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May/June 2004



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*PAGE ONE* magazine (ISSN 1523-6188) is mailed to all PAGE members, selected higher education units and other school-related professionals. An annual subscription is included in PAGE membership dues. A subscription for others is \$10.00 annually. Periodicals postage paid at Atlanta, Georgia, and additional mailing offices. (USPS 017-347) **Postmaster: Send address changes to PAGE ONE, P.O. Box 942270, Atlanta, GA 31141-2270.**

*PAGE ONE* magazine is published five times a year (January, March, May, September and November) by New South Publishing, Inc.; 1303 Hightower Trail, Suite 101; Atlanta, GA 30350; 770-650-1102. Copyright ©2004

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On the cover: Student using e-instruction unit in Houston County High School classroom. Photo by Rod Riley

The articles published in each issue of *PAGE ONE* magazine represent the views of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of PAGE, except where clearly stated.

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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# 10 Percent Circumstance— 90 Percent Attitude

**Life is comprised of 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you take your life and use it to great rewards. Much like the expression, “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.”**



DEENA HOCH

I recently had a wonderful, life-changing experience. I was able to attend the Norham Leadership Conference at the University of Oxford in England. Besides soaking up the smell of a good “cuppa” tea, feeling the stony character of buildings older than the United States and being humbled in the shadow of the spires of colleges where some of the world’s most famous people have studied, I learned that the act of educating students is similar in both the United States and the British Isles. England at present is dealing with many of the same educational issues as Georgia. We have state/national curricula that is always being revamped, budgets that never seem to cover everything and tests that seem to determine the course of all of the above.

In my discovery of these similarities and some differences, I met Dr. Vivian Williams, the chair the conference, who had recently undergone a serious illness. His acquaintance was possibly the greatest gift to me. While watching Dr. Williams cope with the difficulty of handling everyday tasks, I was reminded that life is comprised of 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you take your life and use it to great rewards. Much like the expression, “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.”

As a novice teacher, I had an easy time finding the lemons, but I didn’t find much sugar. As I have gained experience as well as maturity, I have found making lemonade of my situations an easier task. Sometimes, especially in light of the recent political battles in the state government that did not seem to benefit educators, I searched for goodness to sweeten my lemon-

ade, but have found little. I am dismayed and alarmed at the level of discouragement and hopelessness of educators, from superintendents to bus drivers in the present state of education. Without teachers, none of us would be in the positions that we hold; we would have no doctors, lawyers or plumbers. Education is the hope of our world.

As a global society, we need to hold educators in reverence because they hold the future, our children, in their hands. Without a good, sound educational program, a state or nation is lost. PAGE is the largest organization of educators in the state of Georgia. We are working to inspire new teachers, develop great teachers through the National Board programs and workshops and support educators who are in difficult situations by providing immediate legal advice and help. We need to react to the ennui of the public toward education by doing what we do best—educating. Letters, e-mails, phone calls to legislators, neighbors, media and the local barber need to convince people that we are doing our best with what we have, but it is getting hard to find the sugar when we: 1) have to let teachers go; 2) cut programs that benefit students; and 3) have to teach with few supplies or technology.

If it sounds like my attitude is less than 90 percent, then please forgive me. While in England, I also had some time each evening to knit and reflect on life and the responsibilities held by Dr. Williams’ daughter, Cerys, who manages the daily chores and duties of her father. She gave me a book as we parted. Inside, one of the quotes from Oliver Wendell Holmes sums up my newest path as I look forward to a new job and reflect on this past year, “The great thing in this world is not so much where we are, but in what direction we are moving.”

Remember, in life, it’s 10 percent circumstance and 90 percent attitude. ♦

# This General Assembly May Be a Harbinger of Future Legislatures

*"Policymaking ends when politics begins,"  
—Representative Louise McBee*

The 2004 session of the General Assembly may well be an historic benchmark for a number of reasons—most of them bad. Our elected officials had to struggle with the cumulative effects of three years of decreasing revenues, and their inability to approve a FY 2005 budget during the 40-day session stemmed not so much from the lack of funds as it did from a high point of partisan posturing and rancor.

In previous sessions, educators had to concern themselves with the substance of the policymaking and whether or not sufficient funding would be made available. Both issues were prime concerns again this year, but exacerbated by the partisan activity that took place on both sides of the aisle—and, to be fair, from the governor's office as well.

The disagreements grew so rancorous and positions became so hardened that thoughtful consensus was often impossible and in the end Governor Sonny Perdue was forced to call a special session to resolve the budget impasse.

Representative McBee, as quoted above on Georgia Public Radio, was speaking about the HOPE Scholarship debate, which began with a thoughtful set of recommendations from a bipartisan commission appointed to study the continued financial health of the program. Thoughtful debate and discussion, not to mention action, came to an abrupt halt when partisan politics overtook the process.

Perhaps it was overly optimistic to believe that elected officials could seriously and thoughtfully debate and resolve issues of policy and funding in an election year, in a budget crunch and in the face of the relatively recent advent of two vigorous political parties in Georgia.

We have worked very hard this session, using both our website and e-mail network, to keep

our members informed on the issues and empowered to take action by contacting their elected representatives. We have also worked hard to remain above the fray. When the governor and Georgia Senate produced a version of the budget and the House leadership produced a very different budget for education, we made both plans available to the PAGE membership. This information brought about a response that was unprecedented in scope, and we made it publicly known that the majority of PAGE respondents favored the House approach.

In the closing days of the regular session, as partisan rancor intensified, both sides of the budget issue released statements and conferred with the news media in ways that were long on name calling but short on additional facts. This regrettable, but frequent, side effect of partisanship may be commonly "atmospheric" in the coming years.

We hope this is not so. But we are prepared to address issues of education policy and funding in a thoughtful and bipartisan way. We appreciate the technology that allows us to communicate so quickly and effectively with our members. We also appreciate the enlightened and growing activism of our members. We promise to continue the PAGE tradition of positive professionalism and the practice of bringing light and not heat to education decision making.

We believe our members expect no less. ♦

**We appreciate the technology that allows us to communicate so quickly and effectively with our members. We also appreciate the enlightened and growing activism of our members.**



DR. ALLENE MAGILL



# TECHNOLOGY

## After a Decade, How Are We Doing?

By Lee Raudonis

It has been just over a decade (1994) since state lottery dollars were first allocated to install satellite dishes and other technology in every Georgia public elementary, middle and high school. Three years later, Governor Zell Miller set a goal of providing computers and Internet access for all of the state's public schools. Since then, hundreds of millions of state and local dollars have been spent for the purchase of technology in an effort to bring schools into the digital age.

But has this technology chase been worth the cost? Has the new technology helped teachers become more productive and/or more creative? And what about the future—will continued expenditures for rapidly changing technology actually help students learn more? Or, will the constant challenge and expense of providing schools with the latest technological learning devices drain resources that might be put to better use elsewhere?

In 1998, Jamie McKenzie, editor of *From Now On—The Educational Technology Journal*, asked the same questions.

“Access to the Electronic Highway becomes a priority,” he wrote. “Networking schools becomes a goal in itself. For some it becomes an obsession. Bill Gates has compared the rapid development of the Internet to the California Gold Rush of 1849. Some of us remember the miners who returned empty handed.

“Billions are diverted from roofing projects, libraries and art programs to bring schools ‘online.’ Is it really worth all the money and the bother? Will we see dramatic increases in student achievement to justify this investment?

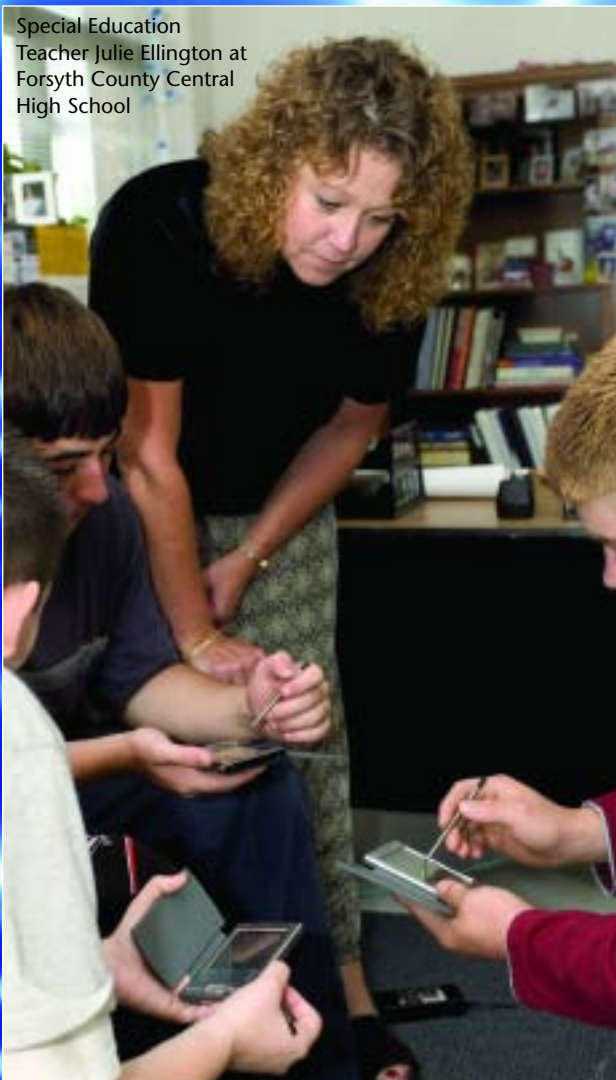
“In many cases—those districts which fail to clarify learning goals and fund professional development—the answer will be ‘No!’ There is no credible evidence that networks improve student reading, math or thinking skills unless they are in service of carefully crafted learning programs which show students how to interpret information and make up their own minds.

“In the best cases—with the right program planning and robust professional development—schools will use these new tools and resources in ways which will improve student performance on high stakes state tests.”

McKenzie continued. “The potential is amazing. An impressive information harvest is just within our grasp. Suddenly we might have all the cultural treasures and the best ideas of human civilization available within a simple mouse click (provided someone digitizes and shares them). ...Schools may take advantage of these electronic networks to raise a generation of free range students— young people capable of navigating through a complex, often disorganized information landscape while making up their own minds about the important issues of their lives and their times. The same skills which allow students to make up their own minds will serve them well on life's tests as well as increasingly challenging state tests.”

That was six years ago. If you were to pose the same questions today to

Special Education  
Teacher Julie Ellington at  
Forsyth County Central  
High School







A video microscope from Houston County High School Science Department.

At Houston County High School, technology is considered as vital to the learning process as textbooks, pens and paper.

teachers and students at Houston County High School (HCHS), they might look at you as if you had just come out of a space ship or time machine. To the faculty and students of HCHS, technology and learning are as inseparable as mac and cheese, mashed potatoes and gravy, or—for the low-carb crowd—eggs and bacon. To the Houston County “Digital” Bears, the concept of a school without technology is as alien as a marching band without drums.



Deputy Superintendent of Information Technology Mike Hall

“Seven years ago, we had less than 100 computers in the whole school, most of which were in vocational classrooms, and only one green screen terminal that could access student information,” says former HCHS Principal Mike Hall, who has recently been named by State School Superintendent Kathy Cox as deputy superintendent of information technology. “Now we have more than 1,200 computers and an integrated network consisting of seven drops in every classroom. In addition, we are totally wireless and have four wireless hotspots outside the school, interactive boards in three-fourths of the classrooms and hundreds of electronic testing devices. We also have a classroom management system that connects students, teachers, parents and administrators in real time.”

To most people who attended or taught school when the latest technology was Hi-Fi, rather than Wi-Fi, the amount of technology described by Hall is almost unimaginable, but it is only a portion of the school’s amazing collection of software and hardware. That is because Houston County High is an Intel Model School, one of only three in the country. It is also a Hitachi Beta School, a Lighthouse School and a Promethean Case Study program. If the questions

posed earlier can be answered anywhere in Georgia, they surely can be answered in Houston County, where technology is thoroughly integrated into virtually every conceivable type of classroom environment. At this unique school, technology is considered as vital to the learning process as textbooks, pens and paper, because, as Hall and his staff and students will tell you, “today’s world is dependent on technology and on technological solutions.”

To understand how technology is integrated into the learning process at HCHS, let’s take a journey through this unique institution—a school that even tech-savvy students consider years ahead of its time.

First stop, the Music Lab. Thanks to Intel, the Music Department has a Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) lab that consists of 15 wireless lap-



Music lab, Houston County High School.

## Where Are Our Schools Today?

The Georgia Department of Education has just completed a massive analysis of the use of technology in Georgia's schools. Although some schools and school systems are doing very well in the use of technology, others are lagging behind. Here are some of the study's findings:



### Number of modern computers in each classroom: (Modern computers are defined as a Pentium III or equivalent).

0	1-2	3-5	6-9	10+
22%	57%	15%	2%	4%

### Percent of Media Centers Meeting Minimum Standards for Modern Computer Access

Elementary	Middle	High
44%	47%	63%

### Frequency of Computer Use for Learning (Percentage of teachers who say their students use computers).

Daily	Weekly	Less than once a week
38%	28%	34%

### Technology Implementation—Skill Acquisition Level

Lower Level Skills	Middle Level Skills	Upper Level Skills
73%	21%	6%

### Teacher Personal Computer Skill Level

Low	Moderate	High
44%	48%	8%

### Percentage of Educators Who Align Technology Use to Research-Based Instructional Models

Low	Moderate	High
22%	63%	15%

tops connected to MIDI-enabled keyboards that students can use to compose, transcribe and arrange music. They can also use the devices for ear notation and note training and to explore music theory. The lab is fun and exciting for all music students, and it is invaluable to those students seeking a career in music composition.

In the Graphics Department, Star Panel technology enables students to capture images from a variety of sources, examine them and export them to other devices where they can be used in commercial art, photography or printing.

Not to be outdone, the English and Social Studies departments

have their own technological goodies, including Promethean, Smart and Hitachi boards. These are interactive boards on which teachers can write notes, assignments and other messages. But unlike the dull, lifeless chalk or white boards of yesterday, these boards can also serve as computer monitors that teachers can use to access the Internet, display video clips, call up maps, charts and other teaching tools, providing a variety of resources to engage students in the learning process.

Along with the boards, the classrooms utilize the Active Vote Electronic Testing System to keep students engaged and help teachers monitor their progress instantly. Students use small, hand-held devices resembling a television remote control to instantly register their "votes" on the answers to questions posed by their teachers on the Promethean Board. As social studies teacher Cameron Andrews explains, the new technology enables teachers at Houston County to open up a wide variety of resources not available in yesterday's classrooms. "While a lot of the materials in our media center are somewhat dated, we can now access current materials in class on the Internet in real time," says Andrews.

Another valuable technology is the TEGRITY System, allowing teachers to create a web-based streaming video that can be accessed by a browser or on CD. The system combines a digital video camera, audio devices and the TEGRITY software. The system is mobile and can be used with either a regular white board or with a Promethean Board. Among the many advantages for students is the ability to access the information from home in case of absence or just to review. For teachers, the system allows greater flexibility in preparing lessons and the ability to save the lessons for future use.

One of the exciting facts about the technologies being used at Houston County High is that they are used by students of all ability levels, in all grades and in all types of classes. A perfect example is the school's Woods Program. Whether the students are preparing for a career in architecture or wanting to learn how to build high quality furniture, the same technology is available to them.

All students in the class have access to brand new wireless Intel Centrino computers with AutoCad 2004 software. The Computer Active Design (CAD) software—the same software that professional architects use—can be used to design house plans and make blueprints or to design and help build high-quality furniture. Ask furniture and architectural drafting teacher Gary Howard, and he will tell you that the combination of software and wireless labs has a tremendous impact on learning for his students.

Other departments making good use of technology include the agriculture department and the Air Force ROTC program. Agriculture students use computer technology for a broad variety of projects, from artificial insemination to pre-birth identification of the gender of a calf—using equipment similarly used by medical doctors to identify the gender of an unborn baby—to designing residential or commercial landscapes. ROTC students use computer flight simulators to supplement their classroom instruction, and the instruction is so effective that all 10 of the cadets who took the ground flight test in 2003 passed.

As one would expect, the Science Department at HCHS has also embraced technology. A video microscope connected to interactive panel technology allows teachers to capture video or still photographs from the microscope for projection onto a large screen for students to view before they look into their own microscopes. It can be shown in real time or saved for later review by



The Internet is here; the computers are here; technology is here, and it is here to stay.

students who were absent or just need additional time. Students create their own digital videos and photos from live specimens. Other devices used to inspire curiosity and aid learning include a spectrometer, computer-based labs and gel electrophoresis that helps students learn about genetics.

Teachers in various courses incorporate the CPS (Classroom Performance System), an interactive classroom tool used to enlighten students by engaging them in the learning process. Using remote devices similar to the Auto Vote System, students provide immediate feedback to teachers, and using this information, teachers tailor instruction to student weaknesses. The system also has a "challenge board" which uses a format similar to the quiz show "Jeopardy" to help students learn material and review for tests in a non-threatening environment at their own pace.

Another device that encourages teacher creativity is Hitachi's Star Board or Star Panel. The flat-screen monitor, on which teachers can write with a special interactive pen, instantaneously projects an image onto a standard white board. The magni-



Student using CPS for remote response in Henry County classroom.

fied, interactive image is easily viewed by students, and the device is touted as an electronic overhead on steroids. The instructor can project images from the Internet computer files and other digital sources, while editing and saving for future uses. Students using laser pointers highlight information on the screen to make comments or ask questions.

Obviously, a major part of Houston County's commitment to technology is to bring the technology into the classroom and integrate it into the learning process. HCSC purchased its first two wireless carts in 2000 and has since acquired 11 more carts. Teachers have found that it is much easier—and far more valu-

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Gary Howard using Woods Program with drafting students at Houston County High School.

Students using laptops in Henry Co. classroom.

## Board members and school system administrators view technology as an important tool to help educators achieve their goals.

able—to bring the computers to the students rather than moving the students to a computer lab or media center. Students also have Internet access near hotspots outside of the building.

And where is all of this leading?

For foreign language teacher Mamie Caldwell, the direction is clear. “I feel confident that in the future each student will have his or her own laptop computer,” she says. “Their computer will also be their textbook. The Internet is here; the computers are here; technology is here, and it is here to stay.”

Yes, technology is here, but is it really cost effective? Ask the students and faculty at HCHS and their answer will be a resounding, “Yes.” But neither school administrators nor their corporate sponsors expect outsiders to accept their word for it; therefore, Intel has launched a national study to determine whether 24-hour access to computers and the Internet actually encourages student learning.

“What they did at Houston County High was divide 56 students from their 9th-grade academy into two groups of 28 students with similar eighth-grade performance data,” explains Wally Reeves, director of technology services for Houston County Schools. “Then they gave the test group 24-hour access to brand new tablet PC computers and the Internet, along with a lot of valuable software, while the control group was not provided any special access to computers. Both groups of students have the same teachers and the same classes, and all the students took the ASSET, the technical college entrance exam, when they entered school. Both groups also took the ASSET at the

end of the school year. Those tests, along with the end-of-course tests in key subjects, will be used to determine if technology does make a difference in student achievement.”

“I am confident that the tests will show a difference,” says Hall. “We have already seen a clear difference in their overall student performance.”

And what technology has made the greatest difference in Houston County?

“I’m sure a lot of students and teachers have their own favorites,” says Reeves, “but our high school teachers tell us that our SmartWeb administrative system has done the most to make their lives as teachers a little more manageable and to improve communication with parents. The SmartWeb system contains centralized e-mail, a centralized grade book and a centralized parent communication program.

Hall agrees that SmartWeb has been a major timesaver for teachers. “It has virtually eliminated administrative paperwork for them,” he says.

Clearly technology has become a great timesaver for teachers, but what about all of the classroom hardware and software?

Is it really valuable, or just a lot of expensive gadgets and “toys”?

“Technology is changing the instructional model to meet the needs of students today,” Hall says. “Without technology, we would essentially be using the same model that was in use in the 19th century.”

But what about Georgia’s other schools, the ones that aren’t fortunate enough to be Intel Model Schools or Hitachi Beta Schools? How far along are they in adapting new technologies and integrating them into the learning process?

“Georgia has come a long way,” says Bailey Mitchell, director of technology for Forsyth County Schools. “The first school computers were used in the front office. Then, some were put into media centers to replace card catalogs. Next, schools began to set up computer labs so students had access to computers. In 1994-95, the state’s technology plan established a goal of having five PCs per classroom. And now, the emphasis in most systems has shifted completely to enhancing the learning process.”

Jill Hobson, coordinator of instructional technology for Forsyth County Schools expands Mitchell’s analysis. “Most of the early technology training for teachers centered on how to use programs such as Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, etc.,” she explains. “Now our focus is on curriculum and using technology in classroom instruction. There is no doubt that computers have made teachers more efficient and given them access to more information about their students and more resources to use to develop lessons, but technology can do much more than that if used as an integral part of students’ learning experience.”

Ann Ware, director of technology services in Henry County for six years, echoes Hobson’s views. She says that her school system has made a major commitment to using technology to improve instruction.

“These are not good financial times for technology,” Ware says, “but our local board has looked at local school needs and at system needs and has come up with a good package that focuses on student achievement. Board members and school system administrators view technology as an important tool to help educators achieve their goals.”

With the financial support from the board, Ware and her staff have worked with school officials to improve the technology



infrastructure within the system.

"We now have a fiber-based wide area network with 100 megabit connectivity at each school, a centralized e-mail system that teachers can check from anywhere, a centralized grade book program for secondary schools and centralized parent communications," she says.

In its classrooms, Henry County is utilizing some of the same hardware and software found in Houston County, Forsyth County and other systems throughout the state. Wireless laptop computers, e-instruction units (infrared pads that students use to provide instant feedback to teachers), graphing calculators and smart boards are just some of the devices being used in an effort to make learning more engaging to students.

And it is student learning that will continue to be the focus of technology, Ware says.

"Although we are technology specialists, we are also educators," she explains, "and we know that technology is about education and instruction."

Anyone who questions whether technology can improve instruction need look no further than almost any classroom in which a teacher truly understands technology and knows how to integrate it into his or her lessons. One such example is the classroom of Bill Schuyler of Forsyth Central High School.

Schuyler, Georgia's Science Teacher of the Year for 2003/2004, uses computer-generated graphics on an interactive white board to make a lesson on the human heart both interesting and understandable for his AP Biology students. And, by using a simple device called Science Workshop Interface to take and display the EKGs of his students on the board, he makes the lesson intensely personal and engaging for them. By overlapping the EKG of a student at rest with the EKG of another student who has just exercised strenuously, Schuyler helps students become part of the lesson, not just spectators.

Do all teachers need to be as technologically savvy as Schuyler? Not really, says Gary Davison, principal of Settles Bridge Elementary School in Forsyth County. But they do need to be open to the possibilities of technology and to trust students to use it.

"I have seen 300-500 candidates for teaching jobs in the last few weeks, and I have asked them a lot of questions to determine their level of trust and their willingness to try something different," he explains. "To me, it is their mindset about technology that is important, not just that

they meet the minimum state technology requirements. A teacher may be very good at using technology personally but not have a clue how to use it with kids. Our philosophy is simple: If you engage students, performance improves."

Mitchell puts it more succinctly, "If we want kids to learn, we need to let them use the tools with which they do most of their learning."

Putting this theory into practice is Julie Ellington, a special education teacher at Forsyth County Central High School. In some ways, her classroom looks remarkably similar to the classrooms in schools attended by most students over the past three generations. The desks are virtually identical to those that students have occupied for well over 50 years, and the student artwork adorning the walls and bulletin boards is not all that different from what might have been created by a student in 1954. As soon as the day's lesson begins, however, it becomes obvious that this is definitely not your father's or your grandmother's classroom. The technology being employed by Ellington to give her students a quiz was not available a generation ago and was not even imaginable two short

generations ago.

Jill Hobson has provided the students in Ellington's Special Education with the latest Palm hand-held computers. After a few brief instructions, including one on how to beam information from one Palm to another, the students seem very comfortable with the new devices and eagerly explore what it will do.

"As David Thornburg, director of the Thornburg Center, puts it, kids are digital natives, and adults are the immigrants," says Hobson. "They love almost anything dealing with technology and adapt to it almost instantly."

Who could have imagined a decade ago when the first computers were being shipped to schools throughout Georgia that just a few short years later, teachers would be taking attendance electronically and communicating with parents via e-mail and web sites? And who could have foreseen that the chalkboard would give way to a giant interactive computer screen that allows teachers and students to surf the Internet, write and draw using nothing but their fingers—and a few thousand dollars worth of equipment?

*Continued on page 25*

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## A STAR is Named



PAGE Executive Director Dr. Allene Magill (center) joined in saluting the 2004 State PAGE STAR Teacher Dr. Cheryl Crooks (left) and the 2004 State PAGE STAR Student Grace Tiao. Tiao is a senior at Wheeler High School in Cobb County.

**M**ay I have the envelope please?" asked John Varner, director of the PAGE Foundation. After receiving the envelope from PAGE Foundation President Tom Wommack, Varner pulled out its contents and announced the 2004 State PAGE STAR Student: "Grace Tiao of Wheeler High School in Cobb County." He also announced that the State PAGE STAR Teacher is Tiao's Honors Chemistry

2004 PAGE State STAR Student Grace Tiao (center) was congratulated by her PAGE State STAR Teacher Dr. Cheryl Crooks (to her right) and her mother, Jui-Ling Li (to her left), following the announcement that she was named the 2004 State PAGE STAR Student.

Teacher Dr. Cheryl Crooks, and that the First Runner-up State PAGE STAR Student is Nneka Ufere, of The Westminster Schools in Atlanta, and her STAR teacher is Dr. Jere Link.

As the State PAGE STAR Student, Tiao received a \$5,000 scholarship from BellSouth, and her STAR Teacher, Dr. Crooks, was awarded a \$2,500 from The Frances Wood Wilson Foundation. As first runner-up, Ufere received a \$1,000 scholarship from The Coca-Cola Company and a \$1,000 scholarship from the PAGE Foundation. Her STAR Teacher, Dr. Link, received the \$500 Mozelle Christian Award. Each of the four winners received engraved glass awards from the PAGE Foundation.

At the State PAGE STAR Banquet on April 29 at the Sheraton Buckhead in Atlanta, Tiao and Ufere were chosen from a field of 25 who had the highest SAT score (or tied for the highest score) among all STAR students in their respective PAGE STAR program regions. A panel of six



judges, comprised of business and education leaders, made its decision based on student interviews and written submissions.

“It was not an easy decision,” said Dale Lyles, chair of the judges committee and media specialist at Newnan Crossing Elementary School in Newnan, Ga. “The caliber of students was such that no matter whom we chose, we felt that we would be slighting the others, but we had to make a choice.”

The judges’ decision was the culmination of a process that actually began in January. At that time, a total of 467 seniors in 442 high schools throughout Georgia were notified that by earning the highest score on the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) and being among the top 10 percent of their graduating class in grade point average, they had qualified as their school’s STAR Student for 2004.

In February, PAGE announced the 187 System STAR Students, and in March, recognition events honoring these outstanding students were held in communities such as Jasper, Monroe, Griffin, Statesboro, Waycross,

*Continued on page 12*



Bill Covington (left), representing The Coca-Cola Company, presented 2004 First Runner-up State PAGE STAR Student Nnika Ufere (center) a \$1,000 scholarship from The Coca-Cola Company. Joining them is Mozelle Christian (right), the first director of the STAR program. Four years ago, Christian had established the Mozelle Christian Award to honor the Runner-up State PAGE STAR Teacher.



State School Superintendent Kathy Cox represented the Georgia Department of Education, a co-sponsor of the PAGE STAR program. Cox encouraged the STAR Students to consider the profound impact that teachers had had on their lives and consider teaching as one of their career options.

Virgil Collins, director of regulatory and external affairs for BellSouth Georgia Operations (far left), presents State PAGE STAR Student Grace Tiao (right) the \$5,000 scholarship from BellSouth. Also pictured are Bill Covington, with The Coca-Cola Company, and State PAGE STAR Teacher Dr. Cheryl Crooks.



STAR Student Nneka Ufere (left) and her STAR Teacher Dr. Jere Link (right) proceeded to the podium to accept their First Runner-up State STAR awards. Dr. Link taught Ufere European History.



# Foundation News

## A STAR IS NAMED

*Continued from page 11*

Americus, Columbus and others throughout Georgia. It was at those events that the region STAR Students were named and received a \$500 cash award from the Cecil B. Day Foundation. The region STAR students also received a \$100 award from The Coca-Cola company which co-sponsored the state banquet with the PAGE Foundation. The STAR (Student Teacher Achievement Recognition) program is coordinated and sponsored by the PAGE

Foundation. Program co-sponsors include the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia Department of Education. Now in its 46th year, the program has honored more than 19,000 students and their teachers for academic excellence. This year, 17 of the finalists scored 1600 on a single administration of the SAT examination.

Tiao and Ufere both plan to attend Harvard College this fall. ♦

> President of the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education Steve Dolinger (far left), representing the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, co-sponsor of the PAGE STAR program, talked with STAR Regional Winners (left to right) Jae Yang, of Alpharetta; Jelle van de Vall, of Alpharetta; Walker Matthews of Athens; and PAGE Executive Director Dr. Allene Magill during the reception sponsored by The Coca-Cola Company.



< Nwandi Lawson (left), co-anchor of Georgia Public Television's "Lawmakers" program, enjoyed a light moment with finalist Adam Tart of Marietta (right), during his interview at the State PAGE STAR Banquet. Lawson interviewed each of the finalists as a part of the evening's festivities.

> The State PAGE STAR program's 2004 Regional Finalists gathered for a group picture at the Judges' Luncheon. During the luncheon, each student was presented with the Coca-Cola Award of \$100 and had an opportunity to talk with the judges in a more relaxed, informal setting. Pictured are (front row, left to right from bottom of stairs) Patrick Poole of Valdosta; Grace Tiao of Marietta; Sung Kim of Rossville; Xuan Gui of Roswell; Victoria Clark of Waycross; Anant Mandawat of Martinez; and Justin Ross of Marietta; (second row, left to right) Chun Li of Kennesaw; Jelle van de Vall of Alpharetta; and Jason Miller of Jackson; (third row, left to right) Dan Bolta, Jr. of Savannah; Nneka Ufere of Marietta; and Bryan Overcarsh of Stone Mountain; (fourth row, left to right) Donald Acker of Atlanta and Vadim Lantukh of Alpharetta; (fifth row, left to right) Adam Colligan of Martinez and Adam Tart of Marietta; (sixth row left to right) Trevor Murphy of Atlanta; Michael Vaughan of Gainesville; and



Noah Mink of Macon; (seventh row, left to right) Jae Yang of Alpharetta and Nathaniel Hiers of Moultrie; (eighth row, left to right) Chris Pryby of Warner Robins and John Doyle, of Hogansville; and (top of stairs) Walker Matthews of Athens.



# 2004 STAR Teachers—System Winners

• Indicates Region Winner & State Finalist

Appling County	Jonathan Hickox	Dade County	Patricia Taylor	Irwin County	Sandra Sumner	Richmond County	Elizabeth Walpert
Atkinson County	Roy Burkett	Dalton City	Lisa Peebles	Jackson County	Kathy Collins	Rockdale County	June Johnston
Atlanta City	Dr. Chris Harrow •	Dawson County	Laura Hendrix	Jasper County	Charlotte S. Crawley	Rome City	Lewis S. Saunders, Jr.
Atlanta City	Dr. Jere Link •	Decatur City	Jeanne D. Lee	Jeff Davis County	Jim Howard	Schley County	Ronnie Dupree
Bacon County	Danny McLean	Decatur County	Joan Beers	Jefferson County	Alysia Flakes	Screven County	James Sheppard
Baldwin County	Cathy Grimes	DeKalb County	Christina Kaylor •	Jefferson City	Sherry Hix	Seminole County	John F. Vanstone
Banks County	Kelly York	DeKalb County	Dr. Diana Lynn Farmer •	Jenkins County	Natalie Whittle	Social Circle City	LeAnn Mitchell
Barrow County	Richard Weeks	Dodge County	Charlotte Miller	Johnson County	Dannie Davis	Spalding County	Lealane Sanders
Bartow County	Barbie Sheppard	Dodge County	Phyllis Sanders	Jones County	Julia C. Simpson	Stephens County	Jennie Clifton
Ben Hill County	Robert Couey	Dooly County	Bobbie J. King	Jones County	Sherry P. Sanders	Stewart County	Yvonne Davis
Berrien County	Carol Tomberlin	Dougherty County	Leigh J. Shepherd	Lamar County	Scott Turner	Sumter County	Jennifer Richmond
Bibb County	Stan Brown •	Douglas County	John R. Siegel	Lanier County	Richard M. Smith	Tattnall County	John S. Lewis
Bleckley County	Jane Sly	Dublin City	Rachel Brown	Laurens County	Margie Sewell	Taylor County	John Upchurch
Brantley County	Bonita B. Bullard	Early County	Karen McNeal	Lee County	Stanley Ray Phillips, Jr.	Telfair County	Coleen W. McIver
Bremen City	Carla Pollard	Echols County	Kristi A. Steltenpohl	Liberty County	Carolyn Annette Payne	Terrell County	William Jackson Harris
Brooks County	Horace Walker	Effingham County	Maureen O'Bryan	Lincoln County	Lena Lee Robinson	Thomas County	Carol Sheftall
Bryan County	Joseph Traywick	Elbert County	Ronald D. Kidd	Long County	Carolyn Williamson	Thomaston-Upson County	Cmdr. F. Warren
Buford City	Patsy Maltbie	Emanuel County	Sally Grover	Lowndes County	Judy Martin •	Thomasville City	Denise Fletcher
Bulloch County	Charles A. Whiddon	Evans County	Diane Hathaway	Lumpkin County	Lloyd Cupp	Tift County	Deborah L. Salter
Burke County	Renee Hickman	Fannin County	Jennifer King	Madison County	Mike Haynes	Toombs County	Sheila Pittman
Butts County	Mark Alling •	Fayette County	Christopher D. Craig	Marietta City	Don Parkhurst	Towns County	Melissa Patterson
Calhoun City	Greg Green	Floyd County	Robert Steelnack	Marion County	Melissa McClaun Jernigan	Treutlen County	Janice H. Walden
Calhoun County	Virginia Ginn	Forsyth County	Matthew Thompson	McDuffie County	Steve Smith	Treutlen County	Walter Harmon Scott
Camden County	Barbara Kevan	Franklin County	Angelia Josey	McIntosh County	Sandra Williamson	Trion City	Susan McCain
Carroll County	Neil Ruby	Fulton County	Carol Koenig •	Meriwether County	Jack Bagley	Troup County	Amy Thornton •
Carrollton City	Richard Bracknell	Fulton County	Lynn Andersen •	Miller County	Joye Bailey	Turner County	Dolores Foley Harper
Cartersville City	Ken Foster	Fulton County	Ron Folds •	Mitchell County	Pam Dean	Twiggs County	Brian Wynne
Catoosa County	Darlene Lane •	Fulton County	Theodore C. Caswell •	Monroe County	Martin Magda	Union County	Mark Donahue
Charlton County	Mary Eve Blair	Gainesville City	Cindy Smith	Montgomery County	Darell Rowell	Valdosta City	Tammy Davis
Chatham County	Joachim Michels •	Gainesville City	Sam Harben III	Morgan County	Dr. Mary C. Boserup	Vidalia City	Tammy V. McFadden
Chattooga County	Kimberly L. Elliott	Gilmer County	Blake Alexander Turner	Murray County	Mark Miles	Walker County	Peg Alton
Cherokee County	Debbie M. Kohler	Glascocock County	Ed Averett	Muscogee County	Joe D. Skinner	Walton County	Hank Evans
Chickamauga City	Ellen Bohannon	Glynn County	Heath Horton	Muscogee County	William M. Durden	Walton County	J.D. Zuber
Clarke County	Elaine Pappas	Gordon County	Kim Watters	Newton County	Judy Smith	Ware County	Ann Goff •
Clayton County	Matt Trucks	Grady County	Kaye G. Helms	Oconee County	W. Andrew Simmonds •	Warren County	Jeanie Joesbury
Cobb County	Dr. Cheryl Crooks •	Greene County	James M. Eaton	Oglethorpe County	Eric Schmidt	Washington County	Scott Price
Cobb County	Dr. F. Wylie Brown •	Gwinnett County	Dr. Dorcas Okor •	Paulding County	Dianna Moyer	Wayne County	Leslie McGregor
Cobb County	Kevin Deck •	Habersham County	Leslie Hunnicutt	Peach County	John F. Rickerson	Wheeler County	Elna Butler
Cobb County	Will Goodwin •	Habersham County	Tina Sutton	Pelham City	Cathy Brinkley	White County	Ronnie London
Coffee County	Ramona D. Steptoe	Hall County	Valerie W. Noble •	Pickens County	Jon Braun	Whitfield County	Henry T. Honeycutt
Colquitt County	Tommy E. Hall •	Hancock County	Charles Jones	Pierce County	Berry Henderson	Wilcox County	Ginny S. Clarck
Columbia County	Jane Elliott •	Haralson County	Margaret Cade	Pike County	Elsie Husak	Wilkes County	Belle Guin
Columbia County	Marsie Anderson •	Harris County	Bette Amy Patterson	Polk County	Margaret B. Jacobs	Wilkinson County	Angela M. Smith
Commerce City	Mark Hale	Hart County	Reginald S. Looney	Pulaski County	Maisie Pilkinton	Worth County	John David Martin
Cook County	Jeremy Landon Williams	Heard County	Paul D. Mixon	Putnam County	Linda Kelly		
Coweta County	Barbara Landreth	Henry County	Jennifer G. Webb	Rabun County	David Landis		
Crawford County	Hollie Ikner	Henry County	Ruth Welborn	Randolph County	Vickie Beard		
Crisp County	Susan McKinney	Houston County	Sherin Hinnant •				

# Wachovia Foundation Donates \$50,000 to PAGE Foundation

The Wachovia Foundation has awarded \$50,000 to the PAGE Foundation in support of National Board Certification and Future Educators of America in Georgia (FEA in GA), according to PAGE Foundation President Tom Wommack. The majority of the Wachovia Foundation gift will be invested in a special PAGE Foundation initiative designed to increase the number of National Board Certified teachers in non-affluent, underserved communities. Ten thousand dollars of the Wachovia Foundation donation will be used to create a groundbreaking FEA curriculum and launch new FEA chapters in communities served by Wachovia Bank.

"This generous gift from the Wachovia Foundation will enable the PAGE Foundation to do several things that have never been done before in Georgia, and perhaps in the nation," said Wommack. "Recognizing that our state must close the achievement gap between students and enrich the education of young people in counties with limited resources, Wachovia has directed funds in support of an initiative to encourage veteran teachers in relatively poor counties to pursue National Board Certification. Research by Dr. Jim Purcell of Georgia College and State University has documented a disparity in the number of National Board Certified teachers in affluent versus non-affluent school systems. We think this creates an inequity that should be eliminated."

Wommack added that the Wachovia Foundation gift will also make it possible for the PAGE Foundation to create an FEA curriculum for middle and high school students who aspire to become teachers breaking new ground for FEA nationwide. "Soon after we signed our Memorandum of Understanding with Phi Delta Kappa International, the parent organization for FEA; we recognized that a new FEA curriculum was needed to ensure consistency, quality and substance to chapter operations statewide," said Wommack. "We also recognized that FEA chapter advisors volunteer their time in this extracurricular activity, and we have an obligation to make sure their work is supported with quality lesson plans." Wommack noted that Phi Delta Kappa International believes this new curriculum will benefit not only the FEA in GA program but also similar programs in other states.

Former FEA National Director Dr. Jim Fogarty will create the



(Pictured left to right) Gary Thompson, CEO of Georgia Banking for Wachovia, PAGE Foundation President Tom Wommack and Ben Boswell, Wachovia's senior vice president and community affairs manager for Georgia.

new curriculum for the PAGE Foundation on a contractual basis. "Dr. Fogarty understands the needs of FEA students and faculty advisors better than almost anyone in the country, and we think his work will contribute immensely toward our goal of becoming the best state FEA program in the nation within five years," concluded Wommack.

The Wachovia Foundation gift will also make it possible for the PAGE Foundation to offer financial assistance to FEA chapters in non-affluent communities served by Wachovia Bank.

"We are very proud to be supporters of the PAGE Foundation," said Gary Thompson, chief executive officer of Georgia Banking for Wachovia. "We recognize that all our children need an outstanding education if the State of Georgia is to prosper, and this can only be accomplished if we have well-prepared teachers in sufficient numbers to meet the changing needs within our classrooms. The PAGE Foundation is an effective means for the Wachovia Foundation to help students and teachers reach their academic and professional potential regardless of where they live and work."

In addition to its annual gifts to the PAGE Foundation, Wachovia has senior executives serving on the foundation's Board of Trustees. Wachovia's senior vice president and community affairs manager for Georgia, Ben Boswell, is currently the treasurer of the PAGE Foundation. ♦



# Gwinnett County's Berkmar High School is the 2004 PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon State Champion



< Berkmar High School's decathlon team received the Howard Stroud Award as this year's PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon State Champion. Joining in the presentation were (front row, left to right) Sunny Jolly, Patrick Harazin, Neeraj Verma, Ashiq Lakhani and Paul Mathewson, and (back row, left to right) GAD Founding State Director and GAD Advisory Board Member Howard Stroud, GAD Coach IV Bray, Gregory Rothmeier, Kevin Tan, Spencer Nettleton, Jon Dees and PAGE Executive Director Dr. Allene Magill.

For the second consecutive year, the PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon State Champion and Division I (large school) winner is Gwinnett County's Berkmar High School, coached by IV Bray. Muscogee County's Columbus High School, coached by Lina Yates and Jan Carter, is the Division II (small school) Champion. The announcement came at the GAD Awards Banquet, the culminating event of the two-day academic competition held Feb. 27 and 28, at Berkmar High School in Gwinnett County. Berkmar High School's team scored the highest points overall in Division I and II, and thus represented Georgia at the United States Academic Decathlon National Finals held in Boise, Idaho in April. The PAGE Foundation, The UPS Foundation, Apple Computer, Inc., the Georgia Power Foundation, the Georgia Department of Education and The Coca-Cola Company sponsor the Decathlon. The Gwinnett County Public School System serves as host.

Other winners include, in Division I, First Runner-up DeKalb County's



Lakeside High School, coached by Mercedes Paxton, and Second Runner-up Richmond County's Cross Creek High School, coached by David Bradberry. In Division II, Cook High School, coached by Pat James and Becky Futch, was named First Runner-up and Walton County's Monroe Area High School, coached by Mindy Dess, was named as Second Runner-up.

More than 200 high school students, representing 25 school districts, competed in the academic event. During the

^ The 2004 Speech Competition gold medal recipients presented their award-winning speeches during the GAD Awards Banquet. This year's winners include: Caitlin Dorne, Cook High School, Honors Division; Matthew Baron, Jackson County High, Scholastic Division; and Ashiq Lakhani, Berkmar High School, Varsity Division.



^ Muscogee County's Columbus High School Decathlon team, coached by Lina Yates and Jan Carter, accepted their trophy as the Division II (small school) Champion. Pictured left to right are GAD Advisory Board member and Forsyth County Schools Superintendent Paula Gault (presenter), Sarahann Wood, Jenny Thomas, Ashley Cooper, Lydia Hofstetter, Brianna Veenstra, Tiffanee Huling, Jeff Nelson, Erica Cone, Matt Lord, GAD Coach Lina Yates, GAD Coach Jan Carter, PAGE Foundation Trustee and Wachovia Senior Vice President Bennie Boswell (presenter).



< DeKalb County's Lakeside High School, coached by Mercedes Paxton, is the First Runner-up in Division I. Pictured during the awards presentation: (front row, left to right) Ben Froman, David Chapman, Ann Downer, Gene Henry and GAD Coach Mercedes Paxton, and (back row, left to right), Kerry Hart, William Flanders, Kasey Dutro, Susan Downer, Tiffany Chang, GAD Assistant Coach Shoshana Froman and GAD Advisory Member and PAGE President Deena Hoch.

> Richmond County's Cross Creek High School, coached by David Bradberry, captured Second Runner-up honors in Division I. Shown here are team members (front row, left to right) Heather Smith, Brandi Hyatt, Patricia Adams and Jessica Kendrick, and (back row, left to right) GAD Coach David Bradberry, Kim McGahee, Lacey Miller, Kauren Cofer, Rochele Johnson and Jessica Arnold.



> PAGE Foundation President Tom Wommack was joined at the GAD Awards Banquet by AT&T Regional Vice President and PAGE Foundation Trustee Betsy Palmer (far left), Cooper Middle School Principal and PAGE President-elect Dr. Diane Ray (second from right) and The UPS Foundation Representative Kerri Mikula (far right). The UPS Foundation is a sponsor of the PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon.



^ Division II First Runner-up Cook High School Decathlon team, coached by Pat James and Becky Futch, paused for pictures following the presentation of their trophy. Pictured left to right (front row) are Jordan Pitts (mascot), Nicole Futch (mascot), Ian Rowswell, Will Cornelius, Abigail Rowswell and Josh Cowart, and (back row, left to right) PAGE Foundation Trustee and Wachovia Senior Vice President Bennie Boswell (presenter), GAD Coach Becky Futch, Brittany Bryant, GAD Coach Pat James, Sarah Lovett, Caitlin Dorne, Dondy Aponte, Rebecca Fussell, Jeff Sowell and Forsyth County Schools Superintendent Paula Gault (presenter).



^ Walton County's Monroe Area High School, coached by Mindy Dess, is the Second Runner-up in Division II. Team members are (front row, left to right) M. Alice Richardson, Tara Queen and Kacie Milligan, and (back row, left to right) Devon Tackett, Joey Martin, Caitlin Gaddy, Jason Galloway, Mitch Alligood, Stephen Nolde, and Sharon Lim.

competition, students were tested in seven content areas: economics, art, language and literature, mathematics, science, music and Written Super Quiz. In addition, students earned points individually in three communication events: public speaking, a personal interview and a written essay. The program is unique because each nine-member team is made up of three "A" students, three "B" students and three "C" students. Each year the program features a different overall curriculum topic. This year's topic was; "America: The Growth of a Nation."

On Saturday afternoon, students participated in the exciting Super Quiz Oral Relay. During the relay, team members competed in a quiz bowl format, keying in answers to questions regarding this year's topic, "The Lewis and Clark Expedition." Gwinnett County's Berkmar High School, coached by IV Bray, was named this year's Super Quiz Oral Relay Champion; Jackson County High School, coached by Emily Gunderson and Carol Sikes, was First Runner-up; and Cook High School, coached by Pat James and Becky Futch,

and DeKalb County's Lakeside High School, coached by Mercedes Paxton, tied for Second Runner-up honors. The Decathlon ended with the PAGE GAD Awards Banquet, during which the highest-scoring students were awarded both team and individual medals in the various categories and the state champion was announced. A high point of the evening's festivities included a speech presentation by each of the gold medal winners in the Honors, Scholastic and Varsity divisions of the Speech Competition. ♦



# Honor Your Favorite Teacher

By Virginia Smith, ESOL Teacher, Beaver Ridge Elementary School, Gwinnett County

## A Quilt of Love

I'm in a quandary. I want to weave a quilt of love for my very special friend, Cathy Blanton. I want to honor her, sing about her (but she might not appreciate my singing!), make a giant sign board for everyone on the interstate to see, set up a meeting with the President of the United States so that he could meet the most talented, loving, caring teacher in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii.

Why is this quest so important to me? Because Cathy is retiring this year, and I want her to know how important she is not only to me, but also to so many others.

My dilemma is that I want to create a quilt for Cathy, but when a button comes off of my pants, those pants are immediately donated to charity. When I go into a craft store, an alarm goes off and a loud voice comes on the intercom shouting, "Woman who doesn't know anything about crafts is now entering the store! Watch out!" I was still on my elastic skirt in my 10th-grade home economics class in the spring when all the other girls finished up in the fall. (The hem was reminiscent of the waves of the ocean!)

So, what can I possibly do? I know. I'll "weave" a story together for her, a story of how special she is from the eyes of her children, her students who have or are learning English from her.

Carlos in third grade places his mis-spelled patch on the quilt. He writes, "Mrs. Blanton helps me know about books. She helps me write better and read. She helps me learn about encyclopedia."

Itzel in first grade hands me her colorful patch. "Mrs. Blanton you are my best teacher because you teach us fun stuff and in Friday we do book share."

Cathy was the librarian in an elementary school for several years. Her love for books was obvious to everyone. She read aloud to the children, taking on the characters' voices and actions. As an ESOL teacher, she ignites a love for books by having her children check out a special book from her large collection to read at home with the family. On Fridays the students share their story with their classmates during Book Share.

Lorena, an ESOL student, wants to be a part of the quilt of love for her beloved ESOL teacher. "Mrs. Blanton encouraged me to want to learn English. She doesn't yell at me. She doesn't scream."

"Every first year teacher looks for that veteran

teacher they can aspire to. Cathy Blanton has been that teacher for me," says Stacy Marshall, a first-grade teacher. "Her gentle and kind spirit is a testimony of the love that she has for her students. She has shown me the secret of being respectful yet firm in discipline. It is hard, as a teacher, to keep your cool during stressful moments in the day but Cathy Blanton has mastered the art of showing grace and patience at all times to her students."

Jesus in third grade puts his thoughts on his patch of love. "Why is Mrs. Blanton special to me is because she makes me more smart than ever."

How does a teacher make a student "more smart?" Cathy does it by staying late to plan interesting, educational lessons. Her lessons always have teacher-made examples and lots of hands-on learning. I told her one time that it was a good thing that I have a strong sense of self or my ego could really be deflated if I compared myself with her!

Heyley, a former student, adds her patch. "Mrs. Blanton you are a very, very special person for me. You are a great friend! You had helped me with reading when I was in first grade. You are a terrific teacher. Also you are the kindest teacher I have ever met. I think you are cool!"

A secret young friend adds a patch to the quilt. She writes, "Mrs. Blanton is special because she never does bad things to us and Friday she puts senters. I can not wait until it is her birthday because I can give her as many presents as she wants because she is my best ESOL teacher that I had in my whole life."

Terrific, kindest, cool, special, best. These are pretty wonderful accolades coming from impressionable children.

Mitzi, a former student, lovingly adds her patch to the quilt. "This is what I recall about Mrs. Blanton. She taught me how to read. I loved when Mrs. Blanton made books special. When it was almost the end of the



Cathy Blanton, and her adoring students.



Virginia Smith (left) with Cathy Blanton

*Continued on page 18*

## HONOR YOUR FAVORITE TEACHER

*Continued from page 17*

year we did homemade clay and she gave my class some. Mrs. Blanton let us borrow books. On holidays we do something very special.”

Vividiana in third grade places her patch on the quilt. “When it’s a holiday Mrs. Blanton makes us something special. On October Mrs. Blanton gives something in a bag and on the bag has our name on it. We have to seat where our bag is and our name is. She gives us a little puppet toy to put on our finger and a lot of Halloween candy.”

Cathy’s husband, Bill, knows that prior to every holiday he will be accompanying his wife to a wholesale store to buy everything imaginable for her students. Decorations for the room, candy, stickers, prizes, flavored drinks, cookies and anything else that will bring smiles to the faces of her students. Bill just goes along agreeably. After all, when a man spends 35 years with a woman, he knows what pleases her—and pleasing Cathy is

important to Bill.

Jose, a second grader, writes, “Mrs. Blanton thank you for be the best teacher. Mrs. Blanton thank you for help me reading and writing. Ms. Blanton thank you for show me to speak English. Love, Jose.”

Thankfulness. Isn’t that what all of us want children to learn? To be appreciative of the thoughtful gestures of others. To remember to say “thank you.” To acknowledge either verbally or in a written form what someone has done for us. Jose says, “Thank you, thank you, thank you.” Today, all of us whose lives she has touched so lovingly, so thoughtfully say, “Thank you, Cathy. Thank you, Cathy. Thank you, Cathy.”

The quilt is finished now, made up of many patches from the fabric of everything that is good and true in the heart of a child. Bright blues, faded greens, candy cane stripes, Halloween orange—one right next to another—each one as different as the students themselves. The patches, made with the warmth and love the children have for this very special English teacher.

We honor you, Cathy Blanton, by

bundling you up in a homemade quilt put together lovingly by the hands of little children. These children care for you, love you greatly and will miss you tremendously, just like the rest of us whose lives you have touched. ♦

## NBPTS News

### NBCTs Team with NCEE and State Farm Insurance

NBCT teachers have served as consultants and content reviewers to State Farm Insurance’s new online Financial Education Program, developed by the National Council on Economic Education. The State Farm program, Common Cents, helps parents and teachers give children the real-life skills needed to become consumers, savers and investors. The program provides age appropriate lessons and games for children in grades K-12. The key concepts of saving, earning, investing, risk management, decision making and money management provide the content for the instructional materials.

Educators are invited to visit the website, [statefarm.com](http://statefarm.com). Locate the section Planning and Learning, and scroll down to Kids’ Stuff. Click on Kids’ Stuff and then Common Cents

### NBPTS 2004 Q & A Brochure Now Available

The electronic version of NBPTS 2004 Q & A brochure is now available. This is an invaluable tool in keeping candidates and pre-candidates informed about the latest requirements and timelines. It is available on the official website, [www.nbpts.com](http://www.nbpts.com).

### NBPTS National Conference

Information on the NBPTS National Conference is now posted on the NBPTS website, [www.nbpts.com](http://www.nbpts.com).

The conference will be held in Washington D. C., July 21-23 at the Hilton Washington Hotel in Washington, D.C. ♦


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# FEA in GA Members Hear Address from National Teacher of the Year

## During Annual FEA Day on Capitol Hill

Dr. Betsy Rogers, 2003 National Teacher of the Year, was the keynote speaker at this year's Future Educators of America in Georgia (FEA in GA) Day on Capitol Hill, held on March 9, at The Depot in Atlanta. During the event, FEA members had the opportunity to meet with recruitment representatives from many of the state's colleges of education and were treated to a tour of the State Capitol Building.

The day's activities culminated in a luncheon with Dr. Allene Magill, executive director of PAGE, serving as moderator of the event. State School Superintendent Kathy Cox brought greetings from the Georgia Department of Education, and Dr. Martha Reichrath, executive director of the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, delivered greetings on behalf of Governor Sonny Perdue. Guests also included members of the FEA in GA Advisory Council and other education, corporate and governmental leaders. During her keynote address, Dr. Betsy Rogers spoke to FEA members about her personal journey to becoming Teacher of the Year and the joys and challenges associated with being a teacher.



FEA in GA members begin their tour of the Georgia State Capitol.



Members of Gwinnett County's Norcross High School FEA in GA Chapter met with 2003 National Teacher of the Year Dr. Betsy Rogers (back row, center) following her keynote address. The group was joined by Chapter Advisors Sonya Neilson (back row, far left), Jennifer Osborne (back row, third from left) and Chuck Sears (back row, to the right of Dr. Rogers).

While the students were enjoying these various activities, a panel of judges reviewed entries in the annual scrapbook competition. This year's winners were Lowndes County High

*Continued on page 20*



State Representative Ben Bridges from District 7 (center) meets with members of the White County FEA in GA Chapter during their tour of the State Capitol.



Jonesboro High School FEA in GA members (left to right) Phong Nguyen, Kari Dalton, Daniel Bruguez and Christie Wooten were among those attending the day's activities. FEA in GA program donors include AT&T Foundation, BellSouth, Copeland Insurance Services, PAGE and the UPS Foundation.

## ANNUAL DAY ON CAPITOL HILL

*Continued from page 19*

School, in the "Most Creative Display" category, and Booker T. Washington High School, in the "Best Overall" category.

The next statewide FEA in GA event will be the 2004 Summer Institute to be held June 7-9, at Georgia College & State University (GC&SU) in Milledgeville. The Institute will offer participants the opportunity to spend three days with educational leaders, such as 2002 National Teacher of the Year Chauncey Veatch and 2002 Georgia Teacher of the Year Lorraine Johnson. GC&SU College of Education faculty will provide workshops related to careers in education. The Summer Institute will feature BellSouth President of Georgia Operations Phil Jacobs as its keynote speaker. Information about the Summer Institute is available at [pagefoundation.org](http://pagefoundation.org) in the FEA in GA section.

The PAGE Foundation and Phi Delta Kappa International are working together to bring Georgia middle and high school students a realistic, meaningful and substantive means for the exploration of teaching as a viable career option. Information about FEA in GA can be found at [pagefoundation.org](http://pagefoundation.org). If you would like to learn about starting an FEA in GA chapter in your middle or high school, contact the PAGE Foundation's Director of Student Groups, Mary Ruth Ray, at [fea@pagefoundation.org](mailto:fea@pagefoundation.org) or toll-free at (888) 413-1078. ♦

Atlanta's Booker T. Washington High School FEA in GA members captured "Best Overall" in the Annual Scrapbook Contest. Marcie Wynn (front row, center) and chapter members display the winning entry.





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College of Education

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April 21, 2004

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The Georgia State University College of Education is committed to preparing highly qualified teachers that exceed the minimum certification standards set in Georgia.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Colarusso".

Ron Colarusso, Ed.D.  
Dean



# 2004 PAGE Final Legislative Report

**B**itter partisan divisions coupled with the state's revenue shortfall begat frustrating gridlock during the 2004 Georgia General Assembly. The House and Senate managed to pass a budget as well as several pieces of education legislation which have been compiled below by PAGE Legislative Services Manager and Staff Attorney Margaret Price.

The following bills passed during the 2004 General Assembly and have been sent to Governor Sonny Perdue for his signature. Governor Perdue has 40 days after adjournment to sign or veto any bills or resolutions. At the end of this 40-day period, bills that are not yet signed or vetoed become law on the effective dates listed below.

## ACCOUNTABILITY & FLEXIBILITY:

- **HB 1190 (Accountability & Flexibility, Discipline)** What started as one of the governor's omnibus education bills grew into the most comprehensive piece of education reform that passed during the 2004 session. Key issues addressed by this bill include:

- **Third Grade Promotion & Retention:** The bill contains a section which authorizes local systems to place children who fail the 3rd grade Criterion Reference Competence Test (CRCT) in "transition classes" or in extended EIP sessions. This provision also requires the Georgia Board of Education (BOE) to contact with another agency to conduct a study on 3rd graders who fail the test.

- **Middle School Seat Time:** Local schools may apply to the Georgia BOE for an exception to allow a schedule of a minimum of 4.5 hours of academic instruction instead of the required 5.0 hours. The State Board must grant the exception for middle schools which achieved an "acceptable" rating for the proceeding year.

- **Expenditure Controls:** Spending flexibility that was implemented during the 2003-04 school year is continued for the 2004-05 school year. In addition, during the 2004-05 school year each school system shall spend 90 percent of funds allocated for professional development for such costs at the system level.

- **Office of Education Accountability:** The office shall create, with the approval of the BOE, a performance-based accountability system; establish indicators of performance; rate schools and systems; and develop a report card. Letter grades will no longer be used. The Georgia BOE shall establish a system of assistance that supports schools which have failed to meet identified levels of achievement.

- **Class Sizes:** The bill delays class size reduction for another year.
- **School Councils:** The bill contains a provision allowing school

councils to increase their membership as long as the number of teachers and parents on the council is equal. In addition to parents and teachers, students, staff, local business persons and persons representing school-related organizations may serve on the school council. The council must meet quarterly and can be involved in the school principal selection process as defined in local school board policy. The local board of education shall provide all information not specifically made confidential by law to school councils. This information includes site budgets, expenditure information and site average class size by grade.

- **Waivers:** The bill authorizes the BOE to waive specifically identified state rules, regulations, policies and procedures at the request of a local school board as long as the goal for each waiver is the improvement of student performance.

- **Georgia History:** The Georgia BOE shall create rules governing the course of study of Georgia history. The BOE may also provide for exemptions from this required course for students of parents in the U.S. military. The BOE may also develop alternative methods for students transferring into Georgia schools to take Georgia history.

- **Early Intervention Programs:** A section prohibiting a school's accountability score from being determined by the period of time its students spend in early intervention programs.

- **End-of-Course Tests:** The bill authorizes the Georgia BOE to decide how end-of-course tests will count toward a student's final grade and to adopt rules regarding accommodations and participation of limited English proficiency students in the end-of-course tests and the CRCT.

- **Student Information System:** The legislation contains a section prohibiting students' social security numbers from being used as primary identifiers in the new Student Information System. The use of employee social security numbers is also prohibited.

- **Recess:** The bill requires local systems to develop policies either allowing or prohibiting "breaks" for students in grades K-8.

- **Driver's License Revocation:** Habitually truant students or students who commit certain serious discipline offenses will lose their driver's licenses.

- **Student Removal:** School principals and superintendents must "fully support" the authority of a teacher to remove a student from his or her classroom under the Improved Student Learning and Discipline Act. Each principal shall do so by implementing the relevant local policies and disseminating such policies and procedures to faculty, students and parents.

- **Discipline Records:** The bill requires both private and out-of-state schools to transmit disciplinary orders on students who



transfer to Georgia's public schools.

- **Student Code of Conduct:** Codes of conduct must now address misbehavior on the school bus and that which occurs off-campus if it could result in the student being criminally charged with a felony. Codes of conduct will also contain provisions addressing bullying and sexual harassment.

- **Disciplinary Hearings:** This section requires that student disciplinary hearings be held no later than 10 days after the beginning of the student's suspension unless the school system and the student's parents mutually agree to an extension. Additionally, the law requires that teachers who are called as witnesses at such hearings be given at least three days notice.

- **Parental Liability for Truancy:** Parents or guardians may be liable for up to \$100, may be imprisoned for up to 30 days or may be ordered to do community service if their child misses more than five unexcused school days.

- **Attendance Protocol Committee:** The chief judge of the superior court of each county shall establish a student attendance protocol committee for the purpose of coordination and cooperation of compulsory attendance issues, reducing unexcused absences, and increasing the percentage of students present to take tests.

- **Charter Schools:** The bill states that charter schools shall be exempt from specified provisions of Title 20 and that charter schools may also be exempt from those state and local rules that do not relate to the operation of a local school.

*This law will become effective on July 1, 2004.*

**FY 2005 BUDGET:**

(\* The amounts in parenthesis represent reductions)

- Reduce funds for the **Three O' Clock Project** contract (\$200,000), **I Can Learn Program** contract (\$1,466,850) and **Communities in Schools** (\$50,000): (\$1,716,850)
- Reduce **Personal Services** (\$899,413), **Computer Charges** (\$176,615), **Telecommunications** (\$33,241), **Regular Operating Expenses** (\$83,339) and **Contracts in the Central Office and Technology Services**, and add \$75,000 for **Global Achievers International**: (\$1,945,189)
- Reduce QBE Formula earnings (see additions further down): (\$380,079,150)
- Reduce pupil transportation: (\$11,108,914)
- Reduce funding for the following:

1. Tuition for the Multi-Handicapped:	(\$132,082)
2. Severely Emotionally Disturbed:	(\$4,391,953)
3. School Lunch (State)	(\$2,741,706)
4. Regional Education Service Agencies	(\$284,918)
5. Georgia Learning Resource System	(\$1,645,557)
6. High School Program – Tech/Career Ed	(\$1,129,197)
7. Special Ed at State Institutions	(\$283,206)
8. Vocational Research & Curriculum	(\$4,018)
9. Next Generation School Grants	(\$9,800)
10. Preschool Handicapped	(\$990,491)
11. Mentor Teachers	(\$89,118)
12. Youth Apprenticeship Grants	(\$313,630)
13. Joint Evening Programs	(\$196,490)
14. Pay for Performance	(\$3,332,835)
15. Charter Schools	(\$11,918)
16. Migrant Education	(\$6,860)
17. Postsecondary Options	(\$3,578,168)

18. Internet Access	(\$110,589)
19. Principal Supplements	(\$426,865)
20. Reading and Math Programs	(\$1,560,995)
21. Communities in Schools	(\$71,345)
22. Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP)	(\$11,760)
23. High School Programs–Agriculture Ed	(\$151,411)

- Reduce funds for contracts in technology services: (\$1,674,481)
- Eliminate funding for vocational lab supervisors: (\$3,000,000)
- Increase local five million share: (\$57,059,550)
- Funding for the **National Science Center**: \$890,000
- Increase funding for **QBE formula grants** based on enrollment growth of 1.75 percent: \$95,593,908
- Increase funding for growth in training and experience: \$22,252,753
- Increase funding for **equalization grants**: \$47,738,278
- Increase funds for development & training related to the rollout of the revised **Quality Core Curriculum (QCC)**: \$1,200,000
- Additional funds for testing expenses related to the new Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) \$2,000,000
- Increase funds to pay the 10 percent salary supplement for new teachers receiving **National Board Certification** \$5,628,256
- Increase funding for **Preschool Handicapped** students to reflect increased enrollment: \$2,125,042
- Restore prior year reductions to equalization formula: \$13,912,970
- Transfer the **Southern Center for International Studies** from the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget to the Department of Education: \$960,232
- To continue **QBE formula funding** for more than 5,000 classroom teachers, counselors, psychologists, social workers and other support personnel and the related classroom materials in reduction number 3: \$204,008,472
- Provide for increases in the employer contribution to the **State Health Benefit Plan** for public school employees and state employees to match prior employee premium increases: \$0 (*Note that the House recommended \$63,109,285 and the Governor and Senate both recommended \$0*)
- Provide a 2 percent increase to the **state base salary** on the teacher salary schedule, effective Jan. 1, 2005: \$63,319,215
- Provide for the addition of an **L-6 longevity step** to the teacher salary schedule for teachers with 21 or more years of experience, effective Jan. 1, 2005: \$29,802,212

*The budget also includes a 2 percent raise for school bus drivers and lunch room workers effective July 1, 2004.*

**RETIREMENT LEGISLATION:**

- **HB 366 (Return to Work)** This bill allows classroom teachers, principals, superintendents, counselors or librarians who have retired under TRS before Dec. 31, 2003, to return to work without having their benefits affected. Eligible retirees include only those on service retirement. Retired principals returning to work as principals must return to another school besides that at which they were previously employed. Returning superintendents must return to work in a different school system. A returning educator's salary shall be commensurate with the employee's position and the

individual's qualifications. Returning teachers will be reported to the state at the certificate and experience level at which the teacher is assigned. Such teachers will not receive any additional benefits or accrue further creditable service under TRS. This bill will take effect on July 1, 2004.

• **HB 917 (Election of Partial Lump-Sum Retirement under TRS)** This bill stipulates that any retiring TRS member may elect to receive a reduced retirement allowance together with a partial lump sum distribution. The amount of the lump sum distribution may not exceed the sum of 36 months of the monthly retirement allowance which the retiree would have received had she or he not elected the partial lump sum option. The partial lump sum distribution will be made as a single payment payable at the time the first monthly retirement allowance is paid to the retiree. This bill shall take effect on July 1, 2004. For specific questions about how election of the partial lump sum distribution will affect you, please call the Teacher Retirement System.

• **HB 267 (TRS-Employee's Contribution Rate)** This bill provides that the board of trustees of TRS shall be authorized to establish the employee contribution rate at not less than 3 percent, nor more than 5 percent; provided, however, that any reduction in such percentage shall be based upon the recommendation of the actuary of the board, the maintenance of the actuarial soundness of the fund or such higher standards as may be adopted by the board, and such other factors as the board deems relevant. The current employee contribution rate is not less than 5 percent, nor more than 6 percent. This bill shall become effective on July 1, 2004.

#### SCHOOL VIOLENCE:

• **HB 1179 (School Violence, Disrupting Public School Buses, Operating Buses) Simple Assault and Simple Battery:** Applies to persons who commit simple assault or simple battery against a public school employee while such employee is engaged in official duties or is on school property. Any person convicted of such a crime will be punished for a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature. The bill adds language identifying "school property" as school buses or school bus stops.

• **Battery:** This section of the bill relates to persons who commit battery against a teacher or other school employee engaged

in school duties or on school property. Current law stipulates that a conviction of such a battery will warrant imprisonment for not less than one year nor more than five years and a fine of not more than \$10,000, or both. Public school buses and bus stops are included in the definition of "school property."

• **Family Violence & Stalking Publication:** A person committing acts of simple assault, simple battery, or battery on a family member for a second time will have a notice of conviction published in the legal organ of the county in which the person resides. Notice of conviction will also be published for persons who, for a second time, commit the act of stalking or aggravated stalking. The notice will contain a photo of the convicted person in addition to the date, time, place of arrest and disposition of the case.

• **Disrupting School Buses:** The bill prohibits any person from disrupting or interfering with the operation of any public school bus or school bus stop. Any person who violates this code section will be guilty of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature.

• **Aleana's Law:** All public school bus drivers receive training on traffic laws pertaining to the operation of school buses and on school bus operations and safety. The Georgia BOE will establish the content and length of initial driver training and will certify instructors who conduct such training. This code section prohibits a bus driver from operating a bus unless she or he has completed safety training in the past 12 months. In addition, the section requires that local systems promulgate policies and procedures for the operation of buses and that such policies be in writing and available for public inspection.

Further, each school bus driver must acknowledge in writing that he or she has received a copy of and has read and understands the policies. Local systems must also make accessible a schedule of bus routes which includes the morning pickup route start time, the afternoon school bell time, and the total number of stops on each bus route. The bill provides that, except in unforeseen circumstances, the time for the bus arrival at each stop will be commensurate with the route beginning time and prescribed stop sequence. Very notably, this bill also requires that each local system publish and distribute to students a copy of the

system's code of conduct. The receipt of such code must be acknowledged in writing by a parent or guardian of each student.

• **Bus Safety:** The bill requires specific safety precautions for bus drivers relating to checking all mirrors, engaging the parking break, displaying the stop arm, operating the red flasher lights and extending the extension arm or gate. Additionally, this section prohibits bus drivers from using cell phones while driving.

• **Bus Compliance:** Buses used for student transport must be in compliance with Georgia BOE specifications for the model and year of such school bus. This section also requires school systems to maintain buses in good working condition.

*This bill shall become effective on July 1, 2004.*

#### OTHER LEGISLATION:

• **HB 1428 (Educational Requirements for Home-School Tutors):** Previous law stated that home-school tutors must hold at least a baccalaureate college degree. This new legislation drops the old requirement and provides that home school tutors must hold only a high school diploma or GED. This bill shall take effect on July 1, 2004.

• **HB 1698 (Online Continuing Education for PSC Recertification):** This bill provides that RESA's and colleges and universities which offer in-service or continuing education for teacher certification or recertification shall offer some online continuing education. The PSC will treat in-service or continuing education as if it had been conducted in person. Local systems may permit teachers to use school computers for online education before and after normal school hours. This bill shall become effective on July 1, 2004.

• **SB 456 (Department of Early Care and Learning):** This comprehensive pre-K legislation authorizes the merger of the Office of School Readiness with several offices of the Department of Human Resources. The resulting office will be known as the Department of Early Learning and Care and will provide for inspection of early care and education programs.

• **Oversight Board:** The bill creates a Board of Early Care and Learning which will consist of one member from each congressional district; each member will serve a five-year term.

## TECHNOLOGY

*Continued from page 9*

- **Commissioner:** The governor will appoint a commissioner who will serve as chief administrative and executive officer of the department.

- **Duties:** The department will administer the Georgia pre-K program, and, effective Oct. 1, 2004, will resume the licensure and regulation of day-care centers, group day-care homes, and family day-care homes. Further, the department is empowered to establish, maintain, extend and improve the regulation of early care and learning.

*This law shall become effective on July 1, 2004.*

- **HB 198 (Code of Ethics for Local Boards and Timely Criminal Background Checks):**

This bill requires each local board of education to adopt a policy providing for a code of ethics to govern members of the local board. Each local board shall review its code annually and shall announce such review and any changes at regular meetings of the board. Furthermore, no person may serve as a local board member who has had any certificate issued by PSC suspended in whole or in part upon any commission finding that the person has failed to maintain a professional relationship with students. The bill also mandates that school systems request the required criminal background check for new employees within 10 working days following the date of hire. This bill shall become effective on July 1, 2004.

### RESOLUTIONS:

- **SR 580 (Proposes a GA Constitutional Amendment on Education & Sales Tax):**

This resolution mandates that a constitutional amendment be placed on this November's ballot. Voters will decide whether the Georgia Constitution should be amended to change the imposition and distribution requirements of the sales and use tax for educational purposes in cases involving county and independent school systems with concurrent resolutions.

- **SR 760 (Joint Early Learning Initiative):** This resolution creates the Joint Early Learning Initiative Commission composed of legislators as well as parents and teachers involved in pre-K. The commission will study and recommend ways to improve Georgia's pre-K programs. This bill becomes effective on July 1, 2004, and abolishes the Commission on Dec. 31, 2005. ♦

Is technology making a difference?

According to Ann Ware of Henry County, "Technology, such as the electronic posting of grades, is making what goes on in the classroom much more transparent," she says. "It allows everyone, from parents to teachers and administrators to see a student's grades whenever they want to see them. It is also changing how we evaluate students' progress. I believe we are in the initial phase of moving away from measuring time in seat to evaluating when students have learned what they need to know."

With technology changing so rapidly, can schools afford to keep up?

"Education is caught in the same situation as the rest of society," Mitchell says. "It is hard to know which of the new technologies to purchase, because things are changing so fast. For example, in Forsyth County, we have made the decision to skip the DVD generation and go straight from VHS to streaming video in our classrooms."

And the good news is that technology is becoming more affordable all the time.

"It cost more than \$100,000 to fully wire

our school a few years ago," says Houston County's Mike Hall, "whereas it only cost \$7,000 when we went wireless."

Ten years ago, it would have been virtually impossible for anyone to imagine a school such as Houston County High School or many others throughout Georgia, and it is just as difficult to imagine what our schools will be like after another decade of technology, but based on current trends, it seems likely that technology is here to stay.

How valuable technology will be in the future depends on how educators approach it today. As Settles Bridge Principal Gary Davison puts it, "Our legacy will be how well we deal with the dynamic fusion of technology and instruction."

And Thornburg puts it this way: "Learning does not take place better or faster simply by replacing one instructional medium with another. The effective use of technology requires thought, experimentation and a willingness to spend the time needed to develop and refine strategies until they are proven to be effective."

Georgia's students are ready. Are our teachers? ♦

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### **Elachee Nature Science Center**

2125 Elachee Drive  
Gainesville, GA 30504  
(770) 535-1976  
[www.elachee.org](http://www.elachee.org)

### **Fernbank Museum of Natural History**

767 Clifton Road, Atlanta, GA, 30307  
(404) 929-6320  
[www.fernbank.edu](http://www.fernbank.edu)

### **Georgia State Parks and Historical Sites**

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### **Imagine It!—Children's Museum of Atlanta**

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### Port Columbus

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www.portcolumbus.org

### Roswell Magnolia Storytelling Festival

617 Atlanta Street  
Roswell, GA 30075  
(770) 640-3253

### SciTrek

395 Piedmont Avenue  
Atlanta, GA 30308  
(404) 522-5500 ext 231  
scitre.org

### Southeastern Railway Museum

Duluth, GA 30096  
(770) 476-2013  
www.srmduluth.org

### Tennessee Aquarium

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www.tnaqua.org

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## PAGE Planner 2004

June 2004

7-9 FEA in GA Summer Institute  
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25-26 PAGE Annual Conference (Atlanta)

# Members in the News

## LAW NAMED NATIONAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR

As a follow-up to our Members in the News section in the Jan./Feb. issue of *PAGE ONE*, we are pleased to report that Odom Elementary School Counselor Brian Law has been named the 2004 American School Counselor Association (ASCA) National Elementary School Counselor of the Year. Law, a *PAGE* member since 1991 and an active member of the Georgia School Counselors Association (GSCA), where he held the office of elementary work setting vice president, human rights chairperson and newly appointed information technology chair, was named Georgia Elementary Counselor of the Year in November 2003.

Odom Elementary School Principal Doug Howell shared in the excitement. "Mr. Law is responsible for many innovative and creative counseling activities at the school level," said Howell. "He is also very active in the Georgia School Counselor's Association at the state level. This award reflects his excellent work ethic and efforts on behalf of our students."

Law was selected from a large pool of



(Left to right) State School Superintendent Kathy Cox, Brian Law and State Board Member Linda Zechmann.

outstanding nominations, ASCA Executive Director Richard Wong said. "There were some incredible candidates in the elementary category this year. It was a very competitive field. I was pleased to see Brian receive the award. He was chosen because his work was so exemplary and particularly because the panel was very impressed with the results they see," said Wong. "We're putting more emphasis on the results and the difference counselors are making in the lives of students, rather than just the activities and how much energy the counselors put into it." ♦

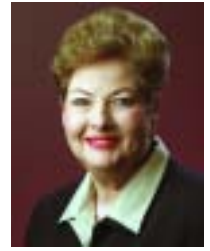
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# Applying Adult Learning Principles to Parent-Teacher Relationships

**There are over 40 million American adults reading at or below a 5th grade level. At this reading level it is difficult to read the newspaper, complete a job application, write a note to the teacher or understand the latest report card information.**



**T**here are over 40 million American adults reading at or below a 5th grade level. (Wallace Foundation, 2004). At this reading level, it is difficult to read the newspaper, complete a job application, write a note to the teacher or understand the latest report card information.

The 2000 census statistic for Georgia is that for the population 25 years and older, 21 percent do not have a high school diploma. Approximately eight percent of the same population has less than a 9th-grade education. These statistics have a significant influence on conferring with parents about their child's progress, conducting school meetings and sending home written reports and homework.

The research on adult learning is helpful when working with parents, especially parents who have a limited education, and helps them understand their child's educational experiences and achievement. It can usually be assumed that most adults who have a limited education back-

ground dropped out of school because of their lack of success in school. The principles of adult learning provide teachers with strategies to use with parents that are different than the strategies used with students.

## ADULT LEARNING

Adult learning is a relatively new area of research and development. Malcolm Knowles, a pioneer in adult learning, has identified several characteristics of adult learners. Adult learners are:

1. Autonomous and self-directed
2. Goal oriented
3. Relevancy-oriented or problem centered
4. Practical and problem solvers

Knowles also points out that adult learners must feel that they are afforded respect. Respect for the learner as an adult is crucial to communication, willingness to learn and building a positive relationship.

Another researcher, D.D. Pratt, who has been researching and writing about adult learning since 1981, states in his numerous writings that adult learners: (1) require an adult-to-adult relationship; (2) like a closure or ending; (3) feel a need to establish clarity of roles; and (4) prefer boundaries to discussion. Lieb (1991) reports that adults use life experiences and accumulated knowledge as a filter through which new information or experiences are processed.

As teachers work with an ever increasing diversity of students and parents, utilizing research findings on adult learning can strengthen the effectiveness of the triadic relationship of teacher-student-parent. The findings on adult learning may be even more significant in strengthening the relationship of limited educated parents with the teacher(s) and with the school.

## COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

Every teacher knows how important it is to have a face-to-face conference with the parents



# RESOURCES

The following sources provided information for this article.:

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- The Wallace Foundation. Adult Literacy. [www.wallacefunds.org/programs](http://www.wallacefunds.org/programs) Click on Programs, click on Communities, click on Adult Literacy.
- U. S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder, Quick Tables. [factfinder.census.gov](http://factfinder.census.gov).
- What Is It about Adult Learners?. Adapted from Butler, J. A. Staff Development, Close-Up # 12. School Improvement Research Series. [www.nwrel.org](http://www.nwrel.org).

of a student. In structuring the conference with the parent(s), the conference should be problem centered and goal oriented. As an example, the student is having difficulty in multiplying two digit numbers (the problem). The goal is for the student to complete daily classroom math assignments with 70 percent accuracy. Allow the parent the opportunity to articulate the problem or make suggestions for helping the student. This provides the parent with a sense of solving the problem and that he/she is being respected as an adult and as a partner in the child's learning.

The research findings are equally applicable at the high school level. The student is not passing first semester American History, a requirement for graduation. The student must pass the final examination with a minimum score of 75 (problem-centered and goal-oriented). Providing the parents with an opportunity to suggest ways to help the student gives the teacher valuable information about the level of assistance the parents can offer. At the high school level, the parent may feel very inadequate and express the frustration by stating that he/she sends the child to school to learn, and if the child isn't learning, then it is the school's fault. Offering several suggestions of assistance and asking the parent to choose from among the options will help the parent retain their feeling of autonomy. Using the problem-centered/goal-oriented approach also puts boundaries around the discussion

and offers more opportunity to reach closure or an ending.

Written communications sent home should be brief, but the same principles of adult learning theory apply. The problem and the goal should be stated in an easy-to-understand language and free of educational jargon and acronyms. The parent can be asked to select from assistance options provided by the teacher. Asking the parent to call for further clarification gives the parent the opportunity to be self-directed.

## TEACHER SKILLS IN WORKING WITH PARENTS

It is important for the teacher to develop an adult-to-adult relationship in working with parents. It also allows the teacher to define the problem, articulate the goal and focus on the child. At the same time, a teacher must expect and acknowledge that the parent is a self-directed, autonomous adult who will use previous experiences and knowledge to translate the information provided by the teacher. By establishing an adult-to-adult relationship, the number of references a parent will make to his/her own school experiences, which are likely to be negative, can be decreased.

Adults also prefer that information presented be relative to the problem or goal. Care must be taken by the teacher to establish the connection between the problem, the goal and the information presented to the parents. If the conference or phone call to the parent is about an aca-

ademic problem and only information about the child's behavior is discussed, the relevancy may not be readily apparent to the parent.

Parents with limited education are more likely than not to be low-income parents. For many such parents, there will be the high intensity, basic demands of food, shelter and clothing; therefore, it is important for the teacher to set the appropriate level of concern for a student's academic progress, classroom behavior, social interaction or attendance. Elevating every concern or problem to a high level of importance will only negate the parents' feelings of self-direction and autonomy and role of problem solver. Feeling that they can no longer be a problem solver, the parents will withdraw from any interactions with the teacher or school.

## NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

No Child Left Behind is about improving educational achievement for all students, but it targets poorly performing students who most often have the associated characteristics of lower socio-economic standing and limited educated parents. Reaching the parents of Title I students is fundamental to improving the performance of these students. Often when the parents come to the school, they feel inadequate and unsure of their role and responsibility. The application of adult learning theory principles provides insights into structuring, building and maintaining more positive teacher-parent relationships. ♦

# Certification Changes Are On the Way: “Standard” Requirements and the Non-Renewable Certificate Transition



*PAGE has asked the PSC to provide this series of articles as a way to provide our members with comprehensive, accurate and timely information. No organizational endorsement on the part of PAGE should be inferred.*

This is the third in a series of articles prepared by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) for PAGE ONE readers. This article focuses on the “standard” certificate eligibility requirements and the new Non-Renewable Certificate.

## “STANDARD” CERTIFICATE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

While the new certificate system includes many significant changes, the “standard” eligibility requirements have undergone only minor modifications. Applicants for academic certificates (other than Trade and Industrial Education, Healthcare Science Technology Education and Performing Arts Permits) still must hold at least a bachelor’s degree from a PSC-approved accredited institution. The definition of the approved accredited institution has changed from “Regional” accreditation to institutions accredited by an agency that is approved by either the U.S. Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Both U.S. DOE and CHEA approve all “Regional” accrediting agencies, as well as many other national and professional agencies. Links from the accreditation rules to the CHEA and U.S. DOE web sites reflect approved agencies.

If the highest degree held by the applicant is a bachelor’s degree, the applicant

must also have a 2.5 Grade Point Average (GPA). The GPA is exempted if (1) the applicant holds a master’s degree or higher, OR (2) is admitted to a PSC-approved accredited master’s program, OR (3) is admitted to a state-approved educator program, OR (4) holds a bachelor’s degree that was awarded ten years or more prior to the date of application for a certificate.

The Praxis I Basic Skills Assessment (Reading, Writing and Mathematics) is still required for educators prepared by Georgia institutions. An educator may be exempted from taking the Praxis I if he or she has achieved the following scores on any one of these standardized tests: a combined verbal and math score of 1000 on the SAT, a combined verbal and quantitative scores of 1030 on the GRE, or a combined English and Math score of 43 on the ACT.

Special Georgia Requirements still include the Praxis II Content Assessments, the Special Education Course, the course in the Teaching of Reading and Writing for certain fields, Recency of Study/Experience, Standards of Conduct and the Computer Skill Competency requirements. A rule change has created some additional exemptions which allow out-of-state educators with recent, specific experience to satisfy all Special Georgia Requirements except the Computer Skill Competency and Standards of Conduct through their out-of-state experience.

## TRANSITION FROM THE OLD TO THE NEW

Two of the primary objectives in creating the new certification rules were to incorporate clear, understandable proce-

dures and terms and to simplify the overall system. As a result, the old Provisional, Probationary, Emergency and Conditional certificate titles will no longer be issued. Don't worry—if you currently hold one of those valid titles, the certificate will remain in effect until the ending validity date printed on the certificate. You should simply continue completing the requirements outlined with that certificate and convert to the Clear Renewable certificate prior to the expiration date.

Most individuals should be able to complete their existing requirements and convert to Clear Renewable status. However, we realize this will not be the case for all educators. During this transition period from the old to the new system, individuals currently holding the old certificates MAY, at the discretion of the employing school system, be eligible for additional certificate time on the Non-Renewable Certificate. For example, individuals who held the three-year Provisional Certificate but have not yet completed all requirements may be issued a Non-Renewable Certificate for two additional years if the new certificate is requested by the school system. Specific criteria for determining

eligibility for additional time will be determined by the local system.

**THE NON-RENEWABLE (N) CERTIFICATE**

Under the new system, the old Provisional, Probationary, Emergency and Conditional certificate titles are now combined into the Non-Renewable (N) Certificate. Like the old titles, the Non-Renewable is issued only at the request of an employing school system. To clarify and communicate exactly what requirements must be completed to convert the Non-Renewable to the Clear Renewable certificate, the specific requirements (course work, assessments, pedagogy, etc.) will now be printed on both the certificate and in the correspondence that accompanies the certificate. This information will be posted on the web-based certification look-up system and the employing school system will also receive this information through the electronic "system copy" of the certificate.

As a general rule, the Non-Renewable Certificate is valid for five years. However, as already outlined, two-year Non-Renewable Certificates may be issued dur-

ing the transition from the old certificates to the new. In addition, after June 30, 2006, a one-year Non-Renewable Certificate will be issued to individuals missing the Computer Skill Competency. Eligibility for the Non-Renewable Certificate falls under two separate criteria: certificate-based and test-based.

Candidates for certificate-based eligibility include individuals who have previously held educator certificates in Georgia or other states, individuals who currently hold a Georgia Clear Renewable certificate and wish to teach in another field, and individuals who hold service certificates in another state for which Georgia requires a higher degree. Requirements that must be completed by these individuals are Special Georgia Requirements that may include such items as course work (Special Education, Teaching of Reading and Writing), Content Assessments (Praxis II), Recency of Study/Experience, and/or the Computer Skill Competency. Individuals with valid out-of-state certificates and recent experience may be able to exempt any of the above requirements except the Computer Skill Competency.

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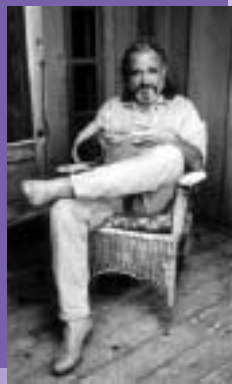
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Candidates for test-based eligibility include (1) individuals with college degrees and a 2.5 GPA (if the bachelor's is the highest degree held and was issued less than ten years prior to application for certification) who have successfully completed the Praxis I AND Praxis II assessments and (2) individuals with the appropriate GPA AND college degrees or majors in a field related to the certificate field AND who have successfully completed the Praxis I AND Praxis II AND Praxis Principles of Learning & Teaching (PLT). Individuals with the Praxis I and Praxis II will be told to affiliate with a state-approved program, complete their requirements and obtain a recommendation for certification. Individuals coming through the Praxis PLT route must initiate a one-year supervised practicum from a PSC-approved provider immediately upon employment AND complete all Special Georgia Requirements during the validity period of the certificate.

The recommendation for certification will come from the provider of the supervised practicum. NOTE: In the fields of Special Education, certificates may be issued without the Praxis II being passed up front, as long as the applicant is already accepted into a state-approved Special Ed program and has a mentor assigned by the employing school system. The Praxis II in Special Ed and all other Special Georgia requirements must be passed to convert to Clear Renewable certification.

The Praxis Principles of Learning & Teaching (PLT) assesses educational pedagogy knowledge for specific grade levels. Applicants for Georgia certificates select the appropriate test for Early Childhood (P-5), Middle Grades (4-8) and Secondary (6-12). The PLT includes four case histories followed by three short-answer questions and 24 multiple-choice questions included in two sections of 12 questions each. Specific categories include: Students as Learners; Instruction and Assessment; Teacher Professionalism; and Communication Techniques. The assessment takes approximately two hours. The one-year supervised practicum must be coordinated by a PSC-approved provider. Additional information on both the Praxis PLT and the one-year supervised practicum may be found on the PSC website at [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com). ♦

## PAGE Letters

Dear PAGE,

Recently, I had some questions about my job that required a lawyer's opinion. A friend suggested that since I was a member of PAGE, I should call my PAGE attorney. I called and a real person answered the phone. I explained that I was a member of PAGE, and I wanted to ask an attorney some questions. I expected her to take my name and number and have someone call to set up a time for me to talk to an attorney at a later date.

Much to my surprise, the receptionist put my call directly through to a PAGE attorney. My attorney was excellent! We communicated through phone calls and e-mails daily. I felt like my case was the only case that she had. I was never put through to her voice mail; I always spoke to her directly. I was amazed to call such a big organization and never have to speak to a recording.

I am very pleased to be a member of PAGE.

Sincerely,  
Jean Silvers

Dear PAGE,

I want to express my sincere gratitude to both the PAGE staff attorney and my network attorney for their assistance in resolving a recent certification/contract matter. I had tried in vain to communicate with our central office. Through no fault of my own, I had neither new certification nor contract. No one would take my phone calls. I had to leave numerous messages. I was even denied access to the personnel department by the switchboard operator. This situation had gone on for weeks.

My call to the PAGE attorneys resulted in "magic." My new contract was immediately posted on the website and my contract was on its way. Your attorney has even written me a letter to be placed in my file, explaining that the lack of my timely receipt of both certification and contract were not due to my negligence but that of the central office.

I am deeply grateful that I have PAGE on my side and that these two attorneys were diligent, courteous and thorough in their efforts to clear this matter.

Sincerely,  
Sheryl J. Bailey





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