By KATHY COX  
*State Superintendent of Schools*

Today is a day I believe most educators are eager to recognize. It’s National Parent Involvement Day (November 19th). This is a time set aside each year to say an extra-special thank you to parents.

The evidence is overwhelming: Students who have highly-involved families get higher grades, have fewer discipline problems, and are more likely to be successful throughout their entire life.

As the parent of two boys, one a sophomore in high school and one a sophomore in college, I know how difficult it can be to get plugged into your child’s education. Life is demanding and there is almost never enough time to get everything done, but being active in your child’s education is arguably the most important role a parent plays. Parents set the tone for education and are their child’s best teacher.

No matter how little or how much time you have, there are many ways you can positively impact your child’s education. Being an involved parent can simply mean doing the little things that matter, like checking homework folders, going to parent curriculum nights, getting online to help your child find a book, practice a test, or email a teacher or counselor. But being an engaged parent can also mean joining a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or sitting on an advisory council at your child’s school.

Parent involvement is also being informed about what your child is learning and how they are succeeding in the classroom. It is knowing the questions to ask the principal and teacher. It is providing a rich learning environment at home, expressing high educational expectations and, most importantly, showing that you care. In general, great parent involvement means making sure your child knows that you value their education more than anything else – and they should, too!

One of the most significant things a parent can do is make sure their child attends school. Setting the expectation that your child will go to school every day demonstrates that education is valuable and it will help them develop a strong work ethic. And Georgia parents should be very proud! The attendance rate continues to increase for all students. Since 2003, the percentage of students missing more than 15 days has decreased about four percent, representing over 50,000 students.

On National Parent Involvement Day it is imperative that our schools and school systems assess whether they are doing everything they can to get and keep parents involved. It is also important for parents to reflect on whether they are doing everything possible to support their child. At the Georgia Department of Education we provide resources for parents and schools to encourage and maintain parental involvement.

One of the resources developed in collaboration with the Georgia Parent Information and Resource Center is a new brochure entitled *Get the facts...get connected...GET INVOLVED!* This brochure features fifteen ways parents can get involved in their child’s education by offering tips for school and home. To get a copy, please contact our Parent Engagement office at 404-232-1148 or visit our website at www.gadoe.org.

On behalf of our schools and school systems, I want to thank all of the parents and families who have taken on the full-time job of being involved in your child’s education. My vision for Georgia is that we will lead the nation in improving student achievement, and with actively engaged parents and families this vision will become a reality.

*Kathy Cox, a parent and a veteran classroom teacher, is Georgia’s Superintendent of Schools.*