability in a way we haven't been able to before. By using today's technology, we can go a step further in engaging our communities—let them see the blueprint for governing their schools. We can answer the demands for information. Nearly every question of accountability can— or should— be addressed through a local board's policy manual. We are hopeful that every board in Georgia will see this as an invaluable piece of the puzzle of how to effectively communicate accountability. Don't underestimate the public's desire for information— they want to know and are entitled to do so. ☞

☞ GSBA PLANNER ☞

October 1999

See page 15 for a schedule of GSBA District Meetings.

- 27-Oct.1 GPEE Bus Trip
- 6 Ed. Reform Study Commission Accountability Committee Meeting
Atlanta
- 9 NSBA Council of Urban Boards of Ed. 31st Annual Conference
Boston, Massachusetts
- 14 Ed. Reform Study Commission
Atlanta
- 14 GSBA Awards Committee Meeting
GSBA Offices, Lawrenceville
- 19-21 GSSA Fall Bootstrap
Holiday Inn, Macon
- 25 Ed. Reform Study Commission Funding Committee Meeting
Atlanta
- 26 Ed. Reform Study Commission Seamless Ed. Committee Meeting
Atlanta
- 27 Ed. Reform Study Commission Accountability Committee Meeting
Atlanta
- 28 GSBA Board of Directors Meeting with Dr. Vivian Williams, Oxford's Norham Center for Leadership Studies
GSBA Offices, Lawrenceville
- 28 Ed. Reform Study Commission School Climate Committee Meeting
Atlanta

November 1999

- 3-5 Ga. School PR Assoc. 25th Annual Conf.
Sea Palms, St. Simons Island
- 4 GPEE Executive Committee Meeting
Atlanta
- 4 GPEE Full Partnership/Board Meeting
Atlanta
- 5-7 PAGE Fall Retreat
Augusta
- 10-11 Ga. Assoc. of School Business Officials
Augusta
- 10-13 NSBA Technology+Learning Conference
Dallas, Texas
- 15 Ed. Reform Study Commission Meeting
Atlanta
- 16 Workers' Comp Fund 2nd Quarter Meeting
TBA
- 18 Georgia Board of Education Meeting
Twin Towers, Atlanta
- 21-27 American Education Week

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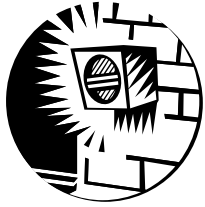
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January 3-7, 2000, will be School Board Member Appreciation Week in Georgia. In addition, NSBA has designated January as School Board Member Appreciation Month.

GSBA will be sending promotional materials to school districts in December, after the proclamation signing with the Governor. Plan now to recognize board members at public meetings and/or events!

Association News, continued from page seven...

- NSBA's EDvancenet has been added to the 1999 Associations Advance America Honor Roll, an awards program of the American Society of Association Executives. GSBA's Deputy Executive Director Gil Parrish is chairman of the EDvancenet Advisory Committee. The EDvancenet team also has proudly announced the publication of "Learning with Technology: A Presenter's Toolkit for Leaders." The publication is a supplement to online materials available at www.edvancenet.org. Parrish was instrumental in developing and reviewing material for the publication.
- GSBA's Director of Finance and Risk Management Lee Gaby is chair of the NSBA Work-Alike Group, which will hold its annual meeting in Atlanta in October.
- GSBA's Controller Mark Willis will chair the Non-Profit Committee of the Georgia Society of CPAs.
- At the 1998 Annual Conference, GSBA presented to former Governor Zell Miller the gift of having a copy of his book, "Signed, Sealed and Delivered," sent to every school system in the state. The inscription on the book plate, which was customized for every school system, reads: This book has been placed in the (name of school system) by the Georgia School Boards

Association in grateful recognition and appreciation for Governor Zell Miller. It is the Association's strongest desire that every board member, superintendent, administrator, teacher and parent in this community will read this book and reflect on the significant contributions Governor Miller has made to public education during his lifetime of public service. His forward thinking and progressive programs for education improvement— including the creation of the HOPE Scholarship program— will forever change and improve the lives of untold thousands of Georgians who might not otherwise have been afforded an opportunity for advanced education. Governor Miller will always and forever be remembered as Georgia's "Education Governor."

- The 1999-2000 Class of Leadership GSBA is underway. The first training session was held September 20-21. The schedule for training is: October 11-12, November 8-9, January 18-19, February 15-16 and March 21-22. All sessions will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Macon. Once again, GSBA appreciates the support of Georgia Power and the Southern Company in bringing this program to so many school board members. ☚



GSBA/GSSA 1999 Annual Conference

December 3-4, 1999

Renaissance Waverly Hotel, Atlanta

Pre-Conference Training Opportunities

December 1-2, 1999, New Board Member Orientation

December 2, 1999, E. Freeman Leverett School Law Seminar

Watch your mail for conference registration information!

Make your room reservations now.

Call the Renaissance Waverly Hotel at: 770-953-4500.

Remember to state that you are attending the GSBA/GSSA Annual Conference to obtain special rates.



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*Associate Members,
continued from page 7...*

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TECHLAN, Inc.
4900 Mercer University Dr., Macon, GA
31210

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Company**
3424 Peachtree Road, NE, Suite 200,
Atlanta, GA 30326

United Design, Inc.
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UPS Foundation
55 Glenlake Dr., Atlanta, GA 30328

VALIC
200 Ashford Center, N, Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30338

Wachovia
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**Waterford Early Reading
Program**
404 Half Hitch Court, Woodstock, GA
30188


News Briefs

- Nationally-known researcher and author Gerald Bracey has developed a new website, www.americatomorrow.com/bracey, where he posts information that helps dispel myths and rumors about American education. The site is free, but you must register to automatically receive notification of new information and a short description of the material. (Source: *NSPRA Network*, August 1999.)

- In another outstanding performance for Georgia, the Governor's Children and Youth Coordinating Council (CYCC) walked away from the 1999 Southern Regional Emmy Awards in June with two television Emmys for Best Composer and Best Photographers for the production of the *Parenting Principle*. These latest awards bring the CYCC's tradition of excellence in youth programming to a total of nine television Emmys and 16 nominations. The *Parenting Principle* was shown at the GSBA Summer Conference in June 1999.

- At the NSBA conference this summer, federation members discussed "Key Work of School Board Members." Participants identified eight main areas of action:

- Establish a clear vision of student achievement as a top priority of school board, staff and community.
- Set clear standards for student performance.
- Establish an assessment process that measures success at regular intervals.
- Establish a strong accountability process.
- Align resources to focus on students' meeting the standards.
- Create a positive climate for student success.
- Build collaborative relationships with political and business leaders with a focus on developing a consensus for student success as a top community priority.
- Commit to continuous improvement for student achievement.

- "Techies Day in Schools" will be celebrated October 5, 1999. The program is to encourage science and technology learning. Visit a special website for more information: www.techiesday.org. 

James Buckley

that the time is right to address the issue of teacher tenure. He says he is not trying to “impinge or infringe on anybody’s freedom to speak out” about unfair treatment from those in supervisory roles, but if a teacher’s performance is not up to desirable levels, then the school board and/or superintendent needs to have the flexibility and authority to deal with the situation. “I fully understand that I can’t require school boards and superintendents to bring along accountability if I don’t give them some more personnel authority,” said Governor Barnes.

“I fully understand that I can’t require school boards and superintendents to bring along accountability if I don’t give them some more personnel authority,” said Governor Barnes.

When asked about his vision for the Commission overall, the Governor said, “Georgia is on a plateau. The question is whether we can be pushed to the next level of performance. Too many reform efforts have been based on process control rather than performance control. That’s the whole focus of (the Commission) – to change the way we look at education.”

The Governor said he believes that, initially, reform efforts need to emphasize grades kindergarten through three and that students need to be reading on grade level by the third grade. It is his opinion that if a child can read on grade level by the third grade, then he probably can perform at grade level in other subjects as well. He believes that whatever interventions are needed– extended days or school years, for example– should be considered in order to accomplish this.

The Governor said the message he would like to leave with school board members for now is this: “We stand at a crossroads right now and (the decision-making process) is going to start in January. Twenty-five years hence people are going to say that the leadership and educational leadership in this state made the right choice or the wrong choice and we either reap the benefits or suffer the consequences of that choice. I want to ask Georgia’s school board members to help me make the right decision by making sure we raise the educational standards for every child in this state. If we do, then we will hear our grandchildren 25 years from now say, ‘Boy, I’m glad they had the courage to make these changes.’”

GSBA Board of Directors Approves Legislative Priorities for the Year 2000 Georgia General Assembly

At their meeting on August 24, the GSBA Board of Directors approved a list of statements that promote the Association’s legislative program. The list of priorities was included in a brochure that was sent to all Georgia legislators and educational leaders. GSBA’s legislative priorities for the Year 2000 are:

- Support the concept that education in Georgia is a state function and the Constitutional mandate that this function be under the management and control of elected local boards of education. For example, GSBA supports curriculum determination by State and local boards of education; the Association likewise opposes attempts to limit the Constitutional authority of elected local boards of education.
- Support the concept that the funding of education K-12 is a partnership between the state and local school boards and its concomitant implication that each partner should pay a fair share of that cost. For example, GSBA supports increased State allocations for Maintenance and Operation and opposes vouchers through which public funds would flow to private schools.
- A quality basic education for all Georgia students regardless of where they live is a state promise that should be kept by providing state-funded programs that address the full array of student needs. For example, GSBA supports State funding for Special Instructional Assistance, summer programs which meet identified student needs, and English to Speakers of Other Languages.
- Support initiatives designed to improve student safety and discipline. For example, GSBA supports legislation which would hold parents accountable when students bring guns to school; when school-age children commit violent acts, theft, or vandalism on school property, and alternative education program improvement, including funding.

1999 GSBA District Meetings Underway

In early September, GSBA began conducting the 1999 District Meetings. Participants of the meetings are hearing current news on issues such as school safety, HB605/SB49, Georgia Board of Education proposals, alternative schools, open meetings and records, salary/benefits and maintenance and operations funding. Several GSBA Districts also are electing new District Directors. The results of these elections will be shared in the next issue of Agenda. As with last year’s District Meetings, school board members can obtain training credit for attending the meeting and completing a “homework assignment.” Pre-District Meeting workshops also are being held to assist all board members in fulfilling their annual training requirements.

October’s schedule of District Meetings looks like this:

- District 7, October 4, Rome High School
- District 14, October 7, Northeast Middle
- District 12, October 14, Jones County High School
- District 1, October 18, Langston Chapel Elementary
- District 11, October 21, Timothy Elementary
- District 13, October 26, Dodge County High
- District 9, October 28, Lumpkin County High

(All other Districts conducted their meeting in September.)

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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Toll Free: 877 813-1518
FAX: 678 584-2286

GSBA's Web Site: www.gsba.com

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

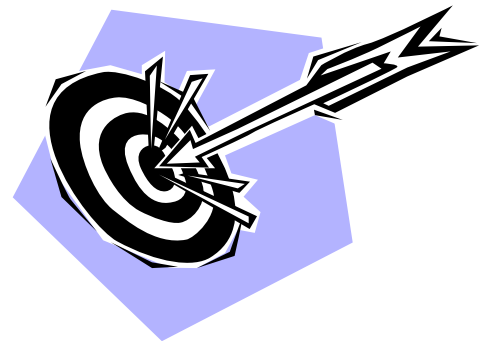
| <i>School System</i> | <i>Application Deadline</i> |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Atkinson County | October 15, 1999 |
| Bibb County | November 12, 1999 |
| Clay County | October 8, 1999 |
| Oconee County | October 29, 1999 |
| McIntosh County | June 18, 1999 |
| Hart County | September 3, 1999 |

Completed Searches

| <i>School System</i> | <i>New Superintendent</i> |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Candler County | Wendell Christian |
| Glynn County | Dr. William Young |
| Murray County | Dr. James Parker |
| Pickens County | Dr. Lee Shiver |
| Screven County | Dr. Whitney Myers |
| Stewart County | Dr. Betty Ray |
| Troup County | Dr. Roy Nichols |

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