

By BRAD BRYANT
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November is Parent Engagement Month in Georgia. This is a time for all parents to consider how they can get more involved in their children's education from Pre-K to 12th grade. Today, though, is National Parent Involvement Day (November 18), which is a special day set aside each year to say an extra-special thank you to parents.

When it comes to parent involvement, the research is clear that when schools, families, and communities support each other, students of all backgrounds and ability levels achieve at highest levels.

As the father of two adult children that attended Georgia's public schools, I remember how difficult it can be to get plugged into your child's education. Life is demanding and there is almost never enough time to get everything done, but being active in your child's education is arguably the most important role a parent plays. Parents set the tone for education and are their child's best teacher.

No matter how little or how much time you have, or whether you are at home or at school, there are many ways you can positively impact your child's education. Being an involved parent can simply mean doing the little things that matter, like talking to your child about their day, monitoring homework and class schedules, visiting the school's website, or calling a teacher or counselor. You can also become a more engaged parent in your child's education by joining a parent organization at your child's school, attending school meetings, functions, and events, or being seen at the school on a regular basis by either volunteering your time or just getting to know school staff.

Parent involvement is also being informed about what your child is learning and how they are succeeding in the classroom. It is knowing the questions to ask the principal and teacher and, most importantly, making sure that your child attends school every day so that he or she can learn! It is providing a rich learning environment at home, expressing high educational expectations and simply showing that you care. In general, great parent involvement means making sure your child knows that you value their education more than anything else – and they should, too!

On National Parent Involvement Day it is imperative that our schools and school systems assess whether they are doing everything they can to get and keep parents involved. That is why last week the State Board of Education passed Georgia's first Parent Engagement Resolution that urges local school officials to use parent, school, and community partnerships as part of their process in developing local school and district plans and policies. However, it is also important that parents do their part by reflecting on whether they are doing everything possible to support their child. Anyone can be an involved parent by just showing up, but I challenge each parent to become more engaged in the process by asking the right questions, getting the facts, and getting more connected in their child's education. To assist parent's in the process, the Georgia Department of Education provides resources for parents and schools to encourage and maintain parent engagement.

A few resources developed in collaboration with the Georgia Parent Information and Resource Center are a collection of video stories featuring real Georgia parents sharing their best *Get Involved* Moments and a brochure entitled *Get the facts...get connected...GET INVOLVED!* Both the brochure and videos feature fifteen ways parents can get involved in their child's education by offering tips for school and home.

To get a copy of the brochure or to view the video stories, please contact our Parent Engagement office at 404-656-2633 or visit our website at www.gadoe.org.

The work of a parent is never done. It is, however, the most important and rewarding work you will ever do. So, on behalf of our schools and school systems, I want to thank all of the parents and families who have taken on the full-time job of being involved in your child's education. Throughout the rest of this month, take time to reflect on your best *Get Involved* Moment. When November is over, continue doing those engaging activities the rest of the year. Remember, you are your child's first and most important teacher!

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