

GaDOE Updates

Educating Georgia's Future

March 2015

FROM SUPERINTENDENT WOODS



Hello, and welcome to the new edition of the GaDOE newsletter. Since taking office as Georgia's School Superintendent on Jan. 13, 2015, I have been focused on improving outcomes for K-12

students and championing policies that are child-focused and classroom-centered.

Six weeks into office, I understand one important fact -- none of this will happen without your help. Whether you are a parent, student, educator, administrator, member of the business community or another stakeholder, you play a key role in Educating Georgia's Future. I want to hear from you. I encourage each of you to share your ideas and concerns with me. Let me know what's going on in your school and your community that impacts our children and teachers. You are an important member of this team, and the key to making a difference.

My email address is state.superintendent@doe.k12.ga.us. Please reach out and share your thoughts at any time. I am here to provide Georgia's students with the best educational opportunities possible, and to provide support to our teachers, administrators, and parents. I want to hear what you have to say.

Richard Woods



Superintendent Woods with attendees at the GA Striving Readers Differentiation Institute in January

Following fire, a gift for DeKalb students

SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

State School Superintendent Richard Woods, with a handful of GaDOE employees, spent last Friday loading a car with boxes and bags. There were paints and pencils and scissors, easels and glue sticks and boxes of hand sanitizer. Loaded up, the car headed to **Fairington Elementary** in DeKalb County,

which had been damaged by fire. When Superintendent Woods heard what happened, he asked GaDOE employees to donate supplies. "These are our students," he said.



"Serving them is the whole reason we're here." When he arrived at the school, he spoke with the kindergarten students whose classroom sustained the most damage. One by one, they told him what they'd lost. Crayons. A pencil case. All items chosen with such care by 5-year-olds, in the last summer days before school begins. Later the students sat with the Superintendent in the middle of the pile of boxes, each choosing something special just for themselves, to replace what they'd lost. "That's the kind of moment that makes it all worth it," Superintendent Woods said.



"I'm grateful to the GaDOE employees and all others who have donated and come through for this school. I hope these students have a wonderful finish to their kindergarten year, and I hope we contributed to that a little bit."

Superintendent Woods was joined on his visit to Fairington Elementary by State Board of Education member Lisa Kennemore and DeKalb Superintendent Michael Thurmond.

Read a longer version of this story at www.gadoe.org, under "News & Announcements"

GaDOE Updates

AROUND THE DEPARTMENT

New traditional/discrete math options

The State Board of Education has approved new traditional/discrete math course options. Starting with the 2015-16 school year, high schools will be able to offer integrated or traditional/discrete math.

Surveys conducted by the State Board of Education and Regional Educational Service Agencies found that many educators desired a choice between integrated and traditional/discrete math. Public comment on the new courses was largely favorable.

“WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO RESOLVE THE ISSUE IN A WAY THAT OFFERS A CHOICE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL”

--Superintendent Woods on math options

2015 AP Honor Schools named

Superintendent Woods has named 609 Advanced Placement (AP) Honor Schools.

The 2015 AP Honor Schools were named in five categories, based on the results of 2014 AP courses and exams: Challenge, Access & Support, Merit, STEM, STEM Achievement, and Humanities.

Find a full list of 2015 AP Honor Schools at www.gadoe.org under “News & Announcements.”

QUICK QUOTES FROM SUPT. WOODS

“Great days are ahead as we expand our agricultural programs.” -to FFA members Feb. 24

“Only working together can we achieve our goal of teaching each child based on their individual needs.”

“We need to personalize education, not standardize.”

GA's Public Schools in the News

AASD partners with Tanzanian students

Students at our **Atlanta Area School for the Deaf** teamed up with Mwera Secondary School in Tanzania to learn marketing skills. Featured in the **Achievers International blog**, bit.ly/1Dfazkv to view.

Teaming up to nix vegetable waste

Students at Dalton Public Schools' **Brookwood School** teamed up with students at **Morris Innovative High School** to research and reduce food waste. Featured in the **Dalton Daily Citizen**, <http://bit.ly/1JYfZCS> to view.

AROUND THE DISTRICTS

The power of grandparent volunteers

Tift County Schools published a wonderful story on Abalene Fore, a grandparent who's been volunteering in schools since 1959. These days, Fore spends two days a week in Tracy Ingram's K5 classroom, helping students at **Len Lastinger Primary** learn to read. From Ingram: “The children feel like they have won the lottery when they get chosen to spend time with Mrs. Fore during Center Time. They just bloom right in front of you.” Read the whole story, which focuses on the impact of grandparent volunteers, at bit.ly/1EQyJTq.



Grandparent volunteer Abalene Fore helps students at Len Lastinger Primary School (Tift County) learn to love reading

Have news for GaDOE Updates?

Email Meghan Frick at mfrick@doe.k12.ga.us