

## Education Dictionary

### A

**A Plus Education Reform Act of 2000 (H.B. 1187):** Education legislation drafted by Governor Roy Barnes that took effect in April 2000. The law lowered class sizes, developed an accountability framework with state criterion-referenced tests as the measurement system, created school councils and implemented early intervention programs.

**Ability Grouping:** A way to organize students of like abilities that allows them to remain together for a short period of time ñ part of the school day, a few days or a few weeks.

**Acceleration:** Enrichment techniques and activities.

**Accountability:** Efforts to hold schools, districts, educators, students and/or parents responsible for achievement test results.

**Accreditation:** The process by which an organization sanctions teacher-education programs.

**Achievement Gap:** The difference in academic achievement of students of different cultural backgrounds, first languages or socioeconomic statuses.

**Achievement Test:** Standardized test that measures a student's knowledge in specific academic areas such as reading, language, mathematics, social studies and science.

**Advanced Placement (AP) Exams:** Tests administered by the College Board in various subjects such as European history, calculus and foreign language. High school students take these exams to receive college credit.

**After School Programs:** Programs established by schools and community organizations to provide safe places and constructive activities to students whose parents cannot be at home after school. Research has linked after school programs to reductions in school discipline problems, teen pregnancy, drug use, violence and dropout rates.

**Age Norms:** The average performance of an individual in various age groups.

**Alternative Assessment (See Authentic Assessment and Performance Assessment.)**

**Alternative Calendar (See Year-Round Schools.)**

**Alternative School:** A specialized school created for students who function better in a different environment than a regular classroom. Alternative schools range from institutions geared towards students with behavioral problems to magnet schools created for a special group of talented or interested students to study a limited curriculum.

AMERICA 2000 – An Education Strategy: An action plan to move America toward the six national goals. (See GOALS 2000.)

America's Choice: A School reform model that focuses on enabling all students to be fluent readers by the end of third grade, competent readers and writers when entering middle school, prepared for algebra by the beginning of eighth grade and prepared to complete college-level work by high school graduation. To reach these goals, the model provides a set of standards and reference exams and assignments based on the standards.

American College Testing (ACT) Assessment: National college admission examination that consists of tests in English, reading, mathematics and science reasoning.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Federal law passed in 1990 that prohibits the discrimination against any disabled individual. Applies to both employment and educational services.

Apprenticeship: Structured work placement that combines secondary school and work-based learning activities

Assessment/Evaluation: A means of measuring the ongoing progress of students and teachers.

At-Risk Student: Any child whom adults believe is in danger of dropping out of school before graduation.

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD): A medical term used to describe students with severe inattention and impulsiveness. The disorder can be treated through medication, psychotherapy, behavior modification and training. The most common medications used are Ritalin, Dexedrine and Aderall.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): A medical term used to describe students with inappropriate degrees of hyperactivity, inattention and impulsiveness. The disorder can be treated through medication, psychotherapy and behavior modification and training. The most common medications used are Ritalin, Dexedrine and Aderall.

Authentic Assessment: A type of student evaluation that requires a student to perform a task rather than select an answer from a ready-made list (i.e. doing a science project or writing a paper). (See Performance Assessment.)

Autism: A neurological disorder that typically appears during the first three years of life. Children and adults with autism typically have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions and leisure or play activities.

## **B**

Balanced Calendar: Modified calendar that includes several breaks during the semester. Students spend the same number of days in class as those on traditional calendars, but breaks are more frequent. Intersessions are shorter than those in year-round schools. (See Intersessions)

Basal Readers: Elementary school books that incorporate simple stories and practice exercises to progressively reinforce what students are learning.

Basic Skills: Reading, writing and mathematics.

Basic Skills Test (BST): Tests administered until the 1990-91 ninth graders graduated in June 1994. The test is required for graduation in Georgia.

**Battery:** Multiple tests to assess functioning in a variety of psychological areas such as intelligence, achievement, personality and self-esteem.

**Behavior Disorder (BD):** A term used in special education to describe students whose behavior interferes with their classroom performance. Such students have problems relating to other children and adults, exhibit inappropriate behaviors such as extreme anger, are severely depressed or have a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears about personal and school problems.

**Behavioral Correction Plan:** Plan developed for a student with chronic disciplinary problems upon return from an expulsion or suspension.

**Below Grade Level:** Any student performing below the achievement level on a standardized test for his/her grade level. Below grade level students are eligible for early intervention programs.

**Benchmarks:** Examples of performances that serve as standards against which students' achievement is scored.

**Block Scheduling:** Reconfiguring the school day by increasing the length of the traditional class period and decreasing the number of class periods a day. For example, a 4X4 schedule allows students to take four 90-minute classes a day and complete them in a semester rather than a full year. Blocked courses allow students more time for laboratory or project-centered work, field trips and special assemblies or speakers.

**Blue Ribbon Schools Program** ñ A national program established by the U.S. Department of Education in 1982 to honor outstanding public and private schools across the country and share information on the best practices among schools.

**Business/Education Partnerships:** School-reform coalitions formed by private businesses and schools or districts. Partnerships range from individual school partnerships to systemic school reform efforts.

## **C**

**Carnegie Unit:** One unit of credit awarded in grades 9 through 12 for a minimum of 150 hours of instruction during the regular school year or 120 hours of instruction during summer school.

**Certificate of Performance:** Certificate for students who do not pass the Georgia High School Graduation Test, but meet all other graduation requirements. Students who leave school with a certificate of performance may take the graduation test again as many times as necessary to qualify for a high school diploma.

**Character Education:** Deliberate education in basic values or virtues. (See Value Education.)

**Charter School:** A school which has greater flexibility in designing programs to improve student learning and in meeting local, state and national education goals. Charter schools are exempt from most state and local rules, policies and regulations, but they must be approved by local and state boards of education.

**Child-Centered Schooling:** A philosophy of education that focuses on the child, not the subject. Educators reject lectures, drills and rote learning in favor of individualized instruction and hands-on learning. (See Rote Learning)

**Class Rank:** The relative position of a student in his or her graduating class, determined by Grade Point Average (GPA).

**Closing the Gap Commission:** A commission created by Governor Roy Barnes in 2001 that is charged with recommending ways to close the student achievement gaps that exist for students disaggregated by ethnicity, sex, disability, language proficiency and socioeconomic status.

**Cognitive Sciences:** Area of study that focuses on how people think and learn. According to cognitive scientists, children make meaning of the world through their interactions with their environments.

**Collaborative Learning:** Working with other students in pairs or teams.

**College Board:** Nonprofit organization that administers the SAT and AP programs.

**Communities in Schools (CIS):** A community-based organization that helps children succeed in school and prepare for life. Through partnerships with schools, public officials, businesses, parents and the community, the organization provides numerous services to prevent children from dropping out of school.

**Community College:** A public two-year institution supported by the local community. Community colleges generally offer two types of curricula: transfer ñ the first two years of work for a bachelor’s degree ñ and terminal ñ vocational training for employment.

**Community Partnerships:** Connections between local organizations and schools to help address students’ needs and improve achievement.

**Comprehensive School Health Program:** An organized set of policies, procedures and activities designed to protect and promote the health and well-being of students and staff which has traditionally included health services, health education and an emphasis on a healthy school environment.

**Confidence Interval:** The range within which a student’s true score is likely to fall. Confidence intervals provide more accurate estimates of student performance than raw test scores.

**Constructivism:** Theory of learning that holds that children modify their understanding in light of new data. Learning is, thus, the result of mental “construction.” Constructivist theorists believe that children learn through experimentation and not lectures or rote practice.

**Constructed Response:** Test questions that require students to write a brief response.

**Content Clusters:** Groups of items measuring a similar skill on each Stanford 9 subtest. For example, Reading Vocabulary is divided into three Content Clusters: Synonyms, Context and Multiple Meanings. The Content Clusters are useful in identifying students’ strengths and weaknesses in meeting specific objectives.

**Contextual Learning:** Learning that enables students to test academic concepts via real-world applications. Students acquire knowledge through actual experience.

**Continuous Progress:** Term used to describe a curriculum model that allows each child to progress at his or her own pace.

**Cooperative Learning:** An instructional method in which students of all performance levels work together in small groups toward a group goal.

**Core Knowledge:** A school reform movement that emphasizes a solid core curriculum to help children establish strong foundations of knowledge at each grade level. The program provides a detailed outline of knowledge to be taught each year in language arts, American and world history, geography, visual arts, music, math and science.

**Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT):** Tests administered to Georgia students to evaluate students' acquisition of skills and knowledge described in Georgia's Quality Core Curriculum (QCC). In grades one through eight, tests are given in reading, math and language arts. In grades three through eight, tests are also given in science and social studies. Test scores will be used in considering the promotion of students in grades three, five and eight beginning with the 2003-2004 School Year. CRCT scores produce information on students, classrooms, schools, systems and state achievement in education.

**Criterion-Referenced Tests:** Tests that compare a student's performance to a specific standard of acceptable performance instead of the performance of other students.

**Critical Thinking:** Mental process of acquiring information and evaluating it to reach a logical conclusion.

**Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA):** Tests developed by the Georgia Department of Education to measure student achievement on a broad range of the state's Quality Core Curriculum (QCC). Students in grades three, five and eight are tested in the areas of reading, math, science, social studies and health.

**Cultural Diversity:** Recognizing that students come from a variety of ethnic, geographic, economic and religious backgrounds.

**Curriculum:** The content of an instructional program.

## **D**

**Data-driven School Improvement:** The use of achievement test scores and data to develop strategies for school improvement. Teachers and administrators constantly monitor scores on achievement tests and other assessments to measure students' progress.

**Decentralization:** Transfer of school policymaking and decision-making authority from federal to state level or from state level to districts or local schools.

**Decision-making skills:** Thinking skills that enable students to solve problems. Skills include identifying problems, seeking alternative solutions, applying knowledge, evaluating alternatives and selecting courses of action.

**Department of Family and Children's Services (DFACS):** The Georgia government department responsible for welfare and employment support, protecting children, foster care and other services to strengthen families.

**Developmental Stage:** The physical, social, emotional, psychological and academic level of an individual child, rather than the actual (chronological) age.

**Developmentally Appropriate Practice:** Any activity involving young children (birth to age 8) that is based on knowledge of the stages of child development, understanding that each child is unique and each child's experiences should match his or her developing abilities.

**Diagnostic Test:** Intensive, in-depth evaluation of a student's skills in a specific area. Diagnostic tests are used to determine the specific learning needs of individual students.

**Direct Instruction:** Scripted instruction in specific skills. Instruction proceeds through demonstration of skills, guided practice, feedback and independent practice.

**Disaggregated Data:** Data that is broken down by subgroups of students. For instance, rather than simply reporting the percentage of students who passed the test, the disaggregated data might include the percentage that passed the test by gender, race and age.

**Distance learning:** Delivery of instruction via multimedia computers, satellite or teleconferencing when the teacher is in one place and the students in another.

**Drills:** Targeted, repetitive exercises. Drills allow students to practice and internalize what they have learned.

**Dropout Rate:** The number of students who do not complete high school.

**Drug-Free School Zones:** Drug-free areas around schools created by the U.S. Congress and state legislatures in the 1980s. People convicted of possession or use of illegal drugs in these areas are subject to increased legal penalties.

**Dyslexia:** Reading impairment, thought to be a genetic condition, in which children transpose letters.

## **E**

**E-learning:** Use of the Internet in instruction.

**E-rate:** Reduced rate for Internet access in public schools and libraries under the Telecommunications Act of 1996

**Early Intervention Programs (EIP):** Programs provided from kindergarten through the fifth grade. These programs provide specialized instruction in smaller classes to students who are performing below grade level.

**Echo Reading:** A program in which children read aloud along with an adult. The goal is completion of the book, so mistakes are not corrected and reading proceeds at a steady pace.

**Education Coordinating Council (ECC):** Council formed by the A Plus Education Reform Act that provides a forum for interagency communication and coordination regarding educational policy and programs. The ECC oversees and reviews all education accountability programs from pre-kindergarten through post-secondary education in Georgia. The ECC is composed of the Governor, the State School Superintendent, the Chairman of the State Board of Education, the Chancellor and the Chair of the Board of Regents, the Director of the Office of School Readiness, the Executive Secretary and the Chair of the Professional Standards Commission and the Commissioner and the Chair of the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education.

**Education for Handicapped Children Act (EHA):** Law passed in 1975 that states that special needs children have the right to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Revised in 1990 to become the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA):** Federal law passed in 1965 that focuses on children from high-poverty communities and students at risk of education failure. The Act authorizes Title I, Safe and Drug Free Schools and Title VII programs.

**Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD):** Disorders characterized by consistently aggressive, impulsive or withdrawn behavior (i.e. schizophrenia). EBDs impair personal, social, academic and vocational skills.

**Empowerment:** Giving educators, parents and students a voice in the decision-making process.

**End-of-Course Tests (EOCT):** Assessments for high school students in core subjects to be determined by the Georgia Board of Education. These tests are still being developed by the Board, but they will eventually replace the Georgia High School Graduation Test. The tests will measure students' acquisition of skills and knowledge described in the Georgia Quality Core Curriculum.

**English Immersion:** Instruction for bilingual students that is entirely in English. Teachers deliver lessons in simplified English, so students can learn English and other academic subjects.

**English as a Second Language (ESOL):** Most commonly includes immersion as well as support to individuals in their native languages. Classes are typically composed of students who speak many different languages, but are not fluent in English. They may attend classes for only a portion of every day to work strictly on English skills or attend for a full day and learn both academics and English.

**Enrichment:** Programs intended to supplement the regular academic curriculum to keep students interested in learning.

**Equalization Grants:** State funding to provide additional assistance to the poorest school districts. Equalization funding aims to reduce the disparities as to how much can be raised through local tax dollars between the wealthiest and poorest school districts in the state.

**Equity:** Equal distribution of funding, technology, facilities, services and equal education opportunities to different schools and groups of students.

**Exceptional Learners:** Students with an IQ in the bottom (mentally challenged) or top (gifted) three percent of the population or who have other physical or mental differences that affect learning. All exceptional learners receive special education.

**Experiential Education:** Education that stresses hands-on experience and activities instead of traditional classroom learning.

**Extended Calendar Schools:** Schools where students attend more than 180 days per year. (i.e. Bethune Elementary in Atlanta is an extended calendar school with 200 days per year.)

## **F**

**Family Connection:** A partnership among Georgia communities and three state agencies ñ Department of Education, Department of Human Resources, Department of Medical Assistance ñ that focuses on children and families at risk.

**Flexible Grouping:** Students are grouped differently depending on the specific activity. In flexible grouping, teachers are encouraged to use a range of grouping and instructional activities.

**Free Lunch Eligibility:** The number of students in a school whose family income makes them eligible to receive free lunch under the National School Lunch Act of 1946.

**Full-Time Equivalent (FTE):** The method of allocating state funds to local school systems. Systems are reimbursed according to a weighted formula that funds the program according to the cost necessary to provide the program.

## **G**

Georgia Association of Partners in Education (GaPIE): Non-profit organization designed to provide leadership in the formation and growth of effective partnerships that ensure success for all students. GaPIE is a part of the National Association of Partners in Education. Through the organization's programs, many businesses and community organizations have formed partnerships with schools to work with faculty, parents and staff to enrich the education of students. These partnerships provide human resources and financial support.

Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT): Given to all high school students until the end-of-course tests are developed. Covers content in mathematics, language arts, science and social studies. Performance levels are reported at the pass and pass plus levels. A score of 500 is needed to pass each section of the Graduation Test. The pass plus scale scores are 538 or greater for English language arts and 535 or greater for math.

Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT): Administered to all 11th grade students. Students are asked to produce a response to a persuasive writing prompt.

Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program-Revised (GKAP-R): A test administered to kindergarten students in Georgia to determine whether they are ready for first grade. Students are evaluated in the areas of literacy, mathematics and social/emotional development through one-on-one, small group and large group instructional settings throughout the year.

Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (GPEE): Founded in 1990 by the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia Economic Developers Association, the Partnership consists of business, education, community and government leaders who share a vision of improved education. Working to be Georgia's foremost change agent in education, the non-profit, non-partisan organization takes lead roles in efforts to shape policy and reform education. The mission of the Partnership is to improve the academic achievement of Georgia students through research, advocacy and communication.

Georgia Schools of Excellence Program: Statewide program that works in conjunction with the Blue Ribbon Schools Program. The program recognizes outstanding Georgia public and private schools and nominates them for the national program.

Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (GTAPP): College coursework and supervised hands-on experience for individuals who hold college degrees and wish to teach in grades K-12, but who have not completed a traditional teacher preparation program.

Gifted: A term used to describe a student who demonstrates a high level of ability and who needs special instructional services to achieve at a level equal to his/her ability. Gifted students have IQ scores in the top three percent of the population.

GOALS 2000: A U.S. Department of Education program that provides grants to states and schools to meet specified national goals.

Grade: An evaluation (normally by letter on a scale of A-F) of a student's performance on an examination, project, paper or in a course.

Grade Equivalent Score: A score that relates achievement on a specific test to the typical performance of students tested in a given month of the school year. The number to the left of the decimal point represents the grade for which the score is typical and the number to the right of the decimal point refers to the school month. (e.g. A grade equivalent score of 5.2 reflects the typical performance of the national sample of the fifth-graders taking the test in the month of October.)

Grade Inflation: Grading in which most student receive grades at the top of the grade scale like A's and B's.

## H

**Hands-On Math, Science:** Teaching math and science by providing students with activities that require them to work with objects instead of working only with paper and pencil and listening to the teacher. The purpose is to help students understand abstract concepts and more closely replicate real-life situations in which such concepts may occur and acquire better attitudes towards math and science.

**Head Start:** A federal program that provides preschoolers of low socio-economic status with education, nutrition, health and social services at special centers based in schools and community settings throughout the country. The program is designed to help prepare disadvantaged children for school.

**Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE):** Funded by the Georgia Lottery, the HOPE program provides qualified Georgia students with tuition assistance in diploma, certificate or degree programs at any public or private college, university or technical institution in the state. To qualify, students must earn a 3.0 GPA in high school, and they must maintain a 3.0 in college to keep the scholarship. Home schoolers can retroactively qualify for the scholarship.

**Heterogeneous Grouping:** A way to organize students with different ability levels in the same class.

**High Stakes Testing:** Making a decision based on a single evaluation or test. For example, a kindergarten student cannot attend first grade unless he or she passes the GKAP-R. For schools and systems, student performance on one test determines whether they will receive salary or funding increases, interventions or sanctions.

**Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS):** The thought processes beyond acquiring and understanding facts; they include using facts, taking ideas apart, creating new ideas and evaluating them.

**Home Schooling:** The practice of teaching children at home rather than sending them to school. The number of home-schooled students has grown substantially over the past two decades.

**Homogeneous Grouping:** A way to organize students with similar ability levels in the same class.

## I

**Illiteracy:** The condition of being unable to read.

**In Loco Parentis:** "In the place of a parent." Legal requirement that a teacher act towards a pupil as a parent could be expected to act. Teachers and schools can be held legally liable for anything that happens to children at school.

**In-School Suspension (ISS):** An alternative to Out-Of-School Suspension for less severe rule infractions. The goal of ISS is to remove students from interactions with their peers. Students are given specific assignments aimed at improving their achievement levels.

**In-Service Workshop:** Workshops attended by teachers on various topics pertaining to education.

**Inclusion:** Term used when special education or ESOL students receive educational services in a general education classroom setting. The students are included in the regular education program rather than being served in individual education classes.

**Independent School:** A private school that is not part of a school system and is funded by tuition and private grants. It must hold a nonprofit status and be accredited by a state or regional education association.

Independent Study: Self-directed learning driven by student interest.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP): A plan developed by a student's parent and teachers that outlines the student's program of study and the particular education services the child receives.

Individualized Instruction: Content and pacing of instruction geared toward students' individual learning styles, abilities, needs and goals.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): A law passed in 1990 that requires public schools to provide a free and appropriate public education to disabled school-aged children ages three through 21.

Inquiry Learning: An instructional method that requires students to use a variation of the scientific method of inquiry to study a topic in depth. Inquiry learning requires students to analyze real world problems, formulate hypotheses, collect and analyze data and draw conclusions.

Instruction: Methods educators use to teach students. Some instructional methods are cooperative learning, small group instruction and hands-on learning.

InTech Training: Program designed to give teachers general technology competency so they can integrate technology into the classroom. By 2006, InTech certification will be required to get or renew a teaching certificate in Georgia.

Integrated Curriculum: Academic and occupational subject matter taught together to emphasize the relationships among the disciplines. Such integration ranges from the introduction of academics into traditional occupational courses to comprehensive programs that organize all instruction around career themes.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ) Tests: Tests that measure a person's purported mental capacity. IQ tests are highly controversial because critics claim the tests only measure a narrow band of intellectual strengths and are biased against minorities. The IQs of about 95 percent of the population are between 70 and 130. Below 70 is considered retarded and above 130 is considered gifted.

Interactive Learning: Students communicate between themselves and with the teacher during the instruction.

Interdisciplinary Learning: Instruction that applies the methodology and language from more than one subject to examine a central issue, problem or topic.

Intersessions: The breaks between sessions in year-round (alternative calendar) schools. Intersessions provide time for remediation and enrichment and allow students who fall behind to get additional instruction.

Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS): Achievement tests given to students throughout the country. Scores usually are reported as percentiles, with scores in the 50th percentile being the national norm. Replaced by the Stanford 9 Achievement tests in Georgia.

## **J**

Job Shadowing: Career exploration activity where a student follows an employee for one or more days to learn about a particular occupation.

**Joint Work:** Shared responsibility for tasks, such as team teaching, curriculum committees or other jobs that create interdependence among teachers. Joint work promotes on-the-job learning by providing opportunities for exchange among teachers.

**Journaling:** Informal writing exercise where students record their thoughts and experiences. By keeping journals, students improve their writing ability in a less intimidating way than formal writing assignments.

## **K**

**Pre-K – 12 (Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12):** This term refers to the educational levels served by the public school systems of the state.

## **L**

**Learning Disability (LD):** A term used in special education to describe a disorder in one of the basic psychological processes. These students may have difficulty in listening, thinking, speaking, writing, spelling or doing mathematical calculations.

**Learning Contract:** An agreement with the school through which a parent or child makes a verbal or written commitment to the child's education.

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** A federal procedural safeguard that requires children with disabilities to be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with students who are not disabled. **Limited-English-Proficient (LEP) Students:** Students who speak a language other than English and have not yet mastered English.

## **M**

**Magnet School:** A school with strong emphasis in a particular subject area (i.e. music, science, drama, math). Students are selected through an application process instead of being assigned based on residence.

**Mainstreaming:** Moving a special education student from a special environment into the regular school environment.

**Manipulatives:** Objects used to help students understand abstract ideas. For example, students bundle straws in groups of 10 to understand the place value of numbers (46 = four bundles of ten and one of six).

**Master Teachers:** Experienced teachers who mentor new teachers, or teachers who are having difficulties in the classroom, to help them become more effective.

**Mastery Learning:** An instructional practice based on the belief that a student's ability to learn depends on the amount of time he or she spends learning, not his or her ability.

**Media Center:** School library and technology resource center. **Mentally Challenged:** Students with an IQ in the bottom three percent of the population. **Mentoring:** Process by which an older student, teacher or other adult works closely with a student, instructing, advising and motivating him or her.

**Merit Pay:** (See Pay for Performance.) **Middle Grades Writing Assessment (MGWA):** Test administered in eighth grade that consists of an evaluation of the student's response to an assigned narrative, persuasive or

expository prompt. Migrant Education: Education programs established to meet the needs of children of farm laborers, who often move from school to school.

Mildly Mentally Handicapped (MiMH) and Moderately Mentally Handicapped (MoMH): Terms used in special education to describe students who have below average learning abilities.

Modeling: Demonstrating a task to students with the expectation that they will copy the model.

Multi-age Grouping: A method of assigning students to a classroom by including students of two or more age levels. Typically students remain in the same class until they have reached a specific skill level or the maximum age for that group.

Multicultural Education: Inclusion on the curriculum of the contributions of many ethnic, geographic, economic and religious cultures. (See Cultural Diversity.)

Multiple Intelligences: Concept of intelligences that includes more aspects of mental ability than IQ. Many educational researchers identify seven intelligences: musical, bodily kinesthetic, logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal.

Multisensory Activity: Instructional approach that emphasizes all five senses to help students learn. For example, in multisensory reading instruction, students use their fingers to trace letters, follow the text or clap along as words are read.

## **N**

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): Often referred to as the National Report Card. National testing program administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). Reading and mathematics tests are given to fourth and eighth grade students nationwide. NAEP reports student performance as average scale scores and by achievement level. Average scale scores reflect the performance of test takers both as a whole and in groups (i.e. by gender, race, etc.). NAEP has three achievement levels: basic (partial mastery), proficient (solid academic performance) and advanced (superior academic performance).

National Board Certification (NBC): Rigorous program administered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards that includes performance-based assessments and peer review. The state and some local school systems reward National Board Certified teachers with additional pay. NBC takes approximately a year to complete and is the top national certification for educators.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS): A nonprofit organization created in 1987 to advance education reform and establish high standards for teachers. NBPTS administers the National Board Certification program to assess and certify teachers in accordance with these standards.

Network: Equipment linked together to enable users to have access to a larger body of knowledge, such as personal computers linked to a larger computer.

Next Generation School Project (NGSP): An initiative of the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education. It is a grassroots effort that encourages local communities to organize themselves to dramatically improve their local schools. For 10 years, schools receive annual grants to give them necessary resources for innovations. Beginning in 2002, schools will receive grants to change the school calendar from the traditional 180 days to a more balanced calendar that features strong intersessions for remediation and enrichment activities.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act: Law passed in 2001 that emphasizes increased accountability for States, school systems and schools and creates greater choice for parents and students, particularly those attending low-performing schools. The law gives more flexibility for States and Local Education Agencies in the use of Federal education dollars, and a stronger emphasis on reading. The law requires all states to implement statewide accountability systems, and allows students attending persistently failing schools to use Title I funds for supplementary education services

Norm Group: A group of students who serve as a standard against which test companies compare the performance of other students.

Norm-Referenced Tests (NRT): Tests that measure students' performance compared to a large, representative group of students nationwide. These tests are not aligned with Georgia's Quality Core Curriculum and help to determine how the state's curriculum compares with national standards.

## **O**

Office of Education Accountability (OEA): Independent agency under the oversight of the Education Coordinating Council (ECC) that will track achievement in Georgia's public schools from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Schools will be rewarded for success or receive help through intervention programs. The OEA will grade schools "A" through "F" on academic achievement standards and improvement over their previous year's performance. The OEA will also produce report cards for post-secondary education institutions.

On-Site Facilitator: A person from a school or district that is trained in a specific instructional model. The facilitator mentors teachers in using the model.

On-Site Specialist: A specialist sent from the instructional model to the school site to assist the school staff with the implementation of the reform.

On-task: Appropriate classroom behavior of which the teacher approves.

Open-ended: Task or inquiry without a single correct answer that allows students to respond in a variety of ways. Open-ended questions usually require higher-ordered thinking.

Overachiever: Term for a student whose performance exceeds his or her abilities. Because this is not possible, the term is a misnomer.

Out-of-Field Teaching: Practice through which teachers are assigned to teach subjects that do not match their training or education.

Outcome Based Education: Goal-oriented plan for education based on the clearly defined results that students are able to demonstrate when they leave school.

## **P**

Pacing: The speed at which information is presented and instruction is delivered. Paired Reading: Program where two people, usually of different abilities, read together. The stronger reader – either a student or parent – helps the other read.

Parent Involvement: Any program or activity that encourages parents to become involved in their child's education. Such programs include parent-teacher conferences, volunteering, helping the child with homework and attending workshops on parenting.

Parental Instruction: Training for parents on how to help their children learn.

Parochial School: A school that is associated with a church or other religious institution.

Pay for Performance (PFP): Plan to pay teachers on the basis of their demonstrated competence in teaching and success in raising student achievement rather than seniority.

Pedagogy: Instructional methods and teaching strategies.

Peer Review: Opportunities for teachers to be observed by colleagues. Peer review helps teachers see how other educators implement reforms or new instructional programs in the classroom.

Peer Support: The encouragement one student offers another within the classroom or within the cooperative learning group as the group works toward a common goal.

Peer Tutoring: An instructional model in which students teach their peers.

Per-pupil Expenditures: Money spent on each student in a given school district. Because public schools are financed in part by local property taxes, there is a disparity in per-pupil expenditures across the state.

Performance Assessment: A way of evaluating students based on a variety of things such as their writing, their experiments and their collections of work, rather than on a standardized test alone. (See Authentic Assessment.)

Performance Criteria: A description of the characteristics that will be judged for a task. Criteria may be holistic, general or specific and are usually expressed as a scoring rubric. (See Rubric.)

Performance Indicators: Specific, well-defined skills that are linked to student achievement. Phonics: A reading instructional strategy to teach letter-sound relationships by having students sound out words.

Portfolio: A collection of student work usually used to assess students. The teacher selects some work and the student chooses some.

Postsecondary Options Program (PSO): A program between public schools and public institutions of higher learning. The student enrolls in classes and earns Carnegie units of credit that count towards high school graduation requirements and credit hours at the college or technical school.

Pre-K (Pre-Kindergarten): Refers to any program designed for students before they are eligible for kindergarten.

Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT): A practice test for students taking the Scholastic Assessment Test. The PSAT is designed to help students identify academic strengths and weaknesses. Since 1997, state funds have paid for PSAT administration to all tenth grade students in Georgia's public schools.

Pretest: Test given before instruction to determine a student's level of performance in a given skill.

Praxis I: Academic skills assessment that tests knowledge in reading, math and writing. The Praxis I is required for initial teacher certification in Georgia.

Praxis II: Subject assessment tests that are required for teacher certification in Georgia. Praxis II tests measure knowledge in particular content areas. For most teaching fields, two Praxis II tests are required.

**Professional Development:** A whole range of activities aimed at improving teaching by providing teachers with necessary skills training and information. Professional development activities range from formal courses and seminars to teacher mentoring and collaboration.

**Professional Standards Commission:** The agency responsible for certifying teachers, school personnel and administrators in the State of Georgia.

**Progressive schools:** Schools with a child-centered approach where the emphasis is on group projects rather than individual performance for grades. Progressive schools emphasize the whole child concept and experiential discovery learning by the child instead of direct instruction led by the teacher.

**Psycho-educational Programs:** Programs located on regular education campuses or in special centers, which provide services to students with severe emotional and behavior disorders or autism.

**Public Engagement:** The involvement of parents and community members in school reform efforts.

**Pull-out:** Removing a child from his/her regular classroom setting for remedial or enrichment coursework.

## **Q**

**Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act:** The legal foundation for education in Georgia passed into law in 1986 with the goal of improving education. It provides the framework for such things as funding, educational programs, and student and teacher assessments.

**Quality Core Curriculum (QCC):** The State of Georgia's mandated minimum guidelines for the curriculum. Objectives are given at each grade level and must be taught. Local systems can add to QCC but they cannot teach less than is mandated.

## **R**

**Readiness for School:** Being physically, emotionally, socially and academically prepared to learn. **Reading Canon:** The complete list of books accepted by a program.

**Reading First:** Initiative included in the No Child Left Behind Act that significantly increases the federal investment in scientifically based reading instruction programs in the early grades. The goal of the program is to ensure every child can read by the end of third grade.

**Reconstitution:** Process through which the state oversees a low performing school (school receiving D or F on a school report card for two or more consecutive years) and directs the duties of the school principal until school performance improves.

**Reflective Practice:** Teachers are encouraged to reflect daily on their teaching to understand which practices are most successful and which needs improvement. Reflection takes various forms, including journaling, portfolio creation and discussions with other teachers, administrators or program facilitators.

**Reform Team:** A group that provides leadership in the planning and implementation of a school reform model. The group usually includes the principal, an on-site facilitator or specialist, teachers and parents.

**Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs):** The primary provider of staff development in Georgia. Georgia's 16 RESAs provide leadership development, strategic planning, school improvement planning and other services to teachers and local schools.

**Remedial Program:** Any program designed to provide specialized help to students having difficulty understanding concepts in basic skills.

**Restructuring:** Major changes in the rules, roles and relationships in education.

**Retention:** Policy that holds back students with failing grades at the end of a school year.

**Rote Learning:** Learning through memorization of facts or repeatedly performing a task.

**Rubric:** A guide for scoring student performance.

## **S**

**Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT):** Standardized test taken by college-bound students to gain admission to College. The SAT tests students' verbal and mathematical reasoning ability. **SAT II: Subject Tests:** Tests that measure knowledge in high school subject areas such as biology, calculus and American History. The SAT IIs are required at many highly competitive colleges and universities. **School Board:** Legislative body of citizens who are elected locally by their fellow citizens to administer their local school system. **School Choice:** Allows parents to enroll their children in the school of their choice. **School Council:** A local school advisory body comprised of the school principal, two teachers, two parents or guardians and two members of the business community. School councils provide advice and recommendations to the principal and the local board of education regarding a variety of issues, including student achievement goals, curriculum and instruction, school and community communications and local school board policies. The A Plus Education Reform Act requires every school to have a school council. **School Improvement Teams:** Teams of master educators that will be assigned by the Department of Education to help diagnose problems in low performing schools as identified by the Office of Education Accountability. Their responsibilities will include reviewing procedures and curriculum, observing staff and assisting in the development of school improvement plans.

**School Resource Officer (SRO):** A law enforcement officer placed in a school who serves as a resource for students, parents, teachers and administrators regarding legal issues. The SRO investigates crimes that occur on school property, acts as a positive role model to students and serves as a link to other agencies that provide preventive and counseling services.

**School Counselor:** A certified professional who provides guidance to all students. School counselors have various responsibilities ranging from preventative counseling and referrals to community organizations to promotion of positive attitudes and choices and vocational assessment and career exploration. **School Service Centers:** Coordinated, comprehensive, unduplicated services to school systems by the Georgia Department of Education, its field offices, Regional Education Services Agencies (RESAs) and neighboring colleges and universities. **School Social Worker (SSW):** Professionals with graduate level training in social work. SSWs work with parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, psychologists and other school staff members to improve students' overall social, emotional, behavioral and adaptive functioning at school. **School-Site Training:** A process for training the school in a new instructional program where a certified specialist comes to the school to train the entire school staff in implementing the reform. **School-to-Work:** Programs ranging from on-the-job training to classes taught by local community colleges designed to prepare non-college bound students to enter the job market. **School Within a School:** A special program, charter school or magnet school that is housed within a regular school. Schools within schools allow districts to experiment with innovative programs and teaching methods using existing facilities. **Scope and Sequences:** A road map outlining the goals for a particular curriculum area and the specific objectives for each grade level. **Seamlessness:** The philosophy of developing one integrated education system from kindergarten through the workforce. The concept fosters communication and cooperation between local school districts, higher-education institutions and the workforce. Seamlessness supports the concept of lifelong learning and encourages the building of bridges so students transition smoothly into the different

phases of their education. Section 504: Federal law that prohibits discrimination against disabled students. Self-esteem: Term denoting a widely accepted psychological aim of education. High self-esteem and a positive sense of one's self translates into higher achievement, greater happiness and more civility to others. Educators debate how much effort should be put into positively reinforcing self-esteem, but there is strong evidence that reinforcement improves student performance.

Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED): Term used in special education that refers to students whose emotions interfere with their classroom performance. Students with SEDs may have an inability to build and maintain satisfactory relationships with peers or teachers, a general mood of unhappiness and a tendency to develop fears associated with school and personal problems. Service Learning: Combines community service with a structured school-based opportunity for reflection. Students acquire skills and knowledge while working in their communities.

Severe Behavior Disorder (SBD): Term used in special education that refers to students who display behaviors that seriously interfere with the learning environment and the individual's ability to benefit from it. These behaviors are demonstrated over a long period of time and significantly extend beyond the norm of acceptable classroom behavior. Site-Based Decision Making: A method of operating a school system in which many decisions traditionally made at the system or state level are made at the school level. Social Promotion: Practice of allowing students who have failed to meet performance standards and academic requirements to pass on to the next grade with their peers instead of completing or satisfying the requirements. Social promotion will end in Georgia for the 2003-2004 school year. Special Education: Special instruction for mentally challenged or gifted students. Special Instructional Assistance (SIA): A state funded program for kindergarten, first and second grade at-risk students. It provides additional funding to the regular instructional program to reduce class size, purchase additional teaching materials and involve parents in their children's education. Special Needs: A student who has disabilities or is at the risk of developing disabilities that may require special education services. Staff Development: An activity or process intended to help educators improve their skills, attitudes, knowledge and/or performance in their roles. Staff development helps teachers stay up-to-date on research, teaching techniques and state law. Standards: Those requirements either in state law or rules passed by the Georgia Board of Education under which Georgia schools operate. Standards-Based Instruction: Instruction that is specifically geared towards meeting standards. All student work is assessed against the standards. Standardized Test: A test taken by many students under identical conditions in which the results are compared statistically to standard norms. Stanford 9 Achievement Test: A norm-referenced test that reflects how well students perform in reading, mathematics, language, science, social science and listening relatively to a nationally representative sample of students in the same grade and tested under the same conditions. This test more closely reflects state's standards than the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. All Georgia students take the test at grades three, five and eight. Scores are reported as percentiles, with a score of 50 being the national norm. State Report Card: Report produced by the Office of Education Accountability for each school in the State of Georgia. School performance is compared to previous school and local school system performance, absolute student achievement standards and comparable school group performance.

State Superintendent of Schools: Elected position that oversees Georgia's K-12 public schools and serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Georgia Department of Education. Student Assistance Program (SAP): Programs that focus on behavior and performance at school. Most SAPs use a referral process to address problems of alcohol and other drug use. Student Empowerment: Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own education in order to improve their achievement and foster a greater enjoyment of learning. Student Support Team (SST): A group of educators at a school who meet to discuss academic and behavior problems of specific students. The Student Support Team makes suggestions to the classroom teacher of ways to help the child improve. The team may also recommend that the child be referred to other programs for special assistance. Summer School Programs: Remedial and enrichment programs conducted for small groups of students in the summer. Most summer school programs are intended to catch students up to their grade-level peers. Support Services: Assistance that includes transportation, childcare, home visits, translators, home visits and referrals to other agencies. Support services are based on the premise that students' families need support, which will enhance the students'

education. Systemic Change: Change that gets to the core of education structure and concepts instead of tinkering with the outer edges. For example, instead of changing the grade scale, authentic assessment is used to determine a student's competency in a given subject area.

## **T**

**Teach for America:** A national nonprofit organization that selects top college graduates in all academic majors to teach for two years in urban and rural hard-to-staff public schools.

**Teacher Collaboration:** Teachers plan, organize or teach together in an effort to improve each teacher's teaching skills.

**Teacher Evaluations:** Methods of assessing teachers' success in improving student achievement. Evaluations may include portfolios, observation and data and other evidence of student achievement.

**Teacher Licensure:** The process by which teachers receive state permission to teach. In Georgia, the Professional Standards Commission oversees teacher licensure and establishes minimum requirements for certification.

**Teacher Networks:** Professional communities of teachers that focus on specific subject matter. Teacher networks seek to deepen teachers' understanding of content and encourage use of new teaching strategies. The National Writing Project and Urban Math Collaboratives are examples of teacher networks.

**Team Teaching:** Any form of teaching where educators work together to teach students. One specific form, which has become quite common in recent years, has two teachers in the classroom teaching simultaneously. In foreign language teaching, team teaching often pairs one teacher, who speaks English, with another, who speaks students' native language.

**Tech-Prep Program:** A program of study that allows high school students to move on to the next level of objectives at either a vocational/technical institute or college.

**Technical Education:** Instruction that prepares a student for employment immediately upon the completion of high school. Such programs range from carpentry to computer-aided design and cosmetology to medical technician programs.

**Teleconferencing:** The term used to describe communicating over distance via technology.

**Thematic Units:** Instruction tied together by key concepts. Teachers integrate information from a variety of disciplines into the instructional units.

**Title I:** A federally funded program for K-12 at-risk students that provides additional help on the basic skills. Title I is the largest federal aid program for elementary and secondary schools. The program provides money to school systems based on the number of low-income families in each district.

**Title II:** A federally funded program that provides assistance to state and local educational agencies and institutions of higher education with teacher education programs. Title II funds programs to improve teaching and learning, reform teacher preparation and certification standards and to develop better performance-based assessment and professional development strategies.

**Title VI:** Part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance, including schools. Title VI prohibits the denial of equal access to education to students with limited proficiency in English. Title VII: A federal program designed to improve the English proficiency of bilingual students. Title IX: Law barring gender discrimination in education facilities that receive federal funds. (Most Title IX cases filed against K-12

schools involve sex equity in athletic programs.) Total Quality Management: A concept for managing schools, which was adopted from the business world, that focuses on client satisfaction and encouraging employees to seek continual improvement. Training of Trainers: A design for training a school in a new instructional method where one or more people are sent to special training and then provide training to the whole school.

Tracking: The practice of dividing students into class size groups, which exist for the major part of the school day or year, based on the student's perceived ability or prior achievement and then designing and delivering instruction to each group.

Transition Plan: Plan separate from the IEP that documents goals for a special education student to aid him or her in making the transition from school to work.

## U

Underachiever: A student who is performing at a significant level below his or her ability. Underachievement most commonly shows up in the most stressful grades: fourth, when students stop learning to read and start reading to learn and ninth with the transition to high school.

## V

Values Education: The process of providing opportunities for all students to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes about the following values specified by the Georgia Board of Education: citizenship, respect for others, respect for self.

Voucher: A state allocation of money given to parents to allow their children to attend a school of the parent's choice, either public or private. Georgia does not allow vouchers.

## W

Whole Child Education: Idea that education should focus on the whole child instead of just academic development. Whole child education places a strong emphasis on social and emotional development and self-esteem. The concept recognizes the essential needs of education, health, mentoring, human services, sports and recreation and arts and culture.

Whole Language: An approach to the teaching of language based on the belief that language is not learned as separate skills and pieces, but as a body of knowledge. Whole language instruction is based on literature and includes reading, listening, speaking and writing. Work-based Learning: Learning activities that involve work experience. Work-based learning integrates academic and occupational curriculum with worksite experience.

## Y

Year-Round Schools: Schools with alternative calendars. Students spend the same number of days in class as those on traditional calendars, but breaks are shorter and more frequent. The most common alternative calendar has 45 days of instruction followed by 15 days of vacation and six-week summer vacations.

Youth Infusion: The principle of intergenerational teamwork and shared decision-making. Youth infusion is gaining popularity in high schools with the hope that seeking student input will make students happier and more willing to follow student policies.

## Z

**Zero Tolerance:** Policies that mandate predetermined consequences or punishments for a specific offense regardless of the circumstances surrounding it.