

GEORGIA

Review of K-12 Education Policy, Issues, Organizations and Contacts

Current Political Environment

Executive Branch

Republican [Governor Sonny Perdue's](#) education initiatives include "Bright from the Start", student achievement, school accountability and flexibility, teacher compensation (see box at right).

The [Governor's Office of Student Achievement](#) (OSA) is the new name for the former Office of Education Accountability (OEA) that was established July 1, 2000 by the state law known as the A Plus Education Act. While the name has changed, the OSA mandate still focuses on improving student achievement and improving school completion

To achieve these goals, OSA's major purpose is the establishment of performance-based accountability standards for all of Georgia's education system, from prekindergarten through postsecondary grades (P-16). OSA also has responsibility for development of reports centering on education workforce issues.

State Superintendent [Kathy Cox's](#) vision for K-12 education in Georgia is "...to lead the nation in improving student achievement. To accomplish this vision, Kathy has made it the mission of the [Department](#) to function as a service-oriented, policy-driven agency that serves local school systems as they prepare all students for college or a career in a safe and drug-free environment where no child is left behind." Superintendent Cox is committed to working with an array of [Education Partners](#) to provide better service to Georgia's students.

General Assembly

2004 Senate: 30 Republicans, 26 Democrats. 2004 House: 73 Republicans, 106 Democrats. Of the 24 bills on elementary and secondary education introduced in 2004, none focused on issues of economic or business education, business partnerships or other areas of specific interest to Junior Achievement leaders.

State Education Budget

"Georgia is a state that understands investment in education is the cornerstone of economic development and our future quality of life. We cannot afford to shortchange the children of our state or those who seek a higher education," said Governor Perdue. Providing further explanation of his view of education as an investment, he added: "We cannot expect our economy to grow stronger if we do not invest in producing educated minds." [Governor Perdue's 2004 budget](#) recommends allocating \$8.8 billion, or 55% of the total budget, for education.

The Governor's Take on Education

We must ensure that "Georgia Learns." In fact, GeorgiaLearns.com is the name of my education package. GeorgiaLearns.com will inspire and empower students, parents, teachers and all educators to meet higher standards of accountability and achievement.

Oh, you're wondering why It's "GeorgiaLearns.com." That's to constantly remind students and teachers and parents of the information and tools available at that website. . .

We want to get our children on the fast track for learning at an early age. We want our kids to get a bright start. So we'll refocus the current Office of School Readiness as "Bright from the Start, Georgia's Office of Early Care and Education."

The Bright from the Start office will ensure that every child enters kindergarten ready for school success. It will improve coordination among Georgia's several early childhood programs, including the pre-K program and Smart Start. . . And by infusing early childcare centers with a greater culture of education we will get all of Georgia's children off to a bright start.

Along with active, engaged parents, one of the best things we can do for education is to attract and keep the best teachers in our classrooms. To help do that, my budget includes a 2% pay raise for teachers. And for veteran teachers there will be an additional increase. In total, my plan will give a 5% pay increase to nearly 75% of teachers statewide. . .

GeorgiaLearns.com promotes accountability by giving local schools and systems the flexibility they need to reach the high standards we expect. And as individual schools show improvement they will be granted even greater flexibility to continue their success. The purpose of setting high standards of accountability is to inspire and empower, not to play "gotcha." So my plan replaces demoralizing letter grades with numerical scores for schools so that continuous improvement can be measured.

And because our poorer school districts face real challenges in educating their students, my budget will help them by providing \$62 million in added relief to the poorest of our state's school districts.

From Gov. Perdue's State of the State address,
January 2004

Key Education Policy Makers

Senate

B. Joseph “Joey” Brush, R, 24 th District; chair, Education Committee. Sen. Brush is a real estate developer and home builder known as a proponent of free market ideas and less government.	319-A Leg Office Bldg Atlanta GA 30334 Capitol phone: (404) 657-0406
Don Balfour, R, 9 th District, serves as the Majority Caucus Chairman and chairman of the powerful Rules Committee. In addition he serves on the Appropriations, Education, Health and Human Services, and Reapportionment and Redistricting committees.	453 State Capitol Atlanta GA 30334 Capitol phone: (404) 656-0095

House

Bob Holmes, D, District 48, Post 1; Chair, Education Committee. The 14 th term representative is a professor of political science at Clark Atlanta University	Room 226, State Capitol Atlanta, Georgia 30334 (404) 656-5115
Jill Chambers, R, District 53; member, Education Committee; small business owner; member, Georgia Chamber of Commerce	Suite 409, Legislative Office Building 18 Capitol Square Atlanta, Georgia 30334 404.656.0116

State Department of Public Instruction

Kathy Cox, Superintendent of Public Instruction	2066 Twin Towers East, Atlanta, Georgia 30334 Tel (404) 656-2800
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Online Resources

General resources on state education policy

1. [Education Commission of the States](#) – comprehensive source for state education policy issues & research
2. [Education Trust](#) – a great source for K-12 performance data for all the states
3. [Southern Regional Education Board](#) (SREB) – excellent source for education information on southern states
4. [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) – good source for legislative perspectives
5. [National Governors Association](#) – good source for governor’s perspectives
6. [Center for Policy Research in Education](#) – best source for research focused on education policy issues
7. [Stateline.org](#) – web site for tracking major state issues, including education; also good basic data

Additional Specific **Georgia** Resources

1. [Education Coordinating Council](#)
2. [Georgia Department of Education](#)
3. [Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education](#)
4. [Georgia Education Initiatives](#)
5. [Georgia Council on Economic Education](#)
6. [Department of Technical and Adult Education](#)
7. [Office of School Readiness](#)
8. [Professional Standards Commission](#)
9. [Georgia School Council Institute](#)
10. [Georgia Closing the Achievement Gap Commission](#)
11. [Georgia Public Policy Foundation](#)