



What's The Idea?

GA NAME seeks to Inform, Dialogue, Engage, and Advocate for critical education for all.

Volume 1, Issue 3, Spring, 2011



Inside This Issue

A Letter From the President	2
Commentary: Collective Agency	3
News Watch: This is What Democracy Looks Like?	4
Community Focus: Project South	6
Book Review: <i>Quality Education as a Constitu- tional Right: Creating a Grassroots Movement to Transform Public Schools</i>	7
Georgia Educator Spotlight: Jennifer Freeman	8
Georgia Education: What Does Race to the Top Mean for Georgia?	9
Past Highlights: The Power of 10	11
Resources & Upcoming Events	13
Submission Guidelines	14

Social Justice: What Does It Mean for Multicultural Education?

What comes to mind when you hear the term *social justice*? Whether your response is positive, negative, or indifferent, the term holds a lot of weight and carries various connotations. In addition to “social,” justice can come in many forms, some of which you may be familiar with: distributive, economic, education, in—, legal, racial, representational, restorative, and others.

An internet search produced about 22,000,000 results for “social justice” and about 1,690,000 results for “social justice” related images. Such images included scales, fists, hugs, doves, hands joined together, protest signs, people giving talks, and book covers. As with other similar terminology, clarity is important but is often elusive; understandings are assumed and definitions are unspecified.

GA NAME builds from the national organization’s definition of Multicultural Education. According to our national organization’s (www.nameorg.org) definition, social justice is embedded in the understanding and implementation of Multicultural Education. Three phrases in the definition specifically use the terms justice and social justice:

- ◆ *Multicultural Education challenges all forms of discrimination in schools and society through the promotion of democratic principles of **social justice**.*
- ◆ *Multicultural Education is a philosophical concept built on the ideals of freedom, **justice**, equality, equity, and human dignity as acknowledged in various documents, such as the U.S. Declaration of Independence, constitutions of South Africa and the United States, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations.*
- ◆ *Recognizing that equality and equity are not the same thing, Multicultural Education attempts to offer all students an equitable educational opportunity, while at the same time, encouraging students to critique society in the interest of **social justice**.*

Over the course of time, various definitions of Multicultural Education have omitted its intended explicit relationship with social justice. Consequently, Multicultural Education and social justice have come to be viewed as separate when in fact, they are interdependent. As noted in the bulleted phrases above, social justice includes but goes beyond the individual; addresses policies, laws, and practices that devalue or dehumanize people or their circumstances; is philosophically bound with democracy; and invites the type of social critique that enables the U.S. to maximize the rhetoric of its stated beliefs, constitutional ideals, and global aspirations.

For some resources on what social justice might look, sound, or feel like in the context of classroom practices or in education as a whole, see our Resources section.



A Letter from the President

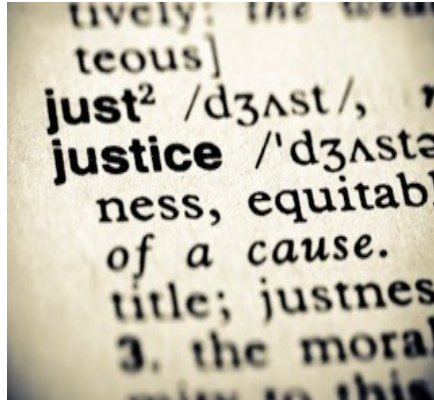
Dear educators,

Justice is not a concept to be played with, yet in an effort to offer a perspective on what it is and what it might mean for how we exist in this world, I would like to play with the way it sounds like the words “just us.” I thought of ways (three, as a matter of fact) that justice can be understood through “just us.” The way you say the words — with various inflections, tones, and emphases — can, in part, relay some insight into our understanding of justice. Read on and let me know if you agree.

First, there’s “JUST us!” said in a way that reflects that our independent lives in the world should revolve around our specific needs, whatever they might be and regardless of whom they might affect. It’s about me to the point of exclusion of others or through the perception that everyone else operates on equal grounding when it comes to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. *It’s just (about) us.*

Second, there’s “just US!” with

an intonation evoking the reality that if anything is going to happen in the world, if anything is going to be achieved, then it’s going to be up to us to do something about it. Whatever that may be, it does matter whom it affects. In fact, if a group is advocating for rights, liberties, and equitable opportunities, “just US” is an important catalyst for such efforts. At this point, individuals and groups are resigned to the fact that they must be the change and advocate for the change they aspire to make. *It’s up to (just) us!*



Third, it is really about “just—us”, a group of human beings making a way in this world. Despite an insistence on individualism and inde-

pendence, it is much more accurate to acknowledge how interdependent we are. I tend to think of a lesson from my In-

digenous (Cherokee) roots that reflects this idea. The consequences of our actions should not only be recognized in our

present but also how they will affect the seventh generation.

Therefore, because it’s just us, we must be ever mindful of our inactions and actions influence ourselves and

others. *It’s just us.*

Depending on your vantage point, justice can be said and heard differently and prompt different outcomes. As discussed on the previous page defining social justice, justice comes in many forms and can be exercised on an individual, collective, and institutional level. What distinguishes types of justice and the awareness of the need for justice has much to do with power, the source of power, and the intentions in exercising that power.

What does your “just us”/justice sound like?

*What does your
“just us”/justice
sound like?*

Vera Stenhouse



Commentary:

By:

Kara Kavanagh

COLLECTIVE:

forming a
whole

+

AGENCY:

a means of exerting
power or influence

=

**COLLECTIVE
AGENCY**

Throughout history, we have seen collectives developed in an attempt to share and exercise greater political and/or social influence focused on one or more specific issues, projects, or common objectives. For instance, *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 was a collective of over 200 plaintiffs including, Black parents, community activists, and students in five different states. Importantly, this was not the first legal attempt to desegregate schools in Kansas, but the eleventh related case, which demonstrates the needed persistence necessary for such massive reform. Another noteworthy example of collective agency, was that of *Lau v. Nichols*, 1974, where many parents and students paved the way for bilingual education and English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services for millions of English Language Learners.

Recently we have seen educators, parents, and students exercising their political voices and collective agency in Wisconsin, Texas, Florida, Washington, and California as they protest education budget cuts that drastically and negatively affect students and educators. There is no shortage of issues and debates in the educational milieu; consequently, we need to remain persistent in our collective agency in

order to continue to amplify our voices and expectations to policy makers. As such, we need to build strong coalitions that can share resources and vocalize loudly and clearly the interests and needs of teachers and students in the political arena. Currently, many smaller groups of individual educators and community activists are working very hard on similar educational issues like merit pay, standardized testing, scripted programs, and equitable schooling for all. What if we banded together to make our voices heard?

GANAME is working collectively with a variety of groups in the community to build a strong coalition centered on educational issues in Georgia and around the nation. Through these established relationships we have learned about each other, built upon each other's strengths and fortified our efforts to advocate for a critical education for all.

We are looking for more groups and individuals who are committed to these issues and the work that it involves. We realize that having the structure and support of a coalition backing up our collective voice is important.

Education reform is not a solitary or easy task. The following suggestions on successful coalition

building found at (www.physiciansforhumanrights.org) are helpful to keep in mind as we move forward together:

- ◆ Choose unifying issues
- ◆ Understand and respect each group's self interest
- ◆ Respect each group's internal process
- ◆ Acknowledge and use the diversity and resources of each group
- ◆ Communicate openly and freely with everyone
- ◆ Structure decision-making carefully
- ◆ Distribute credit fairly
- ◆ Be inclusive and participatory
- ◆ Compromise



Brown v. Board of Education (1954)
http://www.pbs.org/wnet/supremecourt/rights/landmark_brown.html



News Watch: This Is What Democracy Looks Like?

By Mari Ann Roberts

The term "collective bargaining" has been somewhat omnipresent lately, as legislators in several states have moved to eliminate so-called "Cadillac benefits" for myriad numbers of public workers. Pundits, such as Limbaugh, Hannity, and even New Jersey Governor, Chris Christie, have bandied about statements like "living off the government till" and "living high off the backs of taxpayers" in reference to the ability of state employees to collectively bargain for workers' rights and benefits. An anti-union fever seems to be spreading as Republican Governors threaten the rights of state employees in Indiana, Ohio, Idaho, Tennessee, Wisconsin, and – most likely – coming soon to a republican-led state near you!

So, since collective bargaining *seems* to lie at the very heart of this conflict – let's take a moment to look at an issue that has inspired not only the aforementioned criticisms, but also the passion and devastation that took place most recently as thousands of teachers, firefighters, and others, took to the streets of Madison, Wisconsin to fight for workers' rights.

What is "collective bargaining"?

Simply put, "collective bargaining" is a process through which employees band together, form a union, and negotiate a contract with their supervisors that lays out certain employment conditions. These conditions often include factors such as salaries, benefits, vacation time,

work hours, safety conditions and grievance procedures.

The United States has acknowledged workers' rights to unionize and bargain collectively since 1935, when Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), a federal law governing the formation of unions and the process of collective bargaining. However, the NLRA only applies to private employees. Federal legislation has since extended certain collective bargaining rights to federal employees, yet state employees remain subject to their individual states' laws. This fact becomes of key importance in the cases of Wisconsin, Ohio, Michigan, Tennessee and Idaho, where some state legislators are seeking to limit the collective-bargaining rights of their state employees.

When government workers began to organize in large numbers in the 1960s, public school teachers led the way. During the 1960s, the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association grew at a rapid pace; in the 1970s, teachers were among the most militant government workers, willing to strike even when it was illegal in order to advocate for their needs. Through this period, teachers elevated their pay and benefits and won significant reforms, especially reductions in class sizes and increases in education funding. Teachers fought not only for themselves but also for their students' interests. We saw this again recently when thousands of teachers

laid siege to the capitol and took to the streets of Madison, Wisconsin to defend their collective bargaining rights.

Why do some want to eliminate public employees' right to unionize?

Well, to be fair, public employees seem to have more leverage than private workers. While employees in private workers' unions have incentives to keep their benefit requests reasonable, lest they drive their employers into bankruptcy and themselves into unemployment, public unions are in a different position. In theory, it's practically impossible to run the government out of business so there is little incentive for public unions to scale back their demands.

Another fear is that public unions will politicize state agencies at the general public's expense. Unions can use big money and get-out-the-vote influence to back the election of politicians who will do what the union wants – and taxpayers will have to foot the bill.

On the other hand, supporters of public-sector unions say that, regardless of the aforementioned concerns, state employees still face the same workplace concerns that private sector workers do, including equitable work hours, fair grievance procedures, a living wage, and safe working conditions. Without collective bargaining abilities, workers have no way to advocate for these issues.

CONTINUE ON PAGE 5

This Is What Democracy Looks Like?

By Mari Ann Roberts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Does all this union stuff really matter?

That depends on how you feel about mandatory 12-hour workdays and child labor. The struggle for workers' rights has a long history with many powerful, multicultural civil rights leaders involved. As an ironic example, let's look briefly at Wisconsin. More than a hundred years ago, Wisconsinites were leaders in fighting for the rights of workers in the U.S. Thanks to the power of collective bargaining, Wisconsin was one of the first states to implement a minimum wage and to limit the workday and workweek. It also led the nation in creating unemployment insurance and worker compensation. A tangible fear is that the current erosion of public workers' rights, while seemingly benign to many, is a slippery slope that could lead to the repeal of hundreds of years of struggle for basic human rights and dignity.

Why is all this an issue now?

When money is tight, things get funny - and not funny *ha ha*. Many state legislators pushing anti-union legislation are doing it, they say, in the hope that it will help close state budget gaps. Yet, it's unclear how much money limiting union rights will actually save. What is clear, however, is how much money gathering overdue corporate taxes or repealing corporate and high-income tax cuts could generate.

The Reagan Revolution of the 1980s and the tax cuts secured by George

W. Bush in 2001 have dramatically lowered tax rates on upper income earners. The recent extension of the Bush tax cuts, in the midst of a near government shutdown and unprecedented recession, makes it hard to imagine if any significant tax increases on the wealthy—who are now wealthier than any previous generation—will become politically feasible in the years ahead. This means that middle and lower-income taxpayers, who can least afford it, will continue to assume a growing share of the cost of public sector workers' salaries and benefits and politics, as usual, will continue to create a situation ripe for anti-union backlash.

While it is within state powers to limit, or even abolish, employees' collective-bargaining rights, when it all boils down to the bottom of the pot, public sector workers are under attack not because they really are "privileged" or have "Cadillac benefits" but because they are easy-to-reach targets during hard times. Pressing hard-working teachers and other state government workers to surrender some of their salary and benefits at this moment offers a convenient path of least resistance - a path that requires less political will and vision than building an economy in which all workers can labor with dignity and security. Facing budget deficits, recently-elected Wisconsin Governor Scott

Walker proposed increasing the amount that state employees pay for healthcare and pension benefits. He also proposed a series of restrictions on collective bargaining rights for most public employees except police and firefighters. The unions agreed to the increased payments, but had deep opposition to the limitations on collective bargaining. Walker's proposal prompted weeks of demonstrations, attracting as many as 80,000 unionists and their allies, and all 14 Democratic state senators fled to Illinois, blocking consideration of the proposal. Nevertheless, Republican lawmakers implemented an end-run, modified the bill, and moved it quickly through committee and to votes in both chambers, where it passed.

The outcome of anti-union bills, like the one recently passed in Wisconsin, has the potential to start a new national trend in which unions are marginalized and the right to collectively bargain is gradually stripped away.

MSNBC host Rachel Maddow asserted that, "If you can bust public unions in Wisconsin, you can bust them anywhere." The Wisconsin bill and the growing anti-unionist trend are far more than the belt-tightening sacrifices that they claim to be. Despite overwhelming public opinion, Wisconsin is demanding that workers shed rights they have held for more than 100 years - rights won at an extremely high cost. Is this what democracy looks like?

For more information, see our Resources section.



Community Focus: A Spotlight on Local Organizations Doing Critical Work



PROJECT SOUTH

Institute for the Elimination of Poverty and Genocide

Project South is a grassroots organization based in the U.S. South. For over 23 years, we have created critical spaces for movement building. We work with communities pushed forward by the struggle to strengthen leadership for long-term transformation. Our programs focus on communities of color affected by social control and economic degradation created by historic and current trends of privatization, exploitation, and structural racism in the U.S. We provide popular political

PROJECT SOUTH

9 Gammon Avenue

Atlanta, GA 30315

404-622-0602

www.projectsouth.org

education through our dynamic leadership development models, and we build relationships with organizations and networks across the U.S. and global South. We be-

lieve in bottom-up movement building for social, racial, and economic justice on local, regional, national, and global levels.

Join the Project South family and build strong grassroots movements to bring our visions of a just world to life!

Upcoming event:

Midnite School Event

Teachers at the Center of Education! - June 30th, 2011, 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm, at Project South.



What Do We Do?

Project South is a membership-based organization with over 500 members worldwide. Project South Membership equals 365 days of movement building every year. We host monthly dialogues and leadership development in the Atlanta community. You receive biannual newsletters and monthly updates. Members get involved through community events, cultural opportunities and political action, in Atlanta and in the Southeast. Some examples include:

I. The Youth Community Action Program (YCAP)

This program develops youth leadership by providing popular political education to young people in Atlanta, creates alternative youth-run

media programs, and organizes for local community power. The program addresses systemic mis-education of Black youth and youth of color in Atlanta school systems and connects young people to social movements.

II. Institutes and Workshops

Since 2003, Project South has designed, recruited, and facilitated 12 Building a Movement (BAM) weekend sessions and 3 eight-month long BAM Organizing institutes. They have worked directly with over 400 leaders to strengthen long-term strategy in community organizing efforts.

Workshop streams include:

- 1) Popular Education for Move-

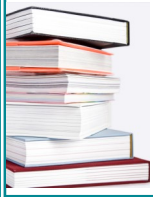
ment Building;

- 2) Leadership Transition & Collective Mode;
- 3) Youth Development for Community Organizing; and
- 4) Custom workshops.

III. Atlanta Transformative Justice Collaborative

Partnered with Kindred Southern Healing Collective and other community members, this program works to eliminate violence by building capacity in or community networks to respond to violence while decreasing the criminalization of marginalized people.

To learn more about what we do, please visit our website at www.projectsouth.org.



Book Review:

Quality Education as a Constitutional Right: Creating a Grassroots Movement to Transform Public Schools

By Vera Stenhouse

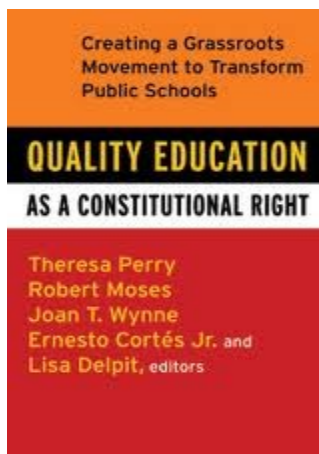
Quality education as a constitutional right: Creating a grassroots movement to transform public schools edited by Theresa Perry, Robert Moses, Joan T. Wynne, Ernesto Cortés, Jr., and Lisa Delpit, 2010 Beacon Press (pp. vii-193).



While reading on the train, I had just gotten to the part in the book where Robert Moses was offering an incisive overview of the historically contentious relationship the United States has had with the Fourteenth Amendment.* I look up and across from me, someone was reading Jonathan Kozol's *Savage Inequalities* (1991). Strikingly, Kozol's book title reflected what I was also reading about "savage inequalities" as they have manifested through the public education system. Specifically, I was absorbed in the historical and contemporary movements orchestrated to eliminate the "savage" and the "inequality" fraught within the U.S. education system.

Quality Education as a Constitutional Right: Creating a Grassroots Movement to Transform Public Schools (QECR) is thought-provoking. The authors present a series of chapters that makes you

think about the power of youth, the necessary demand for a quality education, and what such an education might look like in elementary and high schools. An essential question is why isn't a quality public education a constitutional right? A collection of 9 independently authored chapters divided into 3 parts offer insight, critique, and examples of agency and fortitude that have compelled the U.S. to adhere to its promises to the people within its borders. Collectively, the authors share historical, legal, constitutional, and practical implications while offering their voices, perspectives, and suggestions about the pursuit of quality education.



Four main topics are evident throughout the book:

- 1) Legal precedents, advocacy initiatives, challenges and successes (e.g., Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC));
- 2) The necessity, promise, and power of youth voice (e.g., Algebra Project);
- 3) Exemplars of a quality education: A view from the classroom; and
- 4) Indicators of a quality education.

The authors make clear that a quality education is possible and is hap-

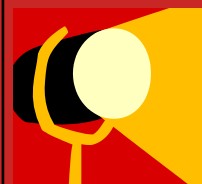
The Constitution's Preamble begins, "We the People," not "We the President," "We the Congress," "We the Supreme Court."

~ Dr. Robert Moses

pening in select spaces; however, the charge is to ensure that all students in the U.S. are guaranteed a quality education. The compilation reflects the legacy, perseverance, and foresight requisite for a movement that demands a quality education for all students.

QECR offers arguments, specific examples, personal testimony, and research that will be useful for grassroots and grass-tops organizers inside and outside the academy; teacher educators and their aspiring teachers; parents/families; and students. As we amass the demand for all students to have a quality education as a matter of policy and practice, the conversation about such a possibility must be persistent. As Dr. Robert Moses concludes in his chapter, the Constitution's Preamble begins, "We the People," not "We the President," "We the Congress," "We the Supreme Court." And so, it is the *People* who are the insurgents who demand the transformation of education to reflect the promise of democracy guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

*On July 9, 1868, the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guaranteed U.S. citizenship rights to Blacks.



Georgia Educator Spotlight: Doing the Work

Meet
Ms. Jennifer Freeman

By Alyssa Hadley Dunn

Walk into Ms. Freeman's classroom and you might see students asking questions and designing original science experiments to answer them. On another day, students may be solving advanced genetics problems and connecting biology concepts to real world issues. According to her former supervisor, Jessica Gale of Emory University, Ms. Freeman "works tirelessly to create engaging, authentic activities that challenge students to think deeply about science concepts... She genuinely cares about and cultivates meaningful relationships with her students, their families, and their community."

Jennifer Freeman's journey to teaching began as an undergraduate biology student at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. She joined the Teach for America ranks and taught for four years in Atlanta Public Schools. In 2010, she received her Masters of Arts in Teaching in Secondary Science Education from Emory University. She is now finishing her first year at KIPP Strive Academy in Southwest Atlanta. There, she teaches seventh grade life science and serves as the school's Wellness Coordinator, helping to plan parent events, working with small groups, and teaching hygiene and health lessons to the entire student body.

Ms. Freeman's story came to our attention because, like many teachers, she goes out of her way to ensure that her students receive an equitable education with the best resources possible. For her birthday in May, Ms. Freeman asked family and friends to forego presents and donate instead to her classroom pro-

ject on Donors Choose*, a Website devoted to gathering charitable contributions for teacher-created projects.

Ms. Freeman created a project called "Science Rules with Science Tools." She explained, "Since I'm at a new school this year, and a newly renovated charter school at that, we have no science supplies. In thinking about the best ways to service my students, it's important to start with the basics... I want to use my first couple of Donors Choose projects to create a solid laboratory foundation in my classroom. In order to run our weekly lab investigations we'll need basic

glassware, balances, pipettes, etc. One of the projects has been funded, and I've put two more up to complete the basic science lab for the upcoming school year. Once the basic lab equipment is there, the enrichment projects will come next!"

On top of all her classroom duties, we wondered how Ms. Freeman found the time to undertake an additional project at the end of her first year at a new school. She replied, "My kids deserve it. They deserve to have access to an equitable science education that puts them on par with other middle schools in Georgia. I worked at a private school last year and seeing the science materials they

had for their students made me realize how uneven the playing field is and how I must work even harder to make things equal for my students."

Next year, Ms. Freeman will see her plans come to fruition in many ways. In addition to the new science lab equipment that will be delivered in July, an advisory program that she created this year will be implemented school-wide. She will also assume the role of science Department Chair and the KIPP Metro At-

lanta Science Content Team Leader. GA NAME commends Ms. Freeman for her important work at KIPP and in the Atlanta community.



To learn more about Ms. Freeman's school and her project, check out: <http://www.kippstrive.com> and www.donorschoose.org/missfreeman.

*To learn more about other teacher-created projects around the country, check out: www.donorschoose.org. The website focuses particularly on public schools in high-need areas and allows teachers to write about their classroom needs. Anyone can donate any amount to any project, and the teacher and students follow up with photographs and thank you notes. To date, there have been over 200,000 projects funded.



Georgia Education: What does *Race to the Top* (RTTT) Mean for the Future of Georgia?

A Feature from EmpowerEd Georgia
www.empoweredga.org

Though Georgia's *Race to the Top* application is over 200+ pages, the following is a list of key changes and proposals outlined in the application. To view the entire application, go to: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/phase2-applications/georgia.pdf>. Numbers located next to key points are the page numbers where the information can be found within the PDF version linked above.

Curriculum

Keep the new Math Curriculum. In its RTTT application, Georgia touts that it "is one of only six states in the nation with an integrated high school mathematics curriculum and the only state which mandates it." Georgia commits itself to continuing to roll out the new math curriculum. The application also describes the creation of "math coaches." (26)

- **Core Curriculum Standards (CCS)** will be implemented during the 2010-2011 school year; 4 educators from each school will undergo training and then train the other educators at their schools on how to implement the federal CCS. (32)

Certification

New Teachers:

-will no longer be able to exempt the **GACE Basic Skills test** with a high SAT score; all teacher candidates must take the GACE test. (148)

- will be placed on a 3-year probationary, Induction Certificate (IC)
-if PLU (Professional Learning Unit)

and high-stakes test score are not met at the end of 3 years, their teaching **certificate will not be renewed and they will be banned from ever teaching in Georgia.** (119)
-satisfactory/unsatisfactory evaluation will be replaced with new, **rubric-styled evaluation tool.** (111)

Current Teachers:

-will stay on the **same 5-year certification schedule.**
- if PLU and high-stakes test score are not met at the end of 5 years, their teaching **certificate will not be renewed and they will be banned from ever teaching in Georgia.** (119)

Colleges and Universities:

- "publicly report and link student achievement data to the programs or institutions where teachers and principals were credentialed." (147)

Evaluation

All Teachers:

- current satisfactory/unsatisfactory evaluation will be replaced with new, **rubric-styled evaluation tool.**(111)

CORE* Teachers:

-Rubric-based evaluation: 30%; **Standardized-test scores: 50%**; Closing Achievement Gap in Sub-groups: 10%; Other measures: 10%. (112)
*CORE—Math, Science, Social Studies, and English

Non-CORE Teachers:

-Rubric-based evaluation: 60%; **Standardized-test scores: 0%**; Closing Achievement Gap in Sub-groups: 0%; Other measures: 40%. (112)

**The score needed in order for a

teacher to achieve a step-increase will be decided later. (112)

Principals and Other School Leaders:

-there will be **Leader Keys for principals** and **School Keys for entire schools/districts** based on the performance of those under their administrative oversight. (20)

Pay

-**Pay will no longer be based on degree level** for those on performance-based pay. (118)

- Teachers will receive "**signing bonuses**" for moving to rural high-need schools. (134)

- The State will place a **priority on core areas by providing higher individual incentives to teachers in "core."** (112-113)

New Teachers:

-will be placed on the **new performance-based pay scale.** (112)

Current Teachers:

-can **choose to stay on the current, years of service and level of degree pay scale or to be placed on the new, performance-based pay scale.** Once on the performance-based pay scale, one cannot go back to the old pay scale. (112)

-opting to stay on the **current scale will not receive COLAs** (Cost of Living Adjustments) since COLAs will be used to fund the merit pay scale once RTTT funds run out. (49)

CONTINUE ON PAGE 10



Georgia Education: What does Race to the Top (RTTT) Mean for the Future of Georgia?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

- Though not mentioned in Georgia's RTTT application, it is rumored that educators on the old pay scale will be "frozen" on their current step and that once educators come up for re-certification that they will automatically be placed on the new, performance pay scale.

"Because of this lack of data, Georgia has not set performance targets at the system or school levels for systems partnering with the State in Race to the Top." (33)

Georgia's submitted performance-based pay scale includes:

- ❖ "Ineffective,"
- ❖ "Effective – Career Teacher,"
- ❖ "Effective – Master Teacher,"
- ❖ "Highly Effective - Career Teacher," and
- ❖ "Highly Effective – Master Teacher."

Note: Amounts submitted in the RTTT application were given for illustrative purposes only and were not actual commitments on behalf of the state. Within the application, there was also no commitment on what scores were to be considered ineffective, effective, or highly effective. (111-117)

Testing

-Educators whose students **make less than a year's progress** in a course will be labeled as **"Ineffective."** (118)

-Educators whose students **make a year's progress** in a course will be labeled as **"Effective."** (118)

-Educators whose students **make a year and a half's progress** in a course will be labeled as **"Highly**

Effective." (118)

- End of the Course Tests (EOCTs) will be expanded to include all high-school English, Science, Social Studies, and Math courses (the Graduation Test will be phased out); CRCT will stay in place for elementary and middle school. The State will keep test questions where CCS and GPS overlap. (71)

- To deter expected cheating, the state will use algorithms and conduct erasure analysis to uncover "increased likelihood of test tampering in classrooms." (124)

- Benchmarks will be developed by the State. They will be administered to students throughout the course and will not count toward a teacher's performance measured. Results to be made available to teachers, administrators, and parents. (73)

-Benchmarks will most likely be administered via computer. (32)

- If students show proficiency at the beginning of the course, their test scores can allow them to "skip" the class and move-on without having to satisfy current seat-time requirements. (73)

- Students will be allowed to leave at the 11th and/or 12th grade, enroll in a college or technical school and receive both high school and college credit. (74)

Professional Development

-Educators teaching Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) classes will receive focused training through partnerships with Georgia Tech and other institutions. (135)

- The State will provide targeted, con-

tent-specific professional development aligned sharply with the common core standards and assessment resources to four teachers from every school who will become school-based trainers throughout Georgia. (73)

Schools

-The State will require that **all elementary and middle schools make Science their second Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) indicator.** (74)

- Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), schools must achieve a 100% pass rate by 2014.

-Schools who fail to meet AYP are placed on a Needs Improvement (NI) List. In the RTTT application, Georgia commits itself to seeking **school closure, mandated charter school, complete reconstitution, site-based expenditure controls, and/or specified maximum class sizes** for schools that are chronically on the NI List. (162)

- Currently, there are 287 NI Schools; this number is sure to increase as the AYP rate approaches 100%.

- "Failing" schools will be visited and evaluated by the Georgia Assessment of Performance on School Standards (GAPSS) team. By 2013, schools must choose whether to convert to a charter school, enroll into the Investing in Educational Excellence (IE2) Grant program (more flexibility in exchange for exceeding NCLB AYP requirements), or stay as a traditional school. (22)

- \$120 million in grants will be given to schools on NI lists to improve their AYP standing. (4)

Past Highlights: The Spring Event ~ The Power of 10

Can you list 10 things you feel are going right with education today? If not, then you should have come to the *Power of 10* event hosted by GA NAME on Saturday March 26th, 2011. The premise behind the event was threefold:

- 1) The event marked GA NAME's 10th year as a local chapter.
- 2) We wanted to celebrate what is going right in education.
- 3) We wanted an answer to the question: how might 10 local organizations with similar concerns regarding education join together to inform each other and dialog across their respective missions?

Given that we often notice people in various education-focused organizations talking about similar concerns, GA NAME wanted to position itself as an organization where such dialogue should take place. Many of us want to improve public education, many of us care about the way educational reform movements are currently affecting students, teachers, caregivers, and families; and many of us are working furiously in our individual silos to make powerful educational change in the state of Georgia. Why not weave a collective web of groups that works collaboratively and strengthens the possibilities and promise of a quality education for all?

We began the morning with an activity to get us looking beyond a surface understanding of who we are and how we might be perceived by others. This activity was followed with a closer examina-

tion of what we believe collective agency looks like (see Kavanagh this issue). This presentation was followed by a forum of the organizations addressing different facets of education in Georgia and the Southeast - during the forum we heard from the audience with questions, comments, challenges, and concerns. Conversations sparked during the forum continued throughout lunch.

During the afternoon, representatives from the respective organizations and attendees who stayed for the optional afternoon session met with one another to work toward coalition building with the goal of applying what we ask of others and foster it among ourselves. To honor our collective work and ideas, we concluded with establishing common beliefs. (See *Power of 10 Beliefs* this issue.)

Feedback shared on the evaluations was positive. A common request was that we needed more opportunities for dialogue.

Attendees also shared the following comments:

- ◆ Great conversations!
- ◆ A plethora of groups available for support.
- ◆ There are a lot of groups doing "the work". I'm excited to be connected to a bigger collective.
- ◆ The large challenges that we face in the education process; The various organizations that are working on solutions to the educational issues.
- ◆ How many wonderful people are working to create a better world

for us all!!

- ◆ So many wonderful things and initiatives are taking place in GA/Atlanta that we/I do not know.
- ◆ Some of my perceptions have been expanded, refined, etc. – additional ways to "see" things and think about them.

The Power of 10 Organizations

The American Institute for Managing Diversity, Inc. (AIMD)
www.aimd.org

Atlanta Public Sector Alliance
www.atlantapublicsectoralliance.org

The Ben Marion Institute For Social Justice
www.benmarioninstitute.org

EmpowerED Georgia
www.empoweredga.org

Metro Atlantans for Public Schools (MAPS)
<http://mapschool.wikispaces.com>

The National Center for Fair & Open Testing (FairTest)
www.fairtest.org

Project South: Institute for the Elimination of Poverty & Genocide
www.projectsouth.org

Students at the Center (SAC)
www.strom.clemson.edu/teams/literacy/sac

Southeastern Equity Center
www.southeastequity.org

Voices in the Treetops, Inc.
www.vocesinthetreetops.org

The Power of 10 Beliefs

The Power of 10 Event resulted in the following belief statements:

We believe that...

◆ Teaching and learning should reflect the diversity of students, teachers, and communities.

We believe that....

◆ Schools should reflect the global community through critical thinking, inquiry, higher order thinking, and problem-based learning.

We believe that...

◆ Collectives of individuals (stakeholders) should have equitable input into the educational process.

We believe that...

◆ Education should be a process that validates teachers and students through the recognition that the education of our nation's students is a public responsibility.

We believe that...

◆ There is liberation through the purification of education by honoring one's story, their story —to make unity in the community.

We believe that...

◆ Schools should be funded in an equitable way.

We believe ...

◆ In finding a new way to communicate our ideas so that we can counteract current thinking and education policies being implemented in schools, and expanding our ideas to a broader audience.

We believe that....

◆ Learning is a social and collective process which is more democratic in a cooperative environment.

We believe that....

◆ Students have a right to dignified learning and authentic assessments and teachers have a right to collaborate with them in that process.

'There are networks and groups that stretch across the country that address these issues and you can tap into those...Then it's not just your voice...And together you can make good things happen.'

~ Rita Tenorio, Veteran Teacher

from An interview with Rita Tenorio The New Teacher Book (2004), A Rethinking Schools Publication.

At GA NAME we believe that fostering spaces for dialogue, such as those offered at our events, are imperative to moving forward on actions addressing educational issues.

We would like to thank participating individuals and organizations for enhancing our knowledge of their work, identifying their needs, expanding our understanding of educational issues, and engaging in dialogue that enriched our efforts to make education a better experience for students, educators, and families.

Resources

Please review critically. Multiple views and perspectives are often provided.

TECHNOLOGY

Discoverthenetworks

www.discoverthenetworks.org

This website describes the networks and agendas of the political left.

EdChange

www.edchange.org

EdChange is dedicated to diversity & equity in schools, organizations, & society. They provide a wealth of resources, workshops, projects.

Justice: The People's News

www.thepeoplesnews.net

Created by EdChange to provide information about local and global issues on human rights, social justice and environmental justice.

The Love Alliance (TLA)

www.thelovealliance.net

TLA is a non-profit organization working to educate individuals on various issues of social injustice such as world poverty, clean water, sickness, human trafficking,



homelessness, the environment, & oppression.

Rethinking Schools

www.rethinkingschools.org

This site is committed to equity and to the vision of a public education central to the creation of a humane, caring, and multiracial democracy.



BOOKS

Adams, M., Bell, L.A., & Griffin, P. (Eds.). (1997). *Teaching for diversity and social justice*. New York: Routledge.

Adams, M., Blumenfeld, W., Castaneda, C. R., Hackman, H., Peters, M., & Zuniga, X. (Eds.). (2010). *Reading for diversity and social justice*. (2nd ed.). Taylor and Frances, Inc.

Au, W. (2009). *Rethinking multicultural education: Teaching for racial and social justice*. Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, Ltd.

Ayers, W., Quinn, T. & Stovall, D. (Eds.) (2008). *Handbook of social justice in education*. New York: Routledge.

Collective Bargaining

Lyman, K. (2011). Teaching and learning in the midst of the Wisconsin uprising, *Rethinking Schools*, 25(4), Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools, Ltd.

Wisconsin Protests Gain Momentum Causes Fear 2/18/11—

www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFU7mn9pOhA&feature=related

Wisconsin Update: Why Collective Bargaining is a Fiscal Issue—

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/op-eds/2011/02/wisconsin-update-why-collective-bargaining-fiscal-issue>

Wisconsin Labor History Society

www.wisconsinlaborhistory.org

Upcoming Events

June 30th, 2011

A Midnite School Event - Teachers at the Center of Education! from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm, at Project South, 404-622-0602 or www.projectsouth.org.

Please join Atlanta Area Educators, Project South and GA NAME in an Atlanta educational justice Midnite School, an evening of critical discourse about educational justice in Atlanta. This teacher-centered dialogue seeks to identify solutions for problems in education today. Refreshments will be served.

October 14-15, 2011

Georgia Association on Young Children (GAYC) Conference—2011 Together for Children, at the Gwinnett Center. 404-222-0014 or email, Serah Ashley Bailey at gayconference@algxmail.com

October 27-29, 2011

Southeastern Regional Association for Teacher Educators (SRATE) 58th Annual Conference (Hosted by Georgia Association of Teacher Educators GATE) - *Research and Teaching: Realities, Innovations, and the Myth of "Waiting for Superman"*. Savannah, GA, Contact: Dr. Gwendolyn Middlebrooks, ghmiddlebrooks@bellsouth.net or

www.srate.org.

November 2-5, 2011

National Association of Multicultural Education (NAME) 2011 International Conference in Chicago. *Re-working Intersections, Reframing Debates, Restoring Hope*, www.nameorg.org.

February 2-4, 2012

Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) 63rd Annual Conference: San Antonio, TX—
Laying the Foundation for Lifelong Learning, www.SouthernEarlyChildhood.org

Submission Guidelines for *What's the IDEA?* GA NAME Newsletter

Submission Guidelines and Considerations

GA NAME welcomes and encourages submissions from our readers and those interested in and dedicated to social justice and critical multicultural education.

Please let us know how you are “doing the work” and/or your great ideas on social justice and multicultural education.

Sections for Submissions:

Submission should relate to one of the following categories:

News Watch: Features commentary on current/timeless educational issues. Commentary must include the various perspectives on the issues followed by the author's position and supporting arguments.

Doing the Work: “Spotlight” individuals, teachers, organizations, or researchers doing critical educational work on matters related to education (locally, nationally, and/or internationally.)

The Arts: Features arts-based commentary and/or events supporting topics of multicultural education through various modes of creative expression—visual (graphic art/cartoons, etc.), movement, poetry, monologues, written music/lyrics, etc.

Book Reviews: Reviews books to inform and supplement understanding of ideas, concepts, and issues. Reviews should connect practice and theory.

Resource Highlights: This section will provide articles, books, tech-

nological and other resources for educators, students, families, and individuals interested in social justice and multicultural education.

International/Global: Addresses issues in global/international education that affect local and national education trends in the US.

Content:

Submissions should address the following considerations:

- ◆ Must speak to excellence and equity in education.
- ◆ May offer issues, concerns, or problems, but must include solutions and problem solving ideas/initiatives or critical questions for further inquiry.
- ◆ Links to the genres of multicultural education within or across your content area/sphere of influence.

Format:

Submissions should follow the following format:

- ◆ Include title of article, name of author(s), any affiliation(s), and contact info for lead contact person (email/phone);
- ◆ Indicate section of newsletter for submission
- ◆ 250-300 words (for written submissions);
- ◆ Typed in 12-point, Calibri font;
- ◆ Follow the APA 6th edition for reducing bias in language/terminology, <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/14/>;
- ◆ Include a reference list of all citations/references where appropriate, and

- ◆ Provide documented permission for the use of:
 - any individual's name and/or photos otherwise not cited in references, and/or
 - any copyrighted material/visual images included in your submission.

Submit to:

ganame2010@gmail.com, or
rmeeler@gsc.edu

Subject line: GA NAME Newsletter Submission.

Your submission will be reviewed through a peer-reviewed process. It will be considered for the newsletter and subject to editorial edits by the Newsletter Team members. The content will be vetted by several factors including alignment with chapter/national mission, quality of the representation of ideas, language bias, and length.



Submission Due Dates by Midnight EST:

Fall, 2011 Issue: August 5
Winter, 2012 Issue: October 5
Spring, 2012 Issue: January 5
Summer, 2012 Issue: April 5