

# 2010 Candidate Questionnaire

Please provide GAE members with information about your positions on education issues by answering the following questions and expanding on your answers in the space provided. You may attach additional pages for extensive explanations.

GAE members fully understand elected officials must decide how state dollars are allocated to *all* the state's programs within the constraints of available funds. With this in mind, please try to indicate which of the following (if any) would be priorities for you.

Thank you for taking the time to provide your thoughts on improving public education in Georgia. *Don't forget to send us your signed cover page along with this questionnaire.*

## 1. How will you *enhance education programs and student achievement with regard to:*

- a. Lowering maximum class size?

It would be nice to reduce class size if possible, of course. Regrettably, with budget constraints, lowering the maximum class size cannot be our first priority.

- b. Maximizing student learning and minimizing high-stakes testing?

Yes, teaching and learning should not be totally test-driven.

- c. Fully funding our public schools?

We must improve in this area. Education is one of the core functions of government.

- d. Securing safe public schools?

Yes, very important! Vital.

- e. Fully staffing all public schools and programs?

Programs must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

- f. Ensuring all education funding is restricted to public schools and programs?

This will get the highest priority.

## 2. How will you *support education employees with regard to:*

- a. Quality, comprehensive health care benefits and services for active and retired public education employees?

Yes. I will fight for this.

- b. Improved salary and benefits for all public education employees?

Yes, Georgia needs to attract and retain the most talented, qualified teachers.

c. Improved retirement benefits for all public education employees?

We definitely need to offer more options for retirement plans than the current bad deals set by Congress for non-profit organizations and educators.

d. Collective bargaining rights for all public education employees?

Yes. I support collective bargaining for all public education employees.

**3. How will you advocate for education employees with regard to:**

a. Enacting and enforcing fair evaluation procedures?

Yes. I firmly support this.

b. Securing an effective and enforceable grievance procedure for all public school employees?

I am surprised that this is not already in place. I would like to know more.

c. Securing due process rights for Education Support Professionals (classified personnel)?

I also need to learn more on this important issue.

d. Securing employment contracts for support personnel?

I need to learn more on this important issue as well. Please send me information on these items.

**4. How will you strengthen the education profession regarding:**

a. Providing public school employees a greater voice in decision-making to improve public education?

Yes, definitely so.

b. Improving working conditions for public school employees?

Yes.

c. Providing comprehensive induction/mentoring for all beginning public school employees including additional pay for mentor teachers?

Sounds like a good idea.

d. Supporting legislation providing alternatives/exemptions to the furloughing of public school employees?

Yes, this is a high priority. Public school employees should not have to shoulder the same burden of budget shortfalls as non-essential government employees. We need to establish a priority level, so that educators, police officers and firefighters will be in an exempt category for such actions.

**5. What are the three most critical issues facing public education in Georgia today?**

**Parent participation in education;**

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**bolstering foreign language classes to prepare our students to be globally competitiveness.**

**6. Will you be willing to sponsor legislation to address issues in this questionnaire?  
If yes, which issues?**

Yes, especially providing alternatives/exemptions to the furloughing of public school employees.

**7. What will be your *top three policy/legislative priorities*? (overall, not limited to education issues)**

1. To set priority levels for all government functions and programs. This way, core government functions, including public safety, as well as education cannot be considered for budget cuts until all lower priority level functions have been reviewed;
2. To strengthen property rights, raise the homestead exemption credit to homeowners;
3. To require all buildings on public roads to have street numbers clearly marked. This is an inexpensive, easy change that will not only increase safety, but will also improve traffic flow.

**8. Will you be willing to attend GAE functions and meet regularly with GAE?**

Yes.

**9. Are there any other thoughts or comments you would like to share?**

A teacher's education should always be considered when setting his or her compensation. This way, we will encourage teachers to seek continued education for themselves, thus improving the quality of our schools. It will also a clear message to students that education matters!

***Please remember to send your signed cover page along with this questionnaire!***