

# AGENDA

Winter Issue/March 2006

"We Believe in Public Education"

## Funding, Accountability Top Issues Driving Systems "Batty"

In December 2005, GSBA conducted an online poll inviting school board members and superintendents to name the top three issues affecting their school district. We also asked what they were doing to meet those challenges. In all, we received 82 responses.

It probably comes as no surprise that adequate funding and accountability outrank all other issues facing school districts across Georgia, according to respondents to a recent Georgia School Boards Association on-line survey. But for one system, bats in the schools rank right up there.

Asked to name the top three issues facing their districts, 71 percent of respondents specifically cited funding issues while another 17 percent are concerned about rapid growth in enrollment – and the associated costs.

Accountability was ranked among the top three by 35 percent, but if responses citing associated matters such as student achievement, graduation/dropout rates, test scores and attracting highly qualified teachers are factored in, it rises to 77 percent.

From there, concerns range widely from special education and lack of parental involvement to tax issues, keeping up with technology, and dealing with rising fuel costs.

In response, systems are creatively seeking new funds through grants, foundations and other outside sources, while trying to do more with the money already available. Board members pour over budgets in fine detail, looking to trim as much as possible without negatively affecting the classroom. More districts are asking their communities to support Special Purpose Local Option Sales Taxes, while some are also seeking legislative flexibility to use some of those funds for maintenance and operation. Local millage rates are on the rise across the state.

On the accountability issue, systems are analyzing and sorting data to pinpoint specific

areas of weakness, as well as programs that are improving student achievement. One system is considering an incentive plan for teachers based on improving test scores. The "Gainesville Model" is attracting attention throughout Georgia, as are conversion charter schools and Performance Learning Centers.

Districts also are doing more to communicate these issues and their implications to their stakeholder groups, so their communities better understand the issues their local school boards are facing. **GSBA**



### What we heard on funding...

"...In response, systems are creatively seeking new funds through grants, foundations and other outside sources, while trying to do more with the money already available. Board members pour over budgets in fine detail, looking to trim as much as possible without negatively affecting the classroom..."

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Go to [http://www.gsba.com/publications/publications\\_finance.htm](http://www.gsba.com/publications/publications_finance.htm) to access GSBA's School Finance Communications Kit. Download the PowerPoint® presentation that includes talking points, then customize it with local funding information and engage your community!

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY: CARROLL GAY

## Through Openness and Leadership We Champion the Ideal of Local Control of Public Education

To regain the public trust, we must listen to the different voices from throughout our communities. We must exhibit leadership that results in successful schools and high-achieving students.

The authority of local boards of education to run public school systems in Georgia comes from the state constitution. The idea of "local control" is central to democracy. In the day of the one-room schoolhouse, the community would gather in town hall meetings to discuss important matters, including education, and every citizen had a say in the decisions.

As society grew, we developed a system of representative government. Elected officials serve as the community voice. Still, the best government is the one closest to those it governs. That is particularly true in education, which involves two of the most precious resources in any community – its children and its tax dollars.

Communities are different and local control reflects those differences. Do we want to pay our teachers more? Is it important to include art, music and physical education as part of the school day? When should the school year start and end? Only the local citizens can answer those questions.

The state's strongest role is in setting broad outcomes and providing resources to achieve them. Local boards are in the best position to make specific decisions about matters such as graduation requirements, class size, attendance zones and extra-curricular activities.

Few people would question the logic of local control. Yet it seems that those outside our communities are cutting it away piece by piece. The federal "No Child Left Behind" law and associated accountability measures are among the most obvious, but the greatest threat comes from the state level. GSBA's Capitol Watch Online shows many legislative proposals for 2006 that would further reduce local control.

They include laws that would:

- Require spending 65 percent of operational funds for "direct classroom purposes" (HB 969);
- Legislate when systems can start the school year (HB 85); and
- Require systems to notify parents and/or get their permission for children to participate in extra-curricular activities (SB 149).

So you have to ask, why do state and federal legislators increasingly feel the need to take away local control?

As I said in my last column, the majority of boards of education are doing a good job creating school systems that reflect their community's values and desires. However, in those few cases where board members act unethically, push personal agendas or stray from policy and oversight into micromanagement that fosters system instability, it reflects on us all. In its frustration, the public increasingly turns for relief to lawmakers, who are proving more than willing to step in.

To regain the public trust, we must listen to the different voices throughout our communities. We must exhibit leadership that results in successful schools and high-achieving students. Perhaps most important, we must continually foster a climate of openness in all we do.

I urge all boards not only to achieve the Georgia School Boards Association's "Standards for Local Boards of Education," but also to aspire to become a School Board of Distinction. Take advantage of all the training and resources GSBA has to help ensure excellence in governance. If we do not do everything possible to hold onto the decision-making powers that are best left to local boards, we will continue to see our role diminish. In the end, our students and our communities will be the losers.

**GSBA**

Go to [www.gsba.com](http://www.gsba.com) and look under the "Training" menu for a complete look at what is available to assist educational leaders in all areas of governance.



Carroll Gay,  
GSBA President,  
Chair, Jenkins County  
Board of Education

### Did You Know...

GSBA is offering workshops now on a new process being piloted that combines the superintendent's evaluation, board assessment and GSBA's Standards for Local Boards of Education. GSBA developed the process with the assistance of board members and superintendents as a new accountability, planning and evaluation system. For more information contact Tony Arasi, GSBA's director of professional development, at 770-962-2985 or [tarasi@gsba.com](mailto:tarasi@gsba.com). (A session will be included in the June 22 Communications Workshop in Savannah.)

- Ron Hopkins, Board Chair
  - Willie Hughey, Board Vice Chair
  - Guy Benson
  - Derrell Crowe
  - Angela McKinney
  - Damon Wilbanks
  - Dr. John Jackson, Superintendent
- \* Jefferson City Schools is a GSBA Standards Board and has achieved the level of Board of Distinction
- \* Go to [www.jeffcityschools.org](http://www.jeffcityschools.org) for more information.

# BEST PRACTICES

## K-12 Initiatives Help Boost This System's SAT Scores

Jefferson City Schools starts young when it comes to focusing on high school achievement results. What is put in place in kindergarten is proving to help many high school students in this system achieve better results.

Teachers often reward students who consistently perform well on tests. When Jefferson City Schools posted the highest average SAT score in Georgia for the second straight year, their reward was a congratulatory resolution from the Georgia Senate and a meeting with Governor Sonny Perdue.

Jefferson City's average SAT score for 2005 in Georgia was 1097, outperforming the next highest system by almost 20 points, the same margin by which they raised their average from 2004's state-leading average of 1077.

How did the small system located within Jackson County raise its average SAT score by more than 100 points over the past five years? The secret, say system officials, is a focus on performance that begins long before students enter high school, with plenty of help preparing for the SAT available once they get there.

### Background

Jefferson City Schools has just under 2,200 students in its single elementary, middle and high schools. The student body is 81 percent white, 12 percent African-American and 4 percent Hispanic. Approximately 48 percent of Jefferson City's 575 high school students take the SAT, although an increasing number are opting for the ACT, says Sherrie Gibney-Sherman, associate superintendent for instruction.



The system's small size and relatively stable student population are certainly factors in their success, says Gibney-Sherman. That has been changing though; during the same five-year period that the system has seen scores rise so rapidly, enrollment has grown by 47 percent, she said.

"Jackson County is just booming, particularly along the I-85 corridor," Gibney-Sherman says. "We are dealing with a lot more students, both in terms of volume and diversity."

Growth has reached the point that Jefferson City is now constructing a new elementary school and will split the grade levels into pre-K through second grade at the existing facility and grades 3-5 at the new school, called Jefferson Academy, scheduled to open in 2007. The system is also adding a whopping 21 new classrooms at the middle school, to be ready this coming fall.

### The approach

"Jefferson City's focus on preparing students for SAT success begins long before students enter

CONTINUES/PAGE SIX

### Jefferson City School's Scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

	Verbal	Math	Total
2001	485	477	962
2002	492	507	999
2003	497	535	1032
2004	517	560	1077
2005	528	569	1097

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**“This is a K-12 effort,”** says Jefferson City Board of Education Chair Ron Hopkins of student achievement initiatives such as raising SAT scores. He stresses that success requires emphasis be placed on this before high school.

the doors at JHS,” says Board Chairman Ron Hopkins.

“This is a K-12 effort,” he stressed.

It starts with an additional daily segment at the elementary level, where students start the day at 7:50 a.m. and finish at 3:30. Most surrounding elementary schools end their day an hour earlier. The extra time focuses on math and reading skills, Gibney-Sherman says.

“We use an inquiry-based, holistic approach to math,” the associate superintendent says. “We also spend a lot of our energy on reading and writing.”

That extra segment continues at the middle school, but the focus expands beyond just math and reading to all content areas. A built-in remedial component, complemented by after-school tutorials, helps students who lag behind.

“Again, because we are a small system, it’s a little easier to track our students,” Gibney-Sherman continues, “but the teachers at all levels do a good job of assessing student performance, then challenging those who are ready for high level work and getting help for those who are struggling.”

Jefferson City also offers Spanish at the elementary and middle schools, meaning students have a foreign language component available K-12.

“Spanish was introduced at the elementary level five or six years ago,” Gibney-Sherman

explains. “The board of education felt that it was important to offer our students the opportunity to acquire a second language in order to compete in a growing global economy.”

System officials also believe having foreign language instruction challenges students to tackle tougher coursework in all academic areas, which means they are better prepared to do well on the SAT.

Once students reach high school, the focus on SAT performance intensifies, as the system offers after-school tutorials three times a week.

### The results

The numbers speak for themselves. (See chart on page four.) The 1097 average (528 verbal/569 math) for 2005 represents a 20-point improvement over last year’s state-leading 1077. It is the fifth straight year of increasing scores for the district.

“Like all systems around the state, we are continually refining our approach based on the previous year’s performance,” Gibney-Sherman says. “We assess what’s working, what’s not, then tighten things up and move forward. We realize we must keep our focus.”

For the past two years, that focus has helped Jefferson City Schools score a SAT bulls-eye in Georgia. **GSBA**

### Other Resources...

Although not strictly about SATs, the Georgia Department of Education recently distributed a newsletter to school systems explaining the various standardized tests and what they are used for. The publication was meant primarily for teachers and testing coordinators, but is downloadable at [http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/pea\\_communications.aspx?ViewMode=I&obj=1079](http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/pea_communications.aspx?ViewMode=I&obj=1079). The name of the publication is “What Georgia Educators Need to Know About Georgia's Testing Program.”

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

BY: JEANNIE M. (SIS) HENRY

## America's Face Has Changed and It is a Complexion of Many Colors, Cultures and Needs

Our populations in America - and Georgia - have changed and continue to do so. Educational leaders need to be ready with information, strategies and vision to meet the challenges ahead.



Jeannie M. (Sis) Henry,  
GSBA Executive Director

At last year's GSBA Summer Conference, Dr. James Johnson\* challenged us concerning the implications for education of the "browning and graying" of America. He shared stark facts on immigration (legal, illegal and otherwise), population projections, age demographics and more. These central themes are not new. What Dr. Johnson brings to the table, however, is a new urgency and a powerful look at the seismic shift our country continues to take in forming a new "melting pot."

The impact of the change in America's "make-up" is huge when you consider what it will mean for public education. Demographic data of all sorts is available that can assist board members and others in education in building understanding and planning for this tremendous change. Data on poverty rates, teenage pregnancy, education attainment rates and more are just a few clicks away with today's technology.

School board members, as the elected citizen leaders of school systems, are in a unique position to bring understanding and leadership to this issue. School boards are created to be the voice of the community — to bring the school system closer to the people. Isn't it fitting then that our school boards be one of the most culturally sensitive governing bodies?

So, what must your board consider?

- Does your school system have a culture that breeds trust, respect and support throughout all demographic groups and cultures?
- Does your system have the appropriate educational structure to raise student achievement and meet accountability standards for all groups?
- Does your system provide outreach to all members of your community for the support needed to operate effectively; and
- Does your system hire and retain highly qualified staff who understand the challenges we face?

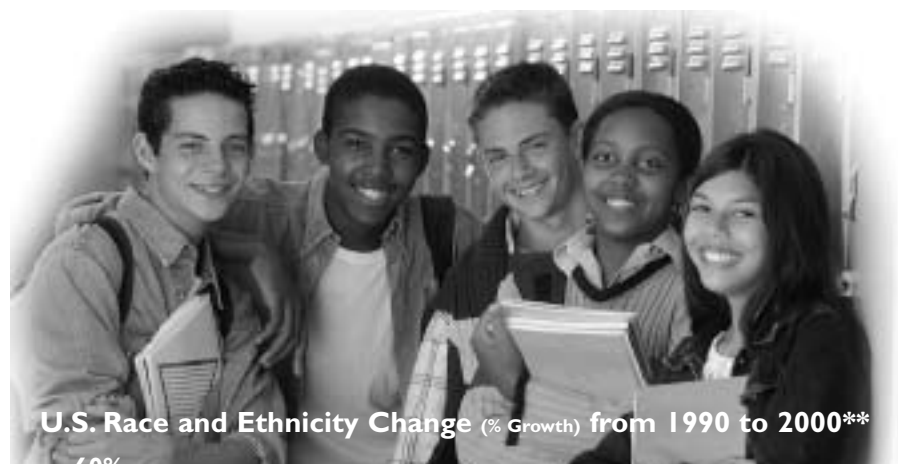
There are numerous examples of school boards and school systems in Georgia that are doing a tremendous job in addressing diversity issues. Consider that in Gwinnett County there are several schools where 50 or more languages are spoken. Examples of how Gwinnett assists its diverse student population includes: offering documents in key languages, funding system level translators, and making available classes such as English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and many other services.

Also consider the story of the "Gainesville Model." We usually think of this only as an accountability model. However, the school board and school system built a culture of empowerment and community engagement as an integral part of their model. Gainesville

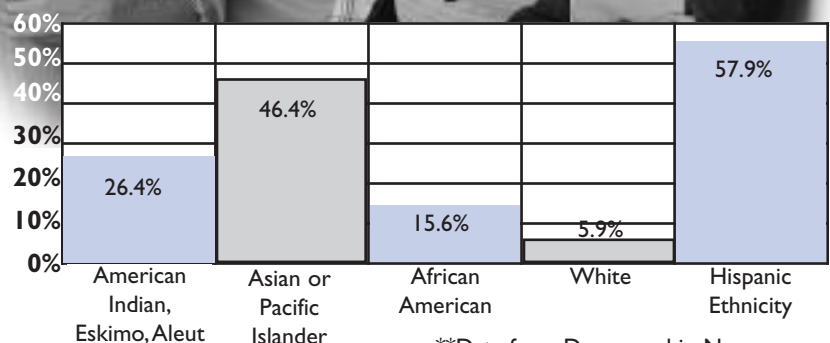
CONTINUES/PAGE EIGHT

### We Could Learn A Lot From Crayons...

Some are sharp.  
Some are pretty.  
And, some are dull.  
Some have weird names.  
And, all are different colors.  
But, they all have to live in the same box.  
- Anonymous



U.S. Race and Ethnicity Change (% Growth) from 1990 to 2000\*\*



\*\*Data from DemographicsNow.com.

FOOTNOTES:

1 Johnson, Dr. James H. Post – 1990 Demographic Change in the U.S.: Implications and Challenges for North Carolina Public Schools (a PowerPoint presentation provided through the Charlotte, North Carolina Chamber of Commerce available via the Internet). [February 2006]

2 U.S. Census Bureau. "Living Arrangements of Children in 2002." Population Profile of the United States: Dynamic Version. www.census.gov. [February 2006]

3 U.S. Census Bureau. "American Fact Finder." Georgia/Population and Housing Narrative Profile: 2004. www.census.gov. [February 2006]

4 Kaiser Family Foundation "Latinos Are Optimistic About Schools And Education: Attitudes Differ from Whites and African Americans on a Range of Education Issues." www.kff.org/kaiserpolls. [February 2006]

5 U.S. Census Bureau. "Living Arrangements of Children in 2002." Population Profile of the United States: Dynamic Version. www.census.gov. [February 2006]

6 U.S. Census Bureau. "Living Arrangements of Children in 2002." Population Profile of the United States: Dynamic Version. www.census.gov. [February 2006]

expends tremendous resources towards its community outreach initiatives and cultural understanding of Spanish-speaking staff, students and their parents. These resources are in the form of time, hiring practices or business partnerships. It is obvious that the sensitivity to and strategic planning for these needs has been a critical component of the success witnessed in Gainesville. If they had not included outreach to these various diverse communities, the results might have been very different.

Consider the following demographics and the impact they will have on your system as you review your role as an educational leader:

- The U.S. has seen dramatic shifts in its racial populations between 1995 and today. Look at what is projected to happen by the year 2050:

Race/Ethnicity	1995	2050
White	73.6%	52.8%
Black	12.0%	13.5%
Hispanic	10.2%	24.5%
Asian	3.3%	8.2%
American Indian	.7%	.9% <sup>1</sup>

- The U.S. Census reports that Georgia's Hispanic population is one of the top ten fastest growing in the nation.<sup>2</sup> Georgia's 2004 population breaks down as follows:

White	64%
Black	29%
Hispanic*	7%
Asian	3%
Reported Some Other Race	3%
American Indian	<.5%
Native Hawaiian, etc	<.5% <sup>3</sup>

\* Hispanics may be another race as well. "Hispanic" often refers to a culture not, a race to Spanish-speaking individuals.

- In a 2004 Pew Hispanic Center and Kaiser Family Foundation study of Hispanic attitudes towards schools and education, it was found that Hispanics are generally positive about public education, their local schools and teachers. The survey also revealed that participants felt concern that Hispanic students lag behind other children "because teachers are unable to bridge the cultural divides in the classrooms."<sup>4</sup>

- In 2002, 72 million children under the age of 18 lived in the U.S., representing 26% of the population.<sup>5</sup> This means that 74% of the population consists of adults and, unless these adults have children in school, they may not have ties to public education and thus are not aware of the challenges faced by school personnel.

- In 2002, 69% of children lived with two parents, while 23% lived with their mother, 5% lived with their father and 4% lived with a grandparent.<sup>6</sup> In homes where students live with two parents, often both parents work. What does that mean to a local school system? Think of the breakfast programs, after school programs and health screening initiatives, to mention a few. How often have you said you don't see parents at teacher conferences or don't see parents involved in their children's education at all? Often these parents are working and can't get time off.

- The data tells us that children who live with parents who were never married, whose education level was a high school diploma or less, and who live in poverty, faced a greater likelihood of never being read to than other children. Again, think of the impact on student achievement.<sup>7</sup>

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# Did *You* Know...

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FOOTNOTES,  
CONTINUED

7 U.S. Census Bureau.  
"Educational Attainment in 2002." Population Profile of the United States: Dynamic Version. www.census.gov. [February 2006]

8 U.S. Census Bureau.  
"Educational Attainment in 2002." Population Profile of the United States: Dynamic Version. www.census.gov. [February 2006]

9 U.S. Census Bureau.  
"American Fact Finder." Georgia/Population and Housing Narrative Profile: 2004. www.census.gov. [February 2006]

10 U.S. Census Bureau.  
"Population Distribution in 2004." Population Profile of the United States: Dynamic Version. www.census.gov. [February 2006]

11 U.S. Census Bureau.  
"Population Distribution in 2004." Population Profile of the United States: Dynamic Version. www.census.gov. [February 2006]

12 Kaiser Family Foundation  
"NPR/Kaiser/Kennedy School Poll on Poverty in America." www.kff.org/kaiserpolls. [February 2006]

\*Dr. James H. Johnson, Jr., is the William Rand Kenan, Jr., Distinguished Professor of Management, Kenan-Flagler Business School; Director, Urban Investment Strategies Center; Frank Hawkins Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

- According to a 2002 Census Bureau report, 84% of the U.S. population aged 25 and older have attained a high school diploma. This percentage has leveled off the last couple of years, but in the 1970s the percentage was much lower – only about 55% of this age group had attained a high school diploma. There are some disturbing trends, however. In the 25 and older age bracket, 29% of men and 25% of women held a bachelor's degree or higher. When looking at the younger age group of 25-29, only 27% of men compared with 32% of women held a bachelor's degree. Asians and Pacific Islanders had the highest proportion of college graduates (47%), followed by Whites (29%), African-Americans (17%), and then Spanish-speaking (11%).<sup>8</sup>
- In Georgia, a 2000 Census Bureau report says that 78.6% of the state's population aged 25 or older hold a high school diploma and only 24.3% of that age group hold a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>9</sup>
- From 2000 to 2004, four Georgia counties made the list of the "Ten-Fastest Growing Counties With Populations of 10,000 or More." Those counties are: Forsyth (#5), Henry (#6), Newton (#8) and Paulding (#10). Not to be left out, the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta metro area was #9 on the list of the "Ten Largest Metropolitan Areas for 2003."<sup>10</sup>
- The U.S. Census Bureau reported in 2004 that the number of Americans living in poverty jumped to 37 million (12.7% of the population), up 1.1 million from 2003. The number of those without health insurance also rose to 45 million from 43.6 million in 2002. The rate for children living in poverty remained unchanged from 2003, but there were 13 million of them at a rate of 17.8%.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, one last bit of news that might make the implication of this information more urgent for us are the results of a poll conducted in January 2001 by National Public Radio, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and the Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. According to this survey, while a majority of Americans believe poverty is a big problem, only one in ten characterize poverty, welfare or a similar issue as one of the top two issues in our country.

Survey respondents were divided on what causes poverty with about half saying that the poor are not doing enough to help themselves out of poverty and the other half saying the circumstances are beyond their control. What is also striking for us as educational leaders is what they said about the number one cause of poverty: **POOR-QUALITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**. While the non-poor were more likely to name public schools as the number one cause of poverty, the poor were just as likely to say the same thing.<sup>12</sup>

While our plates are overflowing with accountability, scarce resources, lack of understanding by some at the state level of all that schools are being asked to do and the enormous personnel load it takes to meet these demands, perhaps one of our greatest challenges will be how to effectively handle our changing student demographics.

We know that the general public supports those institutions they believe in and have ownership with. As we watch our student and community populations become more racially, culturally and socio-economically diverse, what support will remain for our public schools? As the baby boomers in Georgia get older and more removed from public schools, will they support SPLOST campaigns and other funding issues for public school systems that increasingly serve children who come from backgrounds other than their own? Will they understand or care about the importance of local control and other governance issues we continue to advocate for?

**Questions to ask:**

- Do your staffs reflect your community?
- Are you ready for aging staffs about to retire en masse?
- What culture exists in your school systems?
- Does this culture reflect vision, policy and a proactive stance toward diversity issues?

It is no longer a question of when or if. Our world has changed and will keep spiraling toward ever more diverse populations. Is your system going to be prepared? **GSBA**



# POLICY MATTERS

BY: ANGELA PALM

## Getting to the Heart of Local Control

“Local control” becomes more and more important as state and federal laws address issues that were once the sole concern of local boards of education. It is not simply a matter of local boards losing power, it is also a matter of individuals losing the power to influence policy and create change.

Local control is usually thought of in terms of who has the power. Equally important, however, is to what degree and with how much effort that power can be influenced by an individual. Our government was designed to give the greatest number of people the easiest access to the making of policies affecting them. This issue becomes more and more important as state and federal laws address issues that were once the sole concern of local boards of education. It is not simply a matter of local boards losing power, it is also a matter of individuals losing the power to influence policy and create change. It is as important that community members understand this result as it is that they understand any proposed legislation.

Consider the difference in how a local board policy is adopted and a state law is passed to fully see the loss of individual capacity to affect policy. At the local level the public discussion includes the need for the policy, the goal of the policy, and what members think about the proposal. A community member can easily address board members' specific concerns. Anyone can attempt to sway a majority of the board members to vote for, against, or modify the proposal.

At the state level it is much more complicated. Any legislator can file a bill. In the House it is assigned to a committee, then a subcommittee. A citizen would have to know the bill had been filed, know how to find a copy, read the bill without any discussion to explain it, know when and where a subcommittee would meet to discuss it, and know who is on the subcommittee before they could attempt to influence the proposal. At this level one has to be aware of the process, legislators' opinions, legislative alliances, and lobbyists' agendas. It is difficult for an individual to have an impact in this environment. The bill has to be passed by the subcommittee, the full committee, and the House before it can continue. If it gets to the Senate, it must go through a committee, then the full Senate. If all members are pres-

ent, a total of 149 votes are needed to get an education bill through both chambers and then comes the Governor's signature. At the local level it could be as few as 3 votes needed. Where is an individual more likely to be successful?

Local boards can provide numerous opportunities for the public to collaborate with them through public hearings, surveys, board workshops, school councils, and district committees. Many individuals exercise their right not to attend, to participate, or speak out, but the opportunity is available. Our state and federal governments are not designed to interact with the public on a regular basis. Local boards of education are accustomed to doing so. At the heart of the local control issue is the cornerstone belief in the right and necessity of the people to effectively participate in their government process. When individuals speak up to maintain the authority of a local board of education to control and manage the schools, they are also protecting their ability to affect the process. It is a question not only of who should decide the issue at hand, but also to whom that entity is most accessible. This individual loss of the power to influence policy and create change is what we must make clear in all of our advocacy efforts when dealing with this issue. **GSBA**



Angela Palm,  
GSBA Director of Policy

### Policy Resources..

Need more information on school policy? Register for GSBA's annual Policy Workshop scheduled for June 22, 2006, at the Hyatt in Savannah. You may register online at [www.gsba.com](http://www.gsba.com).

#### GSBA'S 2005 BOARD OF DISTINCTION HONOREES - AWARDED AT THE 2005 GSBA/GSSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE



BANKS COUNTY - (L-R) Superintendent Christopher B. Erwin, Board Members John Williams, Ron Gardiner (Vice Chair) and Neal Brown (Chair).



BARROW COUNTY - (L-R FRONT ROW) Superintendent Dr. Ron Saunders, Board Members Lynn Stevens, Mitch Churchill and Beverly Kelley. (BACK ROW) Board Members Randall Holland, William Bramlett and Rickey Bailey.

## Website Feature

### Capitol Watch

**Online (CWO)** is GSBA's best way to keep its members up-to-date on the latest news on education legislation and the news under the Gold Dome. Just go to the GSBA website: [www.gsba.com](http://www.gsba.com) and you will find the CWO button on the far right side of your screen. Capitol Watch Online includes these key features:

- Subscribe to or read daily reports of action at Georgia's Capitol.
- Access GSBA's analysis of bills relating to education. Each analysis includes points to consider.
- Track bills and follow what's "Hot" by checking under the "Legislation" menu.
- Review GSBA's Legislative Positions.
- Access the bills themselves.

# ASSOCIATION NEWS

- The following Georgia school systems were invited to present "Share the Success" sessions at the 2006 National School Boards Association Annual Conference scheduled for April 8-11, 2006, in Chicago.
  - **Floyd County Schools** - Presentation Titles: *A Timely Matter: Using the Modified Year Round Calendar and Intersessions to Improve Student Achievement*; and *Meet the Demands of No Child Left Behind and Raising Standards on a Shoestring Budget: Innovative, Cost-Effective Means of Promoting Higher Student Achievement*
  - **Muscogee County School District** - Presentation Title: *Alternative Routes to a High School Diploma- Meeting the Needs of the "Most Likely Not to Succeed" Student In The NCLB World*
  - **Taliaferro County Schools** - Presentation Title: *Bringing our County School Back by Becoming a Charter*

- The Georgia School Boards Association offers several on-site training opportunities for local school boards. The sessions include one and two day retreats on conflict management, team-building, goal-setting, superintendent's evaluation and board assessment.

Now, in addition to these retreats, GSBA is pleased to offer a two-and-a-half hour session on basic boardmanship. **This new on-site session provides boards and superintendents the opportunity to discuss in an informal setting the important roles of the superintendent and the board.** The training session takes place in your school district, generally in conjunction with dinner.

Two carefully selected veteran school board members conduct the session and the meeting is planned with your board's needs in mind. There

is plenty of time for group discussion.

Each on-site session covers such important areas as:

- The authority of the school board
- Board/superintendent relations
- Policy and administration: Who does what?
- Executive session-privileged communication
- The board as a team
- Following the chain of command
- The board's role with staff

There is no charge for this new GSBA service except the cost of travel for the trainers. The cost of dinner for the board/trainers would also be assumed by the local school system.

GSBA's core of veteran trainers includes the following school board members:

**David Banks**, Thomaston-Upson County; **John Bemby**, Pulaski County; **Guy Dean Benson**, Jefferson City; **Julia Bernath**, Fulton County; **Zenda Bowie**, Fulton County; **Jerry Casey**, Gordon County; **Skip Dawkins**, Houston County; **Sadie Dennard**, Ex-Officio, Atlanta City; **Jimmy Fleming**, Jefferson County; **Carroll Gay**, Jenkins County; **Frank Harben**, Gainesville City; **Charles Heidt**, Effingham County; **Ron Hopkins**, Jefferson City; **Emmett D. Johnson**, Atlanta City; **Deloras Moon**, Jones County; **Mary Kay Murphy**, Gwinnett County; **Ed Murray**, Douglas County; **John Neighbors**, Emanuel County; **Sylvia B. Palmer**, Habersham County; **D. Smith Pass**, Coweta County; **Franklin Pinckney, Sr.**, Ware County; **James Pope**, Carrollton City; **Louise Radloff**, Gwinnett County; **Charles Ragsdale**, Harris County; **Zepora Roberts**, DeKalb County; **Nancy Roche**, Forsyth County; **Diane Sandifer**, Harris County; **Laura Searcy**, Cobb County; **Brad Shealy**, Brooks County;

## GSBA'S 2005 BOARD OF DISTINCTION HONOREES - AWARDED AT THE 2005 GSBA/GSSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE



**BLECKLEY COUNTY** - (L-R) Board Members Terry Darsey and Gary Lister, and Superintendent Dr. L. C. Buster Evans.



**BRYAN COUNTY** - (L-R BACK ROW) Board Members Eddie Warren and Mary Warnell. (L-R FRONT ROW) Superintendent Sallie Brewer, Board Members Mary H. Stafford, Carrol Ann Coleman (Chair), and Judy Crosby.



**BULLOCH COUNTY**- (L-R) Board Members William Francisco, Susan Riley, Dr. Charles Bonds and Maurice Hill.

# ASSOCIATION NEWS

Judy Sims, Rome City; Tricia Smith, Camden County; Ted Stone, Jones County; Robert Tatum, Troup County; Sylvia Vann, Lee County; James Walker, Muscogee County; and Michael Windom, Dougherty County.

Contact Tony Arasi, GSBA professional development director, to schedule your free on-site session (770.962.2985 or tarasi@gsba.com).

- At the GSBA/GSSA Annual Conference, winners were announced of the GSBA eSolutions grants made possible by funding provided by the Georgia Department of Education and the Georgia Power Foundation. These grants will provide governance technology programs for low wealth school districts. "GSBA is proud to be able to provide these services to boards and districts that might not otherwise be able to participate in them," said GSBA Assistant Executive Director Mark Willis.

**The winners for GSBA eBoard are:**

Ben Hill County Schools  
Bleckley County Schools  
Crawford County Schools  
Jenkins County Schools  
Jones County Schools  
Lanier County Schools and  
Polk County Schools  
Truetlen County Schools

**For GSBA ePolicy**

Chickamauga County Schools  
Effingham County Schools  
Jenkins County Schools  
Jones County Schools  
Pelham City Schools  
Polk County Schools and  
Treutlen County Schools

**And, for GSBA eLaw**

Chickamauga City Schools  
Jenkins County Schools  
Polk County Schools and  
Treutlen County School

There are now 133 systems subscribing to GSBA eLaw and 100 subscribing to GSBA ePolicy. There are 30 Georgia local boards of education using GSBA eBoard and another 7 boards using GSBA eBoards, including the Georgia Board of Education and the Colorado Board of Education.

- Dr. Ricky Brantley joined the Georgia School Boards Association staff as Senior Risk

Management Specialist January 1. His base of operations is in Waycross so that he may serve the immediate needs of 27 school systems that currently work together through group self-insurance agreements.

With Dr. Brantley's presence in South Georgia, school systems there now have a dedicated professional school risk management advisor to help them keep students and employees safe and reduce costs for liability, workers' compensation and property risks. Dr. Brantley is well-suited for these tasks having recently retired from the superintendency in Ware County and having served as a facilities and planning director, principal and teacher over a 35-year career in public education. He also has served as a trustee for the GSBA Workers' Compensation Fund for all 13 years of its operation.

You can reach Dr. Brantley at 912-285-6151 or rbrantley@gsba.com. **GSBA**



Dr. Ricky Brantley,  
GSBA Sr. Risk Management  
Specialist

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# GSBA STANDARDS PROGRAM

## GSBA's Standards for Local Boards of Education

is a process to assist the leadership team (board and superintendent) in establishing the district's vision, system goals and developing local action plans for continual improvement in all areas. The Standards process encourages the "local" planning model of:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to go?
- How will we get there?

This planning model, combined with the implementation of the Standards, will assist in ensuring a functional "local" organizational structure that empowers the leadership team to manage the school district. Boards may then elect to go another step and pursue the Board of Distinction recognition. For more information, go to [http://www.gsba.com/services/services\\_awards.html](http://www.gsba.com/services/services_awards.html)

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

Banks County (2005)  
Barrow County (2005)  
Bleckley County (2005)  
Bryan County (2005)  
Bulloch County (2005)  
Calhoun City (2005)  
Camden County (2002)  
Carrollton City (2003)  
Catoosa County (2005)  
Cherokee County (2003)  
Colquitt County (2005)  
Coweta County (2004)  
Dawson County (2004)  
Dublin City (2005)  
Floyd County (2003)  
Fulton County (2002)

Gainesville City (2003)  
Gordon County (2004)  
Grady County (2002)  
Habersham County (2004)  
Harris County (2002)  
Houston County (2004)  
Jefferson City (2002)  
Jefferson County (2005)  
Pulaski County (2004)  
Tattall County (2002)  
Thomas County (2004)  
Turner County (2004)  
Savannah-Chatham County (2005)

Colquitt County  
Commerce City  
Coweta County  
Dalton City  
Dawson County  
Decatur City  
DeKalb County  
Dougherty County  
Dublin City  
Elbert County  
Emanuel County  
Fayette County  
Floyd County  
Fulton County  
Franklin County  
Gainesville City  
Glascock County  
Gordon County  
Grady County  
Greene County  
Griffin-Spalding County  
Gwinnett County  
Habersham County  
Harris County  
Hart County  
Heard County  
Houston County  
Jackson County  
Jefferson City  
Jefferson County  
Jones County  
Laurens County  
Lee County  
Lincoln County  
Long County  
Lowndes County  
Lumpkin County

Macon County  
Madison County  
Marion County  
McDuffie County  
Meriwether County  
Morgan County  
Muscogee County  
Newton County  
Paulding County  
Pulaski County  
Randolph County  
Richmond County  
Rockdale County  
Savannah-Chatham County  
Screven County  
Seminole County  
Stephens County  
Taliaferro County  
Tattall County  
Taylor County  
Terrell County  
Thomas County  
Thomaston-Upson County  
Troup County  
Towns County  
Twiggs County  
Turner County  
Vidalia City  
Washington County  
Ware County  
Wayne County  
White County  
Whitfield County  
Wilcox County  
Worth County

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

Appling County  
Atlanta City  
Baldwin County  
Banks County  
Barrow County  
Ben Hill County  
Berrien County  
Bibb County  
Bleckley County  
Bremen City  
Bryan County  
Bulloch County

Calhoun City  
Camden County  
Candler County  
Cartersville City  
Catoosa County  
Cherokee County  
Chickamauga City  
Clarke County  
Clay County  
Clayton County  
Cobb County  
Coffee County

## GSBA'S 2005 BOARD OF DISTINCTION HONOREES - AWARDED AT THE 2005 GSBA/GSSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE



CALHOON CITY - (L-R FRONT ROW) Board Members Becky Mathews, Amy Atkinson, Al Edwards and Tony Swink. (BACK ROW) Board Member Ed Moyer and Superintendent Mike Davis.



CATOOSA COUNTY - (L-R) Board Members Melvin Edwards, Don Dycus (Chair), Garland Nance, Superintendent Denia Reese and Board Member Jane Everett.



COLQUITT COUNTY - (L-R FRONT ROW) Board Members Debra Hampton, Trudie Hill (Vice Chair), Jerry Meister, Jimmy Taylor and Tim Henry (Chair). (L-R BACK ROW) Board Member Roy Reeves and Superintendent Leonard McCoy.

# STATE NEWS

• **Gordon County Schools** became one of only four school systems in Georgia and the 20th in the nation to earn districtwide accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

According to a news report in the *Calhoun Times*, a six-member accreditation team spent several days in Gordon County, touring the schools and interviewing more than 200 students, parents, faculty and staff. The news report said the accreditation team found that the school system met all standards for the designation including having a “quality assurance framework in place, a strong school board, a Georgia School of Excellence and four Title 1 Schools of Distinction.” The team also cited the district’s six schools that met the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards and the board’s use of technology at the governance level. (Gordon County uses GSBA eBoard, is a GSBA Standards Board and is also a GSBA Board of Distinction recipient.)

• For those school systems looking for ideas on passing SPLOST campaigns, you might check with four midstate counties that got positive results in the September elections: Bibb County, Houston County, Peach County and Laurens County.

- In Bibb, the \$165.6 million tax will pay for, among other things, three new high schools, two new middle schools, and a new elementary school.

- In Houston County, \$123 million will pay for a primary school, two new middle schools, an elementary school and a high school.

- Peach County’s \$17.5 million will pay for two new elementary schools and renovations at the high school.

- Laurens County and Dublin City Schools will split \$43 million to pay for high schools for each system, plus renovations, new buses and technology improvements for each system.

*Information from the Macon Telegraph Online Edition. Wednesday, September 21, 2005. **GSBA***

## Georgia School Board Members Who Participated in the NSBA Federal Relations Network Conference\*

- Elizabeth Andrews - DeKalb County
- David L. Banks - Thomaston-Upson County
- Julia Bernath - Fulton County
- Mildred Blackburn - Columbia County
- Becky Carter - Liberty County
- Carrol Ann Coleman - Bryan County
- Ann Crow - Forsyth County
- Skip Dawkins - Houston County
- Jimmy Fleming - Jefferson County
- Carroll E. Gay - Jenkins County
- Doug Goodin - Sumter County

\*Related story page 18.

CONTINUES/PAGE EIGHTEEN

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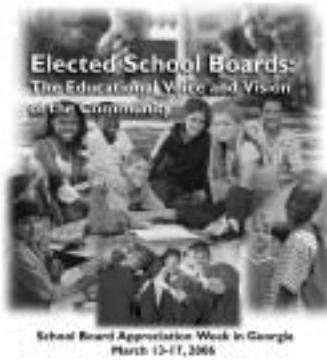
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700 East 2nd Avenue, Ste A  
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(706) 234-1884



# GSBA SERVICES DIRECTORY

March 13-17, 2006, has been proclaimed School Board Appreciation Week in Georgia. GSBA is proud to serve the state's local school board members serving on the 180 boards of education in Georgia. To help districts honor the service of their local school board, we have prepared the following:

- a list of promotional ideas;
- a sample press release that can be customized for your school district;
- a sample guest editorial that can be used for local newspapers or used as the basis for speeches or presentations;
- artwork for a certificate that can be customized with the name of each board of education member; and
- artwork for an ad for newsletters, other publications or websites.

**Have a question?** GSBA staff members are a "mouse click" or a phone call away. Reach most staff members at (770) 962-2985 or (800) 226-1856. Reach the Risk Management Team at (678) 376-0003 or (888) 245-4722.

## Front Office Assistant

Karen Palmer, kpalmer@gsba.com

## Governance Issues/Association Issues

Jeannie M. (Sis) Henry, Executive Director - shenry@gsba.com

Mark Willis, Assistant Executive Director - mwillis@gsba.com

Jeanette Shelnett, Administrative Assistant - jshelnett@gsba.com

## Accounting Department

Mark Willis, Assistant Executive Director - mwillis@gsba.com

Debbie Tweedell, Bookkeeper - dtweedell@gsba.com

## Advocacy

Don Rooks, Legislative Specialist - drooks@gsba.com

Angela Palm, Director of Policy - apalm@gsba.com

Pam Harrison, Staff Assistant - pharrison@gsba.com

## Awards/Standards Program

Jeanette Shelnett, Administrative Assistant - jshelnett@gsba.com

## Communications/Information/Media Relations/ Publications/Public Engagement

Laura Reilly, Director of Communications - lreilly@gsba.com

Donna Davis, Staff Assistant - ddavis@gsba.com

## Conferences/Conference Registration

Tony Arasi, Professional Development Director - tarasi@gsba.com

Karen Hodges, Staff Assistant - khodges@gsba.com

## eSolutions (eBoard/eLaw/ePolicy)

Mark Willis, Assistant Executive Director - mwillis@gsba.com

Tim Covert, Information Systems Specialist - tcovert@gsba.com

Jeanne Fraizer, Staff Assistant - jfraizer@gsba.com

Sandy Vanags, Policy Coordinator - svanags@gsba.com

## Information Technology

Mark Willis, Assistant Executive Director - mwillis@gsba.com

Tim Covert, Information Systems Specialist - tcovert@gsba.com

## Policy Services

Angela Palm, Director of Policy - apalm@gsba.com

Sandy Vanags, Policy Coordinator - svanags@gsba.com

## Risk Management Services

Lee Gaby, Director of Finance and Risk Management - lgaby@gsba.com

Mary Bailey, Risk Control Services Assistant - mbailey@gsba.com

Ricky Brantley, Senior Risk Management Specialist - rbrantley@gsba.com

Wally Hargrove, Senior Risk Improvement Consultant - whargrove@gsba.com

Adriane Highfill, Member Services Representative - ahighfill@gsba.com

Elaine Horne, Risk Services Manager - ehorne@gsba.com

John Shore, Risk Information Manager - jshore@gsba.com

Lori Sours, Member Services Executive - lsours@gsba.com

Brad Thompson, Risk Improvement Specialist - bthompson@gsba.com

Conni Whitten, Senior Risk Improvement Consultant - cwhitten@gsba.com

## Superintendent Searches

Don Rooks, Legislative Specialist - drooks@gsba.com

Donna Davis, Staff Assistant - ddavis@gsba.com

Karen Hodges, Staff Assistant - khodges@gsba.com

## Training

Tony Arasi, Professional Development Director - tarasi@gsba.com

Pam Harrison, Staff Assistant - pharrison@gsba.com

Karen Palmer, Front Office Assistant, kpalmer@gsba.com

Bill Sampson, Professional Development Consultant - bsampson@gsba.com

## GSBA'S 2005 BOARD OF DISTINCTION HONOREES - AWARDED AT THE 2005 GSBA/GSSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE



DUBLIN CITY - (L-R) Board Members Julia Walters, Richard Sheffield (Vice Chair), Bob Willis (Chair), John Bell, and Superintendent Dr. Elaine Connell.



JEFFERSON COUNTY - (L-R) Board Member Charlie Brown (Vice Chair), Superintendent Carl Bethune, Board Members Jimmy Fleming (Chair), Bobby Butts, Steve Norton and Donald Hatcher.



SAVANNAH-CHATHAM COUNTY - (L-R FRONT ROW) Board Members Daniel Frazier, Gloria Wilson, Susan Cox, Lori Brady and Janie Evans Fowles. (BACK ROW) Board Members Gregory Sapp, David Wegmann, Hugh Golson, DeWayne Hamilton and Superintendent Thomas Lockamy, Jr.



**GSBA**  
Georgia School  
Boards Association

**GSBA** Summer Conference/  
Delegate Assembly  
Savannah, Georgia

June 23-24, 2006  
Pre-Conference Workshops:  
June 21-22, 2006  
Savannah Hyatt Regency

New Board Member Orientation • Communications Workshop • Policy Workshop  
June 21-22, 2006 June 22, 2006 June 22, 2006

Register for the Conference and Pre-Conference Workshops today  
AND call one of the overflow hotels as soon as possible to make your  
reservations.

This year's conference features Dr. Willard R. Daggett, president of the International Center for Leadership in Education. Dr. Daggett will present his work on "Preparing Students for Our Changing World." State Superintendent of Schools Kathy Cox is scheduled to address attendees on initiatives of the Georgia Department of Education. The conference will also include presentations on the "Gainesville Model," GSBA's new superintendent evaluation instrument, high school reform and much more. Register today!

Go to [www.gsba.com](http://www.gsba.com) for the latest conference, pre-conference and registration information, including hotel and overflow hotel contact information.



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- Jerry F. Hicks - Meriwether County
- Cliff Hood - White County
- Ron Hopkins - Jefferson City Schools
- Emmett D. Johnson - Atlanta City
- Deloras T. Moon - Jones County
- Mary Kay Murphy - Gwinnett County
- Ed Murray - Douglas County
- D. Smith Pass - Coweta County
- Vernon Payne - Clarke County
- Franklin L. Pinckney, Sr. - Ware County
- James Pope - Carrollton City Schools
- Louise Radloff - Gwinnett County
- Zepora Roberts - DeKalb County
- Diane R. Sandifer - Harris County
- Laura Searcy - Cobb County
- Judy Sims - Rome City
- James T. Stone - Jones County
- Robert Tatum - Troup County
- Sylvia S. Vann - Lee County
- James Walker - Muscogee County

## ADVOCACY

# School Board Members Urge Congress to Support Public Schools

Georgia school board members joined more than 800 fellow school board members from around the nation in urging Congress to support public schools this year. The board members were in Washington, D.C., to take part in the National School Boards Association's (NSBA) annual Federal Relations Network (FRN) Conference, February 5-7, 2006.

As a part of FRN, a national grassroots advocacy network, the Georgians met with their members of Congress to urge them to increase federal funding for public schools, make improvements in the No Child Left Behind law and reject private school vouchers.

Local school board leaders called on Congress to live up to its promise to increase funding for programs that help disadvantaged children and children with disabilities.

School board members also urged Congress to improve the No Child Left

Behind law to more accurately reflect how our schools are doing by expanding student progress measurements. In addition, board members urged Congress to reject vouchers that divert scarce dollars to private schools. **GSBA**



Georgia Delegation Members Robert Tatum, GSBA Executive Director Sis Henry, Ann Crow, Smith Pass, Franklin Pinckney and an aide to Senator Johnny Isakson discuss educational issues impacting Georgia's schools.

## GSBA Associates Support GSBA and Public Education!

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**Parrish Construction Group** - 221 Industrial Drive, Perry, GA 31069  
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**Self-Insurance Administrators, Inc.** - 3473 Satellite Blvd., Duluth, GA 30096  
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## Publication Policy

Agenda is published 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 1,000 to 1,500 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.

Laura D. Reilly, APR, Editor,  
GSBA Director of  
Communications  
lreilly@gsba.com

Contributing Writer:  
Bill Doughty, APR

Georgia School Boards  
Association  
5120 Sugarloaf Parkway  
Lawrenceville, GA 30043  
Phone: 770 962-2985  
Toll Free: 800 226-1856  
FAX: 770 962-5392  
FAX: 770 962-1546

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

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

3/7 9:00 AM	District 9 and 11 Legislative Visits at the Capitol
3/9	Georgia Board of Education Meeting, Atlanta
3/13	School Board Appreciation Week (Proclamation Signing at Day at the Capitol)
3/13 (Begins at 9:00 AM)	GSBA/GSSA Day at the Capitol, Georgia Freight Railroad Depot, Atlanta
3/20 All Day	GSBA Large Systems Meeting, Fulton County Board Office
3/24-3/25	GSBA Board of Directors' Retreat, St. Simons Island
3/27 6:00 PM	GSBA District 6 Meeting, Carrollton Middle School, Carrollton, GA
3/28 6:00 PM	GSBA District 7 Meeting, Holiday Inn Skytop, Rome, GA
3/30 6:00 PM	GSBA District 8 Meeting, Ware County High School, Waycross, GA
<hr/>	
4/8-4/11	NSBA's 66th Annual Conference, Chicago, IL
4/13	Georgia Board of Education Meeting, Atlanta
4/19-4/20	GSSA Bootstrap, Macon, GA
4/24	GSBA Governmental Operations Committee Meeting, Dublin, GA
4/25	GSBA District 9 Meeting, Gainesville Elks Lodge, Gainesville, GA
4/26	GSBA Policy Contact Workshop, Macon, GA
4/26	GSBA District 10 Meeting, Thomson High School, Thomson, GA
4/27	GSBA Nominating Committee Meeting, GSBA Offices, Lawrenceville
<hr/>	
5/2	School Finance and Budgeting, Coastal Plains RESA, Lenox, GA
5/11	Georgia Board of Education Meeting, Atlanta
5/11	GSBA Executive Committee Meeting, GSBA Offices, Lawrenceville
5/12	GSBA Board of Directors Meeting, GSBA Offices, Lawrenceville
5/17	Attorney's Council Meeting (For Attorneys Only), Mercer Law School, Macon
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6/8	Georgia Board of Education Meeting, Atlanta
6/14	GSBA Large Systems Meeting, Fulton County Board Office
6/21-6/22	GSBA New Board Member Orientation, Savannah
6/22	GSBA Communications Workshop, Savannah
6/22	GSBA Policy Workshop, Savannah
6/23-6/24	GSBA Summer Conference & Delegate Assembly, Savannah

Georgia School Boards Association  
5120 Sugarloaf Parkway  
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