a guide to supporters of public education
Connections magazine
Let's talk!
The ability to have an open and respectful conversation is a skill that can be learned and continually improved. pg.13

What's Inside: Exhibitors pg.04 • It's a Small World pg.17 • Mentoring Makes A Difference pg.18 & 19 • The Leadership Skill Needed Today pg.22 • Personal Leadership pg.33
SAFETY THROUGH SEPARATION

in SECONDS

Step 1
Threat is identified on Campus

Step 2
Administrator activates SHIELD™ Lockdown

Step 3
SHIELD™ Lockdown System Saves Lives

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404-290-7006  www.shieldlockdown.com
WHAT'S INSIDE...

GSBA Executive Director Valarie Wilson and GSSA Executive Director John Zauner give a recap of the GSBA/GSSA Annual conference for GSBAtv crew to post on social media.

Wouldn’t you agree that COMMUNICATION is key to everything? Let’s talk about it.

When we need to communicate with a broad audience, the GSBA Communications Department uses several social media platforms. Prevent FOMO – fear of missing out. “Like” and “Follow” us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn. The members only GSBA Hub app for mobile and desktop applications is also a great way for school board members and superintendents to stay informed.

Our GSBAtv team captures informative videos at our conferences and posts them immediately on social media to reach the broadest possible audience. It’s the next best thing to being there.

At GSBA, we are constantly communicating with our members, business friends, and public education supporters and stakeholders. There is never a shortage of topics to discuss when it comes to educating Georgia’s 1.7 million students and serving the 180 board and superintendent governance teams.

Over our 68-year history, GSBA has endeavored to make an impact on public education by engaging people in conversation from all walks of life from the local level all the way to our state and nationally elected officials.

Keeping lines of communication open is a priority for us. We regularly meet with groups, such as the GSBA Rural Taskforce, GSBA Superintendents Advisory Council, and other education associations, just to name a few. Most recently, we started the GSBA Podcast and we formed the GSBA Youth Advisory Council to give high school students the opportunity to provide meaningful input to school board members. We like listening to diverse groups and perspectives.

For more information on how to stay in touch with us, email information@gsba.com.
Exhibits
December 5, 2019
7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
December 6, 2019
7:00 a.m. – 11:45 p.m.
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GSBA.COM
**ABM Education Services (78)**
ABM champions cost controls and sustainability for K-12 schools, rescuing operational dollars from inefficiency and empowering district leaders to support and improve learning environments. Randy Gehman, randy.gehman@abm.com, 404.333.9041, abm.com

**Action Based Learning (90)**
Kinesthetic classroom furniture manufacturer and provider of action-based learning professional development training for K-12 educators. Lah Emmanuel, Lah@kidsfit.com, 470.955.9655, ABLLAB.com

**AlertPoint Security (54)**
Equipping your staff with proven crisis management tools to Know Sooner, Respond Faster, and Communicate Better. We are the integrated crisis management platform designed to accelerate crisis awareness, response and management. Tony Hunter, tonyh@alertpointsecurity.com, 800.661.9158, alertpointsecurity.com

**ALL PRO DAD (67)**
All Pro Dad is a simple program engaging dads and kids in developing their relationship through interactive character-based experiences. Keith Schumacher, keith.schumacher@familyfirst.net, 678.859.6139, allprodadchapters.com

**Allied Powers LLC (84)**
Our product employs the latest in Electric Muscle Stimulation technology. With a fully rechargeable lithium battery, our devices are portable and easy to use. Josh, alliedpowersllc@gmail.com, 702.283.6401, eMP10.com

**Altman + Barrett Architects (1)**
Altman Barrett Architects specializes in K12 facility design, renovations, masterplanning and athletic facilities. Walter Altman, waltman@altmanbarrettarchitects.com, 229.585.9018, altmanbarrettarchitects.com

**Ameresco (59)**
Ameresco, Inc. provides value-added energy efficiency, renewable energy, and infrastructure upgrade solutions to support our K-12 customers’ unique needs. Taneshia Marshall, tmarshall@ameresco.com, 404.908.5367, ameresco.com

**American Fidelity Assurance (33)**
Our goal is to provide employers and employees with benefits and services that add value, while also helping employers control costs. Jimmy Jackson, james.jackson@americanfidelity.com, 800.639.0850, americanfidelity.com

**Audio Enhancement (6)**
Visit Audio Enhancement to learn how SAFEty, intercom, paging, and bells can be integrated and managed from one intuitive platform. Kevin Mitchell, Kevin.Mitchell@AudioEnhancement.com, 561.306.3327, AudioEnhancement.com

**Beck Facility Services (69)**
Custodial Services to K-12 Schools. Matt Morrison, mmorrison@becksupport.com, 678.551.3429, becksupport.com

**Breaux & Associates (51)**
Breaux & Associates Architects (BXA) is a Georgia-based full-service Architectural Firm specializing in Educational Facility Planning and Design. Betsy Mellott, bmellott@bxarch.com, 678-585-4508, bxarch.com

**BuyBoard (31)**
GSBA BuyBoard is a purchasing cooperative that saves time and money while supporting public education in Georgia. Jennifer Lansden, Jennifer.Lansden@buyboard.com, 512.483.7105, buyboard.com

**Campus Benefits (55)**
Campus Benefits is a full-service employee benefits brokerage/compliance and consulting firm serving public school entities.
throughout the Southeast. Please stop by our exhibit to say “hello” and hear the many ways our team serves Georgia public schools. Steven Johnson, sjohnson@campusbenefits.com, 866.433.7661, campusbenefits.com

**Carroll Daniel Construction (39)**
For more than 70 years, Carroll Daniel Construction has been built on a strong foundation of integrity, becoming known as an industry leader in building education facilities. Chris Erwin, cerwin@carrolldaniel.com, 770.536.3241, carrolldaniel.com

**Centegix (34)**
In a crisis, every second matters. Centegix saves lives by allowing anyone to request assistance or initiate emergency protocols from anywhere instantly. Rob Kent, rkent@centegix.com, 678.323.9020, centegix.com

**Charles Black Construction Co., Inc. (22)**
Safe, Quality Work, On Time, and In Budget - Established in 1968. Haley Hampton, haley@charlesblackconstruction.com, 706.865.3155, charlesblackconstruction.com

**Classworks (50)**
Classworks® is a comprehensive, online intervention solution that includes assessment, instruction, reporting, and progress monitoring in one intuitive platform. Chris Thomas, cthomas@classworks.com, 404.632.4799, classworks.com.

**Conference Information Desk (72)**
Need assistance? Have questions? GSBA Staffers are here to help.

**DreamBox Learning (64)**
An adaptive, online K-8 math program designed to complement classroom instruction and deliver results. At DreamBox, we are closing the gap between the way students live and the way they learn by leveraging adaptive technologies that promote student success. Katie House, katie.house@dreambox.com, 770-626-1171; Kimberleigh Dubois, Kimberleigh.dubois@dreambox.com, 919-260-3175, dreambox.com

**Dukes, Edwards & Dukes (66)**
67 Years of Building Projects that Resonate Excellence. Jacques Ware, shorthope413@gmail.com, 229.395.8942, dukesedwardsdukes.com

**Ernie Morris Enterprises, Inc. (41)**
Ernie Morris Enterprises, Inc. is a full-service furniture dealer specializing in the K-12 educational market. Our complete “turn-key” services offer everything you will need to outfit your 21st Century school. Adin Burchfield, Regional Manage, aburchfield@erniemorris.com, 678.771.8364, erniemorris.com

**ESS (32)**
K-12 Education Staffing and Management. Liz Strunk de Wet, LStrunk@ess.com, 704.770.6719, ess.com

**Essentials in Education (70)**
EIE provides quality high school English/Bible Literacy materials that are standards-based, instructionally sound, and encourage high character. Deborah Hicks, deborah@essentialsineducation.org, 405.206.2665, essentialsineducation.org

**Five Points Benefits Solutions (44)**
Employee Lifecycle Management for PC Genesis and other payroll users. Five Points Benefits Solutions specializes in technology solution benefits, human resources and wellness programs. Our platform, MyBenefitsChannel.net, is the first rules-based ACA tracking and reporting solution designed specifically for schools. Think of it as a collection of powerful apps designed to reduce workloads and save money. James Smith, info@mybenefitschannel.com, 615.791.0404, mybenefitschannel.net

**Forecast5 Analytics (68)**
Forecast5 Analytics increases financial and organizational performance by empowering local government leaders with analytics. We develop state-of-the-art technology used for data discovery and decision support. Eric Smith, esmith@forecast5analytics.com, 630.955.7551, forecast5analytics.com

**Freeman Exhibit Services (91)**
Services for exhibitors only.

**GA Music Educators Assoc. (62)**
GMEA has provided music education events and experiences for music teachers and students since 1935. Georgia Music Educators Association, Cecil Wilder, cecilw@gmea.org, 678.289.9299, gmea.org

**Georgia Career Information Center (19)**
The Georgia Career Information Center (GCIC) works with all public middle schools and high schools to assist students in their college and career readiness requirements. GCIS and GCIS Junior are available at no cost. Katina L. Raines, Manager, GCIC Marketing and Training Manager, kraines@gsu.edu, 404.413.1725, gcic.edu
Georgia Power Energy Services (20)
Georgia Power Energy Services is a leader in helping Georgia school districts make needed energy improvements to your schools and use the energy savings to pay for the upgrades. Matt Otani, Project Manager Sales, mmotani@southernco.com, 404.330.4583, gapower.com

Georgia School Boards Association (24)
All GSBA departments and services are represented here for your convenience. GSBA Risk Management Services, SIMBLI by eBoardSolutions, Advocacy, Legislative and Policy Services, Communications, Board Development, Superintendent Search Services, Member Engagement, Financial Services. GSBA staff are here to help and answer your questions. 770.962.2985 or 800.226.1856. gsba.com

Get More Math! (89)
Get More Math is a math practice software program built by a math teacher to increase student long-term retention. Jerry Whitehead III, jwhitehead@getmoremath.com, 209.288.5568, getmoremath.com

Goodwyn Mills & Cawood, Inc. (7)
Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood (GMC) is one of the largest architecture and engineering firms in the Southeast, with offices located throughout Georgia, in addition to Alabama, Florida, South Carolina and Tennessee. GMC takes great pride in serving our communities through the transformative work we do. We strive to serve our communities with quality, integrity, creativity and care. Amy Bell, amy.bell@gmcnetwork.com, 770.919.5038, gmcnetwork.com

GSBA Conference Registration Desk (92)
Conference headquarters. Registration. Check in to get your conference credentials, tote bag, instructions, etc. How may we assist you?

GSBAtv (82)
The conference is captured through a series of scheduled interviews and those videos are placed on various social media platforms. “Like” and “Follow” Georgia School Boards Association on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube. Post your photos and videos on #gsbagssa19. Chris Triplett, ctriplett@gsba.com, 770.995.4380, gsba.com #GSBAtv

Here Comes The Bus by CalAmp (71)
Here Comes The Bus is an easy-to-use website and app that enables parents to see the location of their child’s school bus on a smartphone, tablet, or personal computer. Jeff Lanier, Regional Business Development Manager, Cal/Amp- Synovia Solutions, 1.877.SYNOVIA, 678.822.3144, herecomesthebus.com

Interact Alert (88)
In an emergency, is your staff equipped to act? Empowering you to see, hear, assess and respond. Haywood Pulliam, hpulliam@cenergyit.com, 678.358.1916, interactalert.com

Interquest Detection Canines of GA (4)
Interquest provides substance abuse prevention programs incorporating education, friendly canine deterrence, and measurable results. Our dogs are trained to find drugs, guns, medication and alcohol. Ashley Marratt, amarratt@interquestga.com, 404.891.1432, interquestk9.com

James W Buckley & Assoc. (8)
Full service architectural firm specializing in education facility design. Amy Toler, apt@jwbuckley.com, 912.447.1080, jwbuckley.com

JCI Contractors (35)
Since our founding in 1989, JCI Contractors has specialized in the construction of educational facilities. Jack Loyd, jloyd@jcicontractors.com, 229.985.4444, jcicontractors.com

John A Tuten & Associates, Architects (75)
Achieving client satisfaction with complete Architectural Services providing projects on time and within budget for over 40 years. John A. Tuten, johnt@johntuten.com, 912.265.8686, johntuten.com

Knighton’s Tower Garden (83)
Perfect for your school gardens and home needs. Meet the gardening system that allows you to grow fresh organic and nutritious vegetables anywhere and anytime. Lawrence Knighton, lawrenceknighton@gmail.com, 229.291.0562, lknighton.towergarden.com

Manley Spangler Smith (37)
Manley Spangler Smith Architects is an architectural firm that specializes in the design of educational facilities in Georgia. Allison Smyly, asmly@mssarchitects.com, 770.227.5473, mssarchitects.com
McKnight Construction Company (77)
At McKnight Construction Co, we pride ourselves delivering quality construction with traditional values. Let’s talk about building the future for your children together. Jane Marie Kinsey, Vice President, janemarie@mcknightconstructionco.com, 706.863.7784, mcknightconstructionco.com

Mobile Modular (74)
Mobile Modular has been a leading provider of relocatable classrooms and modular buildings to school districts for over 30 years. We pride ourselves on delivering quality construction with traditional values. Let’s talk about building the future for your children together. David Etzel, David.Etzel@mobilemodular.com, 410.937.3238, mobilemodular.com

Musco Sports Lighting (3)
Musco has shaped the history of sports lighting since 1976. The company’s TLC for LED™ technology delivers unmatched light quality, control, efficiency, and reliability. Rob Staples, rob.staples@musco.com, musco.com

Naviance by Hobsons (26)
Naviance by Hobsons is a comprehensive platform for college, career, and life readiness utilized by over 40% of high schools in the US. We help districts and schools align student strengths and interests to postsecondary goals, improve student outcomes and connect learning to life. Amenah Al-Sherri, amenah.alsherri@hobsons.com, 662.801.9172, Naviance.com

No Kid Hungry Campaign (5)
Did you know that research shows school breakfast helps students succeed in the classroom? Did you know that school districts are leaving federal dollars on the table when they have low participation in their meal programs? The Georgia School Breakfast Leadership team, a public-private partnership, is here to help. Stop by to learn more about free resources available to help your district. Eleni Towns, 202.695.1290, GeorgiaSchoolBreakfast@strength.org and state.nokidhungry.org/georgia

OpenBook (63)
OpenBook offers a literacy software program researched and developed by IBM. Bryan Wallace, openbooksoutheast@gmail.com, 770.380.0489, Stephanie Wallace EdS, openbooksoutheast@gmail.com, 678.235.8542, Stephen Cunningham Phd, cunningham@openbooklearning.com, 502.727.8604, academy.openbooklearning.com

Outdoor Aluminum (61)
Manufacturer of grandstands, custom angle frame bleachers, standard bleachers, press boxes and other related seating. Eddie Spears, espears@outdooraluminum.com, 800.225.4249, outdooraluminum.com

Panic Preventer (87)
Are you sure that your teachers know what to do during a lockdown? Our products will help! Providing school safety products that assist in keeping classrooms calm during a code red lockdown. Derek Brooks, Derek@brandywineprinting.com, 770.772.6136, brandywineprinting.com

Parrish Construction Group (14)
Parrish Construction Group is comprised of talented, hard-working construction professionals, who together have built a solid reputation for providing high performance construction services throughout our Georgia community. Dave Yuhas, Director of Business Development, 404.388.0268, parrishconstruction.com

PowerSchool (86)
PowerSchool helps schools and districts efficiently manage instruction, learning, grading, attendance, assessment, analytics, state reporting, special education, student registration, talent, finance and HR. Amie Briggs, amie.briggs@powerschool.com, 916.693.7737, powerschool.com

Propane Education & Research Council (79)
Propane autogas school buses power the ultimate peace of mind for transportation officials and parents. Hundreds of districts across the U.S. are adopting propane autogas for proven safety, reduced emissions, and better savings. Propane Education & Research Council, info@propane.com, 202.452.8975, propane.com

R.K. Redding Construction, Inc. (45)
Providing General Contracting and Construction Management Services throughout Metro Atlanta, Georgia and the Southeast. Casey Pollard, rcp@rkredding.com, 770.537.1845, rkredding.com

Schneider Electric (76)
Schneider Electric ENABLES Districts to accomplish their goals on long term infrastructure and technology plans in your schools. Trent Egbert, trent.egbert@se.com, 470.303.1668, se-enable.com
SchoolStatus (43)
SchoolStatus turns your data analytics into parent conversation to drive student success, all with premium support and unlimited training included. We provide a student lifecycle software solution that is simple, secure and paperless to engage the community and generate funds for the school district. Mark Sharp, mark@schoolstatus.com, 404.398.1332, schoolstatus.com

Scribbles (29)
We provide a student lifecycle software solution that is simple, secure and paperless to engage the community and generate funds for the school district. Bridget Jones, Bridget.Jones@scribesoft.com, 704.525.492, scribesoft.com

SES (57)
Home of PaddyNet. A full-service Medicaid Consulting Firm. Robin Blanchard, RBlanchard@speced.org, 800.565.2162, speced.org

SFE - Southwest Foodservice Excellence (42)
SFE is a culinary-based foodservice management company dedicated exclusively to K-12 nutrition. Scott Hood, scott.hood@sfellc.org, 480.551.6550, sfellc.org

RA-LIN and Associates (11)
RA-LIN and Associates has become one of the most respected providers of construction services in the Southeast. Tonya Jackson, tonya.jackson@ra-lin.com, 770.834.4884, ra-lin.com

Sheridan Construction Co. (60)
Sheridan Construction is one of the oldest, most experienced full-service general contractors in Georgia for new construction and renovation work. Christy Kovac, ckovac@sheridanconstruction.com, 478.743.1578, sheridanconstruction.com

SHIELD Lockdown Systems (23)
SHIELD Lockdown System is a patented school lockdown system for emergency situations. SHIELD - Protecting Students Daily, Scott Ethridge, sethridge@shieldlockdownsystems.com, 478.244.5637, shieldlockdown.com

Sodexo School Services (2)
Food Service and Facilities Management. Chas Harris, chas.harris@sodexo.com, 901.846.8316, sodexoUSA.com

Southern A & E, LLC (18)
Southern A&E, LLC is a full-service architecture and engineering design firm specializing in educational, athletic, and commercial design. Stephen McCune, AlA, NCARB, smccune@southernae.com, 770.819.7777, southern.com

Southern Bleacher Company (27)
Stadiums, Grandstands, Outdoor Aluminum Bleachers, Press Boxes. Reece Rogers, rogers@southernbleacher.com, 800.433.0912, southernbleacher.com

SP Design Group (21)
SPDG Architects and Engineers is a leader in K12 Education design and we are pleased to be a part of the GSBA winter conference. Rodney Wilson, rww@spdesigngrp.com, 478.737.4068, spdesigngrp.com

Sports Turf Company, Inc. (80)
Sports Turf is a leader in building safer, better performing, longer lasting athletic facilities. Synthetic Turf, Natural Grass, Tracks, Courts. Scott Powers, scott@sportsturf.net, 770.832.8691, sportsturf.net

SRJ Architects Inc. (25)
Smart Ideas - Smart Buildings. David Guerra, dguerra@srjarchitects.com, 229.436.9877, srjarchitects.com

Sturdisteel (38)
Outdoor stadium seating manufacturer, press box manufacturer. Gary Wilson, gwilson@sturdisteel.net, 800.433.3116, www.sturdisteel.net

Swofford Construction, Inc. (28)
Swofford Construction is a commercial contracting firm with over 40 years of experience, specializing in education, professional, institutional and industrial facilities. Joe Tuggle, jtuggle@swoffordconstruction.com; Scott Swofford, sswoffordconstruction.com, Ken Mitchell, kmitchell@swoffordconstruction.com; Chelsea Bowers, cbowers@swoffordconstruction.com, 678.945.8988, swoffordconstruction.com

Terrazzo Promotion Comm. (56)
With a membership of terrazzo contractors & suppliers, the Terrazzo Promotion Committee actively promotes the use of the original recycled flooring choice – Terrazzo! George Hardy, tpcterrazzo@gmail.com, 703.431.2711, terrazzo-info.org

TQ Constructors, Inc. (81)
Since inception in 1993, TQ Constructors, Inc. has established itself as a quality General Contractor and Construction Manager. TQ Constructors has continuously grown as a firm capable of managing a wide range of construction projects while demonstrating the expertise to ensure that each project finishes within budget, on time, and above all client expectations. Dr. Kim Corley, kcorley@tqconstructorsinc.com, 912.293.6999, tqconstructorsinc.com
**Underwriters Safety & Claims (30)**
US&C is one of the leading Third-Party Claims Administrators in the country for Property, Liability and Workers’ Compensation. We were established in 1941 in Louisville, KY and service clients’ claim management needs throughout the country, with specific concentration in the Southeastern United States. Joe Zichettiella, joe@uscky.com, 800.928.9096, ext.229, uscky.com

**Velux America, LLC (49)**
Velux is the worldwide leader in skylights and daylighting solutions with a wide range of solutions. Lewis Burton, lewisburton@jburtoncompany.com, 770.938.2730, jeburtoncompany.com

**Waterford Institute (58)**
Waterford.org seeks to blend the best aspects of learning science, mentoring relationships, and innovative technologies to form community, school, and home programs that deliver excellence and equity for all learners. Jami Marino, jamimarino@waterford.org, 678.787.3229, waterford.org

**Yancey Bus Sales/Service (73)**
Yancey Bus Sales & Service is your full-service provider for Blue Bird Bus sales, parts and service across Georgia. We have 12 fully staffed parts and service facilities across the state to better serve you. We also supply many of your needs for other makes and models of buses and we are proud to be the largest and best outfitted parts, maintenance and repair provider for buses in Georgia. Shooter Roberts 404.606.2367 shooter_roberts@yanceybus.com

**YouScience, LLC (85)**
YouScience is an aptitude-based career guidance platform. Users uncover their talents to find their best-fit career. Rich Thompson, rich@youscience.com, 770.361.0408, youscience.com
We’ve set the bar pretty high.

BuyBoard™ has a long history of being a trusted, transparent, experienced purchasing source for our members. Why is that?

- We undertake the **competitive procurement process** for you.
- We **save you time and money** with competitive pricing, administrative efficiency, and quality vendors.
- We offer a **wide range of commodities, contracts, and vendors**.
- The cooperative is **administered by a nonprofit**.
- Our governing board is composed of **members**.
- We **support** public education and local governments.
- We **listen** to members’ needs.

Maybe it’s time to ask the question: Can other cooperatives clear the bar?

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Jennifer Lansden
Assistant National Manager
512-483-7105
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Building Student Conversation Skills into Social-Emotional Learning

Online role-play is one way that schools can prepare students with conversation skills that support social-emotional learning.

A supportive school climate is built on strong relationships, strong relationships are built on trust, and trust is built on good communication. These connections with others are powerful protective factors and build resilience in students. How are we as educators, mental health specialists, parents, and mentors ensuring that we foster positive communication with and among our students?

One key way to promote positive communication in our schools and communities is to teach and model what effective conversations look like. The ability to have an open and respectful conversation is a skill that can be learned and continually improved.
Companies have long known that providing their employees with professional development opportunities around emotional intelligence and communication has a significant impact on improving workplace culture. Schools too are focusing on these skills with an emphasis on teaching social and emotional competencies to students.

Solid evidence has shown that a core set of social and emotional competencies are highly predictive of success in school and life. These same competencies are at the same time the foundational skills of a good communicator.

Two social and emotional competencies to students stand out when it comes to conversations:

1. **Building empathy:** part of social awareness, empathy is a fundamental people skill that takes the form of identifying with others, taking perspective, and responding and listening to others.

2. **Connectedness:** part of relationship skills, connectedness is seen in our ability to participate in conversations, make friends, help others, show respect for others, and ask for help.

Should schools teach student conversation skills?

When Kognito worked with subject matter experts to develop Friend2Friend, it was designed to give schools and communities a tool to teach these skills. This learning model was then built on gaming technology, a platform that students find highly engaging.

In the simulation, middle and high school students learn effective and motivational communication skills and are able to practice them in a simulated conversation with a friend. Throughout the conversation, they receive feedback on their responses. Through thought bubbles, they are able to see how their questions and responses make their virtual friend feel.

Over 15,000 youth have taken Friend2Friend across the U.S. The recent release of a new lesson plan filled with several reinforcement activities equips educators with a broader curriculum focused on strengthening their students’ empathy and connectedness.

The goal is to build a generation of youth equipped with emotional intelligence and communication skills to not only thrive in school, but to succeed throughout their lives.

**How Can Conversations Be Taught?**

Learn more about Friend2Friend or try out a demo: [kognito.com](http://kognito.com)
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World Languages & Global Workforce Initiatives

It’s a Small World After All

A coalition of federal and state funded language and business-oriented partners is coming together to establish the Greater Atlanta Coalition for Global Education and Research (GAcGEAR).

The Greater Atlanta Coalition for Global Education and Research seeks to align global educational programs K-20 in the Atlanta region with the greater international economic efforts currently underway by numerous state and local agencies.

The coalition’s goal is to foster a dialogue to create a unified global education and economic vision for workforce development in the area of language education and global competencies for the greater Atlanta region. Another goal is to create greater synergy of effort and focus toward building the essential linguistic and intercultural skills required for the regions’ global workforce and further enhance the economic advantage of Georgia in the region’s preeminence in the global 21st century marketplace.

Recently, representatives from the interpreting and translation business community sat down together with members of the world language education community for the very first Georgia Language Industry and Education Summit. The event included presentations from several Language Service Providers, district world language leadership, The Atlanta Association of Interpreters and Translators (AAIT), the Medical Interpreters of Georgia (MING) as well as representatives from legal translation and interpreting and American Sign Language.

A second summit is planned for February of 2020. The goal of this group is to foster dialogue and the exchange of information between all participants and to work toward building greater articulation between world language talent at the high school level and the needs of this growing industry.

To find out more about these initiatives and other programs, such as the International Skills Diploma Seal, Georgia Seal of Biliteracy and Dual Language Immersion, contact Patrick Wallace, Program Specialist for World Languages and Global Workforce Initiatives, Georgia Department of Education, pwallace@doe.k12.ga.us
Construction students from Fulton Schools College and Career Academy in Union City, part of Fulton County Schools, visited RA-LIN to observe a scaffolding lesson. Later, they met with RA-LIN’s current cohort of construction students from Carrollton High School of Carrollton City Schools. The cohort was able to share their RA-LIN experience and projects with the Academy students. RA-LIN provided lunch for the students and conducted a lunch and learn session about the various job opportunities in the construction industry.

“We’re committed to building relationships and collaborating with these school systems to ensure students are ready for the future!”

- Tonya Jackson, RA-LIN Business Development Manager

For more information, contact Ashley Stewart-McMillan, Work-Based Learning Coordinator, stewartat@fultonschools.org, 470-254-0920.
Community-Based Mentoring

Studies show that successful mentoring programs help students develop social skills, improve their school achievement and graduation rates, build character, and many other benefits.

Gwinnett County Public Schools developed a Community-Based Mentoring program to connect caring adults in the community with male and female students in grades 4 through 12 to provide guidance, encouragement, and support to help them become successful young adults, both in and out of school.

While school counselors, teachers, and family members all play a role in keeping students in school and learning, the involvement of a community mentor can make a meaningful connection.

The GCPS Community-Based Mentoring Program designed for girls started in 2018.

Nury Castillo Crawford leads the Community-Based Mentoring Program for Hispanic students which began in February 2019. She finds both personal and professional pride in supporting, elevating and motivating the students. Hispanic and Latino students have the highest dropout rate and thus the lowest graduation rate locally, statewide and nationally. Being a first-generation immigrant and having immigrated to the United States when she was ten years old, Crawford sees herself in the students she serves and sees her own parents in the parents she is assigned to empower.

The program is supported by concerned businesses so that students can experience college/career fairs, community service projects, leadership camp, field trips and more. The Community Based Mentoring Program offers enrichment experiences for the parents, as well.

For more information about the GCPS Community-Based Mentoring Program, how to start one, or how to support one in your community, call: 770-682-8086
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Empathy is the most important leadership skill needed today!

By Bridgette Hyacinth

In this digital age, there is a big disconnect between leaders and the people they lead. Many managers think they are doing a great job but when you ask the people they lead, it’s quite the opposite. Many employees feel unappreciated and undervalued. Employee engagement is at an all time low. What seems to be missing link? Empathy.

Many organizations are focused on achieving goals no matter what the cost to employees. If we treat people only as the means to an end, we will never have their loyalty. Treat your people right. Great leaders are concerned about getting the job done as well as the well-being of those under their care. It doesn’t mean being overly attentive or soft but demonstrate that you value people.

We tend to confuse empathy with sympathy; empathy is really being able to understand the emotions and needs of others. It’s putting yourself in their shoes.

Lauralee emailed me this:

“I worked for a company in Brussels a few years ago when my brother (who was living in the USA) had cancer. In that year, I had 10 weeks leave visiting him & then, when he died, attending his funeral). When I asked my boss, Eric how I repay the company for all these extra holidays, he simply replied “they weren’t holidays, don’t worry about it.” This attitude was not isolated & reflected the company culture . . . to this day, it was the best company I ever worked at & Eric was the best boss I ever had . . . I would walk over hot coals for him!”

If you want to increase employee engagement and loyalty. Pretty simple! Show people that you genuinely care! Sometimes it’s the little things we do that counts the most. It’s the simple things people remember. The thoughtful gesture, the kind word, the much needed support. It’s doesn’t cost much to show employees you genuinely care, but it can make the biggest difference in keeping them loyal, happy and engaged.

“Nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care”

— THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Without empathy, you can’t build a team, inspire followers or elicit loyalty. Leaders that possess this trait always make time for people.

Empathy and listening go hand in hand. Why? Because listening shows you care. You can’t show empathy if you do not listen. Good listening skills is fast becoming an endangered species due to information overload and shortened attention span. The quality of our listening determines the quality of our influence. Employees want to be heard and they want to be respected. Listening transmits that kind of respect and builds trust.

Brigette Hyacinth is the author of The Future of Leadership: Rise of Automation, Robotics and Artificial Intelligence
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Verbalize the emotion of others:
Empathy acknowledges emotion. Acknowledgement isn’t agreement.

“It seems like you feel discouraged.”

I recently led a team in an empathy exercise. First, I told them I was intimidated by a future opportunity. I asked them to tell me how I was feeling.

Empathy made me feel surprisingly optimistic and strong. They didn’t offer solutions. They verbalized my emotion. People rise after they feel understood.

Empathy applies to bright and dark emotion.
Don’t reserve empathy for sadness. Connect by celebrating-with.

“You must feel thrilled to have this opportunity.”

**TIP:** Notice positive emotion when progress needs to continue.

Focus on others.
Keep “you” in your language. You might say, “I think you must feel overwhelmed.” Try saying, “YOU must feel overwhelmed.”

“I” moves conversations away from others. “You” keeps others front and center.

There’s a place to say, “I know how you feel.” Or, “I’ve been through something like this.” But use “I” sparingly.

Seek affirmation of your understanding.
Am I understanding you? Do you think I get what’s going on for you? Am I getting how you’re feeling?

If you’re on target, connection is strengthened. Hearts open.

When you misunderstand, adapt.
Empathy says, “It seems like you’re worried about missing your target. Am I understanding you?” They say, “No. Really I’m angry that my target was set too high.” “Ah. I hear you. You’re angry that your target was set too high.”

Answer emotion before offering answers.
The rush to fix people results in frustration, resistance, and discouragement.

“Ears remain closed until people feel understood.”

Influence requires a willing heart. Hearts open AFTER people feel understood.

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**Dan Rockwell** is the author of the blog called Leadership Freak, the most socially shared leadership blog on the Internet according to the Center for Management and Organization Effectiveness. leadershipfreak.blog/ This is a reprint from his blog post How To Express Empathy Like A Leader.
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Leadership is Personal

By Dr. Michael R. McGough

A significant characteristic of most successful organizational leaders is their ability to lead themselves. Personal leadership is essential, if organizational leadership is to be achieved with any degree of effectiveness. Those who are effective personal leaders tend to demonstrate a number of critical attributes.

**These include:**
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- They make the most of what they’ve got.
- They appreciate personal freewill.
- They embrace change by adapting, making accommodations, and keeping their cool.

High functioning personal leaders also share a common belief about the power they possess. They know and appreciate that they are not the most powerful person in the world. They also know that they are indeed the powerful person in their individual worlds. They strive to make the most of the power they have in their own lives. They know that when they do, they are better enabled to provide strength and power to the organizations they serve and lead.


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