



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

March 25, 2010

Dear Name of Legislator or Legislative Committee Chair,

The Georgia Staff Development Council (GSDC) supports the intent of HB 1307 and SR 1199 to suspend the Professional Standards Commission's requirement that professional learning units (PLUs) be the basis for certification renewal. We have some concerns, however, with the potential implications of this legislation for professional learning in Georgia.

For nearly a decade GSDC, the Georgia Department of Education (GDOE) and the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) have advocated that "contact hours" be abandoned as the basis for certification renewal and that "seat time" be replaced with job-embedded professional learning. To this end, in 2007 GSDC volunteered to lead a year-long collaboration of experienced professional development leaders to recommend revisions to State Board Rule 160-3-3-.10, which would result in recertification based upon school improvement plans that demonstrate measurable student achievement and school effectiveness. We look forward to sharing these ideas with the proposed Certification and Professional Learning Task Force.

However, GSDC has the following concerns:

- ❑ GSDC is concerned that the suspension of recertification for five years not be misinterpreted as also a suspension of the need for professional learning. There is a growing body of research, literature and experience demonstrating the central role that job-embedded, outcome directed professional learning plays in ensuring high quality instruction and continued student achievement, particularly for Georgia's persistently lowest performing schools and most at risk student populations. (Sources available from GSDC)
- ❑ HR 1485 and SR 1199 begin with concerns about the current economy and the costs of professional learning for both educators and school systems. GSDC understands that state and local professional learning budgets must be cut to help meet the state and local fiscal responsibilities, but this should not be the occasion for eliminating entirely that portion of state and local budgets.

- The majority of educators do not incur personal expenditures related to their own certification renewal. Schools, systems, and external agencies have always provided opportunities for educators to receive PLU credits at little to no cost. Currently, less than one-half of one percent of a beginning teacher's base salary is invested in teacher growth through professional learning as they continue to strive to meet Georgia's student needs.

Following this legislative session, we would welcome the opportunity to introduce to you teachers and principals who are using high impact professional learning daily to improve instruction and ensure increased, sustainable student achievement. Please feel free to contact me, or any member of the GSDC Board, if you have questions or would like further information.

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



Sharon Moore
President, Georgia Staff Development Council

Attachment: 2009-2010 GSDC Board Member Information