



**Georgia Staff Development Council  
2830 Fawnwood Circle  
Valdosta, Georgia 31602**

March 25, 2010

Dear Fellow Educators,

The Georgia Staff Development Council (GSDC) would like to share our position on the recently proposed HB 1307 and SR 1199, suspending for five years the requirements for certification renewal and establishing a Certification and Professional Learning Task Force, on which GSDC will have a seat. GSDC supports the intent of this legislation, but we have some concerns about how it may be interpreted.

GSDC has been a leader in the effort to move our schools and systems beyond the belief that professional learning is only measured in “contact hours” and “seat time”. GSDC recently led an effort to revise the Georgia State Board of Education Professional Learning Rules. The committee’s yearlong work resulted in the recommendation that job-embedded professional learning, which leads to improved instruction and student achievement, be the driving force behind teacher recertification, not contact hours. We believe that the Georgia Department of Education and the Professional Standards Commission share these beliefs as well. We anticipate that the work of the proposed task force will lead to GSDC’s recommendations coming to fruition. We hope all of you will support the task force to this end and be prepared to add your voice to the deliberations of this task force.

However, GSDC has some concerns as well.

GSDC is concerned that the temporary suspension of PLUs for certification renewal for five years not be misinterpreted as also a suspension of the need for continued high quality job-embedded professional learning. Our quest as educators for successful schools and high achieving students must not slow down for even one day. The requirements of both state and federal mandates, particularly No Child Left Behind and Georgia’s rising Annual Measurable Objectives, will continue to demand that teachers meet the needs of all learners. Research and our own experience demonstrates that well planned, high impact, job-embedded professional learning is the surest route to meet these demands.

Another concern has to do with funding. GSDC understands that all education programs are facing cuts in their budgets. We are all resigned to these cuts. We do not want the current proposals to result, however, in the elimination of state funding of professional learning all together. We have voiced this concern to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Youth and we hope that you will do so too.

[http://www.legis.ga.gov/legis/2009\\_10/house/Committees/education/gahed.htm](http://www.legis.ga.gov/legis/2009_10/house/Committees/education/gahed.htm)

[http://www.legis.ga.gov/legis/2009\\_10/senate/education.php](http://www.legis.ga.gov/legis/2009_10/senate/education.php)

The voice of GSDC represents teachers, school administrators, superintendents, state level educators, and educational consultants from across the state of Georgia. Georgia has been nationally recognized for its progressive approach to professional learning and school improvement efforts. If we hope to continue to lead the nation in improving student achievement, it is imperative that we provide our educators with professional learning that empowers them to meet the needs of every child in their classrooms. This is an opportunity for Georgia educators to speak with a united voice in support of continuing our own professional learning for the benefit of our students and our communities. I hope you will join GSDC and myself in that quest. Please feel free to contact me, or any member of the GSDC Board, if you have questions or would like further information about professional learning and teacher and student success.

Respectfully Submitted on Behalf of the Georgia Staff Development Council Board,



Sharon Moore  
President, Georgia Staff Development Council