

Thank You Letter to Georgia's Parents

By DR. JOHN BARGE
State School Superintendent

November is Parent Engagement Month in Georgia and schools all across the state are working to bring awareness to the role parents play in their children's education. It is a time for all parents to consider how they can get more involved in the education of their children regardless of the grade level. Today, though, is a special day within the month that I believe most educators are eager to recognize. It's National Parent Involvement Day.

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

As the father of a teenage daughter in high school, I know how challenging it can be to stay engaged in the lives of your children. Life is demanding and there is almost never enough time to get everything done, but being involved in your child's education is arguably the most important role a parent plays.

On National Parent Involvement Day, it is important that parents play their part in this partnership by reflecting on whether they are doing all they can 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 with 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.

One of the resources developed this year is a new parent engagement month calendar that provides specific ways parents can *Get the facts...get connected...GET INVOLVED!* While it was designed to be used in the month of November, parents will also find useful ways to engage in meaningful conversations and positive interactions with their child throughout the year.

To access an electronic copy of the calendar or to learn of other parent engagement resources provided by the Georgia Department of Education, please contact our Parent Engagement office at 404-656-2633 or visit our website at http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/tss_title.aspx?PageReq=ParentEngagement.

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 engaged in their child's education. Throughout this month, I hope you have taken time to become more engaged in your child's education, but please do not stop there. When November is over, continue with those engaging activities. With actively engaged parents and families, my vision of *Making Education Work for All Georgians* will become a reality!

Dr. John Barge, a parent and former school administrator, is Georgia's State School Superintendent.