

COALITION MEMBERS



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**Securing the Education Pipeline
for Georgia's Children through
Community-Empowered Local School Councils**

Local School Councils, which are parent-led and grounded in evidence-based practices, are uniquely suited to address discipline and education issues within Georgia's school systems. Research has shown that parent engagement is an effective strategy for school reform. *Georgia should invest in strategies that will unite parents, teachers, and communities.*

We are fortunate in Georgia to have such a model already in existence with our Local School Councils.

- In 2000, the "A+ Education Reform Act" was passed through bipartisan support which, in part, created Local School Councils (LSC).
- LSC help local boards of education develop and nurture participation by bringing all stakeholders together to work collaboratively.
- LSC serve as policy-level advisory bodies to principals, superintendents, and local boards of education

The Local School Council model is based on years of research and decades of lived experiences.

- Research shows when schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and actually like school more.ⁱ
- "The strongest and most consistent predictors of parent involvement at school and at home are the specific school programs and teacher practices that encourage parent involvement at school."ⁱⁱ
- Given this research background, investing in strategies that more actively engage parents and bring all members of the school community together is the best choice.

Our top elementary, middle and high schools have something in common -- highly-functioning Local School Councils.

These highly effective Georgia Local School Councils are doing great work such as:

- developing long-term strategic plans to ensure their students continue to be well-rounded successful students through a holistic curriculum;
- overseeing school improvement efforts, including staff development;
- supporting the principal in obtaining needed facility upgrades;
- exploring ways to reduce class sizes to improve learning outcomes.

In direct contrast to these successes, legislation that removes accountability from the community risks the disintegration of healthy relationships between schools and their communities. In fact, where similar laws or rules have passed in other cities, schools and communities have become even more divided.ⁱⁱⁱ LSC seek to unite school staff and parents in an effort to create the highest-quality education possible for students, while keeping schools accountable to the communities they serve.

Local School Councils are a powerful tool for transforming Georgia's schools. ***That's why Georgia should invest in and support Local School Councils.***

ⁱ Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, "A New Wave Evidence", (2002), available at <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/introduction.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ Ibid

ⁱⁱⁱ Blume, H. and Watanabe, T. "Efforts to Convert Compton Schools to Charter Draws Fire," (December 11, 2010), available at, <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/dec/11/local/la-me-1211-compton-school-20101211>. See also Lindstrom, N. "A Struggling School, a Bitter Fight and No Tidy Hollywood End in Sight, (October 2, 2012), available, at, http://hechingerreport.org/content/a-struggling-school-a-bitter-fight-and-no-tidy-hollywood-ending-in-sight_9782/.