9th Annual State of Education in Georgia Conference
The University of Georgia
College of Education
September 30, 2016
The University of Georgia Hotel & Conference Center

Education Policy: Leveraging our Resources for School Improvement

8:00 AM  Registration/Coffee

9:00 AM  Greetings/Welcome
Craig H. Kennedy, Dean
UGA College of Education

9:05 AM  “Can America’s Chronically Low Performing Schools be Turned Around?”
Gary T. Henry
Professor of Public Policy and Education
Vanderbilt University

10:15 AM  Networking Refreshment Break

10:45 AM  Concurrent Sessions

- Sustaining and extending excellence in Gwinnett County Public Schools: Twenty years of continuous improvement
  Kevin Tashlein, Gwinnett County Public Schools

- Henry County’s 2020 vision, personalized learning, and the Academy for Advanced Studies – real world student success
  Rodney Bowler, et al., Henry County Schools

- Physical activity and academic achievement: Georgia’s statewide progress
  Emily Anne Vall, Georgia Department of Public Health

- The Charter System model and process
  Allen McCannon, Madison County Schools

- Georgia’s State Plan: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
  Matt Jones, Georgia Department of Education
  Dr. Melissa Fincher, Georgia Department of Education

11:45 AM  Networking Lunch
TED-type talks:
- Casey Bethel, 2017 Georgia Teacher of the Year
- Bynikini M. Frazier, Innovation in Teaching Award Winner
- Steve Miletto, Executive Director, Heart of Georgia RESA
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:30 PM</td>
<td>Concurrent Sessions (repeated)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30 PM</td>
<td>Refreshment Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:50 PM</td>
<td>Panel discussion – Recommendations of the Education Reform Commission: Where are we now? Susan Andrews, Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget and members of the Governor’s Teacher Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>3:45 PM</td>
<td>Closing Remarks                                                       Craig Kennedy, Dean UGA College of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
<td>Conference adjournment</td>
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KEYNOTE SPEAKER

**Gary T. Henry** holds the Patricia and H. Rodes Hart Chair and serves as Professor of Public Policy and Education in the Department of Leadership, Policy and Organization, Peabody College, Vanderbilt University. Professor Henry teaches the doctoral course in Causal Inference and a course on Evaluation at Vanderbilt. In 2016, he was named an American Educational Research Association Fellow. He formerly held the Duncan MacRae ’09 and Rebecca Kyle MacRae Distinguished Professorship of Public Policy in the Department of Public Policy and directed the Carolina Institute for Public Policy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Also, Dr. Henry is a Fellow with the Frank Porter Graham Institute for Child Development.

Henry specializes in education policy, educational evaluation, teacher quality research, and quantitative research methods. He has published extensively in top journals such as *Science, Educational Researcher, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Journal of Teacher Education, Education Finance and Policy*, and *Evaluation Review*. Professor Henry has received over $20 million dollars of sponsored research funding and his research has been funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Spencer Foundation, Lumina Foundation, National Institute for Early Childhood Research, Walton Family Foundation, and numerous state legislatures, governors’ offices, and agencies.

Currently, his major educational research projects are the evaluation of the North Carolina Transformation program; the evaluation of the Achievement School District, a part of Tennessee’s First to the Top initiative; and the evaluation of the leadership pipeline in Hamilton County (Chattanooga), Tennessee. Other recent projects include the evaluation of the North Carolina Race to the Top initiative, North Carolina’s Disadvantaged Student Supplemental Fund, as well as Georgia’s Universal Pre-K and HOPE Scholarship programs.

Dr. Henry previously served as panel chair for the Continuous Improvement in Education Research panel and as a principal member of the Standing Committee for Systemic Reform, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education and has served on numerous advisory boards and as a consultant for several states on evaluations and longitudinal databases.
KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Can America’s Chronically Low Performing Schools be Turned Around?
Gary T. Henry, Patricia and Rodes Hart Chair, Professor of Public Policy and Education, Vanderbilt University

The accountability infrastructure put in place by No Child Left Behind has raised the visibility of large numbers of chronically low performing schools in every state in the U.S. to the point these schools and the students they serve can no longer be ignored. Whether one chooses to blame resegregation, bureaucratic neglect, teachers unions, or the ravages of living in poverty, no one can deny that many students in these chronically low performing schools are not being prepared to thrive and prosper as adults. But more important than assessing blame, now that we have identified these schools, how do we remedy chronic underperformance? Are bold and dramatic changes in governance and management, such as an Achievement or Opportunity School District, or wholesale replacement of school personnel required to overcome the lack of will, capacity, or resources that created this situation? Marshalling large-scale, longitudinal data and the evaluations of school turnaround in North Carolina and Tennessee, together we will explore the dynamics of school performance over time, the solutions that show promise, and the flows of teachers and leaders into and out of these schools. The evidence to date provides hope that outcomes for students and teachers in these schools can be improved but also tempers optimism about permanently raising the performance of schools that serve our most disadvantaged and underserved children and adolescents.

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

Sustaining and Extending Excellence in Gwinnett County Public Schools: Twenty Years of Continuous Improvement
Dr. Kevin Tashlein, Strategy and Performance Officer, Gwinnett County Public Schools
Gwinnett County Public Schools has continued to be a high performing school district even with significant changes in our student population. This session will explore how Gwinnett County has demonstrated continued improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among low-income students and students of color.

Henry County’s 2020 Vision, Personalized Learning, and the Academy for Advanced Studies – Real World Student Success!
Rodney Bowler, Superintendent, Henry County Schools
Aaryn Schumhl, Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Leadership, Henry County Schools
John Uesseler, CEO, Academy for Advanced Studies, Henry County Schools
During this session, participants will learn about the mission, vision and beliefs driving the work of the Henry County School system. There will be a particular focus on our mission to “Ensure Success for Each Student” and our plan to fulfill our vision of personalized learning by the year 2020. In addition, participants will learn about the work of our College and Career Academy, known as the Academy for Advanced Studies, and how our students are being prepared for real world student success.
Physical Activity and Academic Achievement: Georgia’s Statewide Progress

Dr. Emily Anne Vall, Childhood Obesity Project Manager, Georgia Department of Public Health

In 2012, Georgia became the first state in the nation to assess student fitness at the state level and the data were alarming; 42% of males and 57% of females were unable to reach the aerobic capacity healthy fitness zone (a basic measure of fitness). To compound the issue, more and more research showed a direct relationship between physical activity (PA) and academic achievement. This session will provide updates on student health measures, PA programming in Georgia, and the research that links PA and academic achievement.

The Charter System Model and Process

Dr. Allen McCannon, Superintendent, Madison County Schools

In July 2012, the Madison County School System became a Charter System. The major tenants of being a Charter System are instructional innovation and shared governance. This session will provide some examples of how the Madison County School System used flexibility and shared decision making to benefit students. The system will share how a charter system culture was created in Madison County.

Georgia’s State Plan: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Matt Jones, Chief of Staff, Georgia Department of Education
Dr. Melissa Fincher, Deputy Superintendent of Assessment and Accountability, Georgia Department of Education

ESSA allows state and local schools/districts to make education decisions that are best for their students, rather than overreaching federal requirements. The new law requires states to develop plans that address standards, assessments, school and district accountability, and special help for struggling schools and students. In order to ensure the inclusion of educators, parents, community members, business/industry leaders and lawmaker/policy makers in the process an Advisory Committee and 6 working committees have been established to carefully listen to feedback from Georgians and develop a state plan to personalize education for students. This session will describe the application process.

TED-TYPE TALKS

Casey Bethel is the 2017 Georgia Teacher of the Year. Mr. Bethel is an AP Physics, AP Biology, and Physical Science teacher at New Manchester High School in Douglas County. Mr. Bethel planned to become a cardiovascular surgeon. While studying genetics in graduate school, he became a research scientist at the University of Georgia’s Center for Applied Genetic Technologies. He felt his happiest instructing undergraduate students during labs and, because of that experience, he decided to become a teacher.

Bynikini M. Frazier learned the joy of teaching as a fifth-grade student at Hodge Elementary School in Savannah, Georgia, where she helped fellow students with their reading and writing. Today, she serves as lead first-grade teacher at the same school. Frazier was named the 2015 Savannah Chatham County Public Schools District Teacher of the Year and was also selected by Governor Nathan Deal as a winner in the Innovation in Teaching competition.
Dr. Steve Miletto is Executive Director of the Heart of Georgia RESA. Dr. Miletto has been in public education for over 27 years serving families as a classroom teacher, assistant principal, and principal. Dr. Miletto has been recognized as the 2007 Atlanta Braves and AT&T Educator of the Year, the 2009 Georgia Principal of the Year, and a finalist for National Principal of the Year. Dr. Miletto enjoys using social media to connect communities and to provide access to resources.

CLOSING PANEL

Recommendations of the Education Reform Commission: Where Are We Now?

Dr. Susan Andrews, Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget

Members of the Governor’s Teacher Advisory Committee

In December 2015, the Education Reform Commission delivered its report and recommendations to the Governor. During his 2016 State of the State Address, Governor Deal said that he wanted to allow ample time to vet the full report of the Commission. To assist with the vetting process, Governor Deal appointed a Teacher Advisory Committee. The Teacher Advisory Committee began its work this past summer. This panel discussion will provide updates on the meetings of the Teacher Advisory Committee and some of the conversations related to a new funding formula, increasing access to early learning programs, recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers, expanding school options for Georgia’s families, and other Education Reform Commission recommendations.