SUPERINTENDENT'S END-OF-MONTH NOTES

June 2011

OUR MISSION is to provide educational excellence for all students.

IN THIS EDITION:

- Back-2-School Event—July 24th (Note #1)
- Recap of Preliminary Results for Georgia Assessments (Notes #2, #3, & #4)
- Summer Instructional Improvement Institute with Dan Mulligan (Note #5)
- State Pre-K Focus Group (Notes #6, #7, & #8)

1. The annual **Back-2-School** event will take place on Sunday, July 24, 2011, from 3:00 to 5:30 p.m. Schools, PTOs, and various community groups, agencies, and businesses will fill Newton Drive for this event meant to kick off the school year for children and their families. As in the past, various school supplies will be distributed as provided by donors. This year's event is Co-Chaired by BOE members Shakila Henderson-Baker and Jeff Meadors. See you there! ☺

2. We now have "PRELIMINARY" results in for NCSS for various Georgia assessments for the 2010-11 school year. Though federal "Adequate Yearly Progress" results will not be released for another two or so weeks, we can report the following for the school year just completed:

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION TESTS (GHSGT)

English/Lang. Arts 09-10: 90
English/Lang. Arts 10-11: 92
Change: **+2**
State 10-11: 91

Social Studies 09-10: 79
Social Studies 10-11: 85
Change: **+6**
State 10-11: 80

Science 09-10: 91
Science 10-11: 94
Change: **+3**
State 10-11: 93

Math 09-10: Different Curriculum
Math 10-11: 78
State 10-11: 84

GEORGIA WRITING TEST

5th Grade 09-10: 69
5th Grade 10-11: 75
Change: **+6**
State 10-11: 79

8th Grade 09-10: 78
8th Grade 10-11: 81
Change: **+3**
State 10-11: 82

11th Grade 09-10: 90
11th Grade 10-11: 95
Change: **+5**
State 10-11: 95

GEORGIA CRITERION-REFERENCED COMPETENCY TESTS (CRCTs)

Grade 3 Reading 09-10: 89.4
Grade 3 Reading 10-11: 91.7
Change: +2.3
State 3 Reading 10-11: 92.0

Grade 4 Reading 09-10: 86.3
Grade 4 Reading 10-11: 86.0
Change: -.3
State 3 Reading 10-11: 86.0

Grade 5 Reading 09-10: 86.7
Grade 5 Reading 10-11: 86.7
Change: None
State 5 Reading 10-11: 87.0

Grade 6 Reading 09-10: 89.1
Grade 6 Reading 10-11: 91.9
Change: +2.8
State 5 Reading 10-11: 92.0

Grade 7 Reading 09-10: 85.8
Grade 7 Reading 10-11: 88.8
Change: +3.0
State 7 Reading 10-11: 89.0

Grade 8 Reading 09-10: 94.5
Grade 8 Reading 10-11: 95.8
Change: +1.3
State 8 Reading 10-11: 96.0

Grade 3 Eng/L.A. 09-10: 86.0
Grade 3 Eng/L.A. 10-11: 88.7
Change: +2.7
State 3 Eng/L.A. 10-11: 89.0

Grade 4 Eng/L.A. 09-10: 83.9
Grade 4 Eng/L.A. 10-11: 86.7
Change: +2.8
State 4 Eng/L.A. 10-11: 87.0

Grade 5 Eng/L.A. 09-10: 90.9
Grade 5 Eng/L.A. 10-11: 91.1
Change: +0.2
State 5 Eng/L.A. 10-11: 91.0

Grade 6 Eng/L.A. 09-10: 90.2
Grade 6 Eng/L.A. 10-11: 88.1
Change: -2.1
State 5 Eng/L.A. 10-11: 88.0

Grade 7 Eng/L.A. 09-10: 88.7
Grade 7 Eng/L.A. 10-11: 90.7
Change: +2.0
State 7 Eng/L.A. 10-11: 91.0

Grade 8 Eng/L.A. 09-10: 92.1
Grade 8 Eng/L.A. 10-11: 92.7
Change: +0.6
State 8 Eng/L.A.: 93.0

Grade 3 Math 09-10: 77.5
Grade 3 Math 10-11: 77.4
Change: -0.1
State 3 Math 10-11: 77.0

Grade 4 Math 09-10: 70.6
Grade 4 Math 10-11: 80.2
Change: +9.6
State 4 Math 10-11: 80.0

Grade 5 Math 09-10: 78.2
Grade 5 Math 10-11: 82.3
Change: +4.1
State 5 Math 10-11: 82.0

Grade 6 Math 09-10: 70.6
Grade 6 Math 10-11: 70.0
Change: -0.6
State 6 Math 10-11: 70.0

Grade 7 Math 09-10: 83.2
Grade 7 Math 10-11: 86.0
Change: **+2.8**
State 7 Math 10-11: 86.0

Grade 8 Math 09-10: 69.5
Grade 8 Math 10-11: 74.8
Change: **+5.3**
State 8 Math 10-11: 75.0

Grade 3 Science 09-10: 77.9
Grade 3 Science 10-11: 78.5
Change: **+0.6**
State 3 Science 10-11: 79.0

Grade 4 Science 09-10: 75.1
Grade 4 Science 10-11: 77.0
Change: **+1.9**
State 4 Science 10-11: 77.0

Grade 5 Science 09-10: 71.8
Grade 5 Science 10-11: 71.0
Change: -0.8
State 5 Science 10-11: 71.0

Grade 6 Science 09-10: 62.4
Grade 6 Science 10-11: 65.8
Change: **+3.4**
State 6 Science 10-11: 66.0

Grade 7 Science 09-10: 76.4
Grade 7 Science 10-11: 79.3
Change: **+2.9**
State 7 Science 10-11: 79.0

Grade 8 Science 09-10: 62.8
Grade 8 Science 10-11: 66.9
Change: **+4.1**
State 8 Science 10-11: 67.0

Grade 3 Soc. St. 09-10: 78.0
Grade 3 Soc. St. 10-11: 77.6
Change: -0.4
State 3 Soc. St. 10-11: 78.0

Grade 4 Soc. St. 09-10: 68.7
Grade 4 Soc. St. 10-11: 74.1
Change: **+5.4**
State 4 Soc. St. 10-11: 74.0

Grade 5 Soc. St. 09-10: 63.6
Grade 5 Soc. St. 10-11: 59.7
Change: -3.9
State 5 Soc. St. 10-11: 60.0

Grade 6 Soc. St. 09-10: 49.7
Grade 6 Soc. St. 10-11: 59.3
Change: **+9.6**
State 6 Soc. St. 10-11: 59.0

Grade 7 Soc. St. 09-10: 60.3
Grade 7 Soc. St. 10-11: 66.1
Change: **+5.8**
State 7 Soc. St. 10-11: 66.0

Grade 8 Soc. St. 09-10: 59.9
Grade 8 Soc. St. 10-11: 64.5
Change: **+4.6**
State 8 Soc. St. 10-11: 65.0

3. Of the 37 possibilities above:

- **NCSS improved in 28** (by "statistically significant" +3 or more in **15** areas)
- NCSS declined in 7 (**by less than a point** in 5 of 7 areas)
- NCSS had no change in 1
- NCSS had 1 "Not Applicable" area as GHSGT Math is "new" curriculum

4. **Put another way, NCSS demonstrated improvement** [across elementary, middle, and high] **in 76% of the possibilities**, i.e., 28 divided by 37. And, as we are now looking at what we believe the "Preliminary" Adequate Yearly Progress or "AYP" results will be for NCSS for last 2010-11 school year, we are confident that we will do **almost twice better than predicted** when it comes to the number of schools *not* earning AYP. (Nationally, U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, is predicting 83% of American public schools will *not* earn "AYP" for last 2010-11 school year.) Finally, I believe it is appropriate and accurate to say CONGRATULATIONS to our students, teachers, support staff, and administrators for the improvements in student learning last school year! Even as the No-Child-Left-Behind bar was raised this past year, NCSS did much better than predicted … In the coming year, I believe we can do even better … **IF** we continue to work "smarter" … given that we already work hard … ☺

5. **On July 18-22, 2011, NCSS will hold a *Summer Instructional Improvement Institute with Dan Mulligan* for teachers at the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center**. Dr. Mulligan, a renowned expert in classroom instructional strategies, will focus on these strategies as well as how to build background knowledge for academic achievement—"a must" for our students in NCSS, especially those who struggle. 2011-12 will mark a systematic effort on the part of NCSS, K-12, to build the background knowledge of our students per the vocabulary for the four core curricular areas represented in the Georgia Performance Standards. (NCSS teacher experts have identified this critical vocabulary. In addition, vocabulary for the Scholastic Aptitude Test has been identified and made available to all …)

6. On Tuesday, June 21st, BOE Member Abigail Coggin and I met as members of a new statewide Focus Group on Pre-Kindergarten Education. Meeting at the Loudermilk Center in Atlanta, and convened by Voices for Georgia's Children, this group was made up by children advocates from both the public and private sectors, the executive directors of the Georgia School Boards Association and Georgia School Superintendents Association, Department of Early Care and Learning Commissioner Bobby Cagle, Dr. Bill Barr of the Georgia Public School Vision Project, and Board of Education and superintendents from the following county school systems: Terrell, Effingham, Fulton, Muscogee, Rabun, Burke, Griffin-Spalding, Houston, Rockdale, Clarke, Colquitt, Glynn, and Newton. With a great format, and United Nations-like set up, the discussion surrounded the following prompts:

   - Pre-K is important to public schools because …
   - The long-term benefits of Pre-K programs in public schools can best be evaluated by …
   - What it will take to ensure that Georgia's Pre-K children are ready for school is …
   - As a result of today's focus group, I would like to see the following thing(s) happen next …
   - Staffing of public school Pre-K programs could be improved by …
   - A long-term strategy for funding Pre-K programs in public schools is …

- Community support for Pre-K could come through …
- Collaboration and partnerships between public and private Pre-K serving agencies would occur if …

7. As for strategies to fund Pre-K programs in the future (especially in light of dwindling Georgia lottery dollars), the following were discussed:

- A bill by Georgia General Assembly member, Jack Hill, to include Pre-K in the state's QBE funding formula (This will certainly warrant watching. As well intended as this may be, if legislators do what they have sometimes done, especially in difficult budget times, this could end up just "dividing up" the K-12 pie to include Pre-K. If so, school systems would have to "stop" or "amend" doing something they are now doing in order to accommodate Pre-K education. This is a huge "philosophical" issue, one that I doubt state legislators will successfully tackle in the current economic environment. But, we'll see …)

- Like SPLOST, provide counties with the ability to have a special levy for Pre-K.

- Include funding for Pre-K capital outlay at the state level.

8. As with many things in education, I believe it is accurate to report that no "silver bullet" or "magic wand" was identified when it comes to Pre-K funding. Indeed, it may ultimately come down to what commitment people have for high quality early childhood education. (Note: The Georgia Lottery was intended to serve 84,000 children as of last school year, approximately 54% of the 145,000 4-year-olds in the state.) In a state as academically "at-risk" when it comes to Georgia's student demographic, high quality early childhood education seems indispensible for building the background knowledge that many, many children lack when they hit kindergarten. Following directions, working with others, counting, identifying colors and numbers, and calling words are but a few of the critical "school readiness" *musts* for young children. The middle class school often takes these for granted. But, we shouldn't and increasingly don't …

"Leaders must be seen as clarifiers, focusers, 'keepers of the core' who incessantly 'cut through the clutter' … to distinguish between what is merely important and what is imperative … those few things you must never forget … "

- Mike Schmoker
  Focus: Elevating the Essentials To Radically Improve Student Learning
  ASCD, 2011, p. 18

GSM
6/30/11