



Dear Supporter:

I hope you will take a few minutes to look back at 2015 with our Stakeholders' Update. Such a "headline" report only tells a small portion of our story. Last year was another period of accomplishment and moving forward.

As a Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education supporter, your interest in our work is appreciated and encourages us in the many endeavors we undertake. Increasing student achievement and making Georgia a public education model remain our motivation. All of us here on the Georgia Partnership team are grateful for your support.

After reviewing, I hope you will agree with me, 2015 "was another good year." Please consider passing this to associates who might also be interested in our work.

-Steve Dolinger
President

"It was another good year!"

When I take a few moments to look back on 2015 and the accomplishments we were able to register, I can't help but spend a few moments looking a bit further back to 2014. That was a year we faced many challenges considering legislative actions revolving around the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards. We met them head on and were successful in keeping Georgia's journey to higher standards on track.

As we said goodbye to 2014, we couldn't help but wonder how we would yet raise the bar again in the new year. We did, but, as always, we had help. This stakeholders' update will provide a snapshot of our work, but know that inside each area we enjoyed expert leadership from our Board and support from our Council, and received innumerable contributions from a multitude of partners who made such programs as our Critical Issues Forums, Education Policy Fellowship Program, Media Symposium and more, truly class acts.

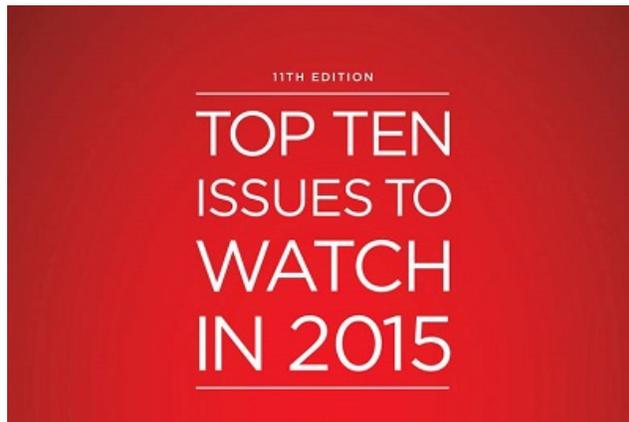
We felt 2015 was a year characterized by focused work guiding education policy and leading the required change needed for continuous, sustained improvement. To everyone who joined us in our never-ending walk, thank you. It was another good year!

Steve Dolinger
President

Media Symposium

31 education reporters, editors

Once again held at Georgia Public Broadcasting the first week of January, this unique day-long session provided media representatives an opportunity to get an inside look at the key education issues certain to be headline makers in the year ahead. The ninth-annual lineup featured the formal release of the *Top Ten* report, Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, funding, the Teacher of the Year and Georgia Superintendents' respective reviews, Georgia Milestones, and a legislative preview. More than 20 stories were filed, almost referencing the event. [Read more.](#)



Top Ten Issues to Watch

More than 3,000 copies distributed

Each year an education policy committee is convened representing a variety of perspectives to identify several issues that could ultimately find a place in the report. Through stringent research of state and national resources, the topics are selected and work begins. Along with the Media Symposium, where it is annually released, this signature Georgia Partnership product welcomes in the new year. Throughout 2015, the *Top Ten* was used to inform numerous audiences including PTA members, business and community leaders, as well as legislators who received personal copies. [Read more.](#)

Critical Issues Forums

Three presentations, 305 audience members

Three times audiences gathered to get unique insight on key issues facing the state in its public education system. In April the focus was on "The Economic Power of Early Care and Education." The August Forum - "The Reshaping of Georgia Through Shifting Demographics - Catastrophe or Opportunity?" - proved especially popular. Ending the lineup was the November presentation, "Closing the Higher Education Attainment Gap." [Read more.](#)





EPFP Fellowship Program

20 graduates, 22 new Fellows

This successful program both celebrated the Cohort 7 graduation of 20 Fellows in May and welcomed 22 new members to Cohort 8 in September. For eight years the Georgia Education Policy Fellowship Program has been a leader in the national Institute for Educational Leadership program which boasts a total of 17 participating sites across the U.S. The true beauty is year after year it is methodically increasing the state's education policy expertise. "Informed leaders make informed decisions" could very well be EPFP's theme running through each class. [Read more.](#)

Economics of Education

28 presentations, 1,100 audience members

"Econ of Ed" has often been referred to as the Georgia Partnership program that "keeps on giving." The first presentation was delivered in early 2004 and 12 years later, the briefings continue. The routinely updated message remains pointed and relevant. This year presentations were given to such groups as the Georgia Academy for Economic Development, the Georgia Municipal Association, the Georgia Energy and Industrial Construction Consortium, and the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce. [Read more.](#)



REACHES

Successful 4-year program ends

Research, Engagement and Communities for Hispanic/Latino Educated Students... This 4-year Goizueta Foundation funded program drew to a close, but the results will have a statewide impact because of the work in two school systems with high Hispanic populations – Calhoun City and Tattnall County. The outcomes were captured in the replication guide that formally closed the program. As stated in the guide, "Change takes time and commitment. These communities are committed to continuing the work they have started." [Read more.](#)

Better Standards

Staying on track remains Georgia Partnership goal

After helping lead the charge in 2014 to protect the state's efforts in moving forward on the implementation of higher standards, the Georgia Partnership's work here continued. The 25-organization Coalition that came together in 2014 remained in place under the leadership of the Georgia Partnership and continued to engage in key issues. The BSBG website remained an up-to-date source of news and information on the continuing national and Georgia higher standards discussion. [Read more.](#)



College Access Grant

Initiative ensuring more Georgia college grads

Helping Georgia reach the goal of obtaining 250,000 more college grads by the year 2025 was the goal as the Partnership provided small grants to local chambers of commerce. In 2015 the initiative supported coordinated outreach by seven chambers – Adel-Cook County, Banks County, Carroll County, Greater Columbus, Pierce County, Sylvester-Worth County, Towns County – and their local schools. The message was training/education beyond high school is important with a big pay off in terms of higher lifetime income for individuals and economic health for communities. [Read more.](#)

Woodrow Wilson Fellowship

36 Fellows in first class

The Georgia Partnership continued its proud affiliation with the Woodrow Wilson Georgia Teaching Fellowship serving as in-state coordinating partner. 2015 saw the program, that is designed to recruit and develop graduate-level STEM teaching expertise for placement in Georgia's high needs schools, progress with 36 Fellows starting their preparation at three of the five participating institutions. The program is now poised for growth. [Read more.](#)





'Failing Schools' Issue

Early look at Opportunity School District proposal

During the 2015 legislative session, Governor Nathan Deal's request for a referendum asking voters to approve a constitutional amendment in November 2016 giving the state the authority to take over chronically failing schools was passed. The Georgia Partnership joined with Voices for Georgia's Children and The Georgia Children's Advocacy Network (Georgia CAN!) to present an open-to-the-public program that provided one of the first looks at what this might mean for our state. [Read more.](#)

Effectively Telling Our Story

Outreach continued to achieve results

At the heart of every successful organization you will most often find an ability to effectively communicate. Such it is with the Georgia Partnership that found itself the subject of more than 130 media inquiries or mentions throughout the year. The Media Symposium in January is the foundation for an ongoing excellent relationship with reporters who have come to trust the Georgia Partnership as a reliable source and resource. [Read more.](#)



Recognition of Our Work

DQC, GSPRA, Stakeholders' Survey

It's always pleasing when our efforts are recognized as both professional and impactful. 2015 provided several such reviews. The **Data Quality Campaign**, a Washington D.C. based group dedicated to the proper use of data to ensure students excel, presented the Partnership with its Flashlight Award for its "outstanding work in promoting and protecting effective data use in the service of students." The organization also won several honors in **Georgia School Public Relations Association** judging and the bi-annual **Stakeholders' Survey** was especially gratifying (see the Impact link below). [Read more](#)



Thank You!

Thanks for joining us for a look back at 2015.

It truly was "another good year." We encourage you to take a few minutes to review some of the video testimonials and other notes on our Impact page. One of the keys to the Georgia Partnership's success over the past 24 years has been its commitment to continuous improvement. We appreciate and listen to the diverse viewpoints that come to our public education table and are honored to join many others in dedicating our work to making Georgia a national leader in student achievement.

[Read more](#)

2016 will be "another good year."



©2016 Georgia Partnership For Excellence In Education