



# PAGE ONE

Professional Association of Georgia Educators

January/February 2004

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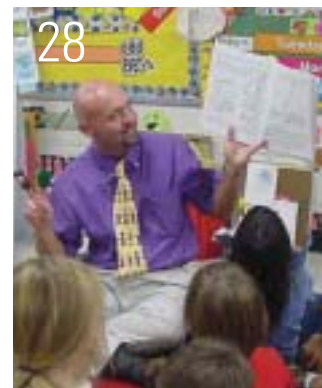
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You are invited to submit articles dealing with current education issues. The editor reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of articles for publication. Articles may be edited to meet space requirements. Georgia educators are encouraged to submit photographs for use as the cover for **PAGE ONE** magazine and other photographs to illustrate story subjects. Send manuscripts and photographs to: Tim Callahan, Editor, **PAGE ONE** magazine; PAGE; P.O. Box 942270; Atlanta, GA 31141-2270.

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# What Defines “Highly Qualified?”

**To ensure that I meet all the requirements of being highly qualified, I decided to get some help from the online thesaurus to see if the synonyms matched my own thoughts.**



DEENA HOCH

I have attended more meetings, listened to more opinions and read more information over the past six months on the topic of being a highly qualified teacher than any other topic in my 13 years as an educator. And every time I think I understand the federal and state guidelines there are changes.

Most administrators and school systems are already planning for next year’s new school openings. They are deciding where trailers will be needed for additional classes, where to hire more teachers and which new curriculum to implement. They do not have time to check on every teacher. They assume that every individual is keeping up with the daunting task of staying on top of the requirements the federal government now calls for, as well as the state’s own

list of requirements. Therefore, I have decided that I am going to do what I do every year at this time: I’m going to evaluate myself in the role I have at the moment.

As educators, we are over half way through another year and are already counting down the months until the end of the school year.

About this time each year, I start reviewing the ways I can improve my own classroom instruction; classes I might need to take for enhancing my own knowledge; and workshops I need to get under my belt in order to satisfy local or state requirements for my job. To ensure that I meet all the requirements of being highly qualified, I decided to get some help from the online thesaurus to see if the synonyms matched my own thoughts.

According to the Merriam-Webster Thesaurus the synonyms for the word *highly* are: exceedingly, exceptionally, extremely, hugely, notably, remarkably, strikingly, surpassingly. Some synonyms for *qualified* are: capable, competent, good, proper, wicked, disciplined, instructed, trained, catechized, examined, quizzed, proved, tested, tried.

I was pleasantly surprised when I read the

related words for both entries because several words describe the characteristics of educators I know. The outstanding educators I know here in Georgia are very capable, competent, disciplined, trained, most definitely proved, tested and tried daily in their positions. Some of them are even amusingly wicked with the creativity and humor they use in their classrooms, because we all know that if we don’t laugh we will cry instead. For every one of those synonyms it would be a shame if we didn’t add some of the related words for highly such as exceptionally, extremely, notably, remarkably and surpassingly when describing the qualities of the teachers in Georgia public schools.

So what happens if any one of us feels that we aren’t as well trained as we should be? We turn to tried and true resources knowing that they will provide us with much needed and relevant instruction. In addition to the outstanding colleges and universities near our homes, we have supportive Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) organizations all over the state; county staff development directors choosing classes that match local objectives; and PAGE—this exceedingly exceptional professional association to which we all belong.

For the past year, educational issues have been presented in the PAGE Issue Briefs. PAGE offers workshops many weekends and weeknights for educators needing to take the Praxis I and II. National Board Certification workshops are being held across the state to support and offer assistance to the educators involved in National Board Certification. Scholarships are also offered through the PAGE Foundation. Wow! I hope that you are taking advantage of these fantastic resources.

Okay, I have made my “to do” list and have decided when and what I will do this summer to improve myself and to hone my professional skills in order to do a better job. I am also allocating some time for the rejuvenation of my soul and spirit—one of the most important things we can do for ourselves. As I wrap this up, I am reminded that I have a mile-long list to do before tomorrow. My highly qualified “to do” list is continuing to grow as I hope I do. ♦

# PAGE Is Taking An Active Role

## Members Can Monitor Our Website and Sign Up For E-Mail Bulletins

**D**ecember and January have been active—you might almost say hyperactive—months for PAGE. The Professional Standards Commission (PSC), the Department of Education (DOE), and of course, the General Assembly, have all been active and we have been on the front lines in each place.

As you are probably aware, the PSC is proposing sweeping changes in its rules for teacher certification. We have already spoken very forcefully about our concerns with some of the changes they are proposing, and our testimony presented at their public hearing has been on our website. Many of our members have expressed their concerns to us—and to the PSC as well—regarding dropping of the GPA requirement, permitting a “test out” option for those with a bachelor’s degree, etc. While we want to “think outside the box” regarding recruiting teachers, we cannot disregard the quality and preparation of the men and women who are entering our classrooms. In addition to submitting our comments for the record, we have had a number of opportunities to speak directly to policymakers at all levels. We are concerned that, under the guidelines of No Child Left Behind, there is not consistent communication between the PSC and the DOE.

PAGE has long had the reputation of being the organization that sheds light on complex issues, not heat. This fact is one of the things that distinguishes us from other groups. In that vein, this issue of *PAGE ONE* contains an article submitted to us by the PSC in which they seek to clearly and directly state their views and provide the background and rationale for their proposals. In the interest of providing that information through the broadest possible means of dissemination, we have included their article and other articles may follow in subsequent issues. While we may agree with some of the PSC proposals, this in no way represents any type of endorsement from PAGE. We believe that clarity, dialogue and vigorous comment are the appro-

priate and professional ways to work through the challenging issues ahead of us.

The Georgia DOE has also begun what will be a multi-year process of renewing the Quality Core Curriculum and PAGE has been on the public record regarding this initiative. While we can agree that our curriculum must be reinvigorated and that we must clearly communicate to both students and teachers what will be tested, we also are concerned that sufficient high quality professional learning be provided to accompany this initiative. Systems will need the time, the resources and the quality leadership from the DOE and the RESAs to make this curriculum change a reality. We will be continuing to express our concerns to policymakers in the DOE, the governor’s office and throughout the legislative session—because the funds must be provided to do what needs to be done. We ask that you monitor the DOE website to keep track of QCC activities.

As you read this article, the legislative session will have begun. We appreciate all of our members who attended one or more of our legislative rallies last fall, served on our legislative task force, or simply took the time to respond to the surveys on our website and included in our magazine. The cumulative sum of that input is what has shaped the priorities we will be addressing with lawmakers. I hope you will continue to let us know your concerns during the forty day session. Regularly checking our website will provide you with up-to-date reports which can be printed and shared with your colleagues. **If you would like to sign up for our e-mail service please direct your e-mail to PAGE staffer Donna Banks at [dmbanks@mindspring.com](mailto:dmbanks@mindspring.com) and she will see that your address is added to our ever-expanding network.**

Thank you for all that you do for the children of Georgia and for PAGE. ♦

**While we want to “think outside the box” regarding recruiting teachers, we cannot disregard the quality and preparation of the men and women who are entering our classrooms.**



DR. ALLENE MAGILL



# Public Education Funding In Georgia— Is It Adequate? Equitable?

By Lee Raudonis  
Photos by Rod Reilly

**I**t has been more than two decades since citizens in Whitfield County went to court to challenge Georgia's system of funding K-12 public education. The Whitfield case was based on the issue of equity—the fact that children in some school systems had access to significantly less in educational resources than children in wealthier school systems. Although the plaintiffs eventually lost the case, the court acknowledged that large disparities in educational expenditures existed across school districts, and the decision led directly to the drafting of the Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act and a new school funding formula.

Since the passage of QBE in 1985, the state of Georgia has dramatically increased its contribution to K-12 education. However, with

increases in the cost of everything from textbooks to gasoline, as well as new costs associated with HB 1187 and No Child Left Behind, some educators and policymakers question whether the state is doing enough to provide every child with an adequate education. In fact, more than 40 school systems have formed a consortium, the Consortium for Adequate School Funding in Georgia, to fight for an increase in state funding.

Is a new legal challenge similar to the Whitfield case inevitable, or is Georgia living up to its responsibility to provide every child with an adequate education? You be the judge.

Before recent reductions in state spending due to falling revenues, K-12 education in Georgia received approximately \$10 billion a year from local, state and federal taxes to fund



**Jeffrey Williams,  
research director for the  
Georgia School  
Superintendents  
Association**

general operations. Even in an era when billion dollar government programs have become as commonplace as “Law and Order” reruns on television, that much money still strikes most people as a significant amount. But is it enough to

provide an adequate education for all 1.5 million public school students in the state? Clearly, that depends on one’s definition of “adequate” as well as on how the dollars are distributed and how well they are utilized.

The topic of public school finance is as interesting to most people as listening to a golf tournament on radio. Likewise, it is about as confusing and hard to understand as a collection of rap songs blaring from several radios simultaneously. Tedious and confusing though it may be, school finance is a topic of critical importance to children, parents and educators.

Why should teachers care about the concepts of full time equivalents, required local share and equalization grants? Quite simply, because every dollar per student that the state decides to send to a local school system could be extra money available for teachers to use in their classrooms. A few extra dollars per student may add up to some new computers. A lot of extra dollars per student may pay for a reading specialist or a paraprofessional. Conversely, a reduction in state funding could lead to extend-

ing the life of textbooks, out-of-date computers, a reduction in the number of paraprofessionals or even the non-renewal of some teachers. In education, money matters.

Perhaps the best way to begin a study of school finance is to gain a better understanding of Georgia’s \$10 billion education pie.

It is worthwhile knowing, for example, that Georgia schools are funded at just under the national average on a per student basis. According to the latest available statistics compiled by the U.S. Department of Education in 2000, the state’s \$7,627 per student support for K-12 education was only slightly less than the \$8,032 average for the nation as a whole. This put Georgia ahead of most southern states as well as many western states, but left it behind states in New England and the large, industrial mid-western states such as Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania. The next important concept to understand is the source of the pie’s contents.

Based on information contained in the Georgia Public Education Report Card, the sources of funding for K-12 General Fund revenues can be broken down approximately as follows: 56 percent state, 38 percent local and 6 percent federal. This breakdown describes revenues for general fund expenditures and federal programs and does not include any capital outlay funds (school construction) or lottery funds.

The most complex issues of school finance relate to how funds are distributed and whether the funding formulas are fair and adequate. In Georgia, the distribution of state funds is determined under the Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act.

The Quality Basic Education Act was landmark legislation passed unanimously by the 1985 Georgia General Assembly under then-governor Joe Frank Harris. Its passage was the culmination of thousands of hours of work by members of an education reform commission. The purpose of the law, as stated in its preamble, was to provide “an equitable public education finance structure which ensures that every student has an opportunity for a quality basic education, regardless of where the student lives.” This meant that the state (to a degree greater than ever before) would assist local school systems in providing the basic elements of public education, such as transportation, maintenance and operation, books and classroom supplies. The law also established formulas to ensure that low tax-wealth systems would receive additional state assistance over that received by high tax-wealth systems.

In addition to the Quality Basic Education Act, the Georgia Constitution also sets forth in clear, concise language the state’s obligation to public education. The first sentence of Paragraph 1 of Section 1 of Article VIII states: “The provision of an adequate public education shall be a primary obligation of the state of Georgia.”

In these documents, as well as the public statements of countless public officials, the state of Georgia has acknowledged its

responsibility to provide every child with a basic or adequate education. But what exactly does that mean? What is an adequate education and how does one determine its cost? Is QBE living up to its intended purpose?

Among those who believe that the state has not lived up to its responsibilities under QBE is Jeffrey Williams, research director for the Georgia School Superintendents Association.

"I worked with the commission that developed the QBE funding formula, and it was the commission's intent that the governor would appoint a task force every three years to review the funding levels included in the formula and recommend any changes that might be needed," Williams explains. Williams also points out that Governor Harris appointed one such task force, and that was the last time that one met. In 1987, the state added millions of dollars to school funding, but it has been essentially downhill every year since, except for a much-needed increase in teacher salaries. Everything else in QBE has been left to starve, including textbooks, classroom supplies, facility maintenance and operations (M&O), staff development and media centers.

"Based on what I believe are conservative estimates, the state is paying only 28 percent of the cost of textbooks, 50 percent the cost of classroom supplies, 20 percent of the cost of substitute teachers and 50-60 percent of the cost of facility M&O. All things considered, I would estimate that the state is under-funding QBE by as much as \$600 million."

Jesse Bradley, Griffin-Spalding County superintendent, believes that officials sometimes reduce funds in one program

### **Scott Austensen, deputy superintendent for finance and business operations at the Georgia Department of Education**



### **Ben Scafidi, education advisor to Governor Sonny Perdue**

area in order to fund other programs.

"Take for example the EIP, Early Intervention Program, passed a few years ago," he explains. "The governor and General Assembly said that it was fully funded, and it probably was. However, I believe it was funded by reducing the state's contribution in other areas. For example, transportation was cut by \$18 million. Who had to make up that \$18 million? The local systems did."

Bradley acknowledges an overall increase in state funding, but feels that the state is falling short in funding the basics of a quality education.

"State officials and legislators frequently tell us that the state is putting more money into public education than ever before, and they are right," he says, "But, most of that goes to teacher salaries. The basics covered under QBE have never been adequately funded, and that is putting a severe strain on the budgets of many local systems."

"Our system, for example, is the 31st in student population, but 81st in property wealth per student. This means that every program the legislature implements but doesn't fund adequately puts an additional strain on local taxpayers. We are already at 18.95 mills, and since the maximum state law allows is 20 mills, that doesn't leave much room for additional local support."

Bradley's finance director, Jim Smith, has witnessed first-hand the fiscal impact of the growing local participation in QBE funding.

"The percentage of state funding has dropped in many of the funding categories," Smith explains. "For example, we are paying 44 percent of the cost of new textbook adoptions. We are also paying 57 percent of maintenance and operations. The state cut its support of the media center in half from \$19.54 per student to \$9.77. We added \$6.73 per student to try to make up as much of the shortfall as possible, but it may still be shortchanged."

Joe Martin, a former Atlanta school board chairman and member of the original commission that wrote the QBE legislation, has been hired by a group of 40 local school systems (Consortium for Adequate School Funding in Georgia) to help formulate a battle plan to persuade and, if necessary, to require the state to provide an adequate education for every child. Martin believes that evidence of the state's failure to fund public education at an adequate level is irrefutable and calculates the shortfall at a minimum of \$300 million per year for non-salary costs alone and probably closer to at least \$500 million in total.

"We need to restore the validity of the QBE formula because it



## PAGE Study Group Addressed the Funding Issue in 1996

was extremely realistic and fair at the time when it was first developed," Martin says. "Unfortunately, it has been tinkered with so much in subsequent years that the partnership between the state and local systems has deteriorated. The state has funded the popular parts of the program and overlooked the parts that aren't. The wealthy systems have been able to make up the difference without much difficulty, but the low-wealth systems have been left in a jam."

Al Hunter, superintendent of Brantley County Schools, a low property wealth system, says the problem is serious.

"We depend on the state and federal governments for 80 percent of our funding," Hunter explains. "This means that it is much more difficult for us to make up reductions in state funding than it is for those systems who already provide 40 percent of their funding from local taxes. The current gap in funding means that our board has had to cut personnel, including paraprofessionals and teachers. We have also had to cut some positions for reading specialists and put off plans for additional targeted instruction in reading and math."

Not everyone agrees that QBE is drastically under-funded. Bill Tomlinson, assistant budget director for the Georgia General Assembly and veteran of nearly 30 years of budget battles, says that the question of adequacy is one that the General Assembly has to decide based on the resources available and all of the needs of the state.

*Continued on page 14*

A 1996 PAGE report on school finance recommended an "Excellent Program of Education for Georgia" (EPEG) using current and real costs with an annual adjustment reflecting inflation and improvements in the definition of excellence. The report called for a redefinition of the wealth of local school systems determined by a combination of factors, rather than simply by the tax digest of cumulative property wealth in a given community. Personal wealth, annual income and expenditures on goods, services, rentals and tourism were among the factors to be considered in a new definition of local wealth. The report also recommended computation of an equity factor based upon a school system's relative wealth under the new definition. This factor would then be applied to the per student cost to insure equity between systems across the state.

Flexible use of funds and enhanced local revenue options were also among the report's recommendations. As long as school systems meet regional accrediting standards, provide fiscal accountability and evidence of appropriate student achievement, the report recommended maximum flexibility on spending decisions. To raise the required funds, the report recommended that each school system be provided a range of taxing options consistent with the factors used to define the wealth of that system. The choice of taxing options (property, retail sales, services and use, tourist, or local income) would be made through a local referendum.

Comparison of Selected QBE Earnings, State Dollars, and School System Expenditures

FY 2002

STATE TOTAL

Cost Object	School System Expenditures	QBE Earnings	Difference Between Expenditures and Earnings	Required Local Share of QBE Earnings	Amount of QBE Earnings Paid By State	State Dollars as Percent of Expenditures
Textbooks	114,781,013	39,808,121	74,952,893	6,833,485	33,174,655	28.91%
Instructional Materials & Supplies	103,992,112	56,218,896	47,773,216	9,315,164	46,903,733	45.10%
Sick Leave / Substitute Teachers	73,947,125	13,315,037	60,632,089	2,218,154	11,096,883	15.01%
Facility Maintenance and Operation	793,069,780	431,310,300	361,759,480	71,756,698	369,554,602	45.34%
Student Transportation	436,712,920	177,551,775	259,161,145	-	177,551,775	40.66%
School Secretaries	125,412,752	43,636,319	81,776,432	7,261,619	36,374,700	29.00%
Social Security	247,211,601	-	247,211,601	-	-	0.00%
<b>Total for Above Costs</b>	<b>1,896,107,363</b>	<b>761,848,448</b>	<b>1,133,296,865</b>	<b>97,184,198</b>	<b>664,666,347</b>	<b>35.07%</b>

Sources: School System Annual Financial Report (DE 48) for expenditure data; school system allotment sheets and other Georgia Department of Education reports for QBE earnings

13-3-02 Connection & Beyond Research in Georgia





# Georgia Is Not 50th On The

# SAT

By Mark Musick  
President, Southern Regional Education Board



Georgia's educational scores do not rank 50th on the Scholastic Aptitude Test scale. I know you read this front page headline, but it is not true. You will believe this when you know the rest of the story.

Here, briefly, is why Georgia is not 50th on the SAT. First, in only 23 states do most students take the SAT. In the other states, most students take another college admission test, the ACT. Of the 23 states—including Georgia—where the SAT is the test most students take, Georgia's white students rank 16th among the white students in the 23 states; Georgia's African-American students rank 12th among the African-American students in the 23 states; Georgia's Hispanic students rank 18th among the Hispanic students in the 23 states; and Georgia's Asian students rank 17th among the Asian students in the 23 states.

If scores for Georgia's white students, African-American students, Hispanic students and Asian students are not last among the 23 SAT states, how can Georgia be last among the SAT states or 50th in America?

One answer is that Georgia can't be 50th in the "SAT Race" when 27 states essentially don't participate in the race. In many of the 27 non-SAT states, only a few hundred students take the SAT and most of these include many of the states' top students seeking admission to highly selective universities, including Ivy League schools. Georgia could have the highest SAT scores of all 23 SAT states in America, and Georgia would still rank in the bottom half of the states in SAT scores if the non-SAT states were included in a 50-state ranking.

It makes absolutely no sense to compare Georgia's SAT scores with scores of non-SAT states. Consider North Dakota and Wyoming, for example. For Georgia to be 50th, North Georgia could have the highest SAT scores of all 23 SAT states in America, and Georgia would still rank in the bottom half of the states in SAT scores if the non-SAT states were included in a 50-state ranking. In only 23 states do most students take the SAT. In many of the 27 non-SAT states, only a few hundred students take the SAT.

North Dakota has to be ranked first in America. North Dakota had 191 students take the SAT. Georgia had 56,385. If you believe that North Dakota is No. 1 in America on SAT scores with its 191 SAT students, what do you say to the fact that 7,098 North

Dakota students took the ACT and North Dakota ranks 25th in the United States on ACT scores if all 50 states are included? North Dakota No. 1? North Dakota No. 25? Georgia No. 50? None of this makes any sense.

Wyoming increased its SAT scores by 29 points in 2002. That's right: 29 points this year. Georgia increased its scores 35 points—in 10 years. But Wyoming had only 330 students take the SAT, so the scores can easily rise, or fall, 29—or 35 points in one year. Georgia has individual high schools that have more students taking the SAT than the entire state of Wyoming—or North Dakota. And remember, many of these students in North Dakota, Wyoming and other non-SAT states are bound for Ivy League or top-rated national universities.

## HOW CAN GEORGIA BE LAST?

But how can Georgia be last among the 23 SAT states when its white students rank 16th, its African-American students 12th, its Hispanic students 18th, and its Asian students 17th?

The answer is both simple and complex. It is not an answer in which any person should take comfort. Neither should it be a secret nor should it be something we ignore rather than face and try to resolve. The answer is found in the "mix" of Georgia's students.

Georgia has more African-American students taking the SAT than any state in America except New York and Texas. Georgia's African-American students have SAT scores that are above those for African-American students in half of the 23 SAT states. Georgia's scores are only five points below the U.S. average for African-American students. But the SAT average score for Georgia's African-American students is low; at 852, it is more than 200 points below the white students' scores in more than half of the SAT states. The combination of low scores for African-American students and the comparatively large number of African-American students in Georgia are the primary reasons that Georgia's average score is last overall among the SAT states.

When these comparatively low scores from more than 12,000 African-American students are averaged with Georgia's white students' SAT scores (SAT 1035, which is 16th among the white students' scores in the 23 SAT states), Hispanic scores (SAT 917, which is 18th among the Hispanic students' scores in the 23 SAT states), and Asian scores (SAT 1030, which is 17th among the Asian students' scores in the 23 SAT states), this produces an "all students" average Georgia SAT score of 984 that is 23rd of 23 SAT states.

Yes, there are other gaps in Georgia SAT scores, and the gaps tell us much about the problems we face. Income gaps show up in SAT score gaps, and an African-American child is statistically three times more likely to be from a family in poverty than is a white child, and much more likely to be living with one parent. These problems don't predetermine lower SAT scores for African-American students, but the statistics paint a challenging, difficult set of gaps to overcome for many African-American youth.

There is obviously troubling news for Georgia in the SAT score.

There is obviously troubling news for Georgia in the SAT scores, but it is certainly not the illogical claim that Georgia is 50th. The scores for Georgia's white students and Georgia's Asian students are essentially the same (1035 for white students and 1030 for Asian students). The gap between white and black SAT scores in Georgia is less than that in 14 of the 23 SAT states, but the gap is huge in Georgia and in America. It doesn't help that the gap in Georgia is less than in most other states.

The other really bad news is that Georgia students who take college prep courses have lower SAT scores than students who take college prep courses in 20 of the 23 SAT states. This appears to say that college prep courses in Georgia for many white, black, Hispanic and Asian students are not really college prep courses. Now here's a problem that we can do something about if we can focus on this issue and not throw up our hands thinking that "Georgia is 50th."

Georgians should know that African-American students in Georgia have higher SAT scores than African-American students

in Florida, New Jersey, South Carolina, Indiana, Texas, North Carolina, Minnesota, Connecticut, Delaware, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania.

Georgians should know that Georgia white students have the same SAT average score as white students in New Hampshire and Rhode Island and higher scores than white students in Delaware, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Indiana and Minnesota.

None of this means that Georgia's education achievement, Georgia's SAT scores or scores on the ACT, now taken by more than 20 percent of Georgia's seniors, are good enough. The black-white score gap and the low performance of Georgia students who take college prep courses are huge problems. They are important problems that can be addressed and solved, as opposed to the nonsensical problem created by claiming that Georgia is 50th on the SAT.

#### IF NOT 50TH, WHERE DOES GEORGIA RANK IN EDUCATION?


There are two fairly obvious—but not perfect—answers to the question of where Georgia ranks in education among the 50 states. Both answers give a much better picture of how Georgia ranks in education than does the nonsensical claim that Georgia is 50th on the SAT. One of these not-perfect-but-better answers is to gather the SAT scores from 23 states where the SAT is the college admission test most students take, and the ACT scores from the 27 states where the ACT is the most-used college admission test, and convert these different scores into a common measure. We can take the ACT scores for the 27 ACT states and convert them to equivalent SAT scores, thereby creating estimated college admission test scores for all 50 states. For example, this means we can compare the 73 percent of students who took the ACT in Arkansas with the 66 percent of Georgia students who took the SAT, rather than making a nonsense comparison of the 6 percent of Arkansas students who took the SAT with the 66 percent of Georgia students who took the SAT. This comparison at least makes sense.

This equivalent measure isn't precise, but it is close enough for America's colleges and the NCAA to use to make decisions about who is admitted to college or whether entering college students are eligible to participate in intercollegiate sports. For years the NCAA used an "ACT-SAT equivalency table" to determine that an ACT score of 17 is comparable to a combined SAT score of 800. Many colleges and universities allow students to submit either ACT or SAT scores, as do Georgia colleges and universities, and they use the "ACT-SAT equivalency" in admission decisions.

If one converts all of the 27 ACT state scores to "equivalent SAT scores," how does Georgia compare among 50 states? The answer is that Georgia is about 40th. The latest actual ranking from this pro-

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cedure is 39th, but allowing that the process is not precise, it would be difficult for anyone to argue that Georgia is not "about 40th." No one is claiming that 40th is good enough for Georgia. But neither can anyone legitimately argue that Georgia is 50th.

Georgians may be surprised to see how black and white students compare in a 50-state ranking based on equivalent ACT and SAT scores. Among African-American students in the 50 states, Georgia's African-American students rank 19th. Among white students in the 50 states, Georgia's white students rank 22nd. The gap between white and black SAT scores is huge in the nation and in Georgia. This large gap and the large number of African-American students in Georgia who take the SAT mean that Georgia's overall ranking in this combined ACT/SAT score card is "about 40th," even though Georgia's black and white students each rank about 20th in the nation when compared with black and white students' scores in other states.

So in a much more valid 50-state college admission test ranking, Georgia is about 40th. This is not nearly good enough, but it is certainly not 50th. Scores of Georgia's African-American and white students compare better with the white and African-American scores of students in other states than most Georgians know.

The second obvious and better answer to how Georgia ranks among states in education can be found in the scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, known also as the Nation's Report Card. For the first time ever, on Nov. 13, 2003, the National Assessment date already passed release

reading and mathematics scores for the 50 states for grades four and eight for white, black, Hispanic and Asian students, for students from low-income families, and for students from rural, urban and suburban schools. This means that there will be comparable state results for all 50 states. This is unlike the SAT scores where the results do not represent the student achievement for a state when as few as four percent of the students in some states take the SAT. These SAT "self-selected" samples do not represent the state.

We have achievement results today from more than 40 states on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. These are scores in reading at grades four and eight in 2002 from more than 40 states, including Georgia.

We know from the 2002 National Assessment of Educational Progress reading scores that Georgia's white fourth-graders read as well as or better than the white students in more than half of the 40 states that participated in the test. We know that Georgia's African-American fourth-graders had scores that were as high as or higher than African-American students in one-third of the states that participated. The numbers were similar at the eighth grade in reading for both Georgia's white and African-American students. Compared with white students in other states and African-American students in other states, Georgia's white and African-American students consistently had reading scores higher than their counterparts in one-third to one-half of the more than 40 states on the 2002 National Assessment of Educational Progress.

...but it is certainly not the illogical claim that Georgia is 50th.



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830-08/03

**SAT Rankings and State Average Scores for the 23 States in which the SAT is the Predominant College Admission Test**

Ranking	All students	White	Black <sup>1</sup>	Hispanic <sup>2</sup>	Core Courses Taken
1	1062 WA	1089 MD	1013 VT	1052 MN	1135 AK
2	1053 OR	1084 CA	1003 NH	1029 MA	1134 WA
3	1043 NH	1072 WA	963 CA	1016 VA	1125 OR
4	1038 MA	1066 AK	912 HI	1002 AK	1116 CA
5	1036 AK	1066 HI	895 OR	987 VT	1108 NJ
6	1027 VT	1064 VA	894 WA	986 NH	1103 MD
7	1026 CT	1062 OR	876 AK	960 HI	1097 MA
8	1024 MD	1059 NJ	867 MA	957 MD	1097 NH
9	1024 VA	1058 CT	865 NY	954 CT	1094 CT
10	1018 CA	1058 MA	855 MD	947 NC	1090 VT
11	1016 NJ	1057 NY	854 VA	940 WA	1079 HI
12	1006 NY	1054 TX	852 GA	936 DE	1078 NC
13	1006 RI	1050 NC	847 FL	936 SC	1073 FL
14	1004 IN	1041 FL	847 NJ	926 FL	1073 NJ
15	1004 MN	1039 SC	847 SC	921 IN	1073 VA
16	1002 DE	1035 GA	842 IN	920 NY	1071 DE
17	1002 HI	1035 NH	841 TX	918 NJ	1070 MN
18	1002 PA	1035 RI	839 NC	917 GA	1069 IN
19	1001 NC	1034 DE	836 MN	911 OR	1067 TX
20	996 FL	1031 VT	835 CT	909 PA	1063 RI
21	993 TX	1022 PA	831 DE	897 TX	1056 GA
22	989 SC	1014 IN	811 RI	887 CA	1056 PA
23	984 GA	1008 MN	810 PA	857 RI	1045 SC

<sup>1</sup> The number of black and Hispanic students taking the SAT in some states is very small (e.g. Vermont had only 28 black students take the SAT; Minnesota had only 25 Hispanic students take the SAT).

<sup>2</sup> Hispanic = Mexican or Mexican/American as reported by the College Board.

Source: 2003 College Bound Seniors: A Profile of SAT Program Test Takers, The College Board, 2003.

To improve, Georgia must focus on real problems and real issues.

On Nov. 13, when the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress reading and mathematics scores were released, Georgia will not rank 50th in America. Georgia's white and African-American fourth-graders and eighth-graders, when compared with white and black students in all other states, may be as close to 25th in America on reading achievement as they will be to 50th if the 2003 scores are reasonably close to the 2002 scores.

There is no encouraging news about the gaps among students' scores. On the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the gap between white and black scores is just as disturbing and just as great as on the SAT and ACT results.

Georgia will certainly not be 50th on the 2003 reading results on the National Assessment of Educational Progress—and not on the 2003 mathematics results, either. None of these results will show that Georgia is 50th, but none of them will mean that Georgia is doing well enough.

To improve, Georgia must focus on real problems and real issues. The nonsense about Georgia being 50th on the SAT takes attention away from real issues. A real issue is that too few Georgia students take college prep courses in high school

and too few prepare in the middle grades for these college prep courses. Georgia students who take college prep courses in high school do not do as well as students in other states who take college prep courses. This means Georgia very much needs a curriculum review. Superintendent Kathy Cox has started such a review.

In order to focus on real problems, we have to look at achievement results as the No Child Left Behind law requires; that is, we have to look at the results by racial ethnic groups, by groups of students for whom English is a second language, by groups of students who are from poverty backgrounds, and by groups of students who have—and have not—had qualified teachers and effective instructional programs.

The achievement gaps among different groups of students are ugly; they are unacceptable; but they are real in 2003. Let's tackle these real problems and drop this nonsense about Georgia being 50th on the SAT. ♦

*Mark Musick is president of the Southern Regional Education Board. You can reach him at mark.musick@sreb.org.*

## Teacher Recruitment Day Mind Shapers Wanted

**Date:** Saturday, Feb. 21

**Time:** 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

**Location:** Westside High School  
Macon, Georgia

The school systems represented (Bibb, Crawford, Jones, Monroe, Peach, & Twiggs Counties) annually employ 300 to 500 new certified teachers in a wide range of fields. All interested and qualified persons are invited to attend and meet with representatives from individual schools and central office personnel. Please bring copies of your resumé.

For more information, please contact Middle Georgia RESA at  
**(478) 825 – 3132**

**Directions:** From I-475, take Exit 5. Go West on Highway 74 to stop light at Food Lion Shopping Center. Take left onto Heath Road. Westside High School is approximately one mile on the right.

# PAGE Fall Retreat: How To Better Utilize Data

The PAGE Fall Retreat, held Nov. 7-9 in Augusta, was very successful thanks to the participation of PAGE members and leaders from across the state and this year's lineup of informative speakers.

The keynote address was delivered by 2004 Georgia Teacher of the Year, Colonel Robert Guy. After retiring from the U.S. Army, Guy began his teaching career and now teaches eighth grade science and reading at Oconee Middle School. His

remarks, with humorous anecdotes about the sometimes bumpy transition from leading soldiers to leading middle school students, were a hit with the audience.

On Saturday, Bethlehem Elementary School Principal Julia McDivitt shared how her staff utilizes data while addressing her school's experience moving from "Needs Improvement" status to meeting Adequate Yearly Progress for 2002-03. Phil Jones, director of the International Inclusion Center and recipient of two prestigious awards for innovation in education, delivered his presentation from the perspective of LEP students.

Joanne S. Leonard, project manager for the Office of Student Achievement, Georgia Department of Education, spoke about the New State Report Card. As we move into an era of more (and more detailed) report cards, PAGE members will need to empower themselves by learning the scope—and the limitations of such reporting procedures.

The weekend concluded with a panel



PAGE Executive Director Allen Magill with 2004 Georgia Teacher of the Year Colonel Robert Guy.

discussion on "Using Data to Improve Classroom Practices." Panel presenters included Tracey Smith, Cumming Elementary; Katye Carlson, Cumming Elementary School; Lisa Goode, International Inclusion Center; Hannah Talley, City Park Intermediate School; and Chris Liner, Dalton High School. PAGE members who attended this year's Fall Conference were pleased with the speakers and topics covered.

At the board of directors meeting, which followed the retreat, the decision was made to change the name of the event to "Fall Conference" in an effort to boost attendance and insure an open invitation to all. ♦

## News from TRS

In September 2003, TRS opened a Call Center to handle approximately 3,000 incoming telephone calls per week. An automated attendant no longer greets members and retirees. Instead, members immediately speak with a knowledgeable TRS representative trained to answer most questions and initiate service requests. Ninety percent of all telephone calls are processed by the Call Center without having to transfer the call. By creating a Call Center, TRS was able to expand customer service hours, which are now from 7:30 a.m. – 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.



TRS staff now has immediate access to electronic member and retiree files, enabling staff to view accounts and answer questions immediately. Electronic files eliminated the old process of taking a message, pulling the paper file, and returning the call.

Retirees now have secure online access to their personal account information. Web applications are being developed to allow retirees and active members the ability to conduct business with TRS from anywhere at any time.

TRS has created an employer website containing all the forms, instructions, policies and procedures that an employer needs to do business with TRS. This site provides guidance and valuable information to the 368 employers whose employees are members of TRS. ♦

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- Consider the other employer-approved choices you may have
- Present investment ideas that may better match your objectives

In many cases, you now have the opportunity to transfer your account balance into another investment with no current tax consequence and still participate in your employer-sponsored plan.

I am available for one-on-one or group appointments after school and on Saturdays.

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## PUBLIC EDUCATION FUNDING

*Continued from page 7*

"I helped staff a group in the late 1990s that determined that funding for QBE was approximately \$800 million short, but that was an idealistic assessment, not a realistic one," he explains. "Given the current economic climate, I believe the present level of funding realistically reflects the level of our resources. It also reflects a good balance between state and local effort. If the state paid a bigger share of the total, state officials would probably want more control of the education process."

Tomlinson also observes that the property tax used by local systems to pay most of the local share of education is far more stable during difficult economic times than the sales and income taxes relied upon by the state to pay its QBE share.

"While state revenue sources dropped sharply during the recent economic downturn, property taxes actually increased," he explains.

Like Tomlinson, Scott Austensen, deputy superintendent for finance and business operations at the Georgia Department of Education, blames the recession for many of the state's current funding woes and questions some of the larger QBE shortfall estimates.

"There is no doubt that the austerity cuts necessary under the current economic climate will cause difficulties for many local school systems, but austerity cuts aside, I don't believe the shortfall is as great as some people claim," Austensen says. "I believe they are ignoring the effects of equalization and of some federal expenditures."

Martin agrees that the state's funding formula compensates for some of the differences in taxable wealth through the required local share and equalization grants. He argues, however, that low-wealth systems (those with low property tax bases) find it very difficult to cover the deficits in funding.

"The differences in taxable wealth per student have a huge impact on the quality of education offered by each of Georgia's school systems," Martin explains. "Since nearly 40 percent of the cost of elementary and secondary education in Georgia is paid from local sources, the taxable wealth of each school system is a crucial factor in determining how much a system can and does spend to educate its students. The expenditure for each of Georgia's students varies accordingly. Therefore, the ability of each system to provide an 'adequate education' for its students depends in large part on the relative wealth of that system."

According to Martin's research, the average expenditure per student by systems in the highest one-fifth of taxable wealth is \$1,014 (18 percent) greater than the average expenditure per student for systems in the lowest one-fifth of taxable wealth.



**Jesse Bradley,  
Griffin-Spalding County  
Superintendent**

Does \$1,000 really make a significant difference in the quality of education? Brantley County's superintendent says he believes that it does.

"If you have an elementary class of 23 students, that means a difference of \$23,000," Hunter explains. "With that \$23,000, we could hire another teacher to help these children for one-half day or have a longer after-school program or summer program. Our instructional model is based on more time and more people, and \$1,000 extra per student per year would help us implement that model. It could also help us improve our use of technology or help us raise the necessary funds to match state funding for capital construction. We have a lot of

classrooms that are 50-60 years old and need to be updated. There is no doubt that we could do some good things for our students with that much extra funding."

Martin points out as well that school systems with low taxable wealth and low expenditures per student often have a high percentage of students from low-income families.

"One cannot avoid the conclusion," he says, "that the quality of a student's education in Georgia is greatly affected by the circumstances of where the student happens to live. I don't believe it is just coincidence that only one of the 104 schools in Georgia to be recognized as a national Blue Ribbon School since the inception of this award in 1984 is in a system in the lowest one-fifth in terms of taxable wealth."

While the logic of Martin's argument is compelling, the question still remains as to whether the education provided to all children in Georgia is at least adequate. After all, just as it is true that some professional sports teams with lower payrolls outperform others with much higher payrolls, it is also true that some lower funded schools outperform higher funded ones.

Although Martin provides evidence that low-wealth system students generally perform at a lower level on both the SAT and the CRCT than students from high-wealth systems, even these statistics do not necessarily prove that the state is guilty of under-funding its public schools. There are other possible explanations for the funding and performance differences among school systems.

One possibility is that some of the school systems are not taxing their own citizens enough. Approximately one-half the local systems levy less than 15 mills of property tax, even though the state limit is 20 mills.

"There are tremendous differences in millage rates among the school systems," Williams acknowledges, "and there is no doubt that some systems are probably shortchanging their students, but many simply don't have the resources to do much more."

Another possibility is that the local systems receive sufficient



funding from the state to provide an adequate education, but don't use the funds effectively.

"There are examples of school systems having as many as nine assistant coaches receiving salary supplements while complaining that they don't receive adequate state funding," says one long-time observer of Georgia public education. "Yes, there may be some situations in which the funding formula doesn't provide sufficient resources, but overall, I believe state funding under QBE is adequate, or at least it was until the recent unavoidable revenue shortfall reductions."

Martin acknowledges that some systems may be more efficient than others, but remains convinced that a lopsided distribution of wealth is the primary problem.

"The amount of money raised per mill of taxes varies tremendously from system to system," he explains. "Systems in the top 10 percent in property tax wealth can raise four times as much per student per mill as systems in the lowest 10 percent. The systems with the least taxable wealth simply do not have enough local resources to compensate for the shortage of state funds, no matter how much they tax themselves."

Is \$10 billion enough to provide an adequate education for all children in Georgia? Is the state of Georgia contributing enough to ensure that even the poorest school systems can provide an adequate education for their students? Are some school systems guilty of wasting state education dollars? Are some children being short-changed? Hopefully, we may soon have some answers to these and other questions.

Ben Scafidi, the governor's education advisor, says that the gov-

ernor is committed to having a task force review the QBE formula in 2004, and the issue of adequacy will be an important part of the discussion.

"You can't look at the funding issue without considering adequacy," says Scafidi. "We are taking this issue very seriously."

The governor should take this issue seriously, because in the end, it is about much more than formulae, fair shares and weights. It is about the number of students in a class and the number of paraprofessionals in a school. It is about the age and condition of textbooks and the amount of equipment and materials in the media center. In other words, it is about what takes place in every classroom in Georgia every single day.

Some say that the state of Georgia is already doing a good job funding its public schools. Others, including a consortium of 40 local school systems, say the state is not doing enough. The issues are complex and won't be settled overnight. Even if the governor's task force makes recommendations acceptable to the consortium, the General Assembly must find the dollars necessary for any increase in the state's share of funding. With the state's budget already stretched thin, finding additional funds will be a challenge.

Regardless of how long it takes to settle this issue or how it is resolved, Georgia's dedicated teachers will continue to do the best job they can with the resources provided to them. The question that must be answered for the future is whether teachers in all parts of the state will be provided adequate resources to meet the needs of all of their students. That is what the Quality Basic Education Act was all about. ♦



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# School Dress Code Policies: What Is or Isn't Legal?

**M**any times in the PAGE Legal Department, we are asked what is or is not acceptable attire for students. By now, most of us are aware that local school boards have the right to set dress code policies for students. But just how far can they go? There is no steadfast rule, but there are primarily three factors that one should consider when determining whether or not a particular dress code policy is legal. They are: (1) the reasonableness of the policy; (2) the relationship of the policy to a legitimate public school interest; and (3) the broadness of the policy.

The first thing to consider when developing a school dress code is whether the policy is reasonable. If the policy is unreasonable, it won't stand. For example, is it appropriate for a school to have a policy that states that students may not wear t-shirts with profanity on it? Yes. Courts have consistently held that school officials have the authority to prohibit offensive speech that may "interfere with the work of the school or impinge upon the rights of other students." But can a school have a policy that students may not wear shirts with any writing on it? Maybe not. The answer is "maybe not" because the policy's reasonableness depends a lot on how school officials address the other two factors. At the very outset, when a dress code policy is proposed, ask if it is a reasonable rule.

Secondly, there must be a rational relationship between the dress code policy and a legitimate public school interest. The reason that this must be considered is because students still have certain First Amendment rights to freedom of expression while they're at school. In the former example, is there a rational relationship between banning clothing with profanity on it and providing a learning environment free from disruption? Most

would say yes. In the latter example, is there a connection between banning shirts with any writing and providing a safe learning environment or any other legitimate school objective? Again, the case is a little harder to make. The bottom line is that the school board must be able to show that dress code policy "A" is in furtherance of legitimate school board objective "B."

Thirdly, one must consider whether the dress code policy is too vague, confusing or overreaching. If the dress code unduly inhibits the exercise of First Amendment rights by students when balanced against the public school systems' interest in promoting the policy, then the code is invalid. This is known as the Overbreadth Doctrine. In plain English, this means that any dress code policy must be written in such a way that it can be easily understood and does not significantly impair students' First Amendment rights to self-expression. In the previous examples, both policies can be easily understood. The difference is that in the first example, the policy is specific and narrow: only shirts with profanity are prohibited. In the latter example, shirts with any writing are prohibited. One could argue that this is overreaching, because this would ban shirts not only with profanity but also with inconspicuous designer logos and inoffensive words.

The seminal case on a student's right to self-expression is *Tinker v. Des Moines*. In that case, the Supreme Court ruled that school boards can censor student speech only if the speech has a substantial negative impact on school operations. So whether it's requiring school uniforms or banning t-shirts with confederate flags, school officials can implement any dress code policy so long as they are able to show that it is reasonable, easily understood and necessary for effective school operations. ♦

## PAGE Letters

### LETTERS OF THANKS

**T**hank you for your participation in the recent GAEL Secretary and Support Personnel Conference. Conference attendees will benefit from the knowledge and insight gained as a result of your preparation and hard work.

As you know, I'm afraid that educators will be "blind-sided" by recent changes in the Code. They now have another ally in helping to stay away from difficulty in the persona of their support staff member that participated in this conference.

Continued best wishes,  
Jim Puckett Director, Georgia Association  
of Educational Leaders



**Y**our (PAGE Staff Attorney) presentation of the "Code of Ethics" to our faculty was wonderful. You took a somewhat dull subject and made it interesting for all. Our faculty is now much more aware of the implications of the Code.

Thank you, and keep up the good work.

Sincerely,  
Eddie Pollard, Principal,  
Tyrone Elementary School

**I**want to thank PAGE for Columbia County Mentoring Sessions in Grovetown. In particular, I want to thank Pat Alexander for all her advice and guidance. Through their support, I became a NBCT this year. I hope PAGE will continue to support this worthwhile endeavor.

Sandra J. Owens  
8th Grade/Math Dept. Chair,  
Veterans Memorial Middle School



# Our Guarantee

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# The NCLB Requirement: Scientifically-Based Research

**NCLB defines SRB as “research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs.”**

**I**t appears more than 100 times in the federal law, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). It is a requirement of technical assistance to schools, it is the basis for curricular programs and instructional practices adopted and implemented in schools and it must undergird the reform strategies for closing the achievement gap. It is one of the major ways NCLB seeks to improve public education. And it is the concept and legal requirement of “scientifically-based research” (SRB).

Despite the preponderance of the term, scientifically-based research, states have proceeded slowly in implementing this aspect of the law because more definitive explanations are needed from the federal government, and there is limited expertise and limited data to determine if a program is scientifically-based. Nevertheless, Congress is showing an unprecedented interest in the programs schools adopt; the results obtained from using the programs; and if valid and credible research supports both the programs adopted and the results obtained by using the programs.

## **NCLB DEFINITION OF SCIENTIFICALLY-BASED RESEARCH**

NCLB defines SRB as “research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs.” Scientifically-based research also includes research that:

- (i) Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
- (ii) Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
- (iii) Relies on measurement or observational methods that provided reliable and valid data across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators;
- (iv) Is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities programs, or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random-assignment experiments, or other designs to

the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls;

(v) Ensures that experimental studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings; and

(vi) Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review.” (Section 9101 (37)).

## **SCIENTIFICALLY-BASED OR RIGOROUSLY EVALUATED**

NCLB makes a distinction between programs that are based on scientifically-based research and those that have been evaluated using valid scientific experiments. In SRB, key elements, which have a research base, can be used to qualify and classify a program as scientifically-based. For example, five elements of effective reading instruction—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension—were identified by the National Reading Panel (1999) as having been established by rigorous research including randomized experiments. This is not the same as a reading program containing these same elements being compared with matched or randomly assigned control group(s) to determine the efficacy of the program. The latter is an example of rigorously evaluated. Robert Slavin has stated that a SRB program provides the educator with information that a program has the potential to be effective, but no proof that it is effective.

As educators are required to review and evaluate more and more research in justifying their program choices and in rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the selected program(s), it is helpful to know the major research designs and the characteristics of each. The chart provides a succinct, quick reference.

## **FEATURES OF FOUR COMMON RESEARCH DESIGNS**

### **Experiment**

Experimental studies seek to establish cause-and-effect relationships by examining whether changes in one variable systematically affect another variable. Random assignment is an

important feature of experimental studies. Since students, classes, or schools are randomly assigned to be in one of several groups, researchers can calculate confidence measures indicating the likelihood that differences in outcomes are due to the intervention being studied. A study examining the effects of a middle school mathematics intervention that randomly assigns classes of students to either participate in the intervention or not. Researchers attempt to keep constant all contributing factors other than the intervention.

#### Quasi-Experiment

Quasi-experimental studies do not use random assignment to groups, but instead make comparisons among groups before and after an intervention or between two groups that are matched (i.e., similar) on important characteristics assumed to influence the outcome of interest. A study examining the effects of a middle school mathematics interventions by comparing classes of participating students to classes of nonparticipating students who are matched by contributing factors other than the intervention, such as the students socioeconomic background.

#### Correlational Study

Correlation studies are decisive studies that determine the strength of a relationship between variables. They do not allow researchers to determine cause/effect. They can be conducted with or without statistical controls. They can be used to determine if groups behave differently, but they do not give evidence as to what caused the difference. Results from correlational studies can be used to provide insights about which relationships should be further investigated to determine causality.

A study that examines the relationship between taking Algebra II in high school and higher earnings as an adult. The existence of this relationship does not imply that requiring all students to enroll in algebra will result in all students earning higher salaries as adults, since the relationship does not imply cause/effect.

#### Case Study

Case studies collect and present detailed information about a particular participant or small group. Case studies can be descriptive research studies of process and implementation issues to examine how, why, and under what con-

**To determine if a program is scientifically-based, the National Research Council has identified six questions that educators can ask.**

- What is the significant question that the research seeks to answer?
- Is the hypothesis linked to relevant theory?
- Are the tools used valid for addressing the question?
- Are there other explanations for the observed evidence?
- Can the findings be replicated across groups?
- Can the results and procedures withstand scrutiny of colleagues and public?

ditions a program works. They give insights about which relationships should be further investigated to determine causality. They can be used to identify factors that contribute to improvements. A study that examines and details common factors of a small group of schools that successfully serve students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

*Source: Making Sense of Research for Improving Education. The Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin, April, 2003. utdanacenter.org.*

#### THE CONUNDRUM

NCLB requires that schools and school districts adopt and implement programs that are scientifically researched based or rigorously evaluated. However, U.S. Department of Education Under Secretary Eugene Hickok has stated that getting states knowledgeable about what makes for adequate research is "a long-term project." Furthermore, According to Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement Grover J. Whitehurst, a high quality and solid body of evidence exists for reading. However, "in the other core academic subjects of math and science, research has not progressed to a level at which it is possible to make strong statements about which approaches produce the strongest effects on academic achievement for which children in which circumstances."

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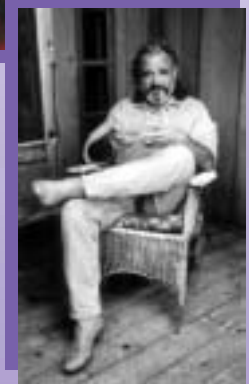
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Because there is a paucity of research in the core content areas, Whitehead has posited that educators may have to rely on evidence-based education, "the integration of professional wisdom with the best available empirical evidence in making decisions about how to deliver instruction."

## A NEW ERA FOR EDUCATION

For 50 years, the federal government has been interested in creating a more scientifically-based public education system. The Cooperative Research Act of 1954 led to the creation of the National Institute of Education in the 1970s which

was later subsumed by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). OERI has now been replaced by the Institute of Educational Sciences (IES). IES has established the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) to "provide educators, policymakers, and the public with a central, independent, and trusted source of scientific evidence of what works in education."

Specifically the WWC was established to help improve the education of students by: (1) producing high quality summaries of research on the effects of educational interventions and approaches on student outcomes; (2) promoting the use of rigorous scientific methods in studies of education effectiveness; (3) promoting the use of rigorous research in education decision-making; and (4) facilitating public and educator access to research-related resources (see [w-w-c.org](http://w-w-c.org)).

Seven topics have been chosen by the WWC for review and are posted on their website. The findings will be published in reports called evidence reports. The first evidence report will focus on interventions for students who are experiencing difficulty in developing beginning reading skills. The second evidence report will review interventions designed for general beginning reading students. As an evidence report on a topic becomes available, it will be posted on the website, [w-w-c.org](http://w-w-c.org).

Carnahan and Fitzpatrick have offered some helpful and practical advice on becoming savvy consumer and user of research. "Becoming a sophisticated consumer of research is a continuing process, not a one-time accomplishment. It begins—as does any journey into new territory—with adjustments and attempts to comprehend new information that may seem a foreign language. Then it requires verbalizing what you don't know, asking questions. Finally it requires a keen sense of inquiry, sniffing out the best sources of information to address those questions."

Today's educator must bring to the table research skills that provide the expertise in examining materials claiming to be researched based and in interpreting the claims by developers and producers that materials and programs have been rigorously evaluated. This new role for educators is essential to an effective closing of the achievement gap. ♦

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## A Special Thanks To Our 2003 Donors

**A**s we bid farewell to one year and look forward to another, it seems appropriate to reflect on those who gave generously to help the PAGE Foundation during 2003.

On behalf of the Foundation trustees and staff, I want to thank the many individuals, corporations and foundations that supported our work through their generous, charitable contributions. I am especially appreciative of the 57,000 members of PAGE who donate funds each year to the Foundation's work—we would not be where we are today without the teachers and support personnel who contribute generously to our work. I am also deeply indebted to the corporations and foundations that invest in the PAGE Foundation, and am grateful that in the face of so many community needs they have chosen to include us as recipients of their support.

Our mission is one that draws support from individuals, corporations and foundations because it is so fundamental to all societal needs. We want to recruit, develop and retain extraordinary teachers for Georgia classrooms and raise student achievement through challenging and competitive academic programs that instill in students a love of learning and an appreciation for hard work in the pursuit of educational excellence. I daresay many of our community's problems would go away or at least be diminished if all of our students graduated with an excellent education.

I believe the statistics prove what many of us have believed for years: quality teachers are the key to helping students develop a love of learning, and a challenging regimen of school work requiring hard work builds in young people

a respect for themselves and a respect for what life demands from all of us. Our donors are accomplished people who have benefited from good teachers and who understand the role of hard work in academics. PAGE Foundation programs are working today to ensure extraordinary teachers for our students now and in the future, and our student programs provide a fun and competitive opportunity for young people to expand their learning outside the classroom in challenging programs that demand their best effort.

As we enter 2004, I am more enthused and excited about the PAGE Foundation than ever before; and I speak for many when I thank our supporters for making our work possible.

Sincerely,  
Tom Wommack



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*Continued on page 27*



# Honor Your Favorite Teacher

Norma J. Greenwood, Lamar County Schools, Director of Curriculum

## The Dynamic Duo: The Greatest Teachers I Know

I was never going to teach, but as I look back, I realize that I did not have a choice. I began teaching while in the womb.

While I was small, I went everyday to school with my mother, to school, who taught first graders at the time. As I grew older, I continued to help with her room and grading papers. Little did I know that I would become a teacher and an administrator due to her influence as well as her sister's. These two women not only influenced my life, but also those of many teenagers who grew up in Griffin, Georgia during the 1960s. Spalding Junior High students (at that time) either had my aunt, Mrs. Jean Ralston, or mom, Mrs. Nina Jones, for chemistry or biology (respectively). What a duo they were!

Aunt Jean was (and still is) an unbelievable personality. In my eyes she is bigger than life. She has exuberance and diligence like no one else I know. She puts all that energy into one package and allows it to drive how she lives everyday and how she taught everyday. From Griffin, she moved onto Pike County and eventually retired as the middle school principal with a Specialist in Education degree. She loved her job and loved the children with whom she worked as a chemistry teacher. I saw her positive energy move toward her staff when she became principal. She loved her staff and gave them her best while she was their leader. Her pride in her students and staff was always prevalent. Her exuberance led her to be a volunteer firefighter, a city council woman and an active participant in many other activities in her community. She wanted her school and her community to be a place where one could not only raise a family, but raise one with a quality of life (and she still does)!

My mom was passionate about her career and loved the many students she taught and counseled over the years. While I was in the 4th grade, she received her Master of Education Degree and began to counsel students at the high school level. She became one of the first elementary counselors in the Griffin-Spalding School System. Of all of her many educational experiences, I think she loved this job the most. She adored working with students. Being a counselor afforded her the time to work independently with students to help them become better students and better "folks." My mom loved learning and added to her degrees, culminating in the Specialist in Education Degree in

Counseling. She continued for many years working with "her students" trying to ensure that everything she did was for them. She was also a very wise person, and many principals, counselors, and central office staff would call her for advice or for her "ear."

This dynamic duo has over 70 years of educational experience between them. I look back now that my mom and Aunt Jean have retired, and realize that my love for learning, my love for children and my love for education has been "inbred." When I was little, I remember singing songs with Aunt Jean. I remember the talks that mom and Aunt Jean would have about students and the ideas that they would share. I am reminded of people who have stopped me and asked, "Are you Mrs. Jones' daughter? Are you related to Jean Ralston?" People have such real and wonderful memories to share with me about both of them. Even former staff members have fond memories of my mom working with them in the classroom, school, or with a private matter. Recently at my high school reunion, several of my former classmates shared with me that my mom was the one person that saved them in high school. They shared that she pulled them through tough moments; helped them graduate; or even got them jobs. This is my mom. She cares about people as individuals. She believes that schools should work with children individually, developing and maintaining relationships so that problems can be solved—not exacerbated.

As you can see, I never had a chance. It was divinely decided that I would be an educator. I find that without my dynamic duo shaping me and molding me, I would still be wandering. I am satisfied with my career. I am passionate about what I do. I am forever behold-  
ing to the greatest teachers I know! ♦



Standing left to right are Norma Jones Greenwood and Jean Williams Ralston, with Nina Williams Jones (seated).

## PAGE Members Earn National Board Certification In Record Numbers

Two-hundred-and-fifty-two members of the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE) were certified by the Washington, D.C.-based National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in November. This total surpasses the previous record of 166 set in 2002, according to PAGE Foundation President Tom Wommack.

"We are incredibly proud of these excellent teachers and all educators who pursued National Board Certification," said Wommack. "To earn this award, teachers

must invest 200 to 400 hours in a rigorous professional learning process that has been compared to the pursuit of a master's degree. Teachers who complete the 1-3 year process have reached the pinnacle of teaching professionalism and number among America's elite teachers."

Wommack noted that PAGE members represent almost half of the 513 Georgia teachers who earned the award recently. "We have worked since 1996 to encourage PAGE members and other teachers to pur-

sue National Board Certification," he said. "With support from the 57,000 members of PAGE and charitable gifts from several of the state's major corporations and foundations, the PAGE Foundation has offered mentoring workshops, pre-certification courses, scholarships and grants to support teachers pursuing this prestigious award. Our members who have obtained this award tell us they have become better teachers as a result, and we believe this translates into improved classroom learning."

The following PAGE members earned their National Board Certification this year:

### ART

#### *Early & Middle Childhood/Art*

Lori Fulton, Fayette  
Bonnie Martin, Gainesville City  
Mary Pegues, Fayette  
Melissa Raymer, Fayette  
Deborah West, Gwinnett

#### *Early Adolescence & Young Adulthood/Art*

Dabney Edenfield, Emanuel  
Margaret Shearouse, Columbia  
Paula Sheehan, Bibb

### CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

#### *Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Career & Technical Education*

Claude Hames Jr., Social Circle City  
Beth Moore, Newton  
John Reagan, Cobb  
Judy Williams, Emanuel

### ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE

#### *Early & Middle Childhood/English as a New Language*

Sonya Sanchez, Gwinnett

#### *Early Adolescence & Young Adulthood/English as a New Language*

Mary Ann Browning, Fayette  
Alicia Patton Richwine, Clayton

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

#### *Early Adolescence/English Language Arts*

Nancy Allen, Thomaston-Upson  
Virginia Bland, Screven

Susan Bright, Fayette  
Cathy Carr-Helmuth, Forsyth  
Merry Hodges, Liberty  
Renee Hunter, Thomaston-Upson  
Melissa Kegley, Berrien  
Gwendolyn Lee, Grady  
Martha Maness, Muscogee  
Dora Matthews Holder, Walker  
Cagina Noird, DeKalb  
Patricia Walker, Dodge  
John Waller, Gwinnett  
Juletta Weaver, Screven

#### *Adolescence & Young Adulthood/English Language Arts*

Cathy Bell, Dodge  
James Carter, Cobb  
Christina Casher, Richmond  
Pamela Clontz, Richmond  
Judith Coane, Cobb  
Tara Delaigle, Morgan  
Nancy Glenzer, Rockdale  
Patsy Lewis, White County  
Christy Meyers, Morgan County  
Katharine Woods, DeKalb County

### EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS SPECIALIST

#### *Early Childhood & Young Adulthood/Exceptional Needs Specialist*

Rebecca Banks, Houston  
Torah Buie, DeKalb  
Denise Chance Oravec, Rockdale  
Mary W. Chase, Clayton  
Lori Chastain, White  
Mary Efland, Clarke  
Connie Forrest Mintz, Richmond  
Carol Galloy, Cobb  
Janice Gibson Pickett, Bibb  
Eunice Hutchins Jones, Atlanta City  
Jill Johnson, McDuffie  
Lynn Peek, DeKalb

Donna Price, Bulloch  
Connie Simms Wildman, Bibb  
Linda Sokowoski, Fulton  
Kathryn Sutton, Evans  
Leigh Warnock, Fulton  
Tina Williams, Rome City  
Jane Young, DeKalb

### GENERALIST

#### *Early Childhood/Generalist*

Sheryl Allen, McDuffie  
Teresa Bannister Hall, Lowndes  
Candice Barnette, Oconee  
Robin Beagles Peace, Catoosa  
Debra Beauregard, Clayton  
Betsy Bedsole Choate, Tift  
Gretchen Bell, Brantley  
Sheryl Bennett Hodge, Columbia  
Teresa Cantrell, Hall  
Gwendolyn Cheatham, Cherokee

Tanya Cheeves, Forsyth  
Joanne Chicchetti, Clayton  
Joyce Cicalese, Bibb  
Dolores Croce, Gainesville City  
Lori Dean, Clarke  
Susan Duke, Fayette  
Beverly Lynn Easterwood, Troup  
Rebecca Farmer, Cherokee  
Ellen Flynn, Jackson  
Delia Garrett, Wilcox  
Lajuana Hall-Ezzard, Fulton  
Marlene Harrington, Cherokee  
Teresa Harris, Paulding  
Carol Hilburn, Henry  
Donna Jackson, Tift  
Ellen Kingery, Tattall  
Kay Klose, Whitfield  
Kimberly Lochbaum, Forsyth  
Dora Magill, Gwinnett  
Stacy Mcglashan, Evans  
Debra Mercer, Dodge  
Anne Ming, Camden  
Debra Mizell, Atkinson  
Lauran Moreno, Sumter  
Leslie Norman Phillips, Columbia

Jennifer Parker, Harris  
Sue Peacock, Dodge  
Theresa Pike, Whitfield  
Kristy Pitts, Hall  
Carole Ramsey Felton, Clayton  
Niki Rann, Whitfield  
Dee Dee Riggs Bennett, Bulloch  
Paula Rowell Lee, Camden  
Kim Sablock, Hall  
Janet Smith, Dodge  
Sheryl Smith Gehle, Colquitt  
Cynthia Smith Morgan, Oconee  
Caroline Sowell, McDuffie  
Courtney Stillwell, Coweta  
Wendy Thompson, Fulton  
Tammy Thrift, Camden  
Mary Tucker, Columbia  
N. Tucker, Muscogee  
Betsy Turner Short, Henry  
April Ward, Valdosta City  
Cindy Williams, Cherokee  
Anita Worley, Whitfield

#### *Middle Childhood/Generalist*

Amy Barnes, Evans  
Andrea Bennett, Appling  
Elizabeth Carlisle, Muscogee  
Jane Cohen-Legge, DeKalb  
Carol Colaluca, Muscogee  
Eileen Connor, Chatham  
Tracie Ellis, Whitfield  
Rhonda Emmett, Cherokee  
Michelle Fields, Bulloch  
Carol Gani Goings, Baldwin  
Denise Griner Brookins, Bulloch  
Jennifer Hall, Houston  
Tammy Harris, Harris  
Shirley Heinsch, Cherokee  
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 Karen Nelson, Chatham  
 Keith Nelson, Cherokee  
 Alicia Norton, DeKalb  
 Kim O'Neal, Harris  
 Susan Queen, Walton  
 Julie Raschen, Coweta  
 Lisa Rudowitz, Gwinnett  
 Gene Sawyer, Colquitt  
 Sylvia Shealy, Chatham  
 Deborah Shirley, Forsyth  
 Jennifer Smith, Screven  
 Cami Sullivan, Coweta  
 Melanie Traylor, Troup  
 Diane Treuman, Gwinnett  
 Lee Whitney, Fulton  
 Sandra Williams, Whitfield  
 Tim Wright, Whitfield  
 Eleese Wyers, Camden  
 Andria Young Bunner, Henry

*Early Adolescence/Generalist*

Wanda Bass Taylor, Rabun  
 Constance Wallingford,  
 Gwinnett  
 Dee Watson Dillard, Rabun

**LIBRARY MEDIA**

*Early Childhood through Young Adulthood/Library Media*

Lisa Adams, Morgan  
 Margaret Baker, Hall  
 Marsha Baucom, Hall  
 Nancy Brown, Bulloch  
 Marianne Chapman, Houston  
 Deborah Haile, Chatham  
 Beverly Stewart, Whitfield

**MATHEMATICS**

*Early Adolescence/Math*

Lisa Blackmon, Elbert  
 Sue Bodiford Funk, Muscogee  
 Sharon Crocker Morris, Hart  
 Peggy Ruth Fulghum, Cook  
 Kimberly Jeffcoat, Spalding  
 Sandra Owens, Newton  
 Melissa Pinder, Wayne  
 Alicia Polley, Cherokee  
 Debby Reynolds, Ben Hill  
 Raymechia Smith, Muscogee

*Adolescence & Young Adulthood/Math*

Philip Belfrom, Gwinnett  
 Elizabeth Brooks, Harris  
 Bette Callaway Neville, Evans  
 Kelly Edenfield, Gwinnett  
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 Steven Messig, Oconee  
 Maxine Russack, DeKalb  
 Mickey Washburn Jr., Gwinnett

**MUSIC**

*Early & Middle Childhood/Music*

Jeffery Johnson, Newton  
 Margaret McEuen Turk,  
 Columbia  
 Lynn Williams, Lowndes

*Early Adolescence & Young Adulthood/Music*

Jana Grace Williams, Henry

**SCIENCE**

*Early Adolescence/Science*

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 Cynthia Brogan, Burke  
 Margaret Cross Counts, Fayette  
 Brenda Hunt, Habersham  
 Leamon Jourdan, Newton  
 Donna New, Fayette  
 Rachael Parr, Jackson  
 Nancy Jean Pettit, Murray  
 Steve Rich, Douglas  
 Deborah Scoggins, Rome City  
 Jane Woodall Franks, Habersham

*Adolescence & Young Adulthood/Science*

Jones Bourassa, Laurens  
 William Bray IV, Gwinnett  
 Charlotte Bridges, Emanuel  
 Neera Chhabra Young,  
 Richmond  
 Albert Evans, Cherokee  
 Stanley Grimes, Oconee  
 Stella Guerrero, Clarke  
 Joyce Mc Kay, Henry  
 Katrina Miller, Clayton  
 Michael Owens, Bryan  
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Mark Stallings, Gilmer  
 Nmaobi Uzochukwu, Richmond  
 Margaret Wallace Coomer,  
 Rockdale  
 Charles Whiddon, Bulloch

**SOCIAL STUDIES-HISTORY**

*Early Adolescence/Social Studies-History*

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 Christine Grass, Cherokee  
 Holly Hill, Paulding  
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*Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Social Studies-History*

Jenny Malona Abercrombie,  
 Irwin  
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Selena Reynolds, Emanuel  
 Deborah Ruth Barto, Whitfield  
 James Seagroove Morel, Chatham  
 Franco Timbol, Douglas  
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**PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

*Early & Middle Childhood/Physical Education*

Darcy Blakewood, Bryan

*Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/Physical Education*

Elaine Binnion, Fulton  
 Kimberly Thompson, Douglas

**WORLD LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH**

*Early Adolescence through Young Adulthood/World Languages Other than English*

Mitzi Bayne, Catoosa  
 Joanna Dawson, Fulton  
 Phyllis Loiacono, Cherokee  
 Rose White, Cobb  
 Mary Ann Browning, Fayette  
 Alicia Patton Richwine, Clayton  
 Sonya Sanchez, Gwinnett ◆

## PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon (GAD) Advisory Board Holds Annual Meeting

The GAD Advisory Board held its annual meeting in November at the Atlanta Marriott Gwinnett Place in Duluth. The PAGE GAD Board meets annually to discuss the academic program and offer suggestions for its improvement and expansion. This year the board approved a motion to make available a PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon Honor Cord for graduating senior participants in the program. The PAGE Foundation would make the cords available to those GAD school systems that wished to purchase it for their graduating seniors. The board suggested that criteria be established for the awarding of the cords. This year's board welcomes new members Tim Chanson, director of external affairs; Georgia School Council Institute, Inc.; Judy Forbes, superintendent, Habersham County Schools; Deena Hoch, president, PAGE; Dr. James Kelly, Education Technology Consultant, Deep South Region, Apple Computer, Inc.; Karen Suddeth, GAD coordinator, Carroll County Schools and Betsy Palmer, regional vice president for public relations, AT&T. Attending this year's meeting were board members (left to right) Sharon Jones, GAD Coordinator, Atlanta Public Schools; Judy Forbes, superintendent, Habersham County Schools; Ruth Cowan, state director of GAD; Sarita Denny, GAD alumni and coach; Howard Stroud, GAD founding state director; Tom Wommack, PAGE Foundation president; and Dr. Milton Stompler, director, Georgia Science Olympiad. ◆



## FEA In Georgia Holds First Fall Conference

Future Educators of America in Georgia (FEA in GA) held a successful first fall conference in November. Plans are underway to make it an annual event. The conference was made possible in part by the generous donations of Southeast Region Association of Teacher Educators and Phi Delta Kappa (PDK) Savannah Chapter #1219. The Southeast Region Association of Teacher Educators donated the meeting space in conjunction with their 50th annual conference held at the Hyatt Regency in Savannah, while PDK provided breakout sessions and co-sponsored continen-



Motivational speaker Keith L. Brown led students in a warm-up chant at the beginning of his keynote address



FEA members listened attentively during a breakout session: "A Road Map to Leadership" by Ericka Reid of Georgia State University

tal breakfast for the conference participants.

FEA members began the day with a greeting from Congressman Jack Kingston's office, delivered by his staff member, Myrlene Free. Afterward they were treated to an energetic and inspiring message from Keith L. Brown, "Motivator of the Millennium." Brown encouraged the students to pursue professionalism and led a positive, productive life as educators. He spoke of the meaningfulness of the teaching profession and presented a generous contribution to the FEA in GA program.

After the general session, students had a selection of breakout sessions to attend. Topics and presenters included, "Creating a Professional Identity," by Carolyn Vander Schee of Georgia State University; "Becoming a Future Leader, Mentor, Educator and Role Model," by Tomika L. Boone of Armstrong Atlantic State University (AASU)/Savannah State University; "A Road Map



FEA members from North Gwinnett High School attended the conference.

to Leadership," by Ericka Reid of Georgia State University; "Show Me the Money: A Detailed Walk Through the World of College Financial Aid," by Jacklynn Lewis and Misty Harvey of AASU; and "What is College Really Like," a panel discussion led by students from AASU and Georgia Southern University. Advisors had the opportunity to attend their own breakout session, "FEA: A National Perspective," led by Juanita Suttle, FEA Advisor at Booker T. Washington High School in Atlanta.

The PAGE Foundation extends special thanks to Dr. Christian Chéreau of PDK International and Dr. Maryellen Cosgrove and Dr. Joan Schwartz, both from the PDK Savannah Chapter #1219, for their contributions to the success of the fall conference. ♦



Attention FEA Chapters  
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FEA in GA Day on Capitol Hill 2004

Tuesday, March 9, 2004  
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**Registration Deadline: Friday, February 20, 2004**

How do I register my chapter? Download a registration form from [www.pagefoundation.org](http://www.pagefoundation.org).  
Then snail mail with payment postmarked no later than 2/20/04.  
FEA in GA is a partnership of the PAGE Foundation and Phi Delta Kappa International.



## NBPTS News

### PAGE Scholarships for NBPTS

The scholarship process is competitive because there are more applicants than scholarship money. The scholarship application can be found on at [pagefoundation.org](http://pagefoundation.org). Click on Scholarships. The scholarship deadline is March 30. Scholarships will be awarded in May.

The next opportunity to apply for a PAGE NBPTS scholarship will be January-March 2005.

Teachers interested in receiving the scholarship must have completed the Knowledgeable Teacher course prior to applying.

### Graduate Credit

Graduate credit is now available for persons pursuing National Board Certification. All information about applying for graduate credit is available on the website [nbpts.org](http://nbpts.org). Click on the orange circle titled Apply Here for Graduate Credit. Three graduate credits are available for non-achieving candidates who received 10 scores in November 1997 or after. Six graduate credits are available for candidates who achieved National Board Certification in November 1997 or after. The American Council on Education is working with NBPTS to provide this service and opportunity.

### Portfolio Due Date

The portfolio is due March 31, 2005 for first time candidates; April 15, 2005 for re-take candidates. Candidates may begin collecting evidence as early as April 1, 2004. Portfolio is due on these dates regardless of when the \$300 application fee is paid.

### Testing

June 23 is the deadline for 2004 candidates to test. For others, testing time is any time between July 1, 2004 and June 23, 2005. Full fee must be paid and eligibility must be verified before a candidate can test. NBPTS advises that candidates should make their testing appointments early because seat availability is not guaranteed. NBPTS' position is that no extension to the testing window will be granted for any reason. ♦

# FEA in GA to Host Summer Institute

FEA in GA will host a three-day clinic for FEA members and advisors to be held June 7-9 2004, at Georgia College & State University in Milledgeville. The Summer Institute will offer participants an informative and realistic view of the field of education as a career choice through valuable sessions led by outstanding education, business and political leaders. Among those invited to share their views on education are the 2002 National Teacher of the Year Chauncey Veatch; President of BellSouth Georgia Phil Jacobs; 2002 Georgia Teacher of the Year Lorraine Johnson; and Governor Sonny Perdue.

Students will have the opportunity to participate in creative breakout sessions designed by the John H. Lounsbury School of Education faculty and to stay in the GC&SU dormitories. FEA Chapter Advisors will have specially designed breakout sessions and activities with their chapter members.

Invitations and registration information will be mailed to all registered FEA advisors in early January.

We encourage all FEA chapters to register their chapters as soon as possible. Chapter registration is available online at [pagefoundation.org](http://pagefoundation.org). ♦

## PAGE FOUNDATION 2003 DONORS

*Continued from page 22*

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# Members in the News

## LAW WINS STATE COUNSELING AWARDS

**Brian Law** has been chosen as Region 10 Elementary School Counselor of the Year for 2003-2004. He has also been selected as Elementary School Counselor for the State of Georgia. He received an award for each honor at a Georgia School Counselors award ceremony on November 19, 2003 in Atlanta. The award was presented by Georgia School Counselors President Janis Webb and State School Superintendent Kathy Cox. A student from Law's school spoke on how Law had made a difference in his education. Law also received the Georgia Human Rights award from Georgia School Counselors for his work to promote Human Rights for all children through his bullying training sessions that have been presented across the state and for his work to promote tolerance for diversity of cultures and respect for all human beings. He is the principal of the Colquitt County Summer Migrant Program and promotes migrant education services.

Law has been an elementary counselor at J.M. Odom Elementary for the past eight years. Prior to becoming a counselor, he taught middle school in Berrien County. Law is an active member of the Georgia School Counselors Association where he holds the office of elementary worksetting chairperson. He is running for the office of first vice president. Georgia School Counselors is the state organization that is affiliated with the American School Counselors Association. With his two current state wins, he will compete with the other 49 states for a chance to be the American School Counselor's Elementary Counselor of the Year and American Human Rights Winner. Law is the current president of the Colquitt County Professional Association of Georgia Educators and recently won the Most Outstanding PAGE member award for District 14.

When asked why he chose school counseling, Law was clear. "I am first a teacher because of my love of teaching students educational/social skills and

love of education," he said. "I hope people can see that I love my job, and that is why I try to do a good job." He remembers when he was 10 years old and he taught his 5-year-old cousin his ABCs. His aunt told him that he was the only person who could get him to remember the alphabet, and that she thought he would be a great



Brian Law

teacher when he grew up. Law immediately knew that he would like to be a teacher. Two years later his cousin's father died. He remembers wanting to say or do something to make his cousin feel better in this crisis. He found that just listening was a good solution. Then, he decided that he wanted to be a counselor when he grew up. After his stepfather had an aneurysm and was sent to Warm Springs Institute,

he was sure he wanted to work in the helping field of psychology.

Law attributes his experiences and years of teaching for preparing him to be able to be an effective school counselor. He signs all of his correspondences with "Always...for the Children." He works closely with other agencies, colleagues and parents to insure that he does all he can do to help children succeed in school and deal with their childhood problems. Law says he thinks that one cannot raise their IQ (Intelligence Quotient) if the EQ (Emotions Quotient) is not taken care of first. "We can't expect children to learn if they are not emotionally happy," he says. Consequently, he does all he can do—for the children.

## FAISON FAMILY ROOTED IN EDUCATION by Joy Webb

There is an old saying that says, "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." For those of us with questionable family heritage, this saying might not be appreciated. But for the family of **Charlie Jackson (Jack) Faison Sr.**, their heritage is a source of great family pride.

Apples have become a common symbol for teachers and education in general. But for the Faison family, apples more than symbolize education. The apple tree began with Jack Faison Sr., who

served on the Colquitt County Board of Education for 34 years! Born in 1906, Jack Faison Sr. was part of a generation now dubbed, the Greatest Generation—and for good reason. Not only did he survive the Depression and two world wars, but within his tenure on the school board he witnessed our school system grow from having one-room schools to consolidation of the city and county systems, integration, and finally ended his career in 1982 after the construction of the new high school. Words used to describe him by those who worked with him while on the school board are, "compassionate, professional, consistent, promoted excellence and always had the best interests of the students at heart."

Charlie Jackson (Jack) Faison Sr. married Ruby Mae Cleveland. Four children were born to Jack and Ruby. The apples began to fall. Within every generation and every family branch were those dedicated to education. Overall, 10 family members are presently involved in education with nine of those being a part of the Colquitt County School System.

Two family members will be leaving the Colquitt County School System at the end of this school year. Judy Faison, elementary curriculum secretary, has been with us for over 25 years. She has worked under the supervision of five curriculum directors and six superintendents. When asked if testing has increased over the years, her response is "No."

There has always been lots of testing but what has changed has been the accountability and security of the testing process. Just the other day, I walked into her office to find her hidden behind stacks of boxes filled with tests. Her job is one that will not be fully appreciated until she is gone and someone new is hidden underneath stacks of boxes of tests trying to find his/her way out!

The other Faison leaving is **Floyd Faison**, the oldest son of Jack Faison Sr., the husband of Judy, the father of Sabrina Faison Odom, the father-in-law of Julie Roberts Faison, and the uncle of Sally, Kirsten, Jack III, Holly and Laura (all of whom who are employees in our system). Floyd has worked in education a total of 43 years. He began in 1958 as a bus driver, then as a classroom teacher, and then as principal at Hartsfield Elementary School. From there he transferred to

Funston Elementary School as a classroom teacher and later became principal. In 1975, he became the principal of Moultrie Junior High School/ninth grade, which later became Colquitt County Junior High School. Following the legacy of his father, Floyd Faison worked many long hours at the Junior High School. He was committed to the Colquitt County School System and to a job well done. After completing 32 years, he chose to retire quietly. He later came back to the school system and worked part-time his last 11 years at the Central Office as the attendance and zoning compliance coordinator. The Floyd Faison I know is not a pretentious man. I have heard it said; there are two kinds of school people, those who are "self-serving" and those who "serve." Floyd has served our system well, as did his father and his wife. His daughter, his daughter-in-law, and other members of his family continue the fine Faison tradition.



Floyd Faison

Floyd Faison says of his years in education, "The Colquitt County School System has been good to my family and me, including my extended family. My involvement in education started with my father. My father believed in public education, and so do I. I strongly

believe public schools more than adequately prepare their graduates for the real world. I realize public schools are not perfect; however, graduates of public schools enter a world that is also not perfect."

On a lighter note, stop by Floyd's office sometime and have him share some of his school memories. You are guaranteed a belly laugh.

Listed below are the Faison family members and their years of service to the Colquitt County Schools:

- Jack Faison Sr.-34, Floyd Faison-43, Judy Faison-25, Sabrina Odom-20, Kirsten Saunders-18, Jack Faison III-17, Sally Tucker-13, Julie Faison-10, Holly Faison-9, Laura Faison-7, Bob Tucker-17.
- Total Years - 213** ♦

## PAGE Planner 2003-2004

### January 2004

24 PAGE Academic Bowl Semi-finals (Macon)

### February 2004

- 9 PAGE Academic Bowl State Finals (Atlanta)
- 10 SPAGE/PAGE Day on Capitol Hill (Atlanta)
- 13-15 FEA National Conference - (Dallas)
- 27-28 PAGE GAD State Competition (Test C) (Duluth)

### March 2004

9 FEA in GA Day on Capitol Hill (Atlanta)

### April 2004

- 14-17 USAD Competition - (Boise, Idaho)
- 29 State PAGE STAR Banquet (Atlanta)
- 30 Deadline for PAGE/SPAGE Scholarship Applications

### June 2004

7-9 FEA in GA Summer Institute (Milledgeville)

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# Preparation and Certification: Proposed Changes Are on the Way

*PAGE One* magazine has asked the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) to explain the background and context of their proposed changes in certification rules. The following article is intended to provide information and was prepared by the staff of the PSC. No endorsement by *PAGE* should be inferred. As an organization, *PAGE* will participate in the public hearing process and will provide testimony regarding changes we would like to see in the proposed rules. We encourage all our members to fully inform themselves and make their views known to the PSC.

## Preparation and Certification: Proposed Changes Are on the Way What is the PSC's Position?

This article is the first in a series prepared by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC). Focused on the teacher quality issues of educator preparation, certification and recruitment, PSC's intent with these articles is to clarify many of the on-going issues, proposed policy changes and their potential impact on educators. The purpose of this article is to discuss some of the reform background, federal and state initiatives and the status of state efforts. Future articles will address specific No Child Left Behind Title IIA initiatives, state certification and in-field assignment changes, and highlights on both Special Education and Middle Grades issues.

### Background for Reform

The state reform effort is complex and involves the PSC as well as a number of other agencies, including the Georgia Department of Education, the Office of the Governor, the Office of Student Achievement, the Board of Regents, Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs), colleges, school districts and others. Specific issues, such as adequate yearly progress, accountability, and safe schools, are the responsibility of different

agencies. Yet the success of the reform effort will require careful coordination and cooperation.

Formed in 1991, the Professional Standards Commission sets the state policies and procedures for educator preparation, certification and ethics, and provides educator workforce research and development. Composed of 18 members appointed by the governor, specific membership categories include nine classroom teachers, two school administrators, two higher education faculty, two members of local boards of education and three representatives of the business/private sector.

### Teacher Quality

Research convincingly shows that teacher quality is the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement. So what is the problem? Hire the best teachers, put them in the classroom with students and close the door. Unfortunately things are never as simple as we would like. For a variety of reasons, the number of new teachers needed is growing and the number of teachers completing our preparation programs is declining.

While the need for teacher quality is clear, the research on most other issues is not as clear, and that brings about the never-ending debate. What is the best way to prepare teachers? Is content knowledge more important than pedagogy? Can just anyone teach? How do we retain and recruit the best teachers? What does having a certificate really mean? In spite of a good deal of research and countless "expert" advice and opinions on how to fix things, these tough, complex issues are not easily fixed.

To make these problems even worse, more than 30 percent of Georgia's new teachers leave the classroom within the first five years. Of the 13,084 new teachers hired in Georgia in FY02, 63 percent replaced teachers who left the classroom

## HIGHLIGHTS OF PROPOSED CERTIFICATE CHANGES

1. Combine Provisional (B), Probationary (PA), Emergency (E) and Conditional (C) certificates into one certificate known as Non-Renewable Professional Certificate (N), which is valid, in most cases, for five years.
2. Create new "Technical Specialist" certificate for specified Technology/ Career Education fields.
3. Expand college accreditation from "Regional" to agencies approved by U.S. DOE and/or Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
4. Replace 2.5 GPA for initial certificate with more consistent requirement of: bachelor's degree or higher from PSC-approved accredited institution, PRAXIS I, PRAXIS II and the employer interview. NOTE: Higher Education institutions, NCATE, etc. will maintain their GPA requirements.
5. If currently hold a Clear Renewable certificate in a TEACHING field, may add new TEACHING fields by either: passing PRAXIS II or completing a state-approved program.
6. Specified out-of-state experience to exempt selected Special Georgia Requirements of content assessment, special education course, recency and teaching of reading and writing.
7. Renewal requirement course work focused on student achievement and school improvement plans. Will accept specified college courses, Professional Learning Units (PLUs) or Continuing Education Units (CEUs).
8. Local school systems have option of hiring, at their discretion, a building principal who does not have three years of public school teaching experience.
9. PRAXIS I requirement added to Permit and Technology/Career Education fields, not as initial but at three-year conversion point.
10. New Route to Certification: Hold a bachelor's degree or higher; Pass PRAXIS I; Pass PRAXIS II; Pass PRAXIS Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT); be offered a teaching job and the employing school system may request a five-year (N) certificate. During that period: complete all Special Georgia Requirements; a one-year supervised practicum; and be recommended by an approved provider for a Clear Renewable certificate.



and 37 percent filled positions resulting from student enrollment growth, class size reductions and new programs. According to the *Georgia Educator Workforce 2002 Report*, Georgia teacher preparation programs supplied 22 percent of the new hires, while just over 32 percent came from other states. FY03 figures show that over 46 percent of the total new hires came from other states.

**National Reform**

In December 2001 the federal government passed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), establishing significant guidelines and requirements addressing student academic achievement. One of many important and controversial aspects of this legislation is that reform in state education is now driven by federal guidelines. The PSC role in NCLB is primarily within the Title IIA area of teacher quality requirements. "Highly qualified" standards for new and veteran teachers and paraprofessionals are now in place for Title IIA schools and will be phased in for all teachers of core academics by 2006. A major focus of these initiatives is to significantly increase the

content knowledge skills of our teaching force. Specific details in some areas are still being resolved, especially in the area of Special Education. Information on how the state is implementing NCLB teacher quality is found on the PSC website at [gapsc.com](http://gapsc.com) via the NCLB link.

**Georgia's Response**

Since the initiation of NCLB, Georgia agencies have been working out the details of the state implementation plan. State definitions and standards had to be resolved and specific time schedules established. A myriad of data needed to be gathered, consolidated and reported back to Washington and other state agencies. On Nov. 6, 2003, representatives from the PSC, Georgia Department of Education, the Board of Regents and several other agencies met with a U.S. Department of Education Assistance Team to discuss the status of Georgia's efforts in complying with key elements of NCLB and to solicit recommendations and advice from the assistance team in the specific area of special education. While much work remains ahead, in many areas the assistance team indicated that

Georgia is ahead of many other states.

An important, upcoming event in this area is a PSC and Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL) sponsored state-wide conference on Georgia Teacher Quality. Focused on issues concerning Title IIA teacher quality, the conference will take place on Feb. 19-20 at the Crowne Plaza in Macon, Ga. Registration will be limited to 300 educators. Additional details on the meeting and registration process are available on the PSC website at [gapsc.com](http://gapsc.com) at the Message Center.

In addition to new federal laws, the state of Georgia has also passed legislation that will bring about important teacher quality change. Signed into law July 1, 2003, House Bill 590 charges the PSC to revise the certification process. Specific directives include such statements as "ensure high-quality certification standards" and facilitate "the interstate mobility of out-of-state certified educators" with particular focus on initial certification standards, renewal requirements and the elimination of out-of-field assignments.

Certification standards are viewed by

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some as the protective "gatekeepers" of the profession. Others describe it as an arbitrary set of hurdles that frequently serve more as a barrier to discourage potentially excellent candidates than as a measure of real teacher quality. The fact is that too many teachers have had less than positive experiences with certification requirements at some point in their career. School systems also have had difficulties in finding "highly qualified" educators due to complicated certificate requirements that may not necessarily measure teacher quality. In spite of improvements in Georgia in recent years, the PSC believes it is time to stop nibbling around the edges and redesign the entire process. Certification must be simplified and tied to meaningful requirements and standards that ensure that increased numbers of teachers enter the classroom meeting appropriate requirements. Then, completion of approved preparation programs and continued professional learning experiences should continue to provide growth and development that will improve student achievement and school improvement.

As this edition of *PAGE ONE* goes to the printer, the PSC has voted to initiate rule-making procedures for this major revision of the state certification system. Designed to simplify the certification system and eliminate barriers while raising important standards, the proposed rules are now posted on the PSC website at [gapsc.com](http://gapsc.com). The rule-making procedures provide a 30-day period of public review and comment, including one day for a public hearing, after which the commission members will study the comments and bring the issues to a vote at the Feb. 12 meeting. All interested parties are encouraged to review the rules and submit written comments to the commission as outlined on the website.

#### **PROPOSED CERTIFICATION RULE CHANGE TIMELINE**

**Dec. 11** Commission Vote to Initiate Rule-making

**Dec. 15 - Jan. 15** Public Review and Comment

**Jan. 7** Public Hearing, Atlanta

**Feb. 12** Commission Vote on adoption/revision

**Mar. 15** Effective date of rules



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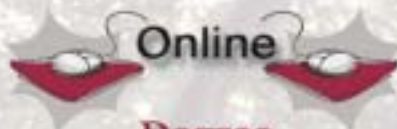


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