



### PTA & ADVOCACY

Since 1897, the PTA has worked to improve the lives of children and their families by speaking with a unified voice on behalf of young people's education, health, safety and well-being. Times and issues may have changed, but advocating for children remains a critical responsibility of PTA. As PTA members, we are concerned with the laws, policies, and conditions that affect children and their families, whether at the local, state, or federal level. Our mission is rooted in a commitment to nonpartisan advocacy.

National PTA and Georgia PTA are committed to providing our members with the materials and training necessary to become effective advocates. This Georgia PTA Advocacy Guide is one of a number of publications we produce to help our members develop the skills necessary to advocate for all children and youth.

### What is Advocacy?

Advocacy's basic parts are: the advocate, the issue, the act and the decision maker.

- Anyone who speaks for another is an advocate. PTA members are advocates for children and their parents.
- PTA members advocate on a wide variety of child-related issues: education, health, nutrition, safety, juvenile protection, welfare reform, parent and family life, and drug abuse prevention, to name a few.
- The act of advocacy is simply communicating about the issue by speaking, writing, phoning, faxing or emailing. The purpose of the communication can be to inform, educate, persuade or increase the level of awareness about the issue.
- The decision-maker is any individual or body that has the power to address the issue or solve the problem. Decision-makers include elected and appointed officials, legislative bodies, school boards, county commissions, city councils and judges.

Every PTA member should be an effective advocate. The process is always the same: determine the issue, research the issue, organize for action, develop the message, use the media, and communicate with decision makers. The process is not always easy; dedication and perseverance are usually required. Sometimes success is achieved quickly, sometimes slowly.

Legislative activity is a specific type of advocacy. In general, the goal of legislative activity is to introduce, amend, repeal, enact or defeat a particular piece of legislation. By engaging in legislative activities, PTA members promote one of the purposes of the PTA – "to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth."

### PTA's ADVOCACY GOALS

The legislative goals of each local unit PTA should be directed under the leadership of a Legislative Chair and include the following:

**Keep informed about issues that affect their children, school and community.** This handbook includes many resources to help you keep abreast of national and state issues. PTAs will also want to follow issues addressed by the local board of education by *attending school board meetings* and accessing information from the school district's website.

**Educate members about these issues.** Use PTA meetings, the PTA newsletter and other forms of communication to keep the membership informed about the issues. Be sure to explain how the issue will affect their child and school. Share the National PTA Legislative Program and Georgia PTA Legislative Priorities with your members.

**Educate and encourage members to be effective advocates for children and their parents.** Share the information in the PTA and Advocacy section of this handbook with your members. Provide them with the names and contact information of their legislators and school board members. Encourage and explain how members can register to vote.



**Advocate for the children and youth at their school and in their community.** Develop legislative priorities for your school. Try to focus on the one or two issues that are most important to your members. Develop resolutions if needed to address these issues.

### PTA'S ROLE IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

PTAs can influence the legislative and regulatory processes at many points in the process. For example, PTAs may be involved in:

- Asking local legislators to introduce legislation addressing a concern;
- Contacting legislators who serve on pertinent committees to express support or opposition for bills under consideration;
- Testifying before a subcommittee or committee hearing;
- Contacting legislators on the Rules committee to promote placement of a bill on the Rules Calendar;
- Urging passage or defeat of a particular bill when considered by the House or Senate;
- Requesting the governor to veto or sign a passed bill; and
- Contacting board members of agencies regarding proposed rules and regulations.

### HOW DO WE ADVOCATE?

#### Determine the issue

Often there are more child-related issues than a PTA can effectively address. So, how can a PTA decide where to focus its advocacy efforts? First, focus on an issue, not a problem. For example, crowded classrooms are a problem; the larger issue would be inadequate facilities or lack of funding for staff. Then, determine the following:

- Does this issue fit within PTA's mission and purposes?
- How does this issue concern young people in the school and community?
- What is the desired outcome?

- Can the issue be made understandable to those within and outside of PTA?
- Does the membership want to work on the issue?
- Is the issue winnable? Will working on the issue create awareness and educate constituents about the issue?

#### Research the Issue

Shaping an issue requires continually staying on top of the facts. Research involves gathering data from other sources and could mean providing original PTA data, such as surveys, to the decision-makers you are trying to influence. Use as many sources of information about the issue as possible. Find the arguments for and against the PTA's position, and identify who supports and opposes the issue.

**PTA members should only speak on issues addressed by an existing position statement or resolution.** A resolution is one method of calling attention to a critical need or concern, and frequently leads to promotion and enactment of needed legislation. Each PTA, whether it be national, state, district, council, or a local unit, is a separate voting body and may adopt resolutions. Resolutions of National PTA are voted by the delegates at the annual National PTA convention and represent the position of National PTA.

*Resolutions of Georgia PTA are adopted by delegates at the annual Convention and Leadership Training and represent the position of Georgia PTA.*

District, council, and local unit PTAs may work to promote a National or Georgia PTA resolution or position without formally adopting the position as its own. If an official position exists, no constituent PTA may take a conflicting position; however, the constituent PTA may choose to remain silent on the issue. If an official position does not exist, the membership of a local unit PTA should adopt a resolution prior to speaking on the issue. The current positions of



National and Georgia PTA are found in Tab 2: PTA Positions and Resolutions of this Advocacy Guide.

### Organize for action

Policy makers and the general public listen if a large group of people speaks to an issue. Our goal is to train all members as advocacy volunteers by teaching them how they can participate in the process. Explain how the issues of National and Georgia PTA affect your community's school and children. Make it easy for members to find information about voting, contacting decision-makers, and PTA advocacy efforts. Devote a large portion of your PTA newsletter to public policy information.

### Develop an action plan

It should include short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals. Short-term goals are the efforts required to achieve intermediate goals, which might include getting endorsements from the community or producing a document showing research on the issue. Intermediate goals reflect victories that might be accomplished midway through the action plan and ultimately lead towards achieving the long-term goals.

For example, a PTA might attempt to obtain funding for a program at the local level as an intermediate goal, with funding at the state level as a long-term goal. Long-term goals reiterate the PTA's overall objectives.

### Identify the targets of the message

Primary targets are the decision-makers who have the power to deliver your PTA's goals, so persuasion efforts should ultimately focus on them. Secondary targets are the prominent members of the community, such as business leaders, activists, and members of the media, who can help influence

your primary targets. The public can be an ongoing target, especially for ballot initiatives.

There are many tactics for reaching your target audiences. One-on-one persuasion campaigns are aimed at your primary targets, the decision-makers. This can be done in person, with telephone calls, letters, email, etc. Media campaigns and petition drives are aimed at influencing decision-makers and the public. Public education campaigns are aimed at the public, and these campaigns should definitely be included in all get-out-the-vote efforts. These campaigns can also include hosting candidate forums or town hall meetings.

***PTA members should only speak on issues addressed by an existing position statement or resolution. If a position does not exist at the national or state level, the membership of the local unit PTA should adopt a resolution prior to speaking on the issue.***

### Develop a message

Message development and disciplined delivery are keys to winning over decision makers. An effective message is targeted at the people who are undecided about the issue, and should be crafted in a way that persuades members of the community to join with PTA. Develop responses for the following:

- What does PTA say about the issue?
- What do those with opposing views say about the issue?
- What is PTA saying about the opposition's position?
- What is the opposition saying about PTA's position?

Once a message is crafted, it is important to keep the message consistent in all communication. In order to be heard, the message must be kept simple and repeated over and over again.



### Use the Media & Social Networking Sites

Taking the message to the public means using all the opportunities available in the media in the most effective manner. Some possibilities follow:

- **Newspapers.** Use press releases, news stories, press statements, letters to the editor. Get to know the editorial board as well as the reporters who cover the issues that concern your PTA.
- **Radio.** Radio programming offers a variety of formats. Radio stations also have a much greater need for “news” than television does.
- **Television.** This medium demands a visual presentation of your message. Consider action events, location for an interview, etc. Don’t overlook cable TV and public access channels.
- **Internet.** The Internet is an efficient way to disseminate a large amount of information to PTA members and target audiences.
- **Facebook.** Many PTAs set up Facebook pages to communicate with their membership. Check to see if your legislators are on Facebook.

### Communicate with Decision-makers

The more decision-makers who can be persuaded with your PTA’s message, the better the chances are of achieving your goals. Once the message is formulated, write a fact sheet on the issue. Information on the fact sheet should include the issue and background facts, the PTA position, what your PTA wants to happen, and the number of members in your PTA. Use the fact sheet to communicate the message to decision-makers.

Knowing the decision-maker’s background and positions prior to contacting them is helpful. Communicate regularly with your legislators and other decision-makers, and begin the lobbying process early.

### LIMITS ON LOBBYING

Because PTA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt association, the IRS rules regulating some types of legislative activities of nonprofit organizations must be followed.

Certain political activities are absolutely prohibited: supporting or opposing political parties or candidates for federal, state, or local public office, even on nonpartisan slates. PTAs may only engage in nonpartisan, issue-oriented advocacy.

Certain lobbying activities are limited. PTA members lobby when they contact or urge the public to contact members of a legislative body for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation. The IRS imposes a limit on the amount of time and money spent on these activities (generally 5%). Records of the amounts of time and money, and the nature of volunteer activity should be accurately kept. These records help PTAs monitor their activities to stay within IRS guidelines and complete any required IRS forms, such as the 990 and 990EZ.

The following legislative activities do not count as lobbying because they are considered educational:

- Reporting on passed, pending, or needed legislation to members;
- Reporting state and national PTA positions to PTA members;
- Adopting PTA position statements; and
- Researching an issue without bias toward one side or other.

More information about IRS lobbying limitations can be found in the National PTA *Annual Resources for PTAs*.

### Ballot Issues

Legislation, as used in the definition of lobbying, includes any local, state or national bill, resolution, referendum, amendment or initiative. A ballot issue is a piece of legislation that needs approval from the voters in order to become law. PTAs may work to support or oppose the passage of a ballot issue, within the IRS limits on lobbying. The types of ballot issues that PTAs are most often involved with are school bond referendums, SPLOSTs, or constitutional amendments. An issue-oriented



campaign committee is commonly created to promote the passage of certain ballot issues. PTAs may make financial contributions to issue-oriented campaign committees, provided total lobbying expenditures do not exceed the IRS limits (5% of annual budget) and the membership has approved the expenditure.

### **Ethics in Government Act**

The Ethics in Government Act is a Georgia law that prohibits the contribution of taxpayer dollars to a campaign committee. PTAs are often involved in campaign committees dealing with ballot issues, such as one to promote a special purpose local option sales tax referendum (SPLOST). Since taxpayer dollars are used to purchase school supplies and to pay the salaries of school employees, any use of school resources or of school employee time could result in an ethics charge being filed against the school system or a school employee as a prohibited campaign contribution.

PTAs are private associations, and as such are not governed by the Ethics in Government Act and cannot be charged with violations of the Act. However, PTAs must take all necessary precautions to ensure their actions do not inadvertently cause charges to be levied against the school or the school system. To avoid violations, PTAs should follow these guidelines:

- Maintain a mailing list of PTA members, and mail campaign materials (including newsletters if they contain promotional material) directly to PTA members. Do not use a school-supplied mailing list. Do not send campaign material home with students.
- Copy all campaign material off school premises. Do not use school copiers.
- Distribute campaign material during PTA meetings. If the school system has a policy allowing private organizations to use the facilities, the PTA meeting is a private meeting and distribution of materials does not violate the law.

- Distribution of educational material (non-promotional) using school resources is not a violation of the law. For example, you can send home a flyer with students urging parents to vote in the upcoming referendum; however, you may not urge them to vote "YES" unless you mail the flyer using the PTA's distribution list.
- Discuss campaign plans with the principal in advance to ensure mutual understanding of the law.

The Ethics in Government Act only applies to information distributed to influence voters. It does not apply to:

- Distribution of material urging members to contact their legislators on an issue
- Publicizing PTA positions on legislative issues,
- Educating the public about issues.

### **METHODS OF COMMUNICATION**

#### **Letters, Fax, Email**

Use the following tips when communicating by letter, fax, or email:

- Focus on one issue or bill per letter, being as brief as possible. Try to limit your comments to one page.
- Explain what action your PTA wants to happen.
- Give the PTA position.
- Explain how the issue will affect the legislator's constituents.
- Ask for a response from your legislator. (Make sure your return address is on the letter.)
- Avoid form letters. In the words of one representative, "We want to hear how you feel, not how someone else feels." A PTA can provide a sample letter for their advocacy volunteers, but remind them to personalize it in some way. They do not need to completely rewrite it, just add some information that will make it unique.
- Be respectful, courteous and businesslike.



### Phone Calls

Phone calls are an effective and fast way to communicate with legislators. Write down your speaking points in advance. When calling, ask to speak with the senator or representative. If applicable, explain that your PTA members are constituents. Focus on one issue or bill, identifying the bill by number and name. Explain why the issue is important to your PTA and state the position your PTA wants the legislator to take on the issue. If your senator or representative is not available, ask if there is an aide or staff member who is available. Unlike members of Congress, not all state legislators will have aides.

### Visits

Personal visits are a most effective way to communicate with decision-makers. Prior to the General Assembly session, schedule an appointment with your PTA's legislators to discuss your PTA's issues. Consider visiting legislators in small groups of two or three. Draft an agenda in advance, and decide who will speak on what issues. Treat this as a business meeting - dress for success, be punctual, polite and to the point. Provide written material to leave with the legislator explaining your PTA's positions. After the visit, write a thank-you note.

During the General Assembly session, visiting your legislator at the Capitol can be very effective. When the House and Senate are in session, messages can be sent to legislators through the page desk on the third floor of the Capitol in front of the House or Senate chambers. If the legislator is able to leave the session to meet with you, be respectful of the legislator's time and be brief with your comments.

### Testifying

Public testimony can be in front of a school board, a city council, or a state or federal legislative committee. Find out ahead of time the procedures for being able to speak and how much time each

speaker will be allowed. Prepare the content of the testimony and practice these comments, being sure to stay within the allotted time. Emphasize the PTA's position and how your PTA wants the decision-makers to respond. Use visual aids if appropriate and prepare a written version of your testimony to leave with your audience.

### Follow-up

After expressing your views, whether in person or by letter, email, or fax, follow up on the legislator's vote or action. Always send a thank-you note if the vote or action was in your PTA's favor. A polite note expressing your disappointment if the decision-maker was against your PTA's position is also recommended. Your PTA's appreciation can also be expressed in more public ways, such as writing letters to the editor of the local paper.

#### Things to Remember About Elected Officials

- Elected officials hold public office to help others.
- Elected officials are expected to be "experts" on many different issues.
- Elected officials can't possibly know everything.
- Elected officials appreciate factual information you can provide.
- Elected officials have great demands on their time.
- Elected officials can't possibly grant all requests for funding requested of them.
- Elected officials want to hear from constituents.
- Elected officials appreciate good press.
- Elected officials like to be thanked.



### TIPS FOR TESTIMONY

PTA leaders and members often present information to decision-making bodies. Whether the opportunity is to provide information or to advocate for or against a proposal, the message and the messenger may influence the way the information is received.

- Find out the rules. School boards, county commissions, city councils, legislative committees, may have established policy. Components of such policies might include a time limit for each speaker, required prior notice of intent to present information, and/or disallowing speakers who do not live in the district.
- Plan to arrive 15-30 minutes early. This allows one time to park, find the meeting room and rest room, get a seat and hear any instructions to the speakers which the presiding officer may impart. The chair may modify the instructions to deal with the circumstances of the moment. It is the chair's prerogative to do so.
- Compose your remarks in writing before you get to the hearing. Practice them with a timer to insure they are within the time limit imposed.
- Bring printed copies of your remarks to share with board, commission, council or committee members. Include your name, address, phone number and other contact information.
- Wear a nametag. Dress appropriately.
- Identify yourself and/or your affiliation. Get prior authority to speak for the association.
- Read your written remarks. It will assure that all you want to say gets said.
- Begin your message with the most important point you wish to make, such as "I support (oppose) the proposal to..." Follow up with rationale. If time runs out, you will still have put your position on record.
- If you have several points to make, select the most important to speak to first.
- If two or more of you are speaking on the same side of an issue, then each can speak to a

portion of the message. This is helpful if your message has several points.

- You may speak as an individual on any subject of your choosing.
- If you speak for PTA, your PTA must agree with you, and there must be a position at the national, state, district, council, or local unit already existing to support your remarks. You must have permission to speak for PTA.
- If one or more speakers support your point of view before you get to the microphone, then shorten your remarks by saying simply "I (we, and identify we) agree with the previous speaker(s) to support (or oppose) ...". Your written remarks will have your rationale.

Some decision-making bodies, particularly legislative ones, permit its members to question the presenters. In answering the questions, consider the following tips:

- Speak directly to the panel, particularly the one who asked the question.
- Call panel members by name, if you know it. Refrain from using first names.
- Speak respectfully. Do not argue with or threaten the decision makers.
- If you don't know the answer, say so.
- If your association does not have a position on the subject of the question, say so.
- If asked for your personal opinion, refrain from giving it if it conflicts with your associational position. Both will become tainted.
- If you do provide a personal opinion, state for the record, "My personal opinion is ..."
- If you choose not to speak, or time runs out before you are called, have your written remarks available to hand in to the decision making body for inclusion in the transcript or to be treated with the same regard as a letter.



### WHERE WE STAND - GEORGIA PTA

This summary has been developed as only a reference to all current resolutions and position statements adopted by the Georgia PTA. The information is paraphrased and is not the complete position of the Georgia PTA and therefore should not be used to quote the Georgia PTA positions.

For more information about a particular resolution contact the Georgia PTA state office or the Georgia PTA Resolutions Chair.

#### *(R) Resolution (P) Position*

#### **Active Parental Involvement – 1981 (R).**

Supports active parental and community involvement in the educational process of students today and creates awareness among parents and the community of the tremendous effect their involvement can make in the educational process.

#### **All-terrain Vehicle (ATV) Safety – 1990 (R) Reviewed (1993) and (1998).**

Encourages state and federal legislators to enact legislation aimed at decreasing the number of ATV-related deaths and injuries to children under 16 by prohibiting them from being ATV operators or passengers.

#### **Anabolic Steroid Use by Students – 1987 (R).**

Supports penalties for anyone who supplies or dispenses steroids illegally to youths.

#### **Booster Seats – 2003 (R).**

Supports a requirement for children between 4-8 years old to be protected in a booster seat while in a motor vehicle. Encourages local units to join statewide and local coalitions made up of community activists, law enforcement officials, emergency response units, parents and

caregivers to create educational programs aimed at 100% usage of booster seats for children 4-8 years old.

#### **Possession of Cell Phones at School – 2002 (R).**

Supports legislation that removes the policy on student possession of cell phones from Georgia law and instead requires local boards of education to create policies for student possession of cell phones at school, while urging the restriction of cell phones during class times to avoid interruptions.

#### **Child Abuse – 1975 (R).**

Supports parent and family life programs that address themselves to the problem of child abuse, its causes and prevention. Encourages and supports family life education curricula in schools so that all future parents may be better able to cope with the problems of parenthood and family responsibilities.

#### **Development of Curriculum for Public Schools – 2007 (R).**

Believes that the state Department of Education should have the sole responsibility of developing curriculum. Should the General Assembly believe that new curriculum or curriculum modifications are necessary, it should refer the actual development to the state DOE.

#### **Discipline in the Schools – 1975 (R).**

Supports programs in the school and community addressing the problems of discipline such as parental involvement policies, promotion of courtesy and respect, adequate counseling services, and innovative education programs.

#### **Driver Education – 1981 (R).**

Urges local, council and district PTA's to encourage driver's education



courses for eligible 15 and 16 year olds.

**Drug-related Paraphernalia Marketing and Broadcasting Obscene and Pornographic Songs Opposition – 1979 (R).** Supports strict legislation aimed at combating marketing and broadcasting of such paraphernalia and obscene and pornographic songs.

**Education about the Dangers of Tobacco Products – 1987 (R). Reviewed (1993) and (1998).** The U.S. Surgeon General has stated: Tobacco products, especially cigarettes, are the most important individual health risk in this country, responsible for more premature deaths and disability than any other known agent. Urges PTAs to participate with other organizations to educate the public about the dangers of the use of tobacco products, their effects on children, and the true cost of tobacco use to society as a whole.

**Education of Children with Limited English Proficiency –1998 (R).** Encourages local and state education agencies to improve academic achievement and funding for all education, counseling and support services for the students with limited English proficiency. Parental support to identify appropriate programs for the students and education of the parents to their rights and responsibilities for the education of their children is promoted. Including foreign language instruction in the elementary and middle school programs and promotes articulated foreign language study from early childhood through high school, college and university levels.

**Energy Conservation – 1980 (R).** Encourages parents and schools to conserve energy and

urges teachers to convey energy conservation information to students.

**Equitable Distribution of Funds – 1973 (R).** Supports equitable distribution of funds to states under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

**Equity in School Sponsored Activities – 2000 (R).** Supports equal opportunity for every student to apply for interscholastic and intramural activities sponsored by the school.

**Foreign Language Programs – 1994 (R).** Supports the inclusion of foreign language in elementary and middle schools and supports foreign language programs from early childhood through college.

**Foreign Language – 2003 (R).** Opposes proposals to eliminate two years of foreign language study from the requirements for the college-prep high school diploma; and encourages Georgia high schools to offer the material involved in two years of foreign language study over a three-year period to students who want to pursue the college-prep track, but have difficulty mastering a foreign language.

**Funding Quality Education -1983 (R).** Urges the Georgia General Assembly to take whatever measures may be necessary to provide quality education for all Georgia's students.

**Gun Safety and Violence Prevention – 1999 (P).** Supports federal efforts to protect children and youth from gun violence. Advocates support restricting access to guns from persons who may endanger public safety and raising the minimum age to 21 to



be allowed to buy a handgun from non-licensed dealers.

***In Support of Healthy Fundraising and Wellness Policy – 2009*** (R). Encourages members to participate in their local school wellness committees to assist in the development and implementation of local School Wellness Policies. Encourages the use of healthy fundraisers and directs Georgia PTA to provide a list of healthy fundraising options.

***Impact Fees for School Construction – 1998*** (R). Requests the Georgia Constitution and/or Georgia Code be amended to allow local boards of education to levy, receive and use impact mitigation fees for school construction.

***Increase Funding for “20 Additional Days of Instruction” to Achieve Grade Level Proficiency – 2006*** (R). Supports a minimum increase in the state appropriations for “20 Additional Days of Instruction” of instructional help from the current 10% to 20% of the students in each local school system to more nearly ensure that every student who needs additional instruction to master grade level requirements will receive it.

***Legal Education of Georgia Youth - 2009*** (R). Supports information about laws affecting Georgia teens being taught in middle and high schools so that students are educated about the laws that apply to them. Also encourages PTAs in schools to develop and implement a student legal education program to inform students about their rights.

***Lottery Education Fund – 2005*** (R). Urges the investigation into percentage of net funds allotted and that the full allocation of funds (35% of net proceeds) from the lottery be

distributed to HOPE scholarships, pre-school education and K-12 programs.

***Local School Councils – 2000*** (R). Urges local PTA members to seek election to the Local School Councils.

***Local Tax Support for Public Schools – 2008*** (R). Opposes repealing property taxes used to fund the local school district and any efforts by the General Assembly to restrict the local school district’s authority to levy and control local revenue necessary to adequately fund education.

***Lowering Class Size – 1998*** (R). Encourages state education agencies and local school districts to develop policies and action plans to lower class sizes and supports legislation to adequately fund lower class sizes.

***Mandatory School Age – 2005*** (R). Urges the Georgia legislature to pass legislation that requires students to stay in school until they reach the age of 18 or earn a high school degree, whichever comes first.

***Media Advertising – 1981*** (R). Urges all mass media outlets to study the effects on teenagers of glamorized and socially acceptable advertising of drug, alcohol and tobacco products.

***Non-Partisan Election of Local Board of Education Members – 1997*** (R). The citizens of Georgia should elect members of local boards of education by nonpartisan ballot. Urges the education of local PTA units, local communities, and elected officials that the most desirable democratic process for public education in Georgia is



the selection of local board of education members without the influence and partisanship of political party politics.

### **Opposition to Vouchers and Tuition Tax Credits for Non-Public Schools and Programs – 2007 (R).**

Requests that the members of the Georgia General Assembly vote against any voucher or tuition tax credit legislation and any attempt to divert public education dollars to non-public education interests.

**Physical Activity and Obesity – 2002 (R).** Seeks to implement programs within the school health curriculum to inform students and parents about the growing problem of obesity in children, which is a serious health issue. Encourages physical activity and emphasizes good nutrition to reduce the incidence of childhood obesity.

**Prevent Unauthorized Posting of Minor's Photos – 2006 (R).** Urges the enactment of laws that would prevent and combat the posting of any photographic image of any child to any website without parental consent and that the appropriate agencies vigorously enforce these laws along with state privacy laws.

**Provision of Quality Child Care – 1988 (R).** Supports state and national initiatives that will make quality child care available to all working parents. This includes support of after school programs to address the issue of "latch key" youth.

**Public Funding of School Nurses – 2006 (R).** Strongly recommends public funding for a full-time licensed school nurse at every school in the state of Georgia.

**Rating System and Information on Contents of Books – 2002 (R).** Urges publishers to establish a rating system along with specific information regarding profanity, vulgarities, sexual situations, excessive violence, or drugs/alcohol to identify books containing mature content and display information on the copyright page. Encourages reader testing programs, retailers and reviewers to consider explicit contents of books in providing information to the public on their websites, in reviews and in catalogs.

**Skin Cancer Education and Prevention – 2002 (R).** Encourages the state to implement programs within the school health curriculum that would reduce skin cancer by informing how to prevent it and promoting early detection. Encouraging the use of sunscreens, wide brim hats, sunglasses, protective clothing and learned safety habits can reduce the skin cancer epidemic.

**Shoplifting Prevention – 1980 (R).** Encourages the Georgia PTA to support educating the youth of Georgia on the crime of Shoplifting.

**Skateboard Safety – 1979 (R).** The Georgia PTA urges its local councils and units to provide information on the hazards of skateboarding without proper safety equipment to its members and support the development of safe skateboard parks.

**Student Dropout–1985 (R).** Make communities aware of the student dropout problem and encourage solutions to eliminate this problem.

**Styrofoam in School Cafeterias Opposition – 1995 (R).** Opposes the use of polystyrene in all



schools and will work to find sound alternatives to polystyrene products.

**Support of Social Host Laws – 2009 (R).** Urges parents and adults to stop “social hosting”, defined as adults who allow underage drinking to occur on their property and/or supply alcohol consumed or possessed by minors and encourages advocacy for social host laws.

**Teacher Preparation for Parent/Family Engagement – 2009 (R).** Encourages the implementation of teacher education programs on parent/family engagement in schools and for teacher certification and recertification.

**Teaching Strategies for Children Born to Drug Addicted Mothers – 1991 (R).** Calls for a coalition of PTA members, experts in the area of medicine, education, and social services to develop strategies for working with young victims of cocaine and substance abuse.

**Teenage Drinking – 1980 (R).** Urges all parents to discourage the consumption of alcohol by teenagers.

**Teenage Driving – 2001 (R).** Supports legislation that incorporates at a minimum the components of the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances’ model law for graduated driver licensing. Supports legislation that incorporates driver education into the phases of graduated licensing. Calls on the Georgia PTA to promote parental involvement with young drivers.

**Teenage Driving – 2006 (R).** Encourages and promotes a partnership between law enforcement, schools, parents and teens to improve teen safety while operating an

automobile; encourages and promotes state of the art driver’s education curriculum and programs that assist parents in developing the skills needed to teach their teens to drive; requires completion of a driver’s education course before a student will be permitted to park on school campuses, encourages high schools to provide “Parent Awareness” programs for parents of teen drivers in order for them to park on school campuses.

**Tobacco Settlement Funds – 2000 (R).** Supports that a majority of the tobacco settlement money be used for health programs (including prevention, intervention, and control) and be focused on Georgia’s youth.

**Use of PTA Funds – 1996 (R).** The Georgia PTA strongly opposes the use of PTA funds by its constituent bodies to pay or subsidize, either directly or indirectly, the salaries of public school employees. Strongly encourages its constituent bodies to achieve funding of public education through advocacy efforts rather than fundraising efforts.

**Youth Access to Alcohol – 2001 (R).** Supports legislation action to stop the illegal availability and sale of alcohol to individuals under the age of 21. Urges PTAs to join community coalitions to address the problem of underage drinking.

### **WHERE WE STAND GEORGIA PTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Establishing National Media Campaign to Prevent Underage Drinking – 2002 (R).** Urges Congress to create a national media campaign to prevent underage drinking by comprehensive programs to



educate young people and the public of its dangers.

**Importance of Physical Education in Our Schools – 2003 (R).** Urges Congress to continue to provide funding for physical education programs. Urges PTAs to support daily physical education programs as an integral part of children's education.

**Middle School Reform – 2002 (P).** Prioritizes student performance and achievement by providing a stronger and more accountable system of education. Expands parental rights, grants school districts flexibility and broadens learning opportunities for students. Emphasizes a balanced instruction program that includes all the arts, physical education and technology instruction for lifetime skills development while maintaining academic programs. Requires challenging and precise standards be developed to objectively measure achievement in academic areas to the highest levels possible, not just minimal standards. Teacher and staff development in assigned subject matters must be sufficient. Seeks remediation for at-risk students within appropriate age groups, with adequate funding for support services. Proposes giving local school districts flexibility to better meet community needs; including all stakeholders, teachers, parents, students and community leaders in establishing policies for implementing reform measures.

### **WHERE WE STAND – NATIONAL PTA**

Below are the most commonly requested PTA position statements and resolutions. For further information on any position statement or resolution, contact National PTA's Programs and Public Policy Office at [ogr\\_office@pta.org](mailto:ogr_office@pta.org).

PTA resolution and position statements are official documents outlining the opinion, will, or

intent of the association to address national problems, situations, or concerns that affect children and youth and require national action to seek resolution on the issue. They serve an important purpose in formalizing and focusing the positions of the association on various important and relevant issues. National PTA has adopted hundreds of position statements and resolutions on a wide variety of national education, health, and safety issues since its first convention in 1897.

**After-School Programs** – supporting after-school programs.

**Background Checks on Teachers** – supporting background checks on teachers prior to licensing.

**Against Bullying** – in support of policies and programs that address the prevention, intervention, and elimination of bullying.

**Care of School-Age Children with Diabetes** – supporting general education on diabetes.

**Comprehensive Guidance Counseling Services** – regarding guidance counseling.

**Federal Budget Policies** – advocating for better funding for education.

**High School Graduation, College Preparation, and Access** – addressing issues of postsecondary education and student participation.

**Indoor Air Quality** – addressing indoor air quality issues.

**Internet and Wireless Communication** – encouraging promotion of ethical use of Internet and wireless communication.

**Nutritional Requirements to Fight Childhood Obesity** – addressing



requirements to fight childhood obesity.

**Parent Involvement in Site-Based Shared Decision-Making** – advocating for the right of parental involvement in site-based shared decision-making.

**Physical Education in Schools** – the importance of physical education programs in the schools.

**School Health Councils** – calling for establishment of school health councils.

**School Trust Lands and Funds** – on sound financial management of school trusts.

**Strengthening Support of Public School Teachers** – addressing ways to support the teaching profession.

**Teaching About Religion in Public Schools** – supporting educating the public about U.S. Supreme Court decisions regarding teaching of religion in public schools.

**Teacher Quality** – advocating for the equitable distribution of high-quality teachers.

**Teacher Preparation for Parent/Family Involvement** – addressing parent involvement.

### **NATIONAL POSITION STATEMENTS**

**Arts In Education** – the importance of arts programs in schools.

**Child Safety and Protection** – outlining areas that PTA encourages members to monitor and support.

**Citizenship and Equality** – emphasizing the importance of civil rights.

**Elements of Comprehensive Health Programs** –

outlining benefits of a comprehensive health program, encompassing health education, health services and healthy school environment.

**Recommendation on Corporal Punishment** – encouraging the use of alternatives to corporal punishment.

**Education Emphasis** – regarding school choice, school report cards, assessment and testing, and other issues.

**Environmental Health and Safety** – advocating for environmental education programs and elimination of environmental pollutants.

**Libraries and Educational Material** – addressing a person's right to use a library and selection of instructional/library materials in schools.

**Mass Media** – addressing technological advances that affect the welfare of children.

**National Health Reform and Access to Care for Children, Youth, Families and Pregnant Women** - advocating the needs of children, families and pregnant women should come first as health care is reformed.

**Nutrition for Children and Families** – nutritional requirements for children.

**Relationship of PTA to Educational Organizations** – the association's relationship with public school groups.

**Role of Religion in Publicly Funded Educational and Social Services** – religious instruction.

**School Facilities** – the impact of school facilities on student success.



**U.S. Supreme Court Decision Regarding Segregation** – desegregation.

**Shared Responsibility in Educational Decision Making** – the impact of community input on school policies.

**The Supreme Court Decisions on Prayer in Public Schools** – on prayer in schools.

**Teacher Negotiations, Sanctions, and Strikes** – the association's role in negotiations.

**Teacher Preparation and Staff Development** – funding for teacher and staff development programs.

**The Principal, The School's Educational Leader** – the role of principals.



### **WHO MAKES THE EDUCATION DECISIONS, ANYWAY?**

All traditional public schools in Georgia are governed by a local board of education. One would think, then, that all education decisions are made there. WRONG.

**Parents** with the teachers in the school make many decisions regarding individual students.

**Principals** determine discipline decisions for students, teacher assignments, hiring decisions in many schools, purchasing decisions, and local calendars for activities. Principals also approve student activities and field trips. Principals are the instructional leader in the school.

**Superintendents** run the school systems, the CEO, responsible for creating procedures to carry out policies adopted by the local board of education, LBOE. Superintendents recommend personnel decisions and budgets to the LBOE.

**Local Boards of Education** (also known as LEA's or Local Education Agencies) have the constitutional authority for the management and control of local schools. They adopt a budget, levy taxes to fund any portion of the desired programs not funded either by state or federal government, hire and evaluate the superintendent, adopt policies by which students and employees will abide, buy and sell property, open and close schools, adopt attendance zones, transport students to and from school and some extracurricular activities.

**The State Board of Education** operationalizes state law through rules (similar to policies adopted by LBOEs), provides personnel for the Department of Education, acts as an appeal board for student and employee issues, and recommends budgets to the governor. The SBOE and the DOE develop and administer the state required tests, provide special schools for unique populations (deaf and blind students), run a special virtual school, and are the LBOE for state chartered special schools. SBOE members are appointed by the governor, one from each congressional district.

**The Georgia Department of Education**, headed by the state school superintendent elected statewide, is the administrative agency for the SBOE. The DOE interprets the rules adopted by the SBOE, acts as the agency for distribution of federal dollars coming into the state, and warehouses food for distribution to schools to use in the school lunch program donated by the federal government.

**The Georgia General Assembly** appropriates funds annually through the Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula to local school districts to educate Georgia's children. The funds are based on the number of students and the programs they are in. As with nearly all government appropriations, the funds have strings attached with which the receiving school or district must comply. Many educational practices are determined because of the funding stream, which is often not adequate to meet the actual costs required.

**The Federal government** appropriates funds for its programs, most notably for school lunch, special education students, Title 1 students and schools, and requirements of No Child Left Behind. Federal funds come with specific oversight responsibilities.

**Private grants** may fund programs in schools. These funds have specific use guidelines that must be followed.

**The state constitution** requires some compliance for local schools districts, which are considered 'political subdivisions of the state'.



### WHO MAKES THE EDUCATION DECISIONS, ANYWAY? – A Quiz

Effective Advocacy often requires that one knows where the decision was made for changes to be made. Where are the following decisions remedied or changed? Does PTA have a position?

1. You want a stop sign or signal light on the street where school is located.
2. You want a change in textbooks in one or more classes.
3. Your student has been in an incident with another. You want information about what were the consequences for the other student.
4. You want a crossing guard at street for students walking to school.
5. You want parental input into school lunch menu planning.
6. You want to hold a raffle.
7. You want information on the discussions and decisions of the local school council.
8. You want information on the discussions and decisions of the local school board.
9. You want changes to the school calendar.
10. Your student is in an AP course and the final test is given before the end of the semester. Also, your student must also take the End of Course Test AND a teacher administered final.
11. Your student must stay after school to participate in a sports program. You want a bus to bring the student home after the event, which is after the regular bus run.
12. The school clinic worker is not full time. And the PTA is asked to buy all the supplies. You want a fully staffed and equipped clinic at your school.
13. Art classes have been cut in your school. You want them restored.
14. You think there are too many children in the PE classes.
15. Trailers on school property used as classrooms should be replaced with permanent classrooms, which have running water so students do not have to go outside for meals or bathrooms.



### WHO MAKES THE EDUCATION DECISIONS, ANYWAY? – The Answers

**1. You want a stop sign or signal light on the street where school is located.** Who owns the road? If municipality, go to city council or city traffic department. If county, go to county commission or traffic department. If state, go to Georgia DOT. PTA has a position on the safety of children.

**2. You want different textbooks in one or more classes.** Local Boards of Education (LBOEs) determine which texts to purchase from a list of instructional materials evaluated by the state Department of Education, DOE. Usually all schools within a district use the same text for the same grade or class. These are adopted at a LBOE meeting.

**3. Your student has been in an incident with another. You want information about what the consequences were for the other student.** You are entitled to any information within the school district about your student, and the school district is bound to keep that information confidential from anyone else. You, as a parent, may give permission for the school district to share information about your child to others. Do it in writing. FERPA, the Federal Education Records and Privacy Act, requires educators to maintain the confidentiality of information on every student. The educators may talk about situations, test results, conditions, environment, trends, and other information about education, but in general terms and without naming any students. PTA has positions on maintaining privacy of individual student information.

**4. You want a crossing guard at the street for students walking to school.** Petition the entity which pays the police, i.e. city, county, or state. It is permissible for LBOEs to employ crossing guards, but it is rarely done because of the costs. There is no state funding for this job. Crossing guards are not permitted to direct traffic, although they may stop it to escort students safely across the street. Police, acting as crossing guards, are empowered to direct traffic, such as determining which lanes of the stopped traffic shall precede. PTA has a position on safety of children.

**5. You want parental input into school lunch menu planning.** School meals are primarily funded federally, with extensive guidelines as to what needs to be included in what quantities. Nearly every LBOE employs a nutrition coordinator, and every school with a

meal program has a food service manager. Parents can act as advisors to these employees, but cannot dictate. PTA has a position on nutritional content of meals.

**6. You want to hold a raffle.** A raffle is a form of gambling which is prohibited in our state constitution except for the lottery and for a raffle held by a charitable organization. Charitable is defined by the IRS tax-exempt status. To hold a raffle, no more than once per year, the association must notify the local sheriff of those intentions. A raffle held without such notification, or a second or subsequent raffle will subject all involved to charges.

**7. You want information on the discussions and decisions of the local school council.** School councils are empowered under Georgia statute and are advisory to the school. School councils are subject to the same Open Meetings and Open Records provisions with which governmental bodies must comply. Meetings must be announced and posted, agendas must be available within a two-week period of the meeting, and minutes and other records considered by the council can be obtained.

**8. You want information on the discussions and decisions of the local school board.** LBOEs are subject to the Open Meetings and Open Records laws with some defined exceptions. Issues pertaining to specific employees and specific students, legal matters, information about property acquisition and sale, and some security measures are allowed to be discussed in executive session which has been empowered by a board vote. Voting, however, is to be done in an open meeting.

**9. You want changes to the school calendar.** Calendars, like many things, are determined by a vote of the LBOE, usually as recommended by the superintendent and staff. The state constitution defines LBOEs as having the power to 'manage and control' public schools within their geographic domain. One must petition these entities to recommend changes. Many LBOEs have established methods of recommendation for the school calendar, such as review by the local school councils, parent organizations, and faculties.

**10. Your student is in an AP course and the final test is given before the end of the semester. Also, your student must also take the End of Course Test AND a teacher administered final.** An AP course is a voluntary enrollment by the student; it is not required for



graduation. The school district with perhaps an LBOE policy requirement suggests that enrolling in that course will require taking of the AP test. End of Course Tests, EOCTs, are required by Georgia law. The state board of education, SBOE, determines which courses EOCTs shall be given, currently 8 courses, and when they must be administered. The state testing window is about 3 weeks long, and the local school districts determine when within that window the tests are administered. Further, the EOCT score is weighted 15% of the final course grade. A teacher-administered test is the option of the teacher with permission from the school and the superintendent and may also be governed by a LBOE policy. Because the AP course and EOCT are frequently administered before the end of the grading period, the teachers want to test any material presented which was not included in any previous test. Also, it keeps the students from goofing off during the final days of the term if there is one more test on the horizon.

**11. Your student must stay after school to participate in a sports program. You want a bus to bring the student home after the event, which is after the regular bus run.** Buses and bus schedules are set by the LBOE. The state DOE assists in funding for bus replacement and for drivers' salaries, although at a very low level. Schedules are left exclusively to the LBOE.

**12. The school clinic worker is not full time. And the PTA is asked to buy all the supplies. You want a fully staffed and equipped clinic at your school.** The state funds clinic workers per school district with tobacco settlement dollars; a registered nurse for each district and an allocation per FTE (full-time student) for workers in the schools. It is insufficient to pay for a clinic worker full time in each school. The LBOE may augment the state appropriation to provide that. The state funds are permitted only for salaries. Providing nursing services is a state law requirement, so supplies should be funded with public money through the LBOE budget. PTA has a position to support full time school nurses.

**13. Art classes have been cut in your school. You want them restored.** The state education funding formula provides money for ONE teacher for art, music, physical education or foreign language. The SBOE determines whether physical education is a required course through state board rule. K-5 grades are required to get 90 minutes per week of PE, and high school students must complete one year of PE-Health. For those schools, that one teacher usually is a PE teacher. If

other teachers are to be provided, it must be done with locally raised funds by the LBOE. PTA has positions on children being exposed to the arts and technology and on getting activity during the school day.

**14. You think there are too many children in the PE classes.** The SBOE rule determines the maximum number of students in any class. It permits 45 students in any PE class.

**15. Trailers on school property used as classrooms should be replaced with permanent classrooms with running water, so students do not have to go outside to wash their hands, use the restrooms or get meals.** Students must be housed from the first day they enroll; and assignment to teachers must follow the SBOE rule relative to class size. Thus, portable classrooms become an overflow measure to permit schools to form classrooms immediately. The state does not fund portable classrooms in any way. The state appropriates funding for new permanent classrooms on a formula that requires an *existing* need; that is, the student must already be enrolled. Further, there are many significant costs associated with new construction that the state does not participate in: land acquisition, preparation and furnishings. The state requires local funding participation for each project ranging from 20% to 8% depending on the property wealth of the school district. State law requires ALL money for any capital project to be in the bank before a contract is let. With these constraints, one can see why it may take 3-5 years for some school districts to get a classroom built to house a student who enrolls today.



**THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS**

The Georgia Constitution is the governing law in Georgia. Amendments to the Georgia Constitution must be passed by a 2/3 vote in each legislative chamber and then approved by a majority of the voters. Laws passed by the General Assembly, known as general statutes, can be found in the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.). The O.C.G.A. also contains annotations of relevant state and federal court decisions, attorney general opinions, law review articles, and other relevant legal information. There is a non-annotated Code of Georgia online accessible through the State of Georgia website.

The Georgia Constitution establishes the structure of the state government and the powers of each branch. The legislative branch (General Assembly) makes the law, the executive branch (governor and agencies) administers the law, and the judicial branch (courts) interprets and determines the constitutionality of the law.

**Structure of the Georgia General Assembly**

The Georgia General Assembly consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives. There are 56 state senators and 180 state representatives. All members of the General Assembly are elected in even numbered years for two-year terms.

The General Assembly convenes on the second Monday of January and meets for 40 legislative days. Each General Assembly lasts for two years. The first year is called the first session of the term, and the second year is the second session of the term.

The presiding officers of the General Assembly are the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House. The Lieutenant Governor serves ex officio as the President of the Senate. Since the President is not a member of the Senate, he cannot debate or vote on Senate matters. The Speaker of the House is elected by the members and is usually the nominee of the majority party of the House. The

Speaker may relinquish the chair and speak on matters, and can also vote in case of a tie.

The House members also elect the Speaker Pro Tempore to preside over the House in the absence of the Speaker. Senate members elect the President Pro Tempore. The Majority and Minority Caucuses elect their own leaders in the House and Senate. The Majority Leader and Minority Leaders are responsible for expressing the views of their respective party on key issues. The Majority Whips and Minority Whips gauge opinions and inform other party members of plans and strategies.

**Committees**

An important phase of the legislative process is the action taken by committees. **Standing committees** in each chamber study bills that have been introduced and make recommendations to the full body as to whether such bills should be supported. These committees are organized around functional areas (education, children and youth, etc.). The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House appoint the officers and members of the standing committees in their respective body.

<b>Schedule of the 2010 General Assembly Session</b>	
January 11	Legislature convenes
January 18	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
Day 30	“Crossover Day”-- Last day for bills to pass the chamber or origin and cross over to the other chamber
Day 39	Last day that Senate may consider any general bills
Day 40	Last day for General Assembly to meet





### HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

#### Introduction and Sponsorship

Legislation may be introduced in the General Assembly as either a bill or a resolution. A **bill** is used to propose changes to the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.). A bill originating in the House is designated as HB, signifying House Bill, followed by a number (e.g. HB 1187). Likewise, a bill originating in the Senate is designated as SB, signifying Senate Bill, followed by a number. Bills must be approved by a simple majority of both houses.

A bill may either be considered general or local legislation. **General legislation** applies throughout the state, such as education, criminal laws, and sales tax exemptions. **Local legislation** applies to a specific county or city, such as establishing city government or homestead exemptions.

**Resolutions** are used to express the opinion or will of one or both bodies. A **simple resolution** is considered by one chamber only and does not have the force of law. A **joint resolution** is passed by both houses, and depending on subject matter, may have the force of law. Amendments to the Georgia Constitution are presented as joint resolutions, and must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the Senate and the House. Once passed, proposed constitutional amendments are presented to the voters at the next general election and must be approved by a majority. A **privileged resolution** is a simple or joint resolution that expresses the appreciation, recognition, or sympathy of one or both houses to some individual or group.

Any member of the House and Senate may introduce a bill or resolution with the following exception: all bills for raising revenue or appropriating money must originate in the House. Often a representative and a senator offer similar proposals, called **companion bills**, which may be acted on simultaneously by the House and Senate. The governor may not introduce bills, but may designate a legislator as the Administration Floor

Leader to manage bills initiated or favored by the governor.

Bills and resolutions are filed for introduction with the Clerk of the House or Secretary of the Senate. This is often referred to as **dropping** a bill in the **hopper**. A bill is considered introduced after the first reading of the bill occurs in the House or Senate.

#### Committee Referral

Once general legislation is introduced, the presiding officer assigns it to a standing committee for consideration. During the committee process, intense debate is given to the proposed legislation and testimony from citizens is heard. Amendments may be offered. This process can take place at either the subcommittee level or full committee level, or both.

At the conclusion of deliberation, the committee or subcommittee votes to determine what action should be taken on the measure. It can be reported, with or without amendment, or tabled, which means no further action on it will occur. A vote in favor of the bill is a "Do Pass" and results in the bill being **favorably reported**. If the committee votes to report the bill, a written recommendation is provided to the appropriate legislative body.

Local legislation is referred to the **local delegation** - the group of legislators whose districts are affected by the bill. If the local bill is passed by the local delegation, tradition dictates that the other members of that chamber will support the bill.

#### Rules Calendar

Bills that are favorably reported from committee are placed on the **General Calendar**. The Rules Committee meets and prepares a **Rules Calendar** for the next day's session from bills on General Calendar. In the Senate, the presiding officer calls bills up in the order listed on the Rules Calendar. In the House, the presiding officer calls up bills from



the Rules Calendar for floor consideration in any order. Many bills are never placed on the Rules Calendar and therefore are never considered by the full body.

### **Floor Action**

Consideration of a measure by the full body can be a simple or very complex process. After all debate is concluded and all amendments and/or substitutions have been voted upon, the legislative body is ready to vote on the bill's final passage. Votes are taken on an electronic voting system that registers each individual legislator's vote. Votes on amendments or substitutes may also be taken by voice vote, and no record of individual responses is available. After a measure passes one body, it goes to the other body to be read, assigned to committee, and voted upon if favorably reported by committee.

### **Conference Consideration**

A bill must pass both bodies in the same form before it can be presented to the Governor for signature into law. If the second body changes the language of the bill, it must be returned to the originating body for its concurrence. If no concurrence can be reached, known as 'agree or disagree,' a conference committee may be appointed with both House and Senate members (3 each) to resolve the differences. This committee may report on an identical version, which cannot be amended, to both bodies for a vote. The budget bills always go to a conference committee.

### **Governor Action**

A bill or resolution (except those proposing a constitutional amendment) that passes both the House and the Senate is transmitted to the governor who has 40 days after adjournment to sign the legislation; 6 days if the General Assembly is still in session. All bills and resolutions (except those proposing a constitutional amendment) become law automatically unless the governor vetoes the

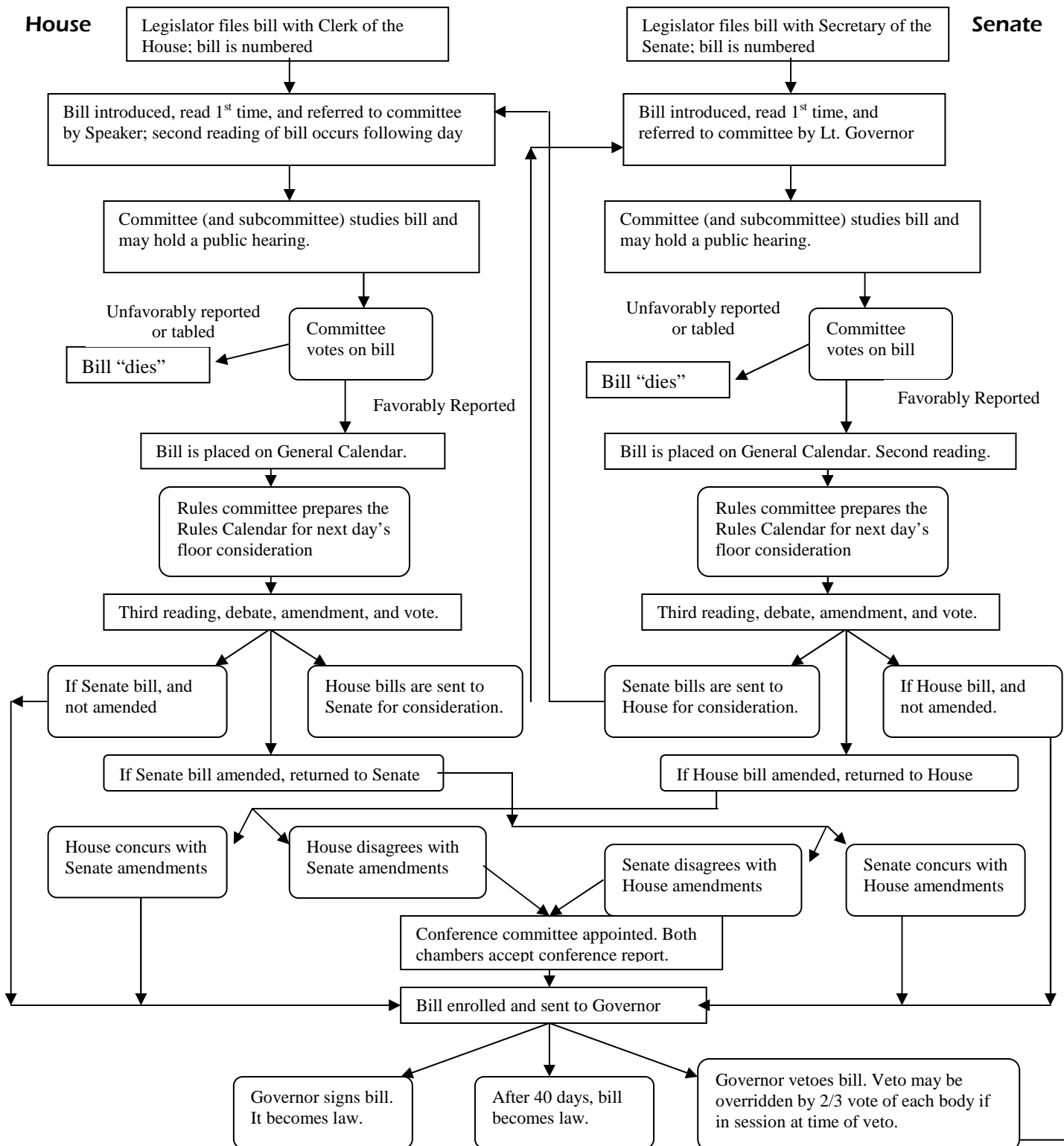
measure. A veto may be overridden by a two-thirds vote in each body. The governor may line item veto budget bills, which can be overridden by a similar vote in the legislature.

### **Regulatory Process**

Once a bill is law, the relevant agency or department is responsible for drafting regulations and rules specifying how the law will be executed. The agency is required by law to give at least 30 days notice prior to the adoption, amendment or repeal of any rule. The exact wording of the proposed rule must be published and the public must have an opportunity to comment on the proposed rule. Adopted rules and regulations are published by the Secretary of State's office and often by the specific agency or department.



## How a Bill Becomes Law in Georgia





### THE BUDGET PROCESS

The Georgia Constitution requires the state government to operate under a balanced budget. No state funds can be spent unless they are authorized in an appropriations bill passed by the General Assembly and signed by the governor.

The budget process begins 14 to 15 months prior to the start of the fiscal year, which begins July 1. Each department or agency develops its official budget requests and submits them to the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) by September 1 for the budget year that begins the following July 1. The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) analyzes each request for cost justification and benefits. During October and November, the Governor meets with OPB and agency officials to formulate his budget recommendations. By December, the Governor has finalized his recommendations and the Governor's Budget Report is printed.

The governor delivers his Budget Address outlining his recommendations to a joint session of the General Assembly during the first week of the session. The recommendations are introduced as the **general appropriations** act in the House.

The governor also presents recommendations for the **amended budget**, which amends the current fiscal year's budget to account for differences in revenue estimates, to take care of emergencies or needs that have occurred after the current budget went into effect, and to adjust education funding to reflect actual – rather than projected – student enrollment. Because this budget often adds additional funding to agencies, it is sometimes referred to as the **supplemental** budget.

### KEEPING INFORMED DURING THE SESSION

The state legislative services website includes listings of bills, a search capability for bills, passed legislation, budget information, access to the House and Senate websites, and live audio/video of the session. There is also live audio/video of some committee meetings. One can also access the

Georgia Code, though not the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. This information is available at [www.legis.ga.gov](http://www.legis.ga.gov).

Some committee meetings are posted on the House and Senate websites, but this information changes frequently. Call the committee chair's office for accurate meeting schedules for particular bills. Committee meetings generally occur prior to the start of the daily session (before 10 am) or at the conclusion of the session. Afternoon meeting times can be adjusted depending on the length of the daily session.

Georgia Public Television (GPB) airs "Lawmakers" at 7:00 pm daily during the session. Check your local listings for access to their legislative wrap-up.

The Georgia Department of Education's website at [www.doe.k12.ga.us](http://www.doe.k12.ga.us) contains listings of proposed rules and regulations. You can access other agencies' websites via [www.georgia.gov](http://www.georgia.gov).

Georgia PTA publishes daily reports during the session, along with key information and status/position ratings on active legislation, on the **Capitol Watch** section of the Georgia PTA website ([www.georgiapta.org](http://www.georgiapta.org)). Capitol Watch also contains PTA positions, news reports and bulletins from the State School Board, and key legislative committees.

Use Capitol Watch for contact information and instant email access to all state and federal legislators and appointed officials. In addition, Capitol Watch has a hotlink to the National PTA website with updated news and information on national and federal legislative issues.

*Information on the federal legislative process can be found in National PTA's Online Advocacy Toolkit under the Take Action pulldown at [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org).*



### PTA'S ROLE IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

PTAs can influence the legislative and regulatory processes at many points in the process. For example, PTAs may be involved in:

- Asking local legislators to introduce legislation addressing a concern;
- Contacting legislators who serve on pertinent committees to express support or opposition for bills under consideration;
- Testifying before a subcommittee or committee hearing;
- Contacting legislators on the Rules committee to promote placement of a bill on the Rules Calendar for floor debate;
- Urging passage or defeat of a particular bill when considered by the House or Senate;
- Requesting the governor to veto or sign a passed bill; and
- Contacting board members of agencies regarding proposed rules and regulations.

### Alerts

Georgia PTA has an email distribution network to alert members when a bill needs fast and significant support or opposition. Members are asked to contact their own legislators and other key decision makers immediately by phone, fax or email to reaffirm PTA's positions. Georgia PTA also encourages its members on the Alert network to pass that information to other PTA members in their own distribution networks, such as phone trees or email lists.

To sign up for the Alert network, go to Capitol Watch ([www.georgiapta.org](http://www.georgiapta.org) Capitol Watch, and click on the flag icon). On the Capitol Watch page, pull down Grassroots and choose Join. Simply follow those instructions to join and you are automatically enrolled in Georgia PTA's Alert network.



## GEORGIA CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

Governor Sonny Perdue                      Term expires 2010  
 www.gov.ga.gov  
 201 State Capitol                              404-656-1776  
 Atlanta, GA 30334                              404-656-7119 (fax)

Lt. Governor Casey Cagle                      Term expires 2010  
 www.ltgov.ga.gov  
 240 State Capitol                              404-656-5030  
 Atlanta, GA 30334                              404-656-6739 (fax)

State Superintendent of Schools Kathy Cox                      Term expires 2010  
 www.doe.k12.ga.us  
 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, Twin Towers East                      404-656-2800  
 Atlanta, GA 30334                              404-651-8737 (fax)

## GEORGIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONTACTS

For questions concerning bills:

House Clerk                                      404-656-5015  
 Secretary of the Senate                      404-656-5040

The Georgia General Assembly’s website contains information about House and Senate members, contact information and committee assignments, and bills (including searches by number or key word) and more. [www.legis.ga.gov](http://www.legis.ga.gov)

## WHO ARE YOUR LEGISLATORS?

Georgia PTA’s Capitol Watch tool connects you immediately to a wealth of information about your state and federal legislators and other elected officials. From the Georgia PTA website ([www.georgiapta.org](http://www.georgiapta.org)), click on Capitol Watch. Use the link from that page. Bookmark the Capitol Watch site: you’ll use it again and again. From the Capitol Watch homepage, pull down “Officials” and choose “District Lookup.” You can link directly to your legislators’ websites to access their background information, committee assignments, contact information and district map. This

information is also available at the Georgia General Assembly’s website: [www.legis.ga.gov](http://www.legis.ga.gov).

A few weeks after the session begins, the General Assembly publishes its **Members of the General Assembly** directory. This booklet contains pictures, background information, committee assignments, and contact information for all House and Senate members. You may pick up a copy of the directory in the Capitol building at the House Clerk’s Office in Room 309 or the Secretary of the Senate’s office in Room 351. It is also available on the General Assembly website homepage [www.legis.ga.gov](http://www.legis.ga.gov) as a .pdf file.

## HOW TO ADDRESS ELECTED OR APPOINTED OFFICIALS

Formal communications with elected officials require a correct address. In letters to elected officials, the inside address should always be to The Honorable (full name). The salutation line depends on the person to whom the letter is addressed:

- US President – Dear President
- US Senator -- Dear Senator
- US Representative – Dear Representative
- Governor – Dear Governor
- State Senator – Dear Senator
- State Representative – Dear Mr./Ms.

When speaking with elected officials, the proper title is

- US President – President (last name)
- US Senator – Senator (last name)
- US Representative – Representative (last name)
- Governor – Governor (last name)
- State Senator – Senator (last name)
- State Representative – Representative (last name)





**GEORGIA BOARD OF EDUCATION**

2053 Twin Towers East 404.657.7410  
Atlanta, GA 30334 fax 404.657.6978  
All members: [state.board@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:state.board@doe.k12.ga.us)

<b>Chair</b> .....	<b>Wanda Barrs</b>
<b>Vice Chair</b> .....	<b>Al Hodge</b>
<b>Vice Chair, Appeals</b> .....	<b>Brad Bryant</b>
<b>State School Superintendent</b> .....	<b>Kathy Cox</b>
<b>State Board Liaison</b> .....	<b>Buck Hilliard</b>
<b>Assistant</b> .....	<b>Lynn Roberts</b>

**7th Congressional District** Term expires 2011  
Mr. Jose R. Perez  
4321 Doerun Court  
Norcross, GA 30092

**8th Congressional District** Term expires 2013  
Ms. Wanda Barrs  
465 Ruth Church Road  
Cochran, GA 31014

**9th Congressional District** Term expires 2013  
Mr. Larry Winter  
206 W. Crawford Street  
Dalton, GA 30720

**10th Congressional District** Term expires 2014  
Mr. Brian K. Burdette  
Glasstech Services Inc.  
204 East Broad Street  
Greensboro, GA 30642

**11th Congressional District** Term expires 2011  
Mr. Al M. Hodge, Jr.  
1 Riverside Parkway  
Rome, GA 30161

**12th Congressional District** Term expires 2014  
Mr. Allen C. Rice  
P.O. Box 447  
Vidalia, GA 30475

**13th Congressional District** Term expires 2016  
Dr. Mary Sue Murray  
6797 Green Oak Drive  
Douglasville, GA 30135

**1st Congressional District** Term expires 2016  
Ms. Linda M. Zechmann  
2320 Chauncey Drive  
Waycross, GA 31501

**2nd Congressional District** Term expires 2016  
Dr. Elizabeth J. Ragsdale  
2005 Devon Drive  
Albany, GA 31721

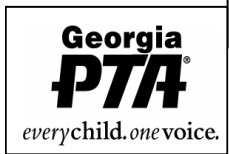
**3rd Congressional District** Term expires 2011  
VACANT

**4th Congressional District** Term expires 2013  
Mr. Brad Bryant  
P.O. Box 450648  
Atlanta, GA 31145-0648

**5th Congressional District** Term expires 2011  
Mr. James E. Bostic, Jr.  
5455 New Wellington Close  
Atlanta, GA 30327

**6th Congressional District** Term expires 2011  
Mr. Robert "Buzz" Law  
1000 Abernathy Road  
Bldg. 400, Suite 1500  
Atlanta, GA 30328

*Revised May, 2009*





### **PTA DO's and DON'Ts DURING ELECTION TIME**

When the election season is upon us, candidates are anxious to meet and get support from voters and all types of community groups, including PTA. A review of PTA allowable activity is timely.

- PTA can NEVER support or oppose a candidate or a political party or body. NEVER lend the PTA local unit's name to a political campaign, nor your PTA title. Do NOT write messages of support or opposition on PTA letterhead or use a PTA distribution medium such as a directory or an e-mail list for a candidate.
- Do NOT solicit or accept sponsorships or donations from a political campaign fund. Such sponsorships or donations are often publicized in PTA newsletters and other media, and when paid with political campaign funds, the appearance is that PTA supports that candidacy. Candidates may use personal funds to support local PTA units.
- Do NOT link in any way the PTA name or logo with a political candidate or party.
- PTA can sponsor voter registration efforts. PTA can encourage citizens to vote, publicize election dates and polling places.
- PTA can support or oppose ballot questions, such as educational special purpose local option sales taxes, SPLOSTs, bond issues for schools, and tax assessment questions. PTA action in these matters must be based on a position adopted through resolution at the national, state, district, council, or local level. Speaking to a ballot issue that may also be a part of a political candidate or party platform does not constitute support for that political candidate or party. Instead, it indicates advocacy on a position of record for the association.

- PTA may sponsor political forums or candidate meet-and-greet meetings. ALL candidates for a specific office MUST be invited to participate and each candidate given equal time to speak. A candidate invited but not attending will not invalidate the PTA activity.

PTA encourages all members to cast a ballot for candidates of one's choice and to be as active as one desires. PTA board members, at all levels, should exercise restraint in visible support of candidates, such as yard signs, bumper stickers, campaign pins, adding one's name to a support list for a candidate, etc. If an observant citizen concludes that a PTA leader's support of a candidate constitutes PTA association support, then the PTA leader should refrain from the overt activity.

For additional guidance, contact Georgia PTA at [www.georgiapta.org](http://www.georgiapta.org), 1-800-PTA-TODAY or 404-659-0214 or visit the National PTA website at [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org).



### ORGANIZING A POLITICAL FORUM – A QUICK GUIDE

PTAs often wish to have a forum during election season to allow their community to listen to the views of candidates who desire to represent them, and to query each about issues important to PTA.

This is a quick reference for planning and executing a fair and open forum.

- Determine which elected offices to invite. It may be wise to be selective, as a forum longer than two hours usually is not viable. Two or three political offices would be about the maximum.
- Select a date at least two weeks before the primary or election. This maximizes the number of citizens who have not yet voted.
- Invite ALL candidates for the selected offices at least three, preferably four, weeks in advance. Include date, time, location, and sponsoring organizations and format for the forum.
- Structure the forum with a set time for answers to questions, opening and closing statements. (i.e., 1 minute, 2 minutes)
- Enclose a sheet of forum rules and procedures. For example: no stand-ins for candidates; election materials will not be allowed in the forum room, but each candidate will have a table for campaign materials in the hallway; no election materials are to be put on automobiles in the parking lot, provide a bio of 150 words or less to be used as an introduction; candidates only may wear nametags; candidates shall not verbally attack another.
- Include a letter of agreement to appear at the forum to be signed and returned to the sponsors.
- Contact each candidate two weeks out from the forum to remind them of the particulars.
- Select a site with sufficient seating for the expected audience. Get required permissions to use the site.
- Advertise the forum. Be aware of newspaper print deadlines, often a week before desired print edition.
- Prepare 25% to 50% more questions on various subjects than there is time available to ask. If more than one group is sponsoring the forum, solicit questions from each. This will provide a cushion if candidates do not take the full time to answer one or more of the questions. One does not want any dead time in a forum.
- Questions should be worded so that a simple YES/NO answer is not convenient for the candidate. The objective is to allow the candidate to share his/her views on an issue and the attendees to make up their minds about who may be the best person for the job.
- Candidates should sit or stand facing the audience. Provide a modesty skirt at the candidate table, particularly if women are to be seated.
- Candidates should have: water; a note pad; pen or pencil; a tented name sign for both audience and moderator to see. Arrange for someone to change out nametags, water, etc., between sets of candidates.
- Use a coin toss to determine who gets the first question. Use another to determine who gets the first opportunity for closing statements and yet another, if opening statements are used. OR, if there are three or more candidates, draw numbers out of a hat to determine sequence of opening statements, then reverse it for sequence of closing statements.
- Provide order of opening-closing statements to moderator prior to the forum for each office.



- Moderator should address each candidate as Mr., Mrs., or Ms., reserving any titles to the introduction only.
- Moderator is courteous to the candidates at all times.
- Audience questions should be submitted in writing. It tends to clarify the desire of the writer and prevents 'speeches' by the asker. The moderator or another committee will determine if question is to be asked as is, combined with other questions, etc. Index cards are handy for this purpose.
- Have runners to hand out index cards and collect them when available and deliver to the moderator/committee.
- Microphones for moderator, and one or more for the candidates.
- Moderator should allow each candidate for any office to answer each question.
- Moderator should be able to see a clock or watch.
- A timer person, seated in the front where all candidates can see the signals, should time the answers of each candidate, opening and closing statements, and signal when 10 or 15 seconds remain, then again when time has expired. Moderator should introduce timer. A watch with a second hand is required if a stopwatch is not available.
- Moderator may sit or stand and be visible to both candidates and audience.
- Arrange for setting up of tables for candidate campaign materials, and stage/area for forum. Allow candidates 20 to 30 minutes both before and after the forum to mix with audience in the hall.
- Moderator starts forum on time, beginning with candidates for first office, introducing them. Candidates not attending should be announced as having been invited. If they RSVP that they could not attend, let audience know that.
- Opening statements [if part of the process] begin in the order for which they are drawn. Alternate candidates answering questions first.
- Between candidate sets, allow one or two minutes for candidates to depart, and candidates for the next set to be seated and to change items at the candidate stations.
- Array candidates alphabetically.
- Prepared questions are easier to read if printed in LARGE type. Check off questions as asked.
- Moderator thanks candidates for each office prior to their leaving the stage; asks for applause for their participation.
- Moderator thanks audience for attendance as the forum wraps up, on time or as close as possible to it.

Contact Georgia PTA [www.georgiapta.org](http://www.georgiapta.org) or NPTA [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org) for more specific guidance on a forum.



**Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education’s Educational Acronyms and Education-ary**

**EDUCATION-ARY**

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Educational Acronyms . . . . . Page 1  
Education-ary . . . . . Page 4

**Educational Acronyms**

- AACTE**--American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
- AASA**--American Association of School Administrators
- AASD**--Atlanta Area School for the Deaf
- ACA**--American Counseling Association
- ACE**--American Council on Education
- ACT**--American College Testing
- ACT**--American Association of Classroom Teachers
- ADA**--Americans with Disabilities Act
- ADD**--Attention Deficit Disorder
- ADHD**--Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- AECT**--Association for Educational Communications and Technology
- AERA**--American Educational Research Association
- AFT**--American Federation of Teachers
- AMO**--Annual measurable objectives, factors in determining adequate yearly progress, AYP. \*\*\*
- AP**--Advanced Placement
- ARCHE**--Atlanta Regional Consortium for Higher Education
- ASCA**--American School Counselor Association
- ASCD**--Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
- ASL**--American Sign Language
- ASP**--After School Program
- AYP**--Adequate Yearly Progress
- BD**--Behavior Disorder
- BOE**-- Board of Education
- BOR** – Board of Regents \*\*\*
- CACREP**--Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs
- CAP**--Corrective Action Plan
- CBA**--Curriculum-Basic Assessment
- CC**--Childcare
- CCSSO**--Council of Chief State School Officers
- CDA**--Child Development Associate
- CEF** – Committee for Education Funding\*\*\*

- CES**--Comprehensive Evaluation System
- CEU**--Continuing Education Unit
- CEISMC**--Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics and Computing at Georgia Institute of Technology
- CIS**--Communities in Schools
- CAN**--Comprehensive Needs Assessment
- CPIR**--Certified Personnel Information Report
- COT**--Committee on Quality Teaching
- CRCT**--Criterion-Referenced Competency Test
- CTAE** – Career, Technical and Agricultural Education\*\*\*
- CYCC**--Children and Youth Coordinating Council
- D/B**--Deaf/Blind
- DECAL**--Department of Early Care and Learning
- DFACS**--Department of Family and Children Services
- DOE**--Department of Education
- DHR**--Department of Human Resources
- DJJ**--Department of Juvenile Justice
- DOT**--Department of Transportation
- DTAE**—See TCSG
- EBD**--Emotional and Behavioral Disorder
- ECC**--Education Coordinating Council, non-functioning\*\*\*
- ECE**--Early Childhood Education
- ECS**--Education Commission of the States
- EIP**--Early Intervention Program
- ELC**--Education Leaders Council
- ELL** – English Language Learners
- EOCT**--End-of-Course Test
- ERIC**--Education Resources Information Center, no longer funded. \*\*\*
- ESEA**--Elementary and Secondary Education Act
- ESOL**--English to Speakers of Other Languages
- ETS**--Educational Testing Service
- FAPE**--Free and Appropriate Public Education
- FMLA** – Family and Medical Leave Act\*\*\*
- FRL**--Free and Reduced Lunch
- FTE**--Full-time Equivalent
- FY**--Fiscal Year
- G-CASE**--Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education
- GACE**--Georgia Advisory Council on Education
- GACE**--Georgia Association for Community Education





## Georgia PTA Advocacy Guide 2009-2010

### Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education's Educational Acronyms and Education-ary

- GACIS**--Georgia Association of Curriculum and Instructional Supervisors
- GACCE**--Georgia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives
- GACTE**--Georgia Association of Colleges of Teacher Educators
- GDOE**--Georgia Department of Education
- GAE**--Georgia Association of Educators
- GAEA**--Georgia Art Education Association
- GAEL**--Georgia Association of Educational Leaders
- GAESP**--Georgia Association of Elementary School Principals
- GAICTE**--Georgia Association of Independent Colleges of Teacher Education
- GAMEIS**--Georgia Association of Managers of Educational Information Systems
- GAMSP**--Georgia Association of Middle School Principals
- GaPIE**--Georgia Association of Partners in Education
- GAPTA**--Georgia Parent Teachers Association \*\*\*
- GASBO**--Georgia Association of School Business Officials
- GASCD**--Georgia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
- GASP**--Georgia Association of School Psychologists
- GASSP**--Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals
- GBST**--Georgia Basic Skills Test
- GCATT**--Georgia Center for Advanced Telecommunications Technology
- GCSTME**--Georgia Coalition for Science, Technology and Mathematics Education
- GCTM**--Georgia Council of Teachers of Mathematics
- GDPS**--Georgia Department of Public Safety
- GED**--General Education Development (Diploma)
- GEDT**--Georgia Department of Economic Development and Tourism
- GERA**--Georgia Educational Research Association
- GFIE**--Georgia Foundation for the Improvement of Education
- GHEA**--Georgia Home Education Association
- GHP**--Governor's Honors Program
- GHTSA**--Georgia High School Association
- GHSST**--Georgia High School Graduation Test
- GHSWT**--Georgia High School Writing Test
- GIMS**--Georgia Initiative in Math and Science
- GITEA** --Georgia Industrial Technology Education Association
- GLC**--Georgia Learning Connections
- GLISI**--Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement
- GLRS**--Georgia Learning Resources System
- GMEA**--Georgia Music Educators Association
- GMSA**--Georgia Middle School Association
- GPA**--Grade Point Average
- GPB**--Georgia Public Broadcasting
- GPEE**--Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education
- GPPF**--Georgia Public Policy Foundation
- GPS**--Georgia Performance Standards
- GREA**--Georgia Retired Educators Association \*\*\*
- GSA, Inc.** --Great Schools Atlanta, Inc.
- GSAMS**--Georgia Statewide Academic and Medical System (an obsolete system)
- GSBA**-- Georgia School Boards Association
- GSCA**-- Georgia School Counselors Association
- GSCI**--Georgia School Council Institute
- GSDC**--Georgia Staff Development Council
- GSEI**--Georgia Superintendent Evaluation Instrument
- GSFC**--Georgia Student Finance Commission
- GSFSA**--Georgia School Food Service Association
- GSP**--Georgia Scholars Program
- GSPRA**--Georgia School Public Relations Association
- GSSA**--Georgia School Superintendents Association
- GSSIS**--Georgia Statewide Student Information System
- GTAPP**--Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program
- GTEP**--Georgia Teachers Evaluation Program
- GTFC**--Georgia Teaching Force Center
- GVA**--Georgia Vocational Association
- GVS** – Georgia Virtual School \*\*\*
- GYSTC**--Georgia Youth Science and Technology Center
- H/H**--Hospital/Homebound
- HEA**--Higher Education Act
- HEIR**--Home Education Information Resource
- HOPE**--Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally scholarship funded with the state lottery
- HOUSSE**--Highly Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation
- IB**--International Baccalaureate

#### Glossary & Acronyms

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### Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education's Educational Acronyms and Education-ary

**IDEA**--Individuals with Disabilities Education Act  
**IE2** – Investing in Educational Excellence \*\*\*  
**IEP**--Individualized Education Plan  
**IGP** – Individual Graduation Plan \*\*\*  
**INTASC**--Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium  
**IQ**--Intelligence Quotient  
**ISS**--In-school Suspension  
**ITBS**--Iowa Test of Basic Skills  
**IU**--Instructional Unit  
**KIPP**--Knowledge is Power Program  
**LBOE**--Local Board of Education  
**LD**--Learning Disability  
**LEA**--Local Education Agency  
**LEP**--Limited English Proficient  
**LRE**--Least Restrictive Environment  
**LUA** – Local Unit of Administration (i.e. local school district) \*\*\*  
**MAPMIS**--Metro Area Plus Managers of Information Systems  
**MCR**--Modified Compliance Review  
**MGWA**--Middle Grades Writing Assessment  
**MIS**--Management Information System  
**MOD**--Modification  
**MoID**--Moderate Intellectual Disability  
**NAEP**--National Assessment of Educational Progress (National Report Card)  
**NAES**--National Alliance for Effective Schools  
**NAESP**-- National Association of Elementary School Principals  
**NASBE**--National Association of State Boards of Education  
**NASDC**--New American Schools Development Corporation  
**NASSP**--National Association of Secondary School Principals  
**NBC**--National Board Certification  
**NBCC**--National Board for Certified Counselors  
**NBCT**--National Board Certified Teachers  
**NBPTS**--National Board of Professional Teaching Standards  
**NCATE**--National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education  
**NCES**--National Center for Education Statistics  
**NCLB**--No Child Left Behind Act

**NCTQ**--National Council on Teacher Quality  
**NEA**--National Education Association  
**NGA**--National Governor's Association  
**NGSP**--Next Generation Schools Project  
**NHSA**--National Head Start Association  
**NICHD**--National Institute of Child Health and Human Development  
**NIH**--National Institutes of Health  
**NPTA**--National Parents and Teachers Association  
**NRT**--Norm-Referenced Test  
**NSBA**--National School Boards Association  
**NSBP**--National School Breakfast Program  
**NSCL** –National Council of State Legislatures \*\*\*  
**NSF**--National Science Foundation  
**NSLP**--National School Lunch Program  
**NSPRA**--National School Public Relations Association  
**O.C.G.A.**–Official Code of Georgia, Annotated  
**OERI**--Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education  
**OMB**--Office of Management and Budget, federal  
**OME**--Office of Migrant Education  
**OPB** – Office of Planning and Budget, Georgia \*\*\*\*  
**OSA**--Office of Student Achievement  
**OSEP**--Office of Special Education Programs  
**OSS**--Out-Of-School Suspension  
**PAGE**--Professional Association of Georgia Educators  
**PDP**--Professional Development Plan  
**PDK**--Phi Delta Kappa  
**PEC**--Program for Exceptional Children  
**PEN**--Public Education Network  
**PfP**--Pay for Performance  
**PEP**--Parents Educating Parents  
**PIRC** – Parental Information Resource Center\*\*\*  
**PLC**--Performance Learning Center  
**PLU**--Professional Learning Unit \*\*\*  
**PRISM**--Partnership for Reform in Science and Math for P-12 students, under the USG \*\*\*  
**PSAT**--Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test  
**PSC**--Professional Standards Commission  
**PSO**--Postsecondary Options Program  
**PTA**--Parent Teacher Association  
**PTO**--Parent Teacher Organization  
**PTSA**--Parent-Teacher-Student Association  
**QBE**--Quality Basic Education

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**QCC**--Quality Core Curriculum, replaced by GPS  
**RBOC**--Regional Educational Service Agency Board of Control  
**REP**-- Remedial Education Program  
**RESA**--Regional Educational Service Agency  
**RYDC**--Regional Youth Detention Center  
**S-T-W**--School to Work  
**SACS**--Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
**SAP**--State Advisory Professional Association  
**SAPA**--Student Assistance Professionals Association  
**SAT**—Scholastic Aptitude Test  
**SBD**--Severe Behavior Disorder  
**SBOE**--State Board of Education  
**S-CHIP** – State Children’s Health Insurance Program\*\*\*  
**SDU**--Staff Development Unit  
**SED**--Serious Emotional Disturbance  
**SEDL**--Southwest Educational Development Laboratory  
**SEF**--Southern Education Foundation  
**SERVE**--Southeastern Regional Vision for Education  
**SLEP**--Secondary Level English Proficiency Test  
**SLP**--School Lunch Program  
**SPLOST** – Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax\*\*\*  
**SREB**--Southern Regional Education Board  
**SRC**--Southern Regional Council  
**SRO**--School Resource Officer  
**SSS**--Student Support Service  
**SST**--Student Support Team  
**SSW**--School Social Worker  
**STAR**--Student Teacher Achievement Recognition  
**STEPS**--Systemic Transition to Education in Public Schools  
**SWD**--Students with Disabilities  
**SYDC**--State Youth Development Campus  
**TAADRA**--Teenaged and Adult Driver Responsibility Act which has requirements for scholastic attendance\*\*\*  
**TANF** – Temporary Assistance to Needy Families\*\*\*  
**TAP**--Test of Achievement and Proficiency  
**(GA) TAPP**--Teacher Alternative Preparation Program  
**TAS**--Targeted Assistance School  
**TCSG**— Technical College System of Georgia \*\*\*  
**TCT**--Teacher Certification Test  
**TESOL**--Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages  
**TFA**--Teach for America  
**TIMSS**--Third International Math and Science Study

**TOEFL**--Test of English as a Foreign Language  
**TOTY**--Teacher of the Year  
**TRS (GA)**--Teachers Retirement System (of Georgia)  
**TSS**--Teacher Support Specialist  
**USCO**--Unsafe School Choice Option  
**USED**—US Department of Education \*\*\*\*  
**USG**--University System of Georgia which oversees 35 public colleges and universities \*\*\*  
**VECC**--Vocational Education Curriculum Center

### Education Dictionary

#### A

**A Plus Education Reform Act of 2000 (H.B. 1187):** Education legislation drafted by Governor Roy Barnes that took effect in April 2000. The law lowered class sizes, developed an accountability framework with state criterion-referenced tests as the measurement system, created school councils and implemented early intervention programs.

**Ability Grouping:** A way to organize students of like abilities that allows them to remain together for a short period of time – part of the school day, a few days or a few weeks.

**Academic Coach:** A teacher with a Master Teacher Certification who coaches other teachers on delivering the curriculum. Academic coaches are specific to curriculum strands. \*\*\*

**Acceleration:** To enable a student to complete a course in less than usual time; to hasten progress or development.

**Accountability:** Efforts to hold schools, districts, educators, students and/or parents responsible for achievement test results.

**Accreditation:** The process by which an organization sanctions teacher-education programs.

**Achievement Gap:** The gap in tested skills between students of different ethnicities and/or from low socioeconomic classes and their majority/privileged/higher-class peers.

**Achievement Test:** Standardized test that measures a student’s knowledge in specific academic areas such as reading, language, mathematics, social studies and science.

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### Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education's Educational Acronyms and Education-ary

**Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP):** An annual measure of student participation and achievement of statewide assessments and other academic indicators.

**Adequacy:** Sufficient funds for schools to teach all – or at least all, but the most severely disabled – students to state and district proficiency standards.

**Advanced Placement (AP) Exams:** Tests administered by the College Board in various subjects such as European history, calculus and foreign language. High school students take these exams to receive college credit.

**After School Programs:** Programs established by schools and community organizations to provide safe places and constructive activities to students whose parents cannot be at home after school. Research has linked after school programs to reductions in school discipline problems, teen pregnancy, drug use, violence and drop-out rates.

**Alternative School:** A specialized school created for students who function better in a different environment than a regular classroom. Alternative schools range from institutions geared towards students with behavioral problems to magnet schools created for a special group of talented or interested students to study a limited curriculum.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** Federal law passed in 1990 that prohibits the discrimination against any disabled individual. Applies to both employment and educational services.

**At-Risk Student:** A child with factors that may negatively influence his/her achievement including poverty, disabilities, limited-English proficiency, and/or abusive or dysfunctional home environments.

**Authentic Assessment:** A type of student evaluation that requires a student to perform a task rather than select an answer from a ready-made list (i.e. doing a science project or writing a paper). (See Performance Assessment)

## B

**Balanced Calendar:** Modified calendar that includes several breaks during the semester. Students spend the same number of days in class as those on traditional calendars, but breaks are more frequent. Intersessions

are shorter than those in year-round schools. (See Intersessions)

**Below Grade Level:** Any student performing below the achievement level on a standardized test for his/her grade level. Below grade level students are eligible for early intervention programs or remediation.

**Benchmarks:** Examples of performances that serve as standards against which students' achievement is scored.

**Block Scheduling:** Reconfiguring the school day by increasing the length of the traditional class period and decreasing the number of class periods a day. For example, a 4x4 schedule allows students to take four 90-minute classes a day and complete them in a semester rather than a full year. Blocked courses allow students more time for laboratory or project-centered work, field trips and special assemblies or speakers.

**Blue Ribbon Schools Program:** A national program established by the U.S. Department of Education in 1982 to honor outstanding public and private schools across the country and share information on the best practices among schools.

**Business/Education Partnerships:** School-reform coalitions formed by private businesses and schools or districts. Partnerships range from individual school partnerships to systemic school reform efforts.

## C

**Carnegie Unit:** One unit of credit awarded in grades 9 through 12 for a minimum of 150 hours of instruction during the regular school year or 120 hours of instruction during summer school.

**Certificate of Performance:** Certificate for students who do not pass the Georgia High School Graduation Test, but meet all other graduation requirements. Students who leave school with a certificate of performance may take the graduation test again as many times as necessary to qualify for a high school diploma.

**Charter School:** A school which has a contract with the local and state Boards of Education to improve student achievement by having greater flexibility in designing programs to improve student learning and in meeting local, state and national education goals. Charter schools are exempt from most state and local rules, policies and regulations, but they must be approved by local and state boards of education.



### Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education's Educational Acronyms and Education-ary

**Class Rank:** The relative position of a student in his or her graduating class, determined by Grade Point Average (GPA) as computed by the LBOE.

**College Board:** Nonprofit organization that administers the SAT and AP programs.

**Communities in Schools (CIS):** A community-based organization that helps children succeed in school and prepare for life. Through partnerships with schools, public officials, businesses, parents and the community, the organization provides numerous services to prevent children from dropping out of school.

**Community College:** Public two-year institution supported by the local community. Community colleges generally offer two types of curricula: transfer – the first two years of work for a bachelor's degree – and terminal – vocational training for employment.

**Comprehensive School Health Program:** An organized set of policies, procedures and activities designed to protect and promote the health and well-being of students and staff which has traditionally included health services, health education and an emphasis on a healthy school environment.

**Confidence Interval:** The range within which a student's true score is likely to fall. Confidence intervals provide more accurate estimates of student performance than raw test scores.

**Cooperative Learning:** An instructional method in which students of all performance levels work together in small groups toward a group goal.

**Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT):** Tests administered to Georgia students to evaluate students' acquisition of skills and knowledge described in Georgia's Quality Core Curriculum (QCC). In grades one through eight, tests are given in reading, math and language arts. In grades three through eight, tests are also given in science and social studies. Reading and math test scores are used in considering the promotion of students in grades three, five and eight. This began in the 2003-2004 school year. CRCT scores produce information on students, classrooms, schools, systems and state achievement in education.

**Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRT):** Tests that compare a student's performance to a specific standard of acceptable performance instead of the performance of other students.

**Critical Thinking:** Mental process of acquiring information and evaluating it to reach a logical conclusion.

**Cultural Diversity:** Recognizing that students come from a variety of ethnic, geographic, economic and religious backgrounds.

**Curriculum:** The content of an instructional program.

**Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA):** Tests developed by the Georgia Department of Education to measure student achievement on a broad range of the state's Quality Core Curriculum (QCC). The Georgia High School Graduation Test is a CBA.

#### D

**Data-Driven School Improvement:** The use of achievement test scores and data to develop strategies for school improvement. Teachers and administrators constantly monitor scores on achievement tests and other assessments to measure students' progress.

**Decentralization:** Transfer of school policymaking and decision-making authority from federal to state level, from state level to districts or local schools, or from LBOEs to individual schools.

**Developmentally Appropriate Practice:** Any activity involving young children (birth to age 8) that is based on knowledge of the stages of child development, understanding that each child is unique and each child's experiences should match his or her developing abilities.

**Diagnostic Test:** Intensive, in-depth evaluation of a student's skills in a specific area. Diagnostic tests are used to determine the specific learning needs of individual students.

**Disaggregated Data:** Data that is broken down by subgroups of students. For instance, rather than simply reporting the percentage of students who passed the test, the disaggregated data might include the percentage who passed the test by gender, race, age, and language proficiency.

**Distance Learning:** Delivery of instruction via multimedia computers, satellite or teleconferencing when the teacher is in one place and the students in another.

**Drop-out Rate:** A calculation determined by student records of those who leave school between grades 7 – 12 and 9 – 12.



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**Drug-Free School Zones:** Drug-free areas around schools created by the U.S. Congress and state legislatures in the 1980s. People convicted of possession or use of illegal drugs in these areas are subject to increased legal penalties.

#### E

**E-Learning:** Use of technology, especially computers, to enhance education and learning. This technique is commonly associated with distance-learning.

**E-Rate:** Reduced rate for Internet access in public schools and libraries under the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Eligibility is based on a school's percentage of free and reduced lunch students (poverty status). This is an effort to close the technology gap between wealthy, suburban and urban and rural schools with fewer resources.

**Early Intervention Programs (EIP):** Programs provided from kindergarten through the fifth grade. These programs provide specialized instruction in smaller classes to students who are performing below grade level.

**Education for Handicapped Children Act (EHA):** Law passed in 1975 that states that special needs children have the right to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Revised in 1990 to become the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA):** Federal law passed in 1965 that focuses on children from high-poverty communities and students at risk of education failure. The Act authorizes Title I, Safe and Drug Free Schools and Title VII programs and was renamed No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002.

**Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD):** Disorders characterized by consistently aggressive, impulsive or withdrawn behavior (i.e. schizophrenia). EBDs impair personal, social, academic and vocational skills.

**End-of-Course Tests (EOCT):** Assessments for high school students in core subjects to be determined by the Georgia Board of Education. The tests will measure students' acquisition of skills and knowledge described in the Georgia Quality Core Curriculum.

**English Immersion:** Instruction for bilingual students that is entirely in English. Teachers deliver lessons in

simplified English, so students can learn English and other academic subjects.

**English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL):** \*\*\* Most commonly includes immersion as well as support to individuals in their native languages. Classes are typically composed of students who speak many different languages, but are not fluent in English. They may attend classes for only a portion of every day to work strictly on English skills or attend for a full day and learn both academics and English.

**Enrichment:** Programs intended to supplement the regular academic curriculum to keep students interested in learning.

**Equalization Grants:** State funding to provide additional assistance to poorer school districts. Equalization funding aims to reduce the disparities as to how much can be raised through local tax dollars between the wealthiest and poorest school districts in the state.

**Equity:** Equal distribution of funding, technology, facilities, services and equal education opportunities to different schools and groups of students.

**Exceptional Learners:** Students with an IQ in the bottom (mentally challenged) or top (gifted) three percent of the population or who have other physical or mental differences that affect learning. All exceptional learners receive special education.

#### F

**Family Connection:** A partnership among Georgia communities and three state agencies – Department of Education, Department of Human Resources, Department of Medical Assistance – that focuses on children and families at risk.

**Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility:** Any child at a participating school may purchase a meal under the National School Lunch Act of 1946. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Those with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals, for which students can be charged no more than 40 cents. (For the period July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2009, 130 percent of the poverty level is \$27,560 for a family of four; 185 percent is



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\$39,220. (quoted from <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/notices/iegs/IEGs08-09.pdf>).

**Full-Time Equivalent (FTE):** The method of allocating state funds to local school systems. Systems are reimbursed according to a weighted formula that funds the program according to the cost necessary to provide the program.

#### G

**Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT):** Passage required by high school students to receive a high school diploma. Covers content in mathematics, language arts, science and social studies. Performance levels are reported at the pass and pass plus levels. A score of 500 is needed to pass each section of the Graduation Test. The pass plus scale scores are 538 or greater for English language arts and 535 or greater for math.

**Georgia High School Writing Test (GHS WT):** Administered to all 11th grade students. Students are asked to produce a response to a persuasive writing prompt.

**Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program-Revised (GKAP-R):** A test administered to kindergarten students in Georgia to determine whether they are ready for first grade. Students are evaluated in the areas of literacy, mathematics and social/emotional development through one-on-one, small group and large group instructional settings throughout the year.

**Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (GPEE):** Founded in 1990 by the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia Economic Developers Association, the Partnership consists of business, education, community and government leaders who share a vision of improved education. Working to be Georgia's foremost change agent in education, the non-profit, non-partisan organization takes lead roles in efforts to shape policy and reform education. The mission of the Partnership is to improve the academic achievement of Georgia students through research, advocacy and communication.

**Georgia Performance Standards (GPS):** A set of academic standards that designate what students should know and be able to do by the end of a given grade level. GPS were written to allow access for all students while

allowing for differentiation of instruction for all students.\*\*\*

**Georgia Schools of Excellence Program:** Statewide program that works in conjunction with the Blue Ribbon Schools Program. The program recognizes outstanding Georgia public and private schools and nominates them for the national program.

**Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (GTAPP):** College coursework and supervised hands-on experience for individuals who hold college degrees and wish to teach in grades K-12, but who have not completed a traditional teacher preparation program.

**Gifted:** A term used to describe a student who demonstrates a high level of ability and who needs special instructional services to achieve at a level equal to his/her ability. Gifted students have IQ scores in the top three percent of the population.

**Grade Inflation:** Grading in which teachers give students higher grades than earned resulting in the perception of many high-achieving students.

#### H

**Head Start:** Head Start and Early Head Start are comprehensive child development programs that serve children from birth to age 5, pregnant women, and their families. They are child-focused programs and have the overall goal of increasing the school readiness of young children in low-income families.

**Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE):** Georgia's unique scholarship program that rewards students with financial assistance in degree, diploma, and certificate programs at eligible Georgia public and private colleges and universities, and public technical colleges. Since the HOPE Program began in 1993, more than \$3.61 billion in HOPE funds from the Georgia Lottery has been awarded to more than 1 million students attending Georgia's colleges, universities, and technical colleges. (Georgia Lottery)

**Heterogeneous Grouping:** Students of varying ability levels are placed in the same learning environment. There is some evidence that the peer learning effects created by this mixed-ability grouping largely influence student achievement.

**High Stakes Testing:** Making a decision based on a single evaluation or test. For example, a



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third grade student cannot be promoted to fourth grade unless he or she passes the CRCT Reading Test. For schools and systems, student performance on one test may determine whether staff will receive salary or funding increases, interventions or sanctions.

**Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS):** The thought processes beyond acquiring and understanding facts; they include using facts, taking ideas apart, creating new ideas and evaluating them.

**Highly Qualified Teacher:** A teacher is considered Highly Qualified when he or she meets the requirements of (1) obtaining an academic minimum of a bachelor's degree, (2) obtaining a full state certification or licensure, and (3) formally demonstrates a high level of competency in the subject taught.

**Home Schooling:** An alternative education form in which parents/guardians bypass the public school system and teach their children at home. One key idea is that curriculum can be customized by parents. Parents must have at least a high school diploma to be eligible.

**Homogeneous Grouping:** A way to organize students with similar ability levels in the same class.

**HOUSSE (Highly Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation):** A rubric format that is used by experienced teachers to demonstrate that they meet the highly qualified provisions of NCLB. Teachers must demonstrate their mastery of content knowledge via documented improvements in student achievement in the specific content area, via professional development, and other state-defined criteria.

#### I

**In Loco Parentis:** "In the place of a parent." Legal requirement that a teacher act towards a pupil as a parent could be expected to act. Teachers and schools can be held legally liable for anything that happens to children at school.

**In-Service Workshop:** Workshops attended by teachers on various topics pertaining to education. This is a form of staff development.

**Inclusion:** Term used when special education or ESOL students receive educational services in a general education classroom setting. The students are included in the regular education program rather than being served in individual education classes.

**Independent School:** A private school that is not part of a school system and is funded by tuition and private grants. It must hold a nonprofit status and be accredited by a state or regional education association.

**Individualized Education Plan (IEP):** A specific education plan developed by teachers and parents to address the unique learning needs of an eligible student as defined by state and federal regulations.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** A law passed in 1990 that requires public schools to provide a free and appropriate public education to disabled school-aged children ages three through 21.

**Intelligence Quotient (IQ) Tests:** Tests that measure a person's mental capacity. IQ tests are highly controversial because critics claim the tests only measure a narrow band of intellectual strengths and are biased against minorities. The IQs of about 95 percent of the population are between 70 and 130. Below 70 is considered retarded and above 130 is considered gifted.

**Intersessions:** The breaks between sessions in year-round (alternative calendar) schools. Intersessions provide time for remediation and enrichment and allow students who fall behind to get additional instruction.

**Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS):** Test used to fulfill Georgia law mandating that a nationally norm-referenced test be administered annually to students in grades 3, 5, and 8. This test allows for a national comparison as students across the country use this assessment.

#### L

**Learning Disability (LD):** A term used in special education to describe a disorder in one of the basic psychological processes. These students may have difficulty in listening, thinking, speaking, writing, spelling or doing mathematical calculations.

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** A federal procedural safeguard that requires children with disabilities to be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with students who are not disabled.

**Limited-English-Proficient (LEP) or Limited Language Proficiency (LLP) Students:** Students whose first language is other than English and who have not yet mastered English.



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#### M

**Magnet School:** A school with strong emphasis in a particular subject area (i.e. music, science, drama, math). Students may be selected through an application process instead of being assigned based on residence.

**Mainstreaming:** Moving a special education student from a special environment into the regular school environment.

**Master Teachers:** Experienced teachers who mentor new teachers, or teachers who are having difficulties in the classroom, to help them become more effective.

**Master Teacher Certification:** Master Teacher certification will recognize teachers of distinction. Only those teachers demonstrating a standard of advanced proficiency in their subject area with documented evidence of student academic achievement will be able to earn the *Master Teacher* credential. (American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence)

**Media Center:** School library and technology resource center.

**Medium-Stakes Testing:** Tests with some consequences attached to them, however not as severe as high-stakes tests. The EOCT is an example of medium-stakes tests in Georgia.

**Mentally Challenged:** Students with an IQ in the bottom three percent of the population.

**Merit Pay:** When salary compensation, all or part, is directly related to the displayed competence of the educator; i.e. achieving elements of a predefined performance plan, which may include the achievement of students taught. \*\*\*

**Middle Grades Writing Assessment (MGWA):** Test administered in eighth grade that consists of an evaluation of the student's response to an assigned narrative, persuasive or expository prompt.

**Migrant Education:** Education programs established to meet the needs of children of farm laborers, who often move from school to school.

**Mildly Mentally Handicapped (MiMH) and Moderately Mentally Handicapped (MoMH):** Terms used in special education to describe students who have below average learning abilities.

**Multicultural Education:** Inclusion on the curriculum of the contributions of many ethnic, geographic, economic and religious cultures. (See Cultural Diversity)

#### N

**National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP):** Often referred to as the National Report Card. National testing program administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Reading and mathematics tests are given to fourth, eighth, and twelfth grade students nationwide. NAEP reports student performance as average scale scores and by achievement level. Average scale scores reflect the performance of test takers both as a whole and in groups (i.e. by gender, race, etc.). NAEP has three achievement levels: basic (partial mastery), proficient (solid academic performance) and advanced (superior academic performance).

**National Board Certification (NBC):** Rigorous program for classroom teachers administered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards that includes performance-based assessments and peer review. The state and some local school systems reward National Board Certified teachers with additional pay. NBC takes approximately a year to complete and is the top national certification for educators.

**National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS):** A nonprofit organization created in 1987 to advance education reform and establish high standards for teachers. NBPTS administers the National Board Certification program to assess and certify teachers in accordance with these standards.

**Next Generation School Project (NGSP):** An initiative of the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education. It is a grassroots effort that encourages local communities to organize themselves to dramatically improve their local schools. For 10 years, schools receive annual grants to give them necessary resources for innovations. In 2002, schools began to receive grants to change the school calendar from the traditional 180 days to a more balanced calendar that features strong intersessions for remediation and enrichment activities.

**No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act:** Law passed in 2001 that emphasizes increased accountability for states, school systems and schools and creates greater choice for parents and students, particularly those attending low-performing schools. The law gives more flexibility for states and local education agencies in



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the use of federal education dollars, and a stronger emphasis on reading. The law requires all states to implement statewide accountability systems, and allows students attending persistently failing schools to use Title I funds for supplementary education services.

**Norm-Referenced Tests (NRT):** Tests that measure students' performance compared to a large, representative group of students nationwide. These tests are not aligned with Georgia's curriculum, but help to determine how the state's curriculum compares with national standards.

#### O

**Office of Student Achievement (OSA):** Formerly known as the Office of Education Accountability (OEA), was established to improve student achievement and school completion in Georgia. The OSA will produce annual accountability report cards for K-12 public schools and post-secondary education institutions.

**On-Site Facilitator:** A person from a school or district that is trained in a specific instructional model. The facilitator mentors teachers in using the model.

**Out-of-Field Teaching:** Practice through which teachers are assigned to teach subjects that do not match their training or education usually to hard-to-staff subjects and/or schools. There are potential implications of the use of unqualified including NCLB stipulations.

#### P

**Parochial School:** A school that is associated with a church or other religious institution and not supported with public funds.

**Pay for Performance (PFP):** A plan to pay teachers on the basis of their demonstrated competence in teaching and success in raising student achievement rather than seniority. (Georgia Law 20-2-213.1)

**Per-pupil Expenditures:** Money spent on each student in a given school district. Because public schools are financed in part by local property taxes, there is a disparity in per-pupil expenditures across the state.

**Performance Indicators:** Specific, well-defined skills that are linked to student achievement.

**Postsecondary Options Program (PSO):** A program between public schools and public institutions of higher learning. The student enrolls in classes and earns

Carnegie units of credit that count towards high school graduation requirements and credit hours at the college or technical school.

**Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT):** PSAT/NMSQT stands for Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. It's a standardized test that provides firsthand practice for the SAT Reasoning Test™. It also gives you a chance to enter National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) scholarship programs ([www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)). Since 1997, state funds have paid for PSAT administration to all tenth grade students in Georgia's public schools.

**Praxis I:** Academic skills assessment that tests knowledge in reading, math and writing. The Praxis I is required for initial teacher certification in Georgia and administered by ETS.

**Praxis II:** Subject assessment tests that are required for teacher certification in Georgia. Praxis II tests measure knowledge in particular content areas. There are Subject Assessments, Principles of Learning and Teaching (PLT) Tests and Teaching Foundations Tests.

**Professional Learning (Professional Development):** \*\*\* A whole range of activities aimed at improving teaching by providing teachers with necessary skills training and information. Professional development activities range from formal courses and seminars to teacher mentoring and collaboration.

**Professional Standards Commission:** The agency responsible for certifying teachers, school personnel and administrators in Georgia.

**Psycho-Educational Programs:** Programs located on regular education campuses or in special centers, which provide services to students with severe emotional and behavior disorders or autism.

#### Q

**Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act:** The legal foundation for education in Georgia passed into law in 1986 with the goal of improving education. It provides the framework for such things as funding, educational programs, and student and teacher assessments.

**Quality Core Curriculum (QCC):** Georgia's mandated minimum guidelines for the curriculum. Objectives are given at each grade level and must be taught. Local systems can add to QCC,



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but they cannot teach less than is mandated.

#### R

**Reconstitution:** Process through which the state oversees a low performing school (school receiving Needs Improvement designation on a school report card for two or more consecutive years) and directs the duties of the school principal until school performance improves.

**Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs):** The primary provider of professional learning in Georgia. Georgia's 16 RESAs provide leadership development, strategic planning, school improvement planning and other services to teachers and local schools.

**Remedial Program:** An instructional program designed for students in grades 9-12 who have identified deficiencies in reading, writing, and math. This program provides individualized basic skills instruction as mandated by Georgia law in the areas of reading, mathematics, and writing. All REP teachers must meet certification requirements as defined by the Professional Standards Commission and be fully qualified to teach reading, writing, or mathematics (gadoe.org).

**Restructuring:** Major changes in the rules, roles and relationships in education created by NCLB. Schools that fail to make AYP for two, three and four years in a row are required to develop improvement plans, offer school choice, and provide supplemental educational services

(<http://www.nwrel.org/planning/reports/ayptitle1/>).

**Retention:** Policy that holds back students with failing grades at the end of a school year.

#### S

**SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test):** Standardized test taken by college-bound students to gain admission to college. The SAT tests students' verbal and mathematical reasoning ability and has a writing component. \*\*\*

**SAT II:** Subject Tests: Tests that measure knowledge in high school subject areas such as biology, calculus and American History. The SAT IIs are required at many highly competitive colleges and universities.

**School Board:** Legislative body of locally-elected citizens who administer their local school system. \*\*\*

**School Choice:** Allows parents to enroll their children in the school of their choice including charter schools, private school, and/or open enrollment plans.

**School Council:** A local school advisory body comprised of the school principal, teachers, parents or guardians and members of the business community. School councils provide advice and recommendations to the principal and the local board of education regarding a variety of issues, including student achievement goals, curriculum and instruction, school and community communications and local school board policies. The A+ Education Reform Act requires every school to have a school council. \*\*\*

**School Improvement Teams:** Teams of master educators that will be assigned by the Department of Education to help diagnose problems in low performing schools as identified by the Office of Education Accountability. Their responsibilities will include reviewing procedures and curriculum, observing staff and assisting in the development of school improvement plans.

**School Readiness:** Being physically, emotionally, socially and academically prepared to learn.

**School Resource Officer (SRO):** A law enforcement officer placed in a school who serves as a resource for students, parents, teachers and administrators regarding legal issues. The SRO investigates crimes that occur on school property, acts as a positive role model to students and serves as a link to other agencies that provide preventive and counseling services.

**School Service Centers:** Coordinated, comprehensive, unduplicated services to school systems by the Georgia Department of Education, its field offices, Regional Education Services Agencies (RESAs) and neighboring colleges and universities.

**School-to-Work:** Programs ranging from on-the-job training to classes taught by local community colleges designed to prepare non-college bound students to enter the job market.

**School Within a School:** A special program, charter school or magnet school that is housed within a regular school. Schools within schools allow districts to experiment with innovative programs and teaching methods using existing facilities.



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**Seamlessness:** The philosophy of developing one integrated education system from kindergarten through the workforce. The concept fosters communication and cooperation between local school districts, higher education institutions and the workforce. Seamlessness supports the concept of lifelong learning and encourages the building of bridges so students transition smoothly into the different phases of their education.

**Section 504:** Federal law that prohibits discrimination against disabled students.

**Self-Esteem:** Term denoting a widely accepted psychological aim of education. High self-esteem and a positive sense of one's self translate into higher achievement, greater happiness and more civility to others. Educators debate how much effort should be put into positively reinforcing self-esteem, but there is strong evidence that reinforcement improves student performance.

**Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED):** Term used in special education that refers to students whose emotions interfere with their classroom performance. Students with SEDs may have an inability to build and maintain satisfactory relationships with peers or teachers, a general mood of unhappiness and a tendency to develop fears associated with school and personal problems.

**Severe Behavior Disorder (SBD):** Term used in special education that refers to students who display behaviors that seriously interfere with the learning environment and the individual's ability to benefit from it. These behaviors are demonstrated over a long period of time and significantly extend beyond the norm of acceptable classroom behavior.

**Site-Based Decision Making:** A method of operating a school system in which many decisions traditionally made at the system or state level are made at the school level.

**Smart Start Georgia:** Formerly the Georgia Early Learning Initiative (GELI), Smart Start is a public/private partnership that works to improve the quality of early care and education for all children ages birth through five.

**Social Promotion:** Practice of allowing students who have failed to meet performance standards and academic requirements to pass on to the next grade with their peers instead of completing or satisfying the

requirements. Social promotion has ended in Georgia for Grades 3, 5, and 8. \*\*\*

**Special Education:** Special instruction for mentally challenged or gifted students.

**Special Needs:** A student who has disabilities or is at the risk of developing disabilities that may require special education services.

**Staff Development:** See "Professional Learning."

**Standards:** Requirements in state law or SBOE rule under which Georgia schools operate.

**Standards-Based Instruction:** Instruction that is specifically geared towards meeting standards. All student work is assessed against the standards.

**Standardized Test:** A test taken by many students under identical conditions in which the results are compared statistically to standard norms.

**State Report Card:** Report produced by the Office of Student Achievement for each school in Georgia. School performance is compared to previous school and local school system performance, absolute student achievement standards and comparable school group performance.

**State Superintendent of Schools:** An elected position that oversees Georgia's K-12 public schools and serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Georgia Department of Education.

**Student Support Team (SST):** A group of educators at a school who meet to discuss academic and behavior problems of specific students. The Student Support Team makes suggestions to the classroom teacher of ways to help the child improve. The team may also recommend that the child be referred to other programs for special assistance.

**Support Services:** Assistance that includes transportation, childcare, home visits, translators, and referrals to other agencies. Support services are based on the premise that students' families need support, which will enhance the students' education.

#### T

**Teacher Evaluations:** Methods of assessing teachers' success in improving student achievement. Evaluations may include portfolios, observation and data and other evidence of student achievement.



### Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education's Educational Acronyms and Education-ary

**Teacher Licensure:** The process by which teachers receive state permission to teach. In Georgia, the Professional Standards Commission oversees teacher licensure and establishes minimum requirements for certification.

**Technical Education:** Instruction that prepares a student for employment immediately upon the completion of high school. Such programs range from carpentry to computer-aided design and cosmetology to medical technician programs.

**Title I:** A federally funded program for K-12 at-risk students that provides additional help on the basic skills. Title I is the largest federal aid program for elementary and secondary schools. The program provides money to school systems based on the number of low-income families in each district. There are school-wide programs in which at least 40 percent of students must come from low-income families or targeted assistance schools that receive services through funds given to local education agencies.

**Title II:** A federally funded program that provides assistance to state and local educational agencies and institutions of higher education with teacher education programs. Title II funds programs to improve teaching and learning, reform teacher preparation and certification standards and to develop better performance based assessment and professional development strategies.

**Title VI:** Part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance, including schools. Title VI prohibits the denial of equal access to education to students with limited proficiency in English.

**Title VII:** A federal program designed to improve the English proficiency of bilingual students.

**Title IX:** Law barring gender discrimination in education facilities that receive federal funds. Most Title IX cases filed against K-12 schools involve sex equity in athletic programs.

**Total Quality Management:** A concept for managing schools, adopted from the business world, which focuses on client satisfaction and encouraging employees to seek continual improvement.

**Training of Trainers:** A design for training a school in a new instructional method where one or more people are sent to special training and then provide training to the whole school.

**Tracking:** The practice of dividing students into class size groups, which exist for the major part of the school day or year, based on the student's perceived ability or prior achievement and then designing and delivering instruction to each group.

**Transition Plan:** Plan separate from the IEP that documents goals for a special education student to aid him or her in making the transition from school to work.

#### U

**Unsafe School Choice Option (USCO):** Ensuring that all of Georgia's schools are safe Under No Child Left Behind, states must develop a definition of "persistently dangerous" schools and allow public school choice for students who have been victims of a violent criminal offense or who attend a school that meets the definition (gadoe.org).

#### V

**Virtual School:** Classes offered to students using the internet for delivery. \*\*\*

**Voucher:** A state allocation of money given to parents to allow their children to attend a school of the parent's choice, either public or private. Georgia currently allows vouchers only for special education students who have spent at least one year in a public school. \*\*\*

#### Y

**Year-Round Schools:** Schools with alternative calendars. Students spend the same number of days in class as those on traditional calendars, but breaks are shorter and more frequent. A common alternative calendar has 45 days of instruction followed by 15 days of vacation and six-week summer vacations.

#### Z

**Zero Tolerance:** Policies that mandate predetermined consequences or punishments for a specific offense regardless of the circumstances surrounding it.



### **PARLIAMENTARY TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**Amendment** – A proposal to change or an actual change to a bill, a motion, or the Constitution.

**Engrossment** – If two-thirds of those voting agree, a bill is engrossed, which prohibits any amendments during committee or floor consideration.

**Main Question** – In the House and Senate, a call for the main question is a motion to vote on final passage of the bill or resolution as amended.

**Modified Structured Bill** – A designation in the House which allows amendments which have been pre-approved by the Rules Committee to be considered during floor debate.

**Motion** – A proposal made by a legislator to the presiding officer that some action or procedure requiring approval of the membership of that house or committee take place. In floor debate, most motions do not require a second. In committee meetings, a second is required.

**Parliamentary Inquiry** – A question addressed to the presiding officer of the house by a legislator regarding the immediate legislative procedure before that body. In the General Assembly, the most common use of the device is to continue debate on a bill after the previous question has been called. This is done by a member declaring “parliamentary inquiry” to the chair and then asking a substantive or conjectural question about the merits of the bill rather than a true point of parliamentary procedure. Though such inquiry could be declared out of order, the presiding officer customarily responds that the inquiry involves a matter that addresses itself to each member.

**Previous Question** – A motion used during consideration of a bill or other matter, which if

approved by a majority of a quorum, has the effect of cutting off debate and moving on to a vote on the main question.

**Recommitment** – A motion to reassign a bill, which has been in one committee to the same or different committee. A motion to recommit may be proposed when a particular standing committee refuses to report out a bill or when issues arise in debate that indicate it is not ready for a vote or when a bill has been assigned to an inappropriate committee.

**Reconsideration** – A motion that can be proposed after a bill has passed or been defeated in a floor vote, which if sustained by a majority allows the house to reconsider its action and vote again on the bill at a subsequent time or when a bill is initially assigned to a committee which realizes another committee has more expertise to deal with the subject matter.

**Structured Bill** – A designation in the House by the Rules Committee which prohibits amendments to the bill during floor consideration.

**Table a Bill** – A motion – technically to “lay on the table” – which, if passed removes a bill from further committee or floor consideration until another motion to remove it from the table passes. A bill may also be tabled until a date or time certain when it can be considered again without a motion.

Source:

[www.cviog.uga.edu/Projects/gainfo/legchart/legterms.htm](http://www.cviog.uga.edu/Projects/gainfo/legchart/legterms.htm)



### **NATIONAL PTA [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)**

Every PTA member is an advocate. A responsive and effective advocate needs supportive information and current data about what is happening on Capitol Hill. Successful advocates continually learn, update, and then educate others about the issues that affect their families, children, schools, and communities. This website is that extensive resource to assist advocates to do their work.

For legislative information and resources pull down the **Take Action** tab on the main menu. This takes you to the **PTA Takes Action Center**. The first thing you should do is to sign-up to join the **PTA Takes Action Network**. By signing up to the network you will receive:

- **Monthly Federal Policy Updates:** these are PTA's federal legislative e-newsletters.
- **Action Alerts** are breaking news items from Capitol Hill that alert and urge advocates to take action with their congressional representative and senators concerning bills and policies.

The **PTA Takes Action Center** is a rich source of legislative information. This includes the:

- **Online Advocacy Toolkit:** This site includes educational information about the appropriations & budget process; points on how to work with the media; how a bill becomes a law; how to correspond & conduct a visit with congress.
- **2009 National PTA Federal Public Policy Agenda:** This is a (20) page printable manual that focuses on PTA's (3) key priorities: Parent Engagement in Education, Equity & Opportunity for all Children, and Child Health & Nutrition.
- **Federal Policy Updates & Action Alerts:** Current and historical articles are accessible.
- **Policy Issue Briefs & Resolutions:** Access and share information about Promoting Family Engagement; Model Partnerships with Parent

Information Resource Centers (PRIC); Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act; Child Nutrition Act; Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA); Family Engagement in Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA-NCLB).

- **PTA Policy Issue Cards:** Download and share this valuable tool highlighting key messages and positions on bills and issues such as education, NCLB funding, and child wellness and nutrition.

### **National PTA Public Policy Team**

The National PTA Public Policy Team, located and working for us in Washington D.C., can be reached at (202) 289-6790. Individual extensions and titles are listed below:

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### **GEORGIA PTA [www.georgiapta.org](http://www.georgiapta.org)**

Located on the Georgia PTA website, **Capitol Watch** is the comprehensive site for Georgia 'Under the Gold Dome' state legislative information. This site includes articles of interest to our association, bills and legislative issues, and PTA's analysis of each. It contains the *Daily Report from the Capitol*, written by Sally FitzGerald, Georgia PTA's Education Policy Specialist; information on state elected officials; and a system allowing you to communicate directly with officials via phone & e-mail.



Advocates need to register as a 'Grassroots' member to receive timely Georgia PTA legislative e-newsletters and **Action Alerts**. Your informed and educated voice must be heard when Georgia PTA asks for advocacy action.

To access **Capitol Watch Legislative & Policy Updates**, click on the American flag on the left panel of the [www.georgiapta.org](http://www.georgiapta.org) site. Bookmark this site.

### **Georgia PTA Advocacy Guide 2009-2010**

This extensive informative educational guide can be accessed through the website. This resource is distributed at the annual **Advocacy Conference** held each September at the state Capitol. It contains information about what an informed and active advocate needs to know. It also contains the legislative chair's responsibilities and Georgia PTA's resolution and position statements.