

# A VISION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION IN GEORGIA



A Joint Venture of the Georgia School Boards Association and the Georgia School Superintendents Association

The Georgia School Boards Association and the Georgia School Superintendents Association are partnering on creating a vision for public education in Georgia. Local boards of education and superintendents, through this partnership, have an opportunity to engage stakeholders in the important work of creating a vision for the future of public education in our state that will focus on the intellectual development of all students; that will prepare them to be contributing members of a democratic society; that will embrace world-class standards; that will promote 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills; that will gain the support of state and local policy makers; and that will be enthusiastically supported by Georgians.

## Why are we undertaking this initiative?

- To rebuild trust and support for public education.
- To create a unifying vision and transformational principles around which coalitions will form to change the education culture in the state.
- To ensure meaningful engagement of communities with their public schools.
- To provide guidance to local school districts as they develop strategic improvement plans for improving educational opportunities in their communities.
- To provide a world-class educational experience for all of Georgia's students.
- To ensure our students are competitive in a global economy.
- To significantly increase the high school graduation rate.
- To ensure appropriate learning standards for a new generation of learners.
- To make learning more rigorous and more relevant.
- To create learning organizations that are responsive to students' individual needs.

## The Planning Team

The work of this partnership is being guided by a 30-member planning team composed of 15 members of local boards of education and 15 local school superintendents from across the state. The planning team represents 25 local school districts that enroll approximately 25 percent of the students in the public schools in Georgia.



## The Time is Now

The visioning plan, to be completed by November 2010, can play a valuable role in shaping the future of Georgia. The work is important and it is urgent. The plan is of no value, however, if the vision is not shared; if the principles and values are not embraced; and if community members do not make a gut-level connection to the vision. Policy-makers at all levels must embrace the vision and effect its implementation to ensure that every child receives an appropriate educational experience. The time is now to create a new vision and to set a new course for public education in Georgia. Our students deserve no less.

From April 19-May 10, community conversations will be held across the state to allow citizens to learn about the initiative and provide them an opportunity to engage in a meaningful conversation about their vision for public education in Georgia. Go to [www.visionforpubliced.org](http://www.visionforpubliced.org) for details.

## The Framework

The planning team will engage parents, students, teachers, principals, other local school district leaders, community members, local and state policy-makers, and all stakeholders in the development of a plan that will contain the following:



- A **vision** for public education in Georgia in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- **Values and beliefs** that represent fundamental convictions about public education and the students served by the public education system.
- **Transformational principles** that, if embraced, adopted as educational policy, and implemented effectively, will change the form, appearance, and structure of public education in Georgia. The planning team has adopted seven areas of focus for these principles and will use them as the framework for accomplishing the planning team's work. The seven areas are:
  - **Teaching, Learning, and Assessment** – learning standards, curriculum rigor and relevance, teaching strategies, multiple intelligences and learning styles, role of technology in a digital learning environment, the crucial role of assessment in an effective instructional program, current state-level testing (criterion-referenced tests, end-of-course tests, high school graduation tests), national norm-referenced tests, promotion criteria, benchmarking, and performance assessment.
  - **Supports for Early Learning and Student Success** – student readiness for school, home environment and influence, health and nutrition, transition from home to school, school readiness for students, intra- and inter-agency coordination, student support services, funding sources and purposes for ages 0-5.
  - **Human and Organizational Capital** – teacher, principal, and district-level leader preparation, certification, mentoring and coaching, differentiated compensation, evaluation, and leader development training, succession planning, organizational structure, organizational responsiveness.
  - **Governance, Leadership, and Accountability** – roles, relationships, and responsibilities at all levels of government regarding how public education should be governed and led, who should be accountable for what and to whom, and the components of a viable local, state, and federal accountability system.
  - **Climate, Culture, and Organizational Efficacy** – school and district climate, performance culture, school safety, community culture, community engagement, cultural diversity, poverty, inter-agency collaboration, and socioeconomic considerations, climate and culture change to increase organizational efficacy.
  - **Financial Resources** – sources of revenue, funding mechanism, adequacy, equity, flexibility, stability, predictability, state-local partnership.
  - **Physical Resources** – appropriate learning environment for 21<sup>st</sup> century students, technology infrastructure, safe and secure campuses, and the viability of physical facilities for the future.
- **Transformation strategy** designed to communicate the work of the joint venture to school districts, local communities, and local and state policy makers through a common language. The ultimate goal of the transformation strategy is to build a viable education culture in Georgia that compels the adoption of policies that will truly transform the education experience for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century learner.
- **School and school district initiatives** that are currently being implemented in Georgia that are consistent with the transformational principles established.