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Professional Association of Georgia Educators

September/October 2004

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On the cover: Buses headed back to Georgia schools as early as July this year.  
Photo by Rod Reilly

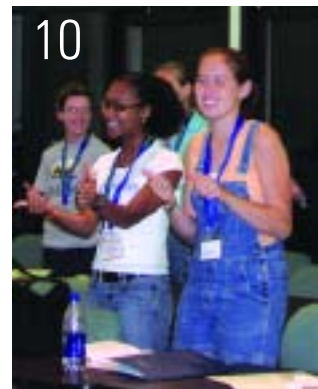
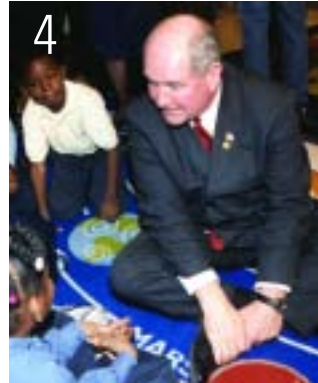
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# Raising Achievement for Each Student

## A Challenge Professional Educators Must Achieve Together



DR. DIANE RAY

**H**enry Ford once said, “Coming together is a beginning; staying together is a process; working together is success.”

If we closely examine this statement, we understand the truth and power of these words as they relate to raising the achievement of our students.

As a teacher, leader and educational professional, I have witnessed the success of “working together.” I know student learning is improved when teachers, school and district administrators and parents work in unison. The bottom line is there is just no way to raise student achievement without good teachers. Teachers are the heartbeat, mind, spirit, core, nucleus and foundation of successful schools. With this being said, there are great challenges to be accomplished. Teachers must plan, analyze, assess, probe and communicate with other teachers, school and district administrators and parents for improved student achievement to be a reality.

We are now embarking upon new curriculum in Georgia that has standards designed to focus on student learning that are both measurable and measured. As teachers and leaders within our schools, we must collaborate with our colleagues about the results we expect from students, the best instructional strategies to achieve the goals and ways to assess student learning in our classrooms each day. In other words, it is crucial to answer the following questions correctly: What should be taught? What is the best sequence? What strategies will help us achieve our goals? How do we assess students? If we focus on teaching and learning by engaging in meaningful and essential dialogue and planning with our colleagues, we will help to position our students for improved learning and greater achievement.

The stimulation for improved student learning and greater student achievement comes from school and district administrators and the support, collaboration and guidance they provide on a daily basis. Administrators have to work and plan with teachers and staffs to develop and articulate clear and measurable

goals, provide indicators that illustrate progress and look at ways to examine these indicators on a regular basis. Furthermore, they must provide training for teachers that will help them to master skills that will further the school goal.

I believe administrators alone cannot transform a school or improve student achievement. However, their ability to work hand-in-hand with classroom teachers is essential and a key component to fostering greater student success. Administrators, working with teachers, questioning the success of instructional strategies, seeking new knowledge, making decisions based on data and being proactive will indeed help to promote student success.

Another pivotal point in ensuring that students are learning comes from working side by side with parents and families. Textbooks and current research provide ample evidence of the positive effects of parental involvement. Teachers and administrators count on parental support. I know you are aware of the time and commitment it takes to implement effective communication systems with active parental participation to gain the support that is so needed. But I believe when educators make the commitment to strategically link the classroom and school with the parents, we will build a strong support system that produces better student achievement.

I have stated that improved achievement will take all of us and this reminds me that the whole is greater than the individual parts. Imagine, if you will, a handful of beautiful individual pearls, each pearl being a special value. Now visualize all of these beautiful pearls joined together on a string. The entire string is now of greater value and significance than the individual parts.

Think about the difference we can make as PAGE members, 57,000 strong, working together for students. Our work together will produce better students. Thus, the challenge is before each of us. Begin this school year by coming together and firmly set the foundation for this process. All of us, working together, will improve student learning and success in Georgia. ♦

# This Summer was a Busy One for All

Educators, by and large, do not “have the summer off” as some members of the public seem to think, so I hope you were able to carve out the time to “recharge your batteries” and share some leisure time with your loved ones.

The summer months were busy for your professional association, as well. We ended June with our annual conference, which is covered on pages 26-27 of this issue. Increasingly, we are enhancing the program each June to provide more of the type information you need as you face the challenges of No Child Left Behind. PAGE is launching a year-long effort to provide multiple learning opportunities for educators. We are very excited about it, and I hope you will read the summary of what’s ahead provided on page 32 of this issue.

July gave us the opportunity to attend the summer conference of the Georgia Association of Education Leaders (GAEL). We were there in force to participate in this important annual meeting. We made some new friends, recruited several new members, cheered as PAGE members received awards and used the time to discuss key education issues with long-time friends and colleagues.

Following GAEL, members of the staff and your three presidents (past, current and elect) spent three days in Washington, D.C., meeting with our senators and representatives, getting briefings from House Education Committee staff members and other education staffers and explaining our legislative priorities to federal leaders. A high point of the visit was time spent with Ohio Congressman John Boehner, who chairs the House Education Committee. Meeting with him and members of the committee staff, we stressed the need for good two-way communications and a continued willingness on their part to provide flexibility to states trying to implement NCLB. We were encouraged by their responsiveness to our comments. We told them that they must listen to educators on the front lines and keep in mind that NCLB must be considered a “work in progress” that will need continual fine-tuning as we find out what works and what does not.

In addition to NCLB, we discussed reauthorization of two important federal programs: IDEA and Vocational Education. Both the Senate and the House have passed versions of

IDEA and a conference committee must negotiate the different versions of the bill. We shared with our congressional representatives our views on paperwork reduction, discipline of special ed students and the need for the federal government to finally step up to its commitment to provide local systems with 40 percent of the costs of special education programs. The three days were busy, but we believe it was time well spent. We also had the opportunity to sit in on a meeting of the Education Committee as it began the “mark-up” of the Carl T. Perkins Vocational Education Act.

In late August, Governor Perdue’s commission to study the QBE formula met for the first time. The group is charged with studying the current funding mechanism and providing recommendations to the governor and the legislature on both short and long-term fixes. As I write this, that first meeting has not yet taken place, but be assured PAGE will be on hand when it does to provide our viewpoints on how we can repair the funding balance between the state and local systems.

That balance, as I am sure you well know, has gotten terribly out of whack, and there needs to be a new set of agreements between state and local leaders on two fronts: What is the appropriate funding responsibility of each of the parties? What can we agree are the accurate, current costs of educating our students? That latter agreement has gotten rather threadbare to say the least and has degenerated into more finger-pointing than consensus. I believe that if people of good faith and sincere intention will sit down and work through these issues, our schools and our students will be the beneficiaries. We are going to be encouraging just such interactions. We will also be insisting upon a plan for annual funding increases related to a set of agreed upon inflationary factors—something the QBE did not address and the lack of which is a primary cause of the current trouble.

We did get the chance to have our feature writer, Lee Raudonis, pose some key questions to Governor Perdue recently, and that interview begins on page 4 of this issue. I hope you will carefully read our questions and—more importantly—his answers. They will form the grist for much discussion and action in the weeks and months ahead this fall, leading toward the 2005 session of the General Assembly. ♦

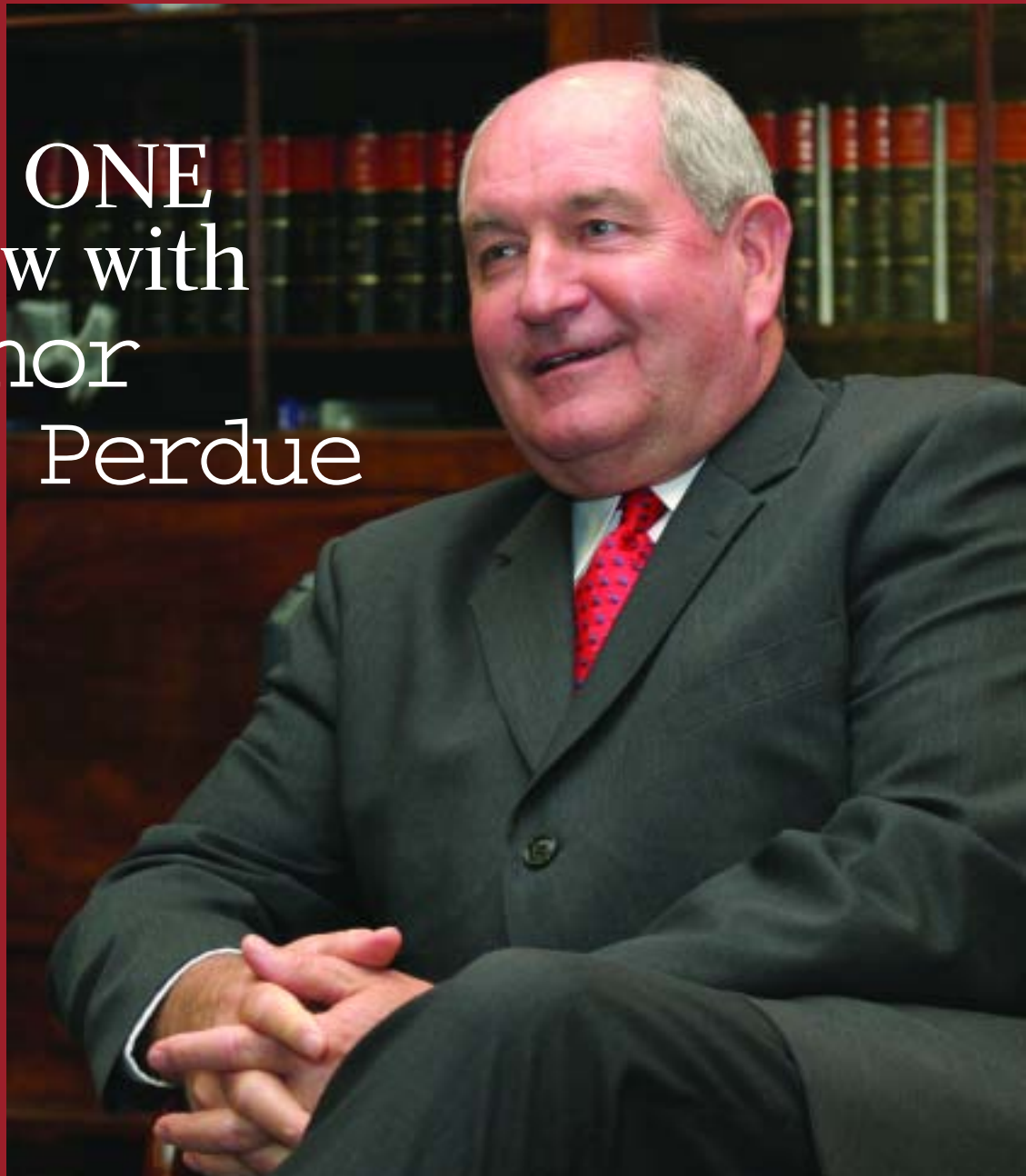


DR. ALLENE MAGILL



# A PAGE ONE Interview with Governor Sonny Perdue

By Lee Raudonis



**A**s the 2004-05 school year begins, Sonny Perdue has been governor of Georgia for almost two years. The first Republican governor since the Reconstruction Era, Perdue has been the only governor in modern times to preside over a divided government, with the governor's office and state senate in Republican hands and the state house of representatives in Democratic hands. Perdue has also faced one of the most serious budget shortfalls in recent memory.

*PAGE ONE* attempted to interview Governor Perdue shortly after his election and again before the 2004 session of the General Assembly, but his schedule prevented the interview at either time. This year, shortly after returning from the G-8 summit and a trip to Latin America, the governor sat down in his office with *PAGE ONE* writer Lee Raudonis for a discussion of education issues. Here is that interview as well as some of the governor's remarks to the Georgia Association of Education Leaders (GAEL) in July.

***PAGE ONE:*** Describe some of your personal memories of the schools you attended in Georgia and of your favorite teachers.

**Governor Perdue:** I have very good memories of my public school education in Houston County and of my teachers. I enjoyed every moment of it, and I am still in love with my second- and third-grade teachers. I don't even remember any junior high angst. I just took it as it came and had a great experience. I graduated from Warner Robins High School and went to the University of Georgia where I played football. My whole school experience was a great ride.

The fact is that education has always been important in our family. My mother taught in Houston County from 1960-1980, and my uncle was school superintendent in Houston County. I also had an aunt who taught. It seemed like the whole family was involved in education.

Our children also had a wonderful educational experience. The two girls graduated from my alma mater, Warner Robins High, while the two boys graduated from Houston County High, which became a National School of Excellence the first year it qualified.



**“It is my belief that the most effective ingredient for improving learning is a well-qualified, passionate, engaged teacher in every classroom.”**

They all received an excellent education and were all well prepared for college.

**PAGE ONE: You speak highly of the public education that you and your children received. How do you rate Georgia's public schools overall?**

**Governor:** I think we have some wonderful schools in Georgia. I think that the opportunity is there for engaged students with engaged parents to get a world-class education. Obviously, the quality is not totally equal in every school in the state, and it's not just an urban-rural division. In some cases, there are differences within the same school system. There are good schools in all parts of the state, but there are also schools throughout the state with some challenges.

It is true that when I talk to parents who have moved to Georgia from states that historically have had higher education rankings and scores than Georgia—states like Virginia, for example—they admit to having been somewhat concerned when they moved here, because of our lower scores. However, once they have been in Georgia for some length of time, most are very pleased with the quality of our schools.

**PAGE ONE: What will it take to improve the public's perception of Georgia's schools?**

**Governor:** What it is going to take is a change in our national scores. I don't believe we are really 50th in the quality of education, but we have to improve our scores on tests such as the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Until we do, the perception that we are near the bottom will remain. I am committed to making real progress in raising our scores on these tests.

**PAGE ONE: The Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law is causing a fair amount of confusion, not just in Georgia, but throughout the country. What are your views on this legislation, and do you believe it will have a positive or negative effect on Georgia's schools?**

**Governor:** From the standpoint of accountability, I believe No Child Left Behind is helpful. We need accountability. The federal financial assistance that comes with the law is also helpful. My only problem with the law, as it originally passed, was the lack of flexibility. Fortunately, there have been some modifications to the law and regulations that now make it more flexible. We built our policies under the law from the ground up by holding listening sessions with people all over the state, including teachers, administrators, parents, students, business people and others. We wanted to hear from those responsible for implementing the law. As a result, we made some changes in the state's approach, for example, getting rid of demeaning letter grades in the school evaluations, replacing them with numerical evaluations. We are more interested in trends than labels. We want to see improvement, not cast blame.



**PAGE ONE:** You mention SAT scores as being important symbolically in improving Georgia's education image. How do you propose to raise these scores?

**Governor:** We are trying to establish a culture of academic excellence, expectation and competitiveness among schools, from teachers and principals to students and parents. To change the culture, we are trying a lot of new approaches, including establishing rewards such as a valedictorian day, where we are going to issue an invitation to every high school valedictorian and their parents to come to the mansion. We're also implementing a Governor's Cup, dividing the schools into the same regions used in athletic competition, but having them compete in SAT scores with the winning schools in each region being awarded the Governor's Cup. There will be more information available about that program in the near future. Another example is [SATrocks.com](http://SATrocks.com), which we hope will help convince students that it is cool to have good SAT scores.

It is a dichotomy. At our flagship universities, Georgia Tech and the University of Georgia, SAT scores are rising every year. In fact, one of the biggest complaints we hear from a lot of Tech and Georgia alumni is that their son or daughter couldn't get into their school even though they are much smarter than the parents. Ten years ago, only 25 percent of our brightest high school graduates were staying in Georgia for college, whereas approximately 75 percent are staying in Georgia now, and they are the like a magnet for bright students from all over the country and the world. This reversal of the brain drain is very good for Georgia.



**PAGE ONE:** Do you have any plans to recommend a return of funding for paraprofessionals in grades 1-3?

**Governor:** I know that this is an issue of concern for a lot of teachers, and a lot of them tell me that they would prefer having a parapro in their class rather than reducing class size. Personally, I believe that paraprofessionals are an excellent resource, and as budgets allow, I will recommend returning them to grades 1-3.

**PAGE ONE:** Speaking of class size, how important is lowering class size in your education plans?

**Governor:** I pride myself on being a facts-based decision maker, so I want to look at the data about class size to see if that is the most effective way to spend our education dollars. Most of the research seems to indicate that reducing class size in the lower grades is effective, and we will probably continue to do that as budgets allow, but I want to see more data on the higher grades. It is my belief that the most effective ingredient for improving learning is a well-qualified, passionate, engaged teacher in every classroom.

**PAGE ONE:** Now I would like to get into some budgetary issues of interest to PAGE members. You have had the misfortune to become Governor at a very difficult time as far as the budget is concerned. What impact has the economy had on your education agenda, and do you have any idea when Georgia's teachers might see a further increase in their salaries?

**Governor:** I think our educational workforce is very professional in its understanding of our



#### **The Governor's Education Advisor**

Benjamin Scafidi serves as the education policy advisor to Governor Sonny Perdue. He is on loan from Georgia State University, where he serves as an assistant professor in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University. He has conducted research on a host of education issues ranging from pre-kindergarten, K-12, and higher education. Scafidi holds a B.A. from the University of Notre Dame and a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia.



state's financial situation. In the past legislative session, I recommended a pay raise of two percent, based on an economy that had not yet turned around. I did that hoping that we would see a turnaround. But let me put the budget in context, because I'm not sure everyone has a complete understanding of the crisis we faced. When we closed the books just last year on June 30, the revenues received in Fiscal 2003 did not equal the revenues we received in Fiscal 2000. And yet, there are more kids to educate, more health care costs, more Medicaid costs, etc. In other words, we had greater needs and less money. That's the situation in which we found ourselves, and I am very grateful to the professional educators who understood that and were very patient during that time period. My recommendation of a two percent increase last year was the very best I thought we could do. It was my recommendation that the increase should start on July 1, as is usually the case, but the legislature felt differently. Unfortunately, they chose school systems over individual educators. Because I feel so strongly that the front line teacher is the most important ingredient in education, I expect to continue recommending pay raises in the future. Due to the economic realities, I don't think I

**"We are trying to establish a culture of academic excellence and academic expectation and competitiveness among schools, from teachers and principals to students and parents."**



will be in the position to recommend the kind of raises that Governor Miller did, six percent, but my commitment is to keep Georgia's teacher salaries in the upper half of teacher salaries nationwide.

**PAGE ONE:** *Do you believe that the state should fund a percentage of health care premiums for teachers? What do you believe to be a fair ratio between what the state pays for and what the individual teachers and their families must pay? Will you put funding in future budgets to defray rapidly increasing premiums and co-pays?*

**Governor:** The fact is that health care costs have increased by double digits everywhere—in the private and public sectors—and I believe that if educators will compare their costs and coverage to that of other public and private employees, they will discover that their health

care coverage is a good value. The ratio of increased costs that the state pays is 75 percent, with employees paying the other 25 percent. So, every time their costs go up, the state's cost goes up three times as much. The best thing we can do policy-wise is to get a handle on healthcare costs.

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**PAGE ONE:** *After your term(s) as governor, what would you like people to say about you as far as education is concerned?*

**Governor:** I would like people to be able to say that this was a governor who valued education, who trusted the education professionals, and who worked together with them to improve the educational opportunities in Georgia, but also one whose term reflected an increase in national scores. I believe our teachers in Georgia are better

than 50th in the nation, and I want to find a mechanism whereby we can demonstrate that.

**PAGE ONE:** *Is there any other message you would like to relay to PAGE's 57,000 members?*

**Governor:** Yes, I would like to say thank you. Your members and other educators are the people that will create the educational opportunities that will make Georgia better. We are absolutely depend-

ent upon their professional skills and commitment to do the job of educating our students. I said it during my campaign, and I have said it since: I don't believe that governor is the highest office in the state; I believe that teacher is. It is an awesome responsibility and a great opportunity to leave a legacy of a better Georgia.

**PAGE ONE:** *Thank you, Governor.*

**PART II**

NOTE: Due to the governor's schedule, there was not sufficient time to ask all of the questions that were prepared for this interview. Additional questions about 25-year retirement, local flexibility, teacher certification, divided government and HOPE Scholarships were submitted to the governor's office for a written response, but his staff preferred instead to set up another PAGE ONE interview shortly before or after the 2005 session of the General Assembly. Look for that interview in an upcoming issue of *PAGE ONE*.

Shortly after the governor's interview with *PAGE ONE*, he addressed the Georgia Association of Education Leaders (GAEL). Here are some of his comments at GAEL.

**SPENDING FLEXIBILITY**

"You've heard me say before that I don't think the state should micro-manage every decision you make...you're the professionals on the ground. You know the needs of your system and your school better than the folks in Atlanta. And we should be looking for ways to help you do your job...not try to do it for you.

With that goal in mind, we passed another year of flexibility through the Legislature. And next year, I am going to ask them again to make that flexibility permanent."

**KEY GOALS**

"What we want to do from the state level

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**Dr. Gwen Mundy**  
Retired Educator





is give you the right tools. Ever since we took office, Superintendent Kathy Cox, Board Chair Wanda Barrs and I have discussed the need for 3 things:

- A world-class curriculum
- Good tests, carefully aligned with the curriculum
- And a student information system to track what is working well in Georgia and to point out where we need to devote more attention.

I want to congratulate Superintendent Cox and the State Board of Education for making tremendous strides in these areas. A large piece of the new performance standards have already passed. These new standards will propel us forward and give teachers and students both a clear understanding of what is expected of them.

The Student Information System is making strides where no one thought it would succeed.

What has been critical to this progress is the input of front line educators on the advisory committee that I appointed.

Our next step in testing will be to align our tests with the new performance standards. My vision for testing includes statewide diagnostic testing, every nine weeks. These diagnostic tests could be used for any purpose by teachers and schools. Diagnostic testing allows parents, teachers and students to see the progress that each child is making and where the child needs extra help.

It should be no surprise to anyone how a child does on the test at the end of the year because we should be tracking progress and adjusting all along the way. My vision also includes, as I just mentioned, getting the scores back quickly—whether that is through on-line testing or local scoring. The sooner we get results back in the hands of teachers, parents and students, the more good they can do.”

#### SCHOOL FUNDING

“We need to stop talking about education funding and start talking about education investing. ‘Funding’ sounds like money spent, money gone. ‘Investing’ reminds us to focus on results. We need to think in terms of investing for education excellence. We need to think in terms of tying every dollar spent to student achievement. Because I guarantee you that is how taxpayers think.

Student achievement is why taxpayers give us their hard earned money for our schools. They expect a high return on their investment. And to be more specific, taxpayers expect a better return than what they

think they’re getting right now.

I have appointed a School Finance Task Force to change the way we think about financing education. I will ask the task force to consider two things:

1. What can we do to bolster QBE in the short run? QBE is the horse we have to ride for now. I want annual interim recommendations for improvement while we design a more thorough-going change of approach.

2. I want recommendations on what is the best possible formula for investing in education excellence. I believe the hallmarks would be a formula that is transparent, simple, and ensures all children have access to an excellent education.

This won’t be a quick, simple or easy process. But it will be a wide-reaching process. Listening to front line educators has been a hallmark of my administration... I am serious about using this task force to move us from settling for ‘basic’ to demanding ‘excellence’...and from an attitude of ‘funding’ to a mindset of investing in education excellence.”

#### SAT

“Georgia is 50th in SAT scores. That’s a cold, hard fact. Now you and I could spend

the rest of our lives trying to convince Georgians that doesn’t mean we are 50th in education. But pigs will fly to the moon before we win that argument. As long as Georgia ranks 50th on SATs, Georgians will believe—right or wrong—that they are not getting a good return on their education investment.

Is that a fair perception? No. I’ll tell you right now it’s not. But I’ll also tell you, life ain’t fair. I have traveled all across this state and that is the perception people hold. Being 50th is demoralizing for our educators ... demoralizing to our students ... and demoralizing to our state. We must get out of the basement.

So I’m doing all I can to get Georgia out of 50th place in SAT scores. And I know that virtually all of you are committed to raising SAT scores 20 points over a two-year period. If every school in Georgia does this, we may even get to 40th. I look forward to congratulating our first Governor’s Cup winners in a few months, honoring the schools with the biggest GAINS in SAT scores statewide. In addition to the trophy, there will be prizes like Braves tickets for students and staff. And the winning schools will be featured on television.” ♦



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**ZOO ATLANTA**



## BellSouth Foundation Awards \$25,000 Grant in Support of FEA in GA

The Future Educators of America in Georgia (FEA in GA) program, a partnership of the PAGE Foundation and Phi Delta Kappa International, enjoyed two major milestones this summer thanks to the generosity of BellSouth and the BellSouth Foundation. In June, BellSouth and the PAGE Foundation co-hosted the first annual FEA in GA Summer Institute at Georgia College and State University (GC&SU) in Milledgeville. In July, the BellSouth Foundation announced its award of \$25,000 to the PAGE Foundation in support of its grant request entitled, "A Positive Response to Georgia's Looming Teacher Shortages."

The grant request outlined ways in which the FEA in GA program can be implemented in an effort to forestall possible future teacher shortages in Georgia by encouraging middle and high school students to consider the field of education as a viable career option. The PAGE Foundation proposal was one of 24 grants awarded from a field of 450 competing applicants.

"We are honored to be chosen to receive this grant, especially in light of the numerous, worthwhile requests that the BellSouth Foundation receives annually," said Tom Wommack, president of the PAGE Foundation. "We appreciate BellSouth Foundation's commitment to improving education in the state by ensuring that each student has a caring and qualified teacher in our classrooms, both now and in the future."

The BellSouth Foundation grant augments the support given to the FEA in GA program from BellSouth Corporation through two previous donations of \$10,000 each. Those donations were instrumental in providing for the initial roll-out of the program in 2003 and in hosting the first annual FEA in GA Summer Institute in June. According to Wommack, the commitment to the program has not been just financial. Phil Jacobs, president of BellSouth Georgia Operations, has made a personal commitment to the program, first as the keynote speaker at the 2003 FEA Day on Capitol Hill and then as the keynote speaker at the Summer Institute opening banquet.

Students who attended the Summer Institute had the opportunity to talk with Jacobs and learn how his life was changed with the help of one teacher. In his speech, Jacobs shared with his young audience that he had gone through school as an average student until an observant 7th-grade English teacher realized Jacobs struggled with dyslexia. Because that teacher was able to help him at a crucial point in his academic career, he was able to have the tutoring he needed to manage his dyslexia, and in time for him to succeed academically in secondary school and go on to college. He credits that teacher as having had a profound influence on this life.

"I tell you that story to say that every person that is sitting in this room has an opportunity to have that kind of influence not on one



President of BellSouth Georgia Operations Phil Jacobs (center) met with Belinda Nyarku (right) and Adrien Carter (left) following his keynote address during the Summer Institute's opening banquet. Both students are members of the FEA in GA Chapter at Norcross High School of Gwinnett County Schools.

or two or three people's lives, but on scores of people's lives every year. I don't think there's any more noble profession not only in this state, but in this country and in the world today

than inspiring and leading other people to meet their full potential. That is ultimately as teachers what you're going to do," Jacobs said. In his remarks, Jacobs also explained that a strong educational system and an educated workforce are vital in attracting and maintaining new and existing businesses—thus maintaining a strong and vital state economy.

Joining Jacobs at the opening banquet was Carolyn Lovett, senior director of external affairs for BellSouth Georgia, who serves as vice chair of the PAGE Foundation and a member of the FEA of GA Advisory Council. Lovett has been instrumental in directing BellSouth support to the PAGE Foundation and FEA in Georgia.

### FIRST SUMMER INSTITUTE RECEIVES HIGH MARKS FROM PARTICIPANTS

In addition to Jacobs, FEA members and advisors attending the Summer Institute heard from other inspirational speakers throughout the three-day session held June 7-9. The participants heard from outstanding educators and professionals, such as 2002 National Teacher of the Year Chauncey Veatch; 2003 Georgia Teacher of the Year and National Teacher of the Year Finalist Lorraine Johnson; National Board Certified Teacher Kaysheila Mitchell; Georgia Professional Standards Commission Representative Robert Maxson; Mrs. Georgia United States 2002-03 and Cobb County Educator Javella Simmons.

Students also attended creative breakout sessions designed by the John H. Lounsbury School of Education faculty. Topics ranged from "The Who, What, When, Where, How and Why of Teaching" to "Teaching Math in High School: Does It Add Up?" Students also enjoyed team-building and extracurricular activities.

FEA Chapter Advisors attended breakout sessions especially designed for them, including such topics as "How to Help Students on Pathway to Teaching" and "Financial Aid for Students." They also participated in activities with their chapter members, including a skit competition.

The 2005 FEA in GA Summer Institute will be held on June 6-8, at GC&SU. Invitations and registration information will be sent to all registered FEA chapters, so all FEA advisors are encouraged to register their chapters for the 2004-05 school year. Chapter registration is available online at [www.pagefoundation.org](http://www.pagefoundation.org). ♦

# Summer Institute Highlights

**FEA in GA members were inspired by:**



2003 Georgia Teacher of the Year Lorraine Johnson



2002 National Teacher of the Year Chauncey Veatch



National Board Certified Teacher Kaysheila Mitchell

**Georgia College and State University John H. Lounsbury School of Education faculty members:**



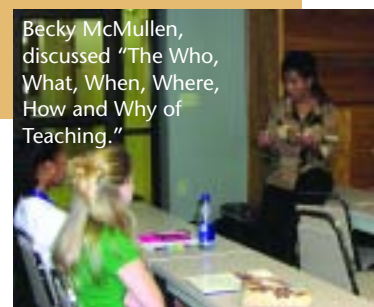
Revel Pogue explored "Creative Expressions"



Leigh Hern discussed "How to Help Students on Pathway to Teaching"



GS&SU Outdoor Education Instructors taught team building through: Lassoing a chair



Becky McMullen, discussed "The Who, What, When, Where, How and Why of Teaching."



Georgia College and State University President Dr. Dorothy Leland welcomed FEA in GA Summer Institute participants to the GC&SU campus.



Pat Biggerstaff, a member of the State Board of Education, brought greetings from Governor Sonny Perdue and the state board.



Summer Institute participants included members of the Duluth High School's FEA in GA chapter. They are: (front row, left to right) Liz Bouchell and Samantha Reynolds and (back row, left to right) Danielle Jenkins (FEA Advisor), Amanda Alvarado, Jessica MacNeill and Lauren Wood.



Other participants in the Summer Institute included: (front row, left to right) Belinda Nyarku, Norcross High School; Jennifer Sullens, White County High School; Kara Cowdrick, Brookwood High School; Athena Alexander, White County High School; FEA Advisor Patsy Lewis, White County High School; (back row, left to right) FEA Advisor Jennifer Garcia, Brookwood High School; Lauren Wood, Duluth High School; FEA Advisor Chuck Sears, Norcross High School; Adrien Carter, Norcross High School; Misty Humphries, White County High School.

## Interview with Ben Boswell

**PAGE Foundation Director John Varner recently sat down to talk with Ben Boswell, who serves as the PAGE Foundation's Board of Trustees Treasurer, to discuss various education issues. Boswell is the senior vice president and community affairs manager of Wachovia Bank.**

**PAGE:** *You began your career as a teacher and later moved into the banking profession. What was it that ultimately persuaded you to leave the classroom?*

**Ben Boswell:** I taught for three years immediately after graduating from college, and really did not make a conscious decision to leave teaching. I was offered the opportunity to return to my alma mater and serve as assistant director of admissions. In that capacity I was also responsible for a program serving disadvantaged youth. So I really stayed in education for the first five and one half years following college. As it happens, my wife and I found ourselves in Boston in 1975 with elderly parents in Virginia at a time when there was a lot of turmoil in that city during school desegregation. My wife and I made a conscious choice to return to the South. Upon our return, I was unable to get a job in education, and Wachovia stepped in and offered me a job in Human Resources. That's how I made the transition from education to banking.

**PAGE:** *There are reports that approximately 30 percent of our novice teachers leave the profession within the first five years of service in the classroom. Why do you suppose this happens, and what do you think we can do to retain capable people?*

**Ben Boswell:** I think one of the things we have to recognize is that many young people will go through a number of jobs and career changes early in their professional life; we experience a similar situation here at the bank. We bring in young

folks from school, most with business or finance degrees. Some stay, and a number choose to go on and do something different. There is a natural desire for exploration, and people make a decision to try something else. They may come back or they may discover in that process something they like better. I do think, however, that efforts to orient, train and support new employees can make a difference in whether they get a solid footing in that occupation and elect to stay. I think some concentrated efforts like that can help reduce turnover. Frankly, I don't think we will ever eliminate it; few of us know at the ripe old age of 22 what we will be doing at the ripe old age of 65.



Ben Boswell, Wachovia senior vice president and community affairs manager for Georgia, is the treasurer of the PAGE Foundation Board of Trustees.

**PAGE:** *What did you learn about the teaching profession during the years you were in the classroom?*

**Ben Boswell:** One of the things that really stayed with me from my experience in the classroom was the realization that the single most important way to help students "get it" was for me to really connect with them. Ultimately I wanted them to embrace the subject matter. More importantly, I wanted them to embrace the art of lifelong learning. But to get there, I first had to connect with each student as an individual and then I think through that relationship, we could lead them through history or whatever the subject was, but ultimately a love of learning.

**PAGE:** *How do you think teaching has changed since the days when you were a teacher?*

**Ben Boswell:** Oh, many, many ways. There are some obvious changes; technology of course being a major one. I can remember the occasional day when I brought an 8 mm film to show to a class. Of course we have progressed beyond videotapes onto DVDs and the Internet and all sorts of opportunities and

avenues that we never dreamed of, quite frankly. When we look at some of the demographics—particularly in our communities here in Georgia—and you look at some of the real changes in American society, teachers are faced with challenges unheard of when I was in the classroom. Some of the problems are driven by problems within families and a high degree of poverty. You can even look at the impact of immigration in many of our communities and just the fact that teachers not only are managing classes of 20 or 30 students, but they are managing classes of many cultures, many languages, dialects and many philosophies of education. That is very different from anything I ever faced.

**PAGE:** *The Wachovia Foundation recently announced a five-year, \$20 million commitment known as the "Teachers and Teaching Initiative." Why has the foundation chosen to focus a considerable amount of its philanthropy on teachers, and what outcomes do you expect from this initiative?*

**Ben Boswell:** First and foremost the company believes that the challenge of improving academic achievement in the communities we serve is paramount. We have an almost innate belief in the power of education to change lives, to improve lives for the better. When we look in that arena we believe that effective teaching is probably the single most influential factor that can make a difference. Consequently, among all the options we could choose to improve public education, we believe it is most important to help communities, school systems and organizations like PAGE strengthen programs to attract, develop and retain effective, accomplished teachers.

**PAGE:** *How will you know when your initiative has succeeded? What outcomes will you see that will tell you that Wachovia has seen a return on the investment it made in this initiative?*

**Ben Boswell:** One would hope that reports of student achievement will begin to show improvement—whether that is



performance on standardized tests, reduction in absenteeism or an increase in college attendance. I think these are the initial mileposts we will look to. Ultimately, we hope the caliber of entrants into the work force and the overall caliber of available workers will be such that education becomes one of the selling points of those communities.

**PAGE:** *One of the things this initiative does is to put a priority on helping students and teachers in under-performing and under-resourced school systems. Why is this important to Wachovia?*

**Ben Boswell:** Obviously there are a lot of ways that one could invest in the whole issue of the achievement gap. When we look at the landscape, there are so many students and so many communities where we have underachieving students. Clearly, if the whole state is to thrive and prosper, it makes more sense to us to invest our dollars in those communities to help bring them up to standard and eventually help them exceed standards. We think that's going to be good for Georgia; it is going to be good for the communities; it will be good for the organization and ultimately it will be good for our state's future.

**PAGE:** *You and Wachovia have been strong advocates for National Board Certification, and you've given generously to help teachers pursue this prestigious award in multiple gifts to the PAGE Foundation through what is now known as the Wachovia Scholars program. What is it about National Board Certification that merits your sustained financial support?*

**Ben Boswell:** Experts within and outside education are trying to figure out how to close the achievement gap—how do we make a difference? I think some answers are emerging. I know we are not there yet, but from what we see, accomplished, effective teachers seem to be the single most important factor. Given our understanding of the rigorous process for the National Board Certification and the feedback we have heard from teachers who have undergone that process, it seems to really make a difference in terms of their professional development and ultimately, their performance in the

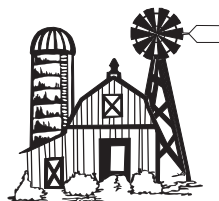
classroom. Interestingly enough, just recently I read about a study involving North Carolina students that clearly showed a correlation between National Board Certified teachers and higher student test scores on standardized tests. That was quite impressive. Again, it is an evolving field and there are critics of that study; but all indications so far seem to say to us that there really is a correlation and it is worth the investment we are making there. In an ideal world we could wait out all the studies until there is some definitive answer—maybe 10 or 25 years from now. But what is going to happen to all of our students and our schools and our communities while we wait? I don't think we have got that kind of time. We need to seize those programs and those strategic initiatives that are at least showing promise and work with them because our students need it yesterday.

**PAGE:** *You and the Wachovia Foundation recently provided the PAGE Foundation with a \$50,000 donation to*

*increase the number of National Board Certified teachers in under-resourced school systems in Georgia. Why is this important to you, and what do you expect to see happen as a result of this very generous grant?*

**Ben Boswell:** I think it is important because, on many fronts, our less affluent communities have even greater challenges, and one of those challenges is their ability to attract and retain top notch teachers. It is no surprise that many individuals who particularly want to rise to the top of their profession are attracted to school systems that pay better, have better laboratories, better facilities and better support systems. It is important to Wachovia that all students in Georgia have access to the best quality education we can give them. It just makes sense to support those teachers who are serving in some of our less affluent school systems and communities and help them provide some of the advantages that students in other communities enjoy today.

*Continued on page 18*



## Cagle's Dairy Farm Tours

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## PAGE and the PAGE Foundation Announce 2004 Scholarship Recipients

PAGE and the PAGE Foundation announced the winners of its annual scholarships for experienced and aspiring teachers. Six veteran educators were awarded \$1,000 each to be used to pursue advanced education degrees. Two additional scholarships were awarded to paraprofessionals seeking teacher certification, and seven Student PAGE (SPAGE) members earned \$1,000 scholarships to help realize their aspiration to become Georgia educators.

A panel of judges consisting of practicing and retired educators from across the state scored the applicants on the basis of academic achievement; record of school and community service; recommendations; and essay. Mary Ruth Ray, manager of student programs, commented that the program provides valuable assistance to those students who may not be eligible for HOPE scholarships. "PAGE is a strong advocate of the HOPE scholarship program; however, there are some students who are ineligible for various reasons," said Ray. "We are pleased that the PAGE Foundation scholarships are there for these students to assist them in pursuing their professional education."

The following scholarships are available through the PAGE Foundation. The scholarships are one-time awards of \$1,000 each. To apply, download the application from [www.pagefoundation.org](http://www.pagefoundation.org) beginning in September 2004. All applications must be postmarked no later than April 30, 2005, in order to be eligible.

**SPAGE Scholarships** (*college students—rising juniors, seniors or graduate students—not currently employed by a school system*)

Scholarship recipients must have a minimum 3.0 GPA, attend a college in Georgia, and be a member of Student PAGE (SPAGE). Recipients must teach in Georgia for three years upon completion of degree.

Categories include:

- **SPAGE Undergraduate Scholarship**
- **S. Marvin Griffin Scholarship**
- **Dr. John Robert and Barbara Moore Lindsey Scholarship**—must be enrolled or committed to enroll in Georgia Southern University.

- **SPAGE Graduate Scholarship**—must be pursuing an advanced degree in education and not yet employed by a school system.

**PAGE Scholarships** (*teachers, administrators and support personnel*)

Scholarship recipients must have a minimum 3.0 GPA and be a member of PAGE. Recipients must teach in Georgia for three years upon completion of degree.

Categories include:

- **PAGE Graduate Scholarship**—must be pursuing an advanced degree in education or be a provisionally certified teacher pursuing professional certification.
- **H.M. and Norma Fulbright Scholarship**—must be serving as a Future Educators of America in Georgia (FEA in GA) chapter advisor or a PAGE Academic Bowl team coach.

- **Jack Christmas Graduate Scholarship**—must be pursuing an advanced degree in elementary education or reading.

- **Support Personnel Scholarship**—must be employed as support personnel within a Georgia school system and pursuing teacher certification.

### 2004 PAGE Foundation Scholarship Recipients

#### *Jack Christmas Graduate*

**Georgee (Gigi) Cousar Mills**, 4th grade teacher, Screven County Elementary, Screven County Schools—attending Georgia Southern University, Statesboro and pursuing Ed. S. in Elementary Education



#### *H.M. and Norma Fulbright Scholarship*

**Advis Dell Wilkerson**, business education teacher, Creekside High School, Fulton County Schools—attending Georgia Southern University, Statesboro and pursuing Ed. D. in Curriculum Studies



#### *PAGE Graduate*

**Shannon Cheney Hammond**, school counselor, Auburn Elementary, Barrow County Schools—attending University of Georgia, Athens and pursuing Ed. S. in Early Childhood Education



#### *PAGE Graduate*

**Carrie Lee Hicks**, first grade teacher, Arbor Springs Elementary School, Coweta County Schools—attending University of West Georgia, Carrollton and pursuing Ed. S. in Early Childhood Education



#### *PAGE Graduate*

**Brett Miles James**, Social Studies teacher, Murray County High School, Murray County Schools—attending Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tenn. and pursuing Ed. S. in Leadership/Administration



#### *PAGE Graduate*

**Lisset Leticia Bird-Pickens**, teacher, Tara Elementary, Clayton County Schools—attending Mercer University, Atlanta and pursuing M. Ed. in Early Childhood Education



#### *PAGE Support Personnel*

**Tricia J. Socky**, paraprofessional, Goshen Elementary, Richmond County Schools—attending Georgia Military College, Augusta and majoring in Early Childhood Education



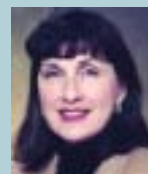
*PAGE Support Personnel*

**Cheryl A. Winsor**, paraprofessional, Morrow Elementary, Clayton County Schools—attending Mercer University, McDonough and majoring in Early Childhood Education



*SPAGE Undergraduate*

**Kathleen Ann Townsend**, Middle Grades Education major science/language arts—attending University of Georgia, Athens



*S. Marvin Griffin SPAGE*

**Jenny Nell Tyre**, Family and Consumer Sciences Education major—attending Georgia Southern University, Statesboro



*SPAGE Undergraduate*

**Deborah Annette Sechrist**, Middle Grades Education major math/science—attending Clayton College & State University, Morrow



*S. Marvin Griffin SPAGE*

**Michelle Backes Parkerson**, Early Childhood Education major—attending Valdosta State University, Valdosta



*SPAGE Graduate*

**Anna Rebecca Temlock**, Early Childhood Education major—attending Mercer University, Atlanta



*John Robert and Barbara Moore Lindsey Scholarship*

**Anna Frances Griffin**, Early Childhood Education major—attending Georgia Southern University, Statesboro



*SPAGE Graduate*

**Lisa Babbage Taylor**, Middle Grades Education major Language Arts/Social Studies—attending Mercer University, Atlanta



## NBPTS News

Barbara Kelley, former NBPTS Chair, has been inducted into the National Teacher Hall of Fame. Kelley retired from the NBPTS Chair in 2003 and now lives in Raleigh, NC. Ms. Kelley was mentored by the founding president of NBPTS, Jim Kelley, and founding chair and former North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt. To be inducted into the Hall of Fame, nominees must be certified public or nonpublic teachers, active or retired, with at least 20 years of preK-12 teaching experience.

NBPTS National Conference 2005 will be held July 21-23 at the Hilton Washington Hotel, Washington, D. C. There is no longer a national conference held in November. Mark your calendar for this important date.

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission, Georgia State University and Albany State University are collaborating to establish Centers for Accomplished and Exemplary Teachers. Funded by state and private funds, the goal is to establish a resource center for teachers seeking national board certification. Information about the Albany State Center can be found at [asuweb.asurams.edu/news/teachingcourse.html](http://asuweb.asurams.edu/news/teachingcourse.html).

# PAGE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The PAGE Foundation Offers \$1,000 Scholarships to Qualified PAGE/SPAGE Members Who Are:

- Teachers Pursuing Advanced Degrees or Initial Certification
- Support Personnel Pursuing Teacher Certification
- College Students Pursuing Certification and/or Advanced Degrees

For more information or to download an application (available after September 1, 2004) visit [www.pagefoundation.org](http://www.pagefoundation.org).



*Volunteers Needed for the PAGE Academic Bowl for Middle Grades & The PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon*

Visit [www.pagefoundation.org](http://www.pagefoundation.org)



# Honor Your Favorite Teacher

By Grace Tiao, 2004 State PAGE STAR Student, Wheeler High School Graduate

Dr. Cheryl Crooks is the kind of person people in the South would refer to as “the salt of the earth.” She meets all the qualifications—she comes from the South (her family lives in Alabama) and is always gracious and kind to others. That much I knew from the first five minutes I ever spent with her as a trembling freshman on the first day of high school. I remember looking around her classroom at the closed, indifferent faces of sophomores and wondering if taking Honors Chemistry as a freshman had been a mistake. But when she began to speak to the class, welcoming the freshmen to school in open, friendly tones, I instantly relaxed. This is a person I can trust—and maybe even talk to—I told myself. To this day I can still remember the cheery blue shade of her suit on the first day of school—an omen for the year to come.

But Dr. Crooks is so much more than an approachable and friendly personality—she is a truly gifted teacher. Imagine having to instruct a group of green underclassmen not only how to diagram Lewis structures but also



Grace Tiao, 2004 State PAGE STAR Student, with Dr. Cheryl Crooks, 2004 State PAGE STAR Teacher and Cobb County educator.

how to calculate pH—when they had never even seen a logarithm before! She did it though, and she did it so well that last year all my classmates begged her to teach our AP Chemistry class. The fact that she declined in loyalty to underclassman instruction is a testament to her dedication as a teacher.

I’ve had the opportunity of working with her outside the classroom as an officer in the service club she sponsors, Leadership Club. And true to the club’s reputation, Dr. Crooks is a leader, both in and out of the classroom. She commands respect from everyone I know for a fact that her colleagues in the magnet program I attend refer to her as the “Mother Teresa of the Magnet.” She’s such an amazing person—so reachable and open to everyone. And so humble. Dr. Crooks has been a shining example of the kind of person I’d like to be when I grow up: intelligent, kind, approachable, elegant, funny, loved and admired by everyone.

My good fortune in having had such a wonderful teacher didn’t just end there, however. I was also blessed in the form of the most incredible counselor

any high-schooler could ever wish for. People in the magnet program call her “Momma Banks,” and we all raid her office for candy. As academic counselor to almost 400 students, her doors are always open, though there’s a sign taped on to it that reads, “Always Late—But Worth the Wait!” Ms. Cathie Banks does so much more than advise us what classes to take, however. She’s the glue that holds the student body together. We run to her with our complaints, cry in the chair before her desk, gossip about who’s going out with whom, ask her for advice on important things (like college) and little things (like gum brands). Ms. Banks always says she’s going to retire but somehow manages to stay on for just another year. That’s a good thing, though, because without her a good portion of us would be completely lost and the rest of us would have nowhere to go for our sugar fixes.



Cathie Banks, assistant magnet director, Wheeler High School.

Ms. Banks gave me rides home from school after my father died, when my mother was too busy working to take me home. She organized and rounded up a week’s worth of food for my family from the faculty at school, and she was there at the funeral to give me a hug. When I broke to her the news that I had scored a 1600 on my SAT, she cried, because she knew how much it meant to me, and because she had always believed I could do it.

Last summer, she and my family took a short road trip up through Virginia and North Carolina to visit colleges, and on the long stretches of highway I heard stories about her genius sister and her veterinarian daughter. But she always came back to teaching. She had stories about her first year as a teacher, stories from her years teaching biology, comments about the state of education today, of students in general, of the changes she’d seen occur on her watch. I could tell from listening to her talk that teaching was not merely an occupation for her—it was her way of life.

Sometimes I wonder how I’ll cope next year when I’m off at college and can’t walk into her office for a heart-to-heart. I’d like to take her with me, but that would deprive another generation of students from the privilege of knowing her. And besides, she believes in me—she knows that I’ll find my feet this fall at college and take off running—and that’s enough for me. ♦

# PAGE Foundation to Offer Praxis I and Praxis II Workshops in 2004-05

Are you interested in attending a Praxis I or Praxis II workshop during 2004-05? The PAGE Foundation will offer a full slate of workshops being offered throughout the state.

Here are some quick facts about our Praxis workshops: You must be a PAGE or SPAGE member in order to attend.

There is no fee to attend any workshop, but the Praxis I workshop requires the purchase of a \$35 workbook (used for instruction during the workshop).

You must register online before attending any workshop. Registration closes two days prior to the workshop.

More information about the workshops, including FAQs, can be found at [www.pagefoundation.org](http://www.pagefoundation.org).



**PRAXIS I WORKSHOPS**—\$35 to cover materials.

We have contracted with ARS (Academic Resource Services) to provide Praxis I workshops for PAGE and have negotiated a much lower rate for our members than what individuals pay for the workshops on their own. The PAGE sponsored Praxis I workshop will be \$35 to cover the price of the materials. Bring payment to the workshop. Exact change or a check made out to ARS will be accepted. (Please note: this fee is strictly for materials only, PAGE earns no profit from this fee.)

The Praxis I workshop will cover reading, writing and mathematics\*. For more information about the Praxis I Combination Series workshop please visit the ARS website at [www.arspraxis.org](http://www.arspraxis.org).

*Saturday, Sept. 18, 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m.*  
**Wesleyan College, Macon**

*Saturday, Sept. 25 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m.*  
**Truett-McConnell College, Cleveland**

*Saturday, Oct. 9, 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m.*  
**East Georgia College, Swainsboro**

*Saturday, Oct. 23, 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m.*  
**Kennesaw State University**

*Saturday, Oct. 30, 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m.*  
**Kennesaw State University—  
Math Only\***

*Saturday, Jan. 22, 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m.*  
**Brewton-Parker College, Mt. Vernon**

*Saturday, Feb. 5, 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m.*  
**Augusta State University**

*Saturday, Feb. 12, 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m.*  
**Kennesaw State University**

*Saturday, Feb. 19, 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m.*  
**Darton College, Albany**

**\*Oct. 30 workshop is math only. Cost for this workshop is \$30.**

**PRAXIS II WORKSHOPS**—No charge.

Praxis II workshops, provided by Estrada Consulting, Inc., are approximately three hours long and are appropriate for anyone preparing to take any Praxis II exam, regardless of subject area. The workshop covers how the Praxis series of exams differs from other standardized tests and how to prepare specifically for Praxis tests. A subject area-specific question and answer time follows the general presentation. Optional study guides will be available for \$15 each.

*Thursday, Aug. 26, 5-8 p.m.*  
**Valdosta State University**  
[Exam date: Saturday, Sept. 11]

*Thursday, September 30, 5-8 p.m.*  
**Berry College, Rome**

*Saturday, Oct. 2, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.*  
**Augusta State University**

*Wednesday, Oct. 13, 5-8 p.m.*  
**Columbus State University**

*Thursday, Oct. 14, 5-8 p.m.*  
**Clayton College and State University**

*Thursday, Oct. 21, 5-8 p.m.*  
**Kennesaw State University**  
[Exam date: Saturday, November 20]  
[Exam date: Saturday, Jan. 8]

*Thursday, Feb. 3, 5-8 p.m.*  
**Valdosta State University**

*Thursday, Feb. 10, 5-8 p.m.*  
**Mercer University, Macon**

*Saturday, Feb. 19, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.*  
**Kennesaw State University**

*Saturday, Feb. 26, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.*  
**Brewton-Parker College, Mt. Vernon**  
[Exam date: Saturday, March 5]

*Saturday, March 19, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.*  
**Mercer University, Atlanta**

*Thursday, March 31, 5-8 p.m.*  
**Columbus State University**  
[Exam date: Saturday, April 16]

*Thursday, May 12, 5-8 p.m.*  
**TBD**

*Thursday, May 19, 5-8 p.m.*  
**Georgia Southern University**

*Saturday, May 21, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.*  
**TBD**  
[Exam date: Saturday, June 11]

All PAGE and SPAGE members are welcome at any of the workshops, but you must register to attend. Registration deadline is two days prior to the workshop. Register online at [www.pagefoundation.org](http://www.pagefoundation.org). ♦

## TRUSTEE FORUM

*Continued from page 13*

**PAGE:** *You chose to accept an invitation to join the Board of Trustees of the PAGE Foundation several years ago, and you were elected treasurer a year ago. What was it about PAGE and the PAGE Foundation that attracted your attention and why do you think service on the foundation Board of Trustees warrants your time and service?*

**Ben Boswell:** As far back as I can remember—and this goes back to my college and perhaps even high school days—education and helping others learn has really been important to me personally. Earlier I mentioned my days in the classroom and my stint in college administration. What I haven't shared with you is that for ten years I managed the training department here at Wachovia. In that process, I actually went back to the classroom, but this time instructing and facilitating classes for managers. I believe to my core that education is essential not

only to individuals realizing their dreams and ambitions but also as a means of improving the quality of life in our communities. Toward that end, I can think frankly of no better way of trying to have an impact on a broad scale than by working with PAGE and the PAGE Foundation. When you look at the membership of PAGE and the tremendous number of educators who are involved in and committed to PAGE, it is just one thing I can do to help all of their many efforts to improve education. So for me, it is just a natural thing to do; but it is also an honor to serve the educators of Georgia in this way.

**PAGE:** *For several months now, you have played a crucial role on the PAGE Foundation Planning Committee, which is reviewing the activities of the foundation and its mission and objectives. As of the time of this interview, the committee seems to be directing more attention to the development of teachers. Why do you think the trustees of the PAGE Foundation see teacher development as*

*a top priority?*

**Ben Boswell:** As we constantly stress at Wachovia, each of us has room to develop, to hone our skills, to learn new skills, but also to improve in those areas where we are not as strong. It is extremely important that our teachers be afforded the right opportunities to develop professionally and continue to grow. Through that process they will realize more satisfaction in their careers and will deliver even more to the students in the classroom. Professional development is a very important ongoing process that professionals across the board need to continually be involved with.

**PAGE:** *What is your take on projections of teacher shortages in Georgia during the next 10 years? Do you believe these shortages are something we need to be concerned about, and how would you and the business community like to see the State of Georgia and the PAGE Foundation respond?*

**Ben Boswell:** We absolutely need to be concerned about those projected shortages. One of the interesting things to me is that projected shortages are not confined to Georgia. Many states are also projecting shortages. This becomes significant because it may say to us that Georgia may not be able to import the talent to bail us out of this problem. Given the growth in our population, and as we continue to grow, it is crucial that we do all we can to support people who have already committed themselves to education, and that we do all we can to make the profession as rewarding and attractive as we can.

**PAGE:** *Final question: If you had the opportunity to speak to every classroom teacher in the State of Georgia, what would you say to them?*

**Ben Boswell:** That's easy. I would say thank you, thank you, thank you. You are dealing with our most precious resource, the young minds and future leaders of our state. What you do not only influences them today but it has far greater impact on our state and our future. You are critical in that process. We love you, and we appreciate all that you are doing. ♦

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# WHAT ARE YOUR LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES?

## PAGE Wants To Hear From You...

PAGE is a democratically run association, relying on input from its members at the local level. Please review PAGE's Tentative Legislative Priorities that were discussed at the 2004 Summer Conference and will be finalized at the Fall PAGE Conference. The legislative priorities will be finalized at the Fall Conference. PAGE lobbyists will work for these priorities at the 2005 Georgia General Assembly.

Please rate each item from 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest) on the ballot below and return to the PAGE office as soon as possible.

**1 - unimportant    2 - could be considered but not necessary    3 - important    4 - very important**

### I. STUDENT LEARNING & ACHIEVEMENT

Through the QBE Formula, Provide the Following:

- A. Fully implement the lower pupil-teacher ratio as mandated by current Georgia law by providing for the required teachers and permanent facilities.
- B. Enable districts to employ paraprofessionals in grades 1-8 for the purpose of enhancing the academic program, permitting teachers to focus on individual students' instructional needs.
- C. Provide students with art, music, and physical education teachers in grades K-8 at the rate of at least one of each for every 345 students (five-year phase-in).
- D. Preserve the middle school program by allowing for a curriculum that includes the core subjects but also provides for music, the arts, physical education and connections.

### II. ATTENDANCE & STUDENT SERVICES

Through the QBE Formula, Provide the Following:

- A. At least one school counselor for every 400 students in grades K-8.
- B. At least one school social worker for every 1,200 students.
- C. At least one school psychologist for every 1,200 students.
- D. Expand the alternative education program to include Grades K-5.

### III. ATTRACTING & RETAINING QUALITY EDUCATORS

- A. Improve state support of the State Health Benefit Plan to reduce the rate of premium increase and maintain the integrity of the plan.
- B. Ensure that Georgia teacher salaries reach and remain above the national average and lead the Southeast by increasing the state base scale by six percent.
- C. Add steps to the state teacher salary scale to extend salary steps through 30 years.
- D. Continue enhancement of salaries and retirement benefits of educational-support personnel in the Public School Employees Retirement System.

- E. Provide for optional retirement with full benefits after completing 25 years of creditable service in the Georgia Teacher Retirement System (five-year phase-in).
- F. Increase the TRS multiplier from 2% to 2.5% (five-year phase-in).

### IV. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

- A. Provide increased program expansion and state support for the Mentor Teacher Program.
- B. Make the National Board salary incentive program available to certified counselors, audiologists, social workers, and school psychologists.
- C. Provide additional support for professional learning and leadership opportunities for educators.

### PAGE POSITIONS (Do Not Rate)

Support

- Continued support of the National Board Teacher Certification Program.
- Utilizing alternative sources of funding for public education.
- Maintaining a state salary scale for certificated personnel.
- Application of the Fair Dismissal Act to all educators.
- Use of retired teachers to alleviate Georgia's teacher shortage.
- Transfer of full experience from one school system to another for all personnel.

Oppose

- Using Georgia lottery proceeds to supplant existing resources for educational purposes and programs.
- Collective bargaining, legalized meet and confer, legalized permissive professional negotiations, binding arbitration, strikes, sick-outs, school closings and other militant tactics.
- Diverting K-12 public school tax dollars to private schools.
- Merging the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia with the Employees' Retirement System of Georgia.

## PAGE MEMBER'S OFFICIAL BALLOT

Please complete and mail to: PAGE, P.O. Box 942270, Atlanta, GA 31141-2270; or fax to (770) 216-8589.

Rate each item listed (1 as the lowest and 4 as the highest):

**I. Student Learning & Achievement**     A.     B.     C.     D.

**II. Attendance & Student Services**     A.     B.     C.     D.

**III. Attracting & Retaining Quality Educators**     A.     B.     C.     D.     E.     F.

**IV. Professional Learning**     A.     B.     C.

Other legislation you would like PAGE to consider:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ POSITION \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL SYSTEM \_\_\_\_\_ PAGE MEMBER:  YES     NO

# Educator Leave



MARGARET  
COPELAND ELLIOTT

**U**nder Georgia Law O.C.G.A. 20-2-850 the legislature has mandated that educators be granted sick leave time which is computed on the basis of one and one fourth working days for each completed contract month; and all unused sick leave shall accumulate from one contract year to the next.

A maximum of 45 state-funded sick leave days may be accumulated. Local school board policy can allow for the accumulation of additional days over 45. Specifically, the law states that educators may utilize sick leave upon the approval of the local school superintendent for

absences due to illness or injury or necessitated by exposure to contagious diseases or to illness or death in the immediate family.

Additionally, under O.C.G.A. 20-2-850 educators may utilize up to a maximum of three days of any accumulated sick leave for purposes of absenting themselves for personal leave or professional reasons if prior approval is given; provided, however, that the absence is not in conflict with a local school board policy concerning the days on which the presence of the personnel is essential for effective school operation. No grant of approval shall be conditioned upon

disclosure of the specific purpose for which such absence is sought.

The PAGE Legal Department receives many calls about leave each week. It is important for all school system employees to be familiar with local policy and procedures and to complete required paperwork in a timely manner. Also, a

copy of a doctor's statement should be attached to the paperwork if the employee or a family member went to the doctor. The employee should make a copy of all paperwork and keep it in a personal file, in case the original is lost.

Many times educators assume that they can take their sick leave days at any time. Some people refer to this time as "their time." This is an incorrect assumption. Sick leave may only be used if the employee or a family member is sick or injured. If the school system has any doubts or concerns they may ask the employee to submit verification of the illness or injury. Recently, the misuse of sick leave has become a growing problem; therefore, the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) has added language to their Educator Code of Ethics under Standard 4, misrepresentation or falsification. The new language reads: "falsifying, misrepresenting, omitting or erroneously reporting reasons for absences or leave." When requesting leave, employees must be truthful in stating the reasons for the leave. Certainly, educators do not wish for the leave issue to become the subject of a PSC investigation.

In addition to leave provided by Georgia law, there is also leave available under federal law known as the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Every school system is required to have a local school board policy for FMLA. FMLA provides that an eligible employee is entitled to take up to 12 unpaid work weeks during a 12-month period for one or more of the following:

- The birth and care of a child;
- The placement of an adopted or foster child with the employee;
- The case of a spouse, son, daughter, or parent of an employee, if said person has a serious health condition;
- A serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform his/her job.

This is wonderful law that permits employees to take an extended period of time off from work when needed. Many parents enjoy taking time off to spend with a new baby. However,

**Many times educators assume that they can take their sick leave days at any time. Some people refer to this time as "their time." This is an incorrect assumption. Sick leave may only be used if the employee or a family member is sick or injured.**



the down side to this federal law is that it is *unpaid leave*. Therefore, employees should be aware that if, for example, they want to take 12 weeks off for the birth or adoption of a child, it may well be that it is 12 weeks without pay; unless the school system has a local policy that grants permission to use sick leave days for the absence. In the case of an adoption, there is no period of medical disability, so the system could deny the request to use sick leave days.

In a situation where the educator gives birth then there will be a doctor's letter of medical disability; usually for a period of six weeks. The employee would be able to take sick leave days in this situation because of the medical disability.

Once the period of medical disability is over, the school system is under no legal obligation to grant a request for sick leave days. For example, if an educator gives birth and plans to take 12 weeks off for maternity leave and has accumulated 60 sick leave days, the employee may only be permitted to take 30 sick leave days and the other 30 days will be unpaid leave. Why is that? That is because no one is sick and the federal law only requires the employer to hold the employee's position and let them take unpaid leave upon the birth of a child.

The following are some other issues to be aware of:

1. Upon the birth or placement of a child, FMLA may be taken at any time within 12 months after the birth.
2. For the birth of a child, FMLA leave must be taken consecutively; and intermittent leave may only be taken for the care of a sick spouse, child, parent or employee themselves with a serious health condition.
3. Under FMLA "a year" is defined as 12 consecutive months and begins to run the first day FMLA leave is requested.
4. The employee can take up to 12 weeks each year.
5. The employee must have worked for an employer 12 months or longer in order to be eligible to take FMLA.
6. The employee can only take a total of 12 weeks, not 12 weeks of unpaid leave in addition to the six weeks of paid leave under the school system's maternity leave policy.
7. FMLA paperwork, which includes a portion to be completed by the doctor,

must be completed in advance.

In the case of an employee or his/her family member who is seriously ill, Georgia's sick leave law entitles an employee to take all of his/her accumulated sick leave days. In addition to the accumulated sick leave days, other options that may be available to assist the employee are:

- Unpaid leave under FMLA; again paper work must be completed and submitted, and a doctor must complete a portion of the paperwork;
- Requesting paid sick leave days from the school system's sick leave bank; and
- Checking with the school system's benefits department to see if the employee has purchased a disability policy with a private insurance company through the school system; the benefits department will show the employee how to file a claim with the insurance company.

If the employee wants to avail him/herself of the sick leave bank, the employee would need to be a participant

in the sick leave bank program, and every school system's sick leave bank program operates differently. The employee should review the school system's policy and procedure handbook to find out the specific guidelines.

It is important to review the local school system's policies and procedures handbook to understand all the different leave policies that your school system may offer. If an employee is seriously ill and needs to be on leave for longer than 12 weeks, then the employee should meet with the school system, probably the director of human resources, to try to work out an arrangement. However, the school system has no legal obligation to hold an employee's position for that employee for longer than 12 weeks, according to federal law.

If you have a question about any type of leave, please give the PAGE legal department a call, and we will be glad to help you. It is always better to call us at the very beginning of a situation than at the end. ♦

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DR. EDIE BELDEN

# Making **Teacher-Made Tests** Better

**I**n the educational climate of No Child Left Behind, standardized tests have become the measuring rod for assessing the closing of the achievement gap and determining teacher accountability, as well as the source of data for instructional decision-making. Although standardized tests are important for comparing large groups of students and making some curricular and instructional decisions, teacher-made tests are still the mainstay of daily instruction and differentiated instruction. It is the teacher-made test that tells the teacher what must be re-taught, reinforced or reexamined for relevancy.

Georgia's new curriculum, Georgia Performance Standards (GPS), provides a significant reason for teachers to review, revamp and restore teacher-made tests to their important place in the instruction of students. Quality

**Quality teacher-made tests are a teacher's accountability armor in documenting that they are teaching the curriculum and modifying instruction so all students can learn.**

teacher-made tests are a teacher's accountability armor in documenting that they are teaching the curriculum and modifying instruction so all students can learn. With access to the Internet, availability of websites and the frequent use of computers, teacher tests can have reliability, validity and overall quality. The computer command of cut and paste even makes it possible to

have more than one version of a test.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHER-MADE TESTS**

A well-composed teacher-made test measures or evaluates the content or skills that have been taught in a lesson or unit, i.e. the test is a valid representation of the content taught. The test must reflect the amount of instructional time devoted to a topic or skill. To develop one or two test items on a topic which required several class hours and perhaps a project jeopardizes the validity of the test and misleads students in test preparation.

A quality test focuses on important content. Trivial or obscure content does not provide the

teacher with the important information needed to modify instruction, move to the next topic, or determine if the student has met the performance standard. In determining which content is important, it is critical for each teacher to know the performance standards for the grades/subjects he or she teaches and the performance standards in the previous and subsequent grades or associated subject fields.

Teacher-made tests are free of errors and misinformation. Spelling and punctuation can be corrected by using the "tools" command in a computer's word processing program. Misinformation in a question, e.g. purposefully using the wrong date or attributing an event or action to the wrong person, does not enhance the quality of a test. The use of misinformation in a test question diverts students' attention from analyzing the question and determining the best answer. "Trick questions" convey the message that the test is about guessing and deception rather than an evaluation of what a student must know. Absolute words like "never," "always" and "all" should not be used because inevitably there is an exception.

Test items are written at the appropriate level of difficulty and cover the cognitive range from knowledge to synthesis. It is usually recommended that the test begin with items considered easy or at the knowledge level and gradually move to the more difficult levels. Quality test items will differentiate between low scorers and high scorers thereby providing valuable information for differentiating instruction. A general rule of thumb is that difficult questions are answered by 50-70 percent of the students taking the test and moderately difficult questions should be answered by 70-90 percent of the students tested. A test item which 90 percent or more of the students answer the question correctly is either too easy or contains clues to the answer. Even though such an item may make students feel more secure in a testing situation, it offers little data to the teacher.

Charts, graphs, timelines and diagrams must be clearly drawn and labeled. Instructions must

# RESOURCES

The following sources were used in preparation of this article and provide additional information for the reader.

- Academic Testing: Test Design and Construction. Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence. Penn State University. [www.uts.psu.edu/Test\\_construction\\_frame.htm](http://www.uts.psu.edu/Test_construction_frame.htm). Assessment Item Creation and Review. Creating Effective Assessments. [712educators.about.com/cs/assessment/a/assessments.htm](http://712educators.about.com/cs/assessment/a/assessments.htm).
- Devine, M and Yaghlian, N. Construction of Objective Test Items. Microsoft Test Construction pdf.
- Essential Test Preparation Strategies for Your Classroom. Education Up Close [glencoe.com/sec/teachingtoday/educationupclose.phtml/31](http://glencoe.com/sec/teachingtoday/educationupclose.phtml/31).
- Multiple Choice Tests. [www.albertingram.com/mctests/](http://www.albertingram.com/mctests/)
- Study Skills, Essay. University of Bradford, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. [www.bradford.ac.uk/acad/civeng/skills/essays.htm](http://www.bradford.ac.uk/acad/civeng/skills/essays.htm).
- Rudman, Herbert C. Integrating Testing with Teaching. Practical Assessment and Evaluation, (1) 6. [pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=1andn=6](http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=1andn=6).
- Widemuth, B.M. Alternatives to Standardized Tests, ERIC Identifier ED286938. [www.ericfacility.net/ericdigests/index](http://www.ericfacility.net/ericdigests/index). Click on Original database of 898 ERIC Digests. Click on ERIC Identifier ED286938
- Written Test Construction and Evaluation. [www.geolog.com/msmnt/mcog.htm](http://www.geolog.com/msmnt/mcog.htm).

be clear and concise. Idioms, slang, phrases, sayings and specialized vocabulary should not be part of a test unless connected with vocabulary development or if they have been inextricably linked to the taught concept or skill.

## IMPROVING TEST QUESTIONS

Teacher-made tests are usually composed of several types of questions: true/false, multiple choice, matching, completion and essay. True/false, multiple choice, matching and completion test items are referred to as selected response or objective questions.

Essay questions are referred to as created response or extended answer questions.

The objective test item is an excellent way to test a wide sampling of content. The objective test can be used to test skills or concepts. Its weakness is that most objective test items are written at the knowledge and comprehension levels. Objective test items can be written at a level requiring students to use analysis and synthesis. Teachers developing quality objective questions will spend more time in the creation of the test items, but recover some of the time because of ease and quickness in scoring.

The created response test or essay test is important in determining the students' knowledge of the content and his/her ability analyze, organize and synthesize information effectively. While these test items take less time to develop, a much longer time must be devoted to scoring. It is important to develop a scoring rubric

that has a least two dimensions—the major points the answer must contain and the value assigned to each point. The rubric may or may not contain a requirement for correct spelling, punctuation and sentence structure.

Comprehensive information on the do's

and don'ts of constructing objective questions can be obtained by searching the Internet using the phrase, "test construction." Specifically, by clicking on the entry, Microsoft Test Construction, the pdf file will provide you with detailed information and examples compiled by Drs. Marjorie

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Devine and Nevert Yaghlian at Cornell University. It cannot be accessed using the link provided, but can be accessed clicking on the Microsoft Test Construction entry. A very useful website, [www.bradford.ac.uk/acad/civeng/skills/essay.htm](http://www.bradford.ac.uk/acad/civeng/skills/essay.htm), gives a succinct definition of over 20 words often used in essay questions, e.g. account for, assess, classify, contrast and illustrate. Although this information has been published by the University of Bradford, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, United Kingdom, the glossary of terms and their meanings is highly recommended for writers of essay questions and for students who must answer the essay questions.

### ANALYZING TEST ITEMS

**Table of Specifications:** Test item analysis should begin with a blueprint or a Table of Specifications. This analysis should be completed before the test is given to students so the test contains items representing most, if not all, the cognitive levels. The Table of Specifications is a grid with the major objectives/standards/concepts listed down the left hand side and the level of cognitive difficulty or depth of cognitive

TABLE OF SPECIFICATIONS				
CONCEPTS OBJECTIVES	BASIC FACTS	APPLICATION	ANALYSIS	SYNTHESIS EVALUATION
A	1, 3	6, 13	5	12
B	2	16	7	10
C	8, 18	15, 20	11	9
D	4	14, 17		19
Total # Items	6	7	3	4

processing across the top. Each question is evaluated in relation to the objective and level of difficulty. The number of each test item is placed in the appropriate box. After completing the analysis, a determination is made regarding the number of questions at a specific cognitive level or if a concept/standard has been tested too much in relation to the time spent in class. In the example above, concepts A and C are tested at every cognitive level and should have involved a considerable amount of class time. The Table of Specifications also allows a teacher to determine if each question is testing the information at the same cognitive level at which it was taught. Many times content is taught at the basic facts or knowledge level and tested at the application or synthesis level. For more

differentiation in the cognitive levels, Bloom's Taxonomy is appropriate.

### CONCEPTS

While there are more sophisticated procedures for analyzing test item data, there are simplified procedures that will provide the teacher with valuable and useful information without major time involvement. The indices of alternative (distractor) effectiveness, item difficulty and item discrimination yield significant information about the effectiveness of test items to differentiate among students and the content learned. Creating a data base of highly effective questions will over time provide better classroom tests and provide the teacher with objective data on achievement that can be used in meeting the needs of all students.

To analyze alternative effectiveness, item difficulty and item discrimination, the following steps should be followed:

- Arrange all the papers in a class set with the test scores from highest to lowest.
  - Select approximately 1/3 of the papers with the highest scores and approximately 1/3 of the papers with the lowest scores.
- Set aside the papers with the middle scores. (In the examples below the arbitrary number of 32 test papers was selected for illustrative purposes. To complete the analysis 10 will comprise the upper group and 10 will comprise the lower performing group).

### EFFECTIVENESS OF EACH ALTERNATIVE

The alternatives are the distractors or possible answers that are listed as A, B, C, D or E on a multiple choice question. To determine the effectiveness of each distractor on a test item, simply make a grid as shown on the next page. Count the number of students in each group (upper and lower) that chose each answer. Indicate the correct answer by an asterisk. In Test Item 1, the test item is effective because 6 out of 10 of the students scoring in the upper range chose distractor B,

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Improving the quality of test items is a complex and time consuming task, but it can be made easier by concentrating on the improvement of one type of question rather than trying to improve all the questions on a test. There are specific criteria for developing each type of question and are too numerous for this publication. There are several websites that provide information and guidelines on how to improve the construction of each type of test item.

[www.glencoe.com/sec/teachingtoday/educationupclose.phtml](http://www.glencoe.com/sec/teachingtoday/educationupclose.phtml)

[www.albertingram.com/mctests](http://www.albertingram.com/mctests)

[www.geolog.com/msmnt/mcog.htm](http://www.geolog.com/msmnt/mcog.htm)

whereas almost all the distractors were equally attractive to the lower performing students. The grid also indicated that another answer should be substituted for E because it was not a plausible answer for any of the students regardless of performance. This procedure should be repeated for each question.

TEST ITEM NUMBER	A	B*	C	D	E
1 Upper	0	6	3	1	0
1 Lower	3	2	2	3	0
2 Upper					
2 Lower					
3 Upper					
3 Lower					

#### ITEM DIFFICULTY

To determine item difficulty, it is only necessary to use the data from the upper group (10 test scores) and lower group (10 test scores). Follow these steps:

1. Sum the total number in both groups:  
 $10 + 10 = 20$
2. Sum the total number in both groups selecting the correct answer:  $6 + 2 = 8$
3. Divide the first sum into the second sum:  $8/20 \times 100 = 40\%$
4. Multiply the answer in Step 3 by 100:  
 $0.4 \times 100 = 40\%$

Index of Difficulty =  $8/20 = 40\%$

The 40% difficulty level indicates this is a moderately difficult item—the smaller the percentage the more difficult item.

#### DISCRIMINATING POWER OF THE ITEM

The basis of the item discrimination is to determine how well the test item discriminates between the top students and the bottom students. The discrimination index varies from -1.00 to +1.00. The closer the number is to either end of the continuum, the better the item discriminates.

The maximum positive discriminating power is +1.00. This only occurs when all students in the upper group get the answer right and no student in the lower group gets the answer right. When the reverse is true, the item has a negative discriminating power.

An item has zero discriminating power when an equal number of students in each group get it right. A test item with zero discrimination should be discarded because it has no assessment value.

#### Maximum Discriminating Power

$$\frac{10 \text{ Upper Group} - 0 \text{ Lower Group}}{10 \text{ Upper Group}} = +1.00$$

#### Zero Discriminating Power

$$\frac{10 \text{ Upper Group} - 10 \text{ Lower Group}}{10 \text{ Either Group}} = .00$$

Source: Devine, M. and Yaghlian, N. *Construction of Objective Tests, Microsoft Test Construction, pdf.*

#### SUMMARY

There are other statistical procedures teachers may use in analyzing the data from classroom tests. The emphasis in this article has been to give teachers some simple techniques for analyzing the effectiveness of test items in assessing students. Knowing that classroom tests are aligned with the Georgia Performance Standards, creating quality test items using test construction rules and evaluating the effectiveness of distractors, the difficulty level of items and the power of an item to discriminate between high and low scorers provides teachers with accountability on a regular basis. Quality teacher-made tests are very effective measures of accountability for the teacher and for the student. ♦

In the future, someone will develop a way to teach first graders to write poetry. In three languages. [ What will you do? ]

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# PAGE Annual Conference Kicks Off Year of Professional Learning with PAGE



Director of The Education Trust Kati Haycock captivates the lunch crowd with her presentation on "Closing the Achievement Gap."



TRS Executive Director Jeff Ezell gives an update on issues relevant to teacher retirement.



Principal Eulin Gibbs, Teacher Anna Brown and Media Specialist Kathy Wilson, all from Hart County Middle School, held a panel discussion on "Using Data to Make a Difference in Students' Achievement."



2004 Counselor of the Year Brian Law leads a breakout session on "Dealing with Aggressive Behavior in the Classroom."

This year's topic—"Relating Data to Student Achievement"—not only generated considerable positive comment among conference attendees but also served as a starting point for what should prove to be an outstanding "Year of Learning with PAGE." As a new and added benefit of membership, PAGE will be offering substantive seminars and drive-in conferences throughout this school year, featuring dynamic speakers like those who made the Summer Conference a remarkable success.

Opening session keynoter Kati Haycock, director of the Education Trust, impressed her audience with comprehensive national and state level statistics on the persistent achievement gap. Her chal-

lenging conclusion was that high schools are not doing enough to prepare students for post-secondary education—and more seriously, not preparing those students most in need of such post-secondary training to be successful. The upbeat news, according to Haycock, is that there are schools that are succeeding, and she shared with conference participants some of the ways these schools are preparing students.

Dr. Michael White gave what one evaluator termed an "awesome" presentation on improving the effectiveness of schools using student assessment data. His quick tempo and timely content make him a highly sought after presenter and he was a valuable addition to this year's conference

line-up. He will also be a presenter at several PAGE events planned for later this year.

In addition to the two keynote speakers, the informative breakout sessions covered an array of topics from bullying in the classroom to recent changes in certification rules, to teacher retirement.

Many positive comments were included in the written critiques of the sessions. Typical of them was this comment: "The conference was excellent and the new format is much better. It lends to the professionalism that PAGE strives to present." Other great learning opportunities from PAGE will be highlighted in future issues of the magazine.

A full description of "A Year of Learning with PAGE" is on page 28. ♦





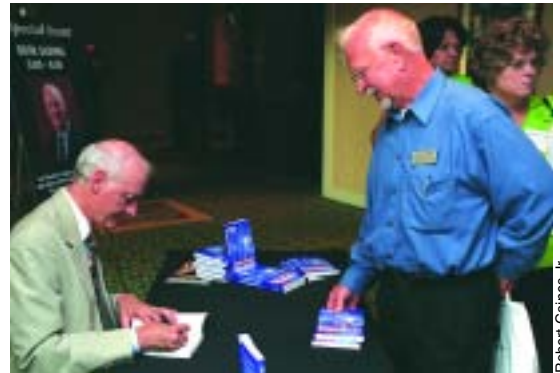
Rod Reilly

Comments from this year's conference included, "Excellent!" "Great Conference!" "Wonderful presenters, very informative!" "I encourage more to attend next year's conference."



Rod Reilly

PSC's Director of Certification Policy Rick Eiserman reviews changes in certification.



Robert Gaines Jr.

Feature writer for PAGE ONE Lee Raudonis signs copies of his book, "The Susan B. Anthony Shootings."



Rod Reilly

(Left to right) 2005 Georgia Teacher of the Year Chase Puckett, PAGE Executive Director Dr. Allene Magill, 2004 National Teacher of the Year Kathy Mellor, PAGE Past-President Deena Hoch and PAGE President Dr. Diane Ray.



Rod Reilly

Keynote speaker and 2004 National Teacher of the Year Kathy Mellor shares some personal experiences from her ESOL class at Davisville Middle School, RI



Rod Reilly

Installation of 2004-05 PAGE officers and directors. See page 31 for entire listing.



# NCLB Teacher Quality

*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 fourth in a series of articles prepared by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) for *PAGE ONE* readers.

This article focuses on frequently asked questions concerning No Child Left Behind and Teacher Quality.

## **NCLB TITLE II, PART A, TEACHER QUALITY**

Some of the new certificate rule changes are based on teacher quality requirements outlined in federal legislation. The Title II, Part A portion of No Child Left Behind focuses on preparing, training and recruiting highly qualified teachers and principals. All teachers of core academic subjects hired after the first day of the 2002–03 school year and teaching in a program supported with Title I funds must be “highly qualified.” Beyond that, all teachers teaching core academic subjects must meet the highly qualified status by the end of school year 2005-06. In Georgia, the core academic subjects are English, reading and language arts, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics and government, economics, history, geography, visual arts, music, band and chorus. Drama, dance, technical and vocational, and health and physical education teachers are exempt from the NCLB criteria for highly qualified teachers. The following questions and answers address the most commonly asked areas of concern.

mathematics, science, foreign language, civics and government, economics, history, geography, visual arts, music, band and chorus. Drama, dance, technical and vocational, and health and physical education teachers are exempt from the NCLB criteria for highly qualified teachers. The following questions and answers address the most commonly asked areas of concern.

### **What is the purpose of the new Title II, Part A, Improving Teacher Quality State Grants program?**

The purpose of Title II Part A, Improving Teacher Quality State Grants, is to increase the academic achievement of all students by helping

schools and school districts improve teacher and principal quality and ensure that all teachers are highly qualified. In exchange, agencies that receive funds are held accountable to the public for improvements in academic achievement. Improving Teacher Quality State Grants provides these agencies with the flexibility to use these funds creatively to address challenges to teacher quality, whether they concern teacher preparation and qualifications of new teachers, recruitment and hiring, induction, professional development, teacher retention, or the need for more capable principals and assistant principals to serve as effective school leaders.

### **Who is a “highly qualified” teacher?**

The requirement that teachers be highly qualified applies to public elementary or secondary school teachers who teach a core academic subject. (The term “core academic subjects” means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, history, geography, visual arts, music, band and chorus.) Refer to “Georgia’s Implementation Guidelines” on the Title II-A website located at [www.gapsc.com/nclb/home.html](http://www.gapsc.com/nclb/home.html) for more information and specific definitions for “highly qualified” teachers.

### **What is the timeline for teachers to meet the new requirements for “highly qualified” teachers?**

All teachers of core academic subjects hired after the first day of the 2002–03 school year and teaching in a program supported with Title I funds must be “highly qualified.” All teachers teaching in core academic subjects must be “highly qualified” not later than the end of the 2005-06 school year. Local school systems must report annually, beginning with the 2002-03 school year, on their progress in meeting these requirements.

### **Are all systems required to develop plans to have all teachers “highly qualified” by the end of the 2005-06 school year?**

The requirement to develop this plan applies to all systems that received Title I funds. All teachers of core academic subjects hired after the first day of the 2002–03 school year and teaching in a program supported with Title II, Part A funds must be “highly qualified.”

### **Must alternative schools for disruptive or behaviorally challenged students that are generally self-contained classroom with a limited number of students meet the highly qualified requirements?**



At the elementary and middle school levels, teachers who provide instruction in alternative educational placements should meet the same highly qualified requirements as elementary school teachers. At the middle school and secondary levels, arrangements should be made for independent study opportunities, where the teacher of record provides materials and lessons for the student.

**Are school systems required to inform parents about the quality of its teachers?**

All teachers of core academic subjects hired after the first day of the 2002-03 school year, all school systems that accept Title I funding must notify parents of students in Title I schools that they can request information regarding their child's teacher, including, at a minimum: (1) whether the teacher has met the State requirements for licensure and certification for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; (2) whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other non-renewable status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; (3) the college major and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree; and (4) whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

**Are Title I schools within the system required to provide parents with any additional information about the schools' teachers?**

In a timely manner, an individual school must also notify parents: (1) when their child has been assigned to a teacher who does not meet the qualifications of a highly qualified teacher; or (2) when their child has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet the highly qualified requirements.

**What core academic subjects am I considered highly qualified to teach by passing Praxis II Middle Grades Generalist or TCT Middle Childhood examinations prior to 2002?**

Teachers who were issued a Middle Grades certificate and passed the Praxis II Middle Grades Generalist or the TCT Middle Childhood examination prior to 2002 will be considered to currently meet the highly qualified requirements for social studies, science, language arts, reading and mathematics. UNTIL JULY 1, 2006, these teachers are considered highly

qualified to teach Middle Grades language arts, Middle Grades mathematics, Middle Grades science, and Middle Grades social studies. After that date, all Middle Grades certificate holders may only be assigned to, and be considered highly qualified in, the Areas of Concentration identified on their Middle Grades certificate.

**Is there a Reading Praxis II test available?**

There is a Middle Grades Praxis II Reading test available in Georgia. Even though the Middle Grades Praxis II Reading test is not currently validated for high school teachers, it may be used to establish content knowledge for high school reading teachers. The certificate for high school teachers who pass the Middle Grades Praxis II Reading test will indicate Middle Grades Praxis II Reading (grades 4-8), not Secondary School Praxis II Reading.

**Is the course work requirement for adding concentrations to middle grades certificates 12 or 15 semester hours?**

Since 2002, 15 semester hours is the concentration area standard for graduates of Georgia Middle Grades preparation

programs. All Georgia Middle Grades graduates since that date have 15 semester hours in their program concentrations. However, new Areas of Concentration will also be added to already existing Middle Grades certificates based on a PSC transcript review identifying 12 semester hours of content courses or completion of the Middle Grades Praxis II in specific concentration areas. After July 1, 2006, the PSC will no longer add Middle Grades Areas of Concentration based on counting transcript hours. From that point on, concentrations will only be added based on a recommendation from a state-approved program or by passing the Middle Grades Praxis II in a specific concentration.

**How can I get additional information about Title II Part A, Improving Teacher Quality?**

For additional information on Title II, Part A, Improving Teacher Quality, you may visit the new Title IIA website located at [www.gapsc.com/nclb/home.html](http://www.gapsc.com/nclb/home.html), contact the Title II-A consultant in your area, or call the Georgia Professional Standards Commission at (404) 232-2640. ♦



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September 21, 22 & 23, 2004  
Kennesaw State University, Fort Valley State University & Valdosta State University

**Education's "A" Words—Accountability, Assessment & Achievement** - Dr. Angelika Pohl  
October 19, 20 & 21, 2004  
Albany State University, Clayton College and State University & Oglethorpe University

**The Changing Role of Counselors** - Dr. Pam Paisley/Dr. Deryl Bailey  
February 15, 16 & 17, 2005  
Valdosta State University, Clayton College and State University & Georgia Southern University

**Breaking the Cycle of Poverty** - Dr. Jacqueline Jacobs  
March 15, 16 & 17, 2005  
Albany State University, Fort Valley State University & Kennesaw State University

## FALL CONFERENCE 2004

**Educating Children for a Profoundly Different Future**  
November 5-7, 2004

- Sea Palms Golf & Tennis Resort, St. Simons, Georgia
- Dr. Gary Marx, Author of *Educating Children for a Profoundly Different Future*
  - Dr. Mike Hall, Deputy Superintendent for Technology, Georgia Department of Education, *Technology in Georgia Schools Today and Tomorrow*
  - Lisa Stueve, Administrator of On-line Courses, Gwinnett County, and Becky Nunnally, Principal, The On-Line Campus, Cobb County, *Courses On-Line and The On-line Campus*

## PRE-CONFERENCE 2005

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June 21-23, 2005

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## SUMMER CONFERENCE 2005

June 24-25, 2005

Atlanta Marriott Gwinnett Place

- Program to be announced in the March/April 2005 Issue of *PAGE ONE*



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# 2004-05 PAGE Officers and Directors

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The president, president-elect, secretary and treasurer are elected by the PAGE Delegate Assembly and serve for a period of one year.

### Board of Directors

PAGE board members are elected by the Delegate Assembly during the annual conference for a three-year term on a staggered basis.



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**Jan Godwin**  
Director, District 14  
Cook County

# PAGE Planner 2004-05

## September 2004

- 1 PAGE Scholarship Applications Available
- 4 NBPTS Workshops, Turner Co. Spec. School and St. Marys Elem. School
- 11 NBPTS Workshop, Northside H.S.
- 21-23 Drive-In Conferences\*
- 25 NBPTS Workshop, Columbia Co. Admin. Complex

## October 2004

- 2 NBPTS Workshops, Turner Co. Spec. School, Northside H.S. and St. Marys Elem. School
- 9 NBPTS Workshops, North Ga. RESA and Macon State College
- 16 NBPTS Workshops, Columbia Co. Admin. Complex and Callanwolde Fine Arts Ctr.
- 29 PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon (GAD) Registration Deadline

## November 2004

- 5-7 PAGE Fall Conference, St. Simons, Ga.
- 5 PAGE Academic Bowl for Middle Grades Registration Deadline
- 6 NBPTS Workshops, Turner Co. Spec. School, Northside H.S. and St. Marys Elem. School
- 12 PAGE Academic Bowl Late Registration Deadline
- 13 NBPTS Workshops, North Ga. RESA, Macon State College, Callanwolde Fine Arts Ctr. and Columbia Co. Admin. Complex
- 19-21 Drive-In Conferences\*
- 20 NBPTS Workshop, Columbia Co. Admin. Complex

## December 2004

- 4 NBPTS Workshops, Turner Co. Spec. School, Northside H.S. and St. Marys Elem. School
- 11 NBPTS Workshops, North Ga. RESA, Macon State College and Callanwolde Fine Arts Ctr.

## January 2005

- 8 PAGE Academic Bowl Regional Competition
- 8 NBPTS Workshops, Turner Co. Spec. School, St. Marys Elem. School, North Ga. RESA, Macon State College, Northside H.S. and Columbia Co. Admin. Complex
- 15 NBPTS Workshop, Callanwolde Fine Arts Ctr.
- 22 PAGE Academic Bowl Semi-final Competition
- 22 NBPTS Workshop, Macon State College

## February 2005

- 5 NBPTS Workshops, St. Marys Elem. School, Northside H.S. and Columbia Co. Admin. Complex
- 7 PAGE Academic Bowl Final Competition
- 8 PAGE/SPAGE Day on Capitol Hill

- 12 NBPTS Workshops, North Ga. RESA, Macon State College, Callanwolde Fine Arts Ctr. and Turner Co. Spec. School
- 15-17 Drive-In Conferences\*
- 25-26 PAGE GAD State Championship
- 26 NBPTS Workshop, Callanwolde Fine Arts Ctr.

## March 2005

- 5 NBPTS Workshops, Turner Co. Spec. School, St. Marys Elem. School, Northside H.S., North Ga. RESA, and Columbia Co. Admin. Complex
- 12 NBPTS Workshop, Macon State College
- 15 FEA Day on Capitol Hill
- 15-17 Drive-In Conferences\*
- 19 NBPTS Workshop, Northside H.S.
- 26 NBPTS Workshop, Callanwolde Fine Arts Ctr. and North Ga. RESA

## April 2005

- 2 NBPTS Workshop, St. Marys Elem. School
  - 9 NBPTS Workshops, Turner Co. Spec. School and Macon State College
  - 13-16 USAD National Competition, Chicago, IL
  - 30 PAGE Scholarship Application Deadline
- Last Week TBA PAGE State STAR Banquet

## May 2005

- 7 NBPTS Workshop, Macon State College
- 14 NBPTS Workshop, Turner Co. Spec. School

## June 2005

- 6-8 FEA in GA Summer Institute

\* For a complete listing of topics, speakers and locations see page 30 or go to [www.pageinc.org](http://www.pageinc.org) and click on the heading Professional Learning, then go to "A Year of Learning with PAGE."

## PAGE Letters

### Dear PAGE ONE:

Having had the opportunity to attend the Future Educators of America Summer Institute 2004, I felt compelled to express how this program influenced the students and teachers who attended. Without hesitation, I would recommend this conference to all FEA chapters as an extraordinary means to build a more cohesive group.

Centrally located on the beautiful campus of Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, the Summer Institute offered classes for advisors and students, team building activities and incredible guest speakers. The accommodations for sleeping and meeting were excellent as were the food and recreation. Everyone on the college level from GC&SU President Dr. Dorothy Leland to the college students who participated in our room registration made the FEA group feel at ease.

A variety of activities and inspirational speakers filled our days. My students enjoyed listening to all of the guest speakers; yet, they were most impressed with Lorraine Johnson, 2003 Georgia Teacher of the Year, who spoke of her desire and passion to teach. Another guest speaker, Chauncey Veatch, shared his enthusiasm for teaching with the participants. Veatch was the 2002 National Teacher of the Year; he encouraged the students to follow their dreams and to know that through teaching they could make a difference as long as they always put their students' needs ahead of their own need for recognition.

As I reflect upon the conference, I realize that I departed with a renewed sense of why I teach. The breakout sessions and the guest speakers appealed to the students and advisors alike, providing both groups with terrific ideas and endless possibilities. Additionally, we developed a sense of family although we were from different counties. This made the FEA conference even more enjoyable because fast friendships were formed that are not soon to be forgotten.

In closing, I would like to thank Mr. Phil Jacobs from BellSouth for contributing to this conference. Partners in education, like BellSouth, make events like the institute possible; we appreciate this. One of my students remarked on the way home that she was ten times surer that she wanted to teach after attending the conference. This is exactly what we want to accomplish with FEA.

Although at first I was unsure about taking time away from my family to attend the conference, I am thankful for the opportunity to be a part of the first FEA Summer Institute, and I look forward to next year. The sacrifice of a few days during summer is well worth the investment toward our next generation of teachers.



Sincerely,  
Patsy D. Lewis  
White County High School, FEA advisor



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