

# GSO to GO

NEWS FOR  
DECEMBER  
2009



The Monthly Educator Resource  
Newsletter from GeorgiaStandards.Org



## General Information

### 2009 Georgia Schools of Excellence



On November 6, 2009, State Superintendent of Schools Kathy Cox named the 2009 Georgia

Schools of Excellence in Student Achievement, honoring 27 schools that have shown the greatest improvement or highest achievement across the state. "These schools are getting great results from all students in many different areas," Superintendent Cox said. "The teachers, students and administrators at these schools truly represent excellence. Congratulations to our 2009 Georgia Schools of Excellence." The Georgia Schools of Excellence are honored in two categories. Qualifying schools are chosen from each Congressional District in the following categories:

- Top 10%: Schools that are in the top 10 percent in Georgia as measured by assessments in reading and mathematics.

- Greatest Gains: Schools that demonstrated greatest continuous gains in student achievement for the past three years as measured by assessments in reading and mathematics.

The Georgia Schools of Excellence will be honored at a banquet on February 5, 2010 at the Georgia International Convention Center in College Park.

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# 2009

### GSO Feedback

The GSO Team welcomes your feedback by contacting us through the following:

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## 2009 GEORGIA SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE

### GREATEST GAINS

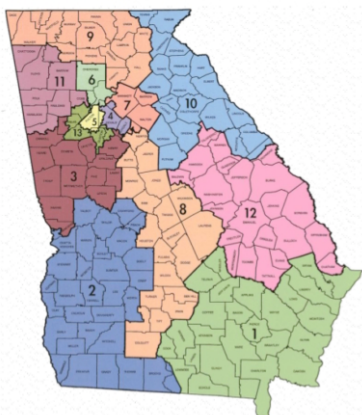
Congressional District, School, System

- 1 - Waycross Middle School, Ware County
- 2 - J.S. Pate Elementary, Crisp County
- 2 - Lake Park Elementary, Lowndes County
- 3 - Pike County Elementary Pike County
- 5 - Renfro Middle School, Decatur City
- 6 - Dogden Middle School, Cobb County
- 7 - Peachtree Ridge High, Gwinnett County
- 7 - Frank Osborne Middle, Gwinnett County
- 8 - Jasper County Primary, Jasper County
- 9 - West Hall High School, Hall County
- 10 - Oglethorpe County Middle School, Oglethorpe County
- 11 - Rome Middle School, Rome City
- 13 - Mableton Elementary School, Cobb County
- 13 - Teasley Elementary, Cobb County

### TOP 10%

Congressional District, School, System

- 1 - Appling County Primary, Appling County
- 2 - Lincoln Elementary Magnet, Dougherty County
- 3 - Whitewater Middle School, Fayette County
- 4 - Honey Creek Elementary, Rockdale County
- 5 - West Manor Elementary School, Atlanta Public Schools
- 6 - Pope High School, Cobb County
- 6 - Chattahoochee High, Fulton County
- 7 - Daves Creek Elementary, Forsyth County
- 8 - Bonaire Elementary, Houston County
- 9 - Riverwatch Middle, Forsyth County
- 10 - Oconee County Elementary, Oconee County
- 11 - Ford Elementary, Cobb County
- 12 - Savannah Arts Academy, Savannah-Chatham County



## Ruta Quetzal BBVA 2009 Scholarships

According to the [Education Office of Spain's website](#), King Juan Carlos of Spain started a scholarship program in 1979 with the purpose of raising awareness among 16 and 17 year old students about the Ibero-American cultural and historical heritage. Later, this was extended youths from all over the world. Ruta Quetzal-BBVA is an academic and travel adventure exclusively for recipients of the scholarships. The expedition features a broad array of academic activities and a curriculum designed by the Complutense University of Madrid. This academic adventure will include visits to Chile and Spain. The tentative dates for the trip are June 22 through July 26, 2010. There are four scholarships for U.S. students and one scholarship for Canadian students. Each scholarship is valued at \$16,000 and covers round trip air travel from New York or Miami in the US and Montreal in Canada and the full cost of the study-expedition. Visit the [Ruta Quetzal BBVA 2010 Expedition webpage](#) for more information about the requirements, topics, projects and applications. Deadline is January 8, 2010.

## 2009-2010 Young Georgia Authors Competition



The Young Georgia Authors Competition 2009-2010 information is posted on the [ELA program page](#) of the Georgia Department of Education website. Scroll towards the bottom of the page, and you will see links to the following documents:

- [2009-10 Official Rules Booklet](#)
- [Winners of 2008-09 School Year](#)
- [Young Georgia Authors Winning Entries 2009](#)

The deadline for entries this year's Young Georgia Authors Competition is March 10, 2010. The [ELA program office](#) looks forward to your participation.

## Chuck Leavell Now Performing on Georgia Read More



One of the most abundant natural resources found in Georgia are trees. Therefore, tree preservation is an important lesson to teach students. And what a great reason to watch Chuck Leavell read [The Tree Farmer](#), a book he has written along with Nicholas Cravotta, to a group of students. This beautifully illustrated and poetic story aims to educate children about the environment and our roles as environmental stewards. Just like other Georgia Read More featured books, there is a [vocabulary list](#) that goes along with The Tree Farmer story. Watch this month's featured [Georgia Read More video](#) with your students to plant important environmental ideals. Your class can also check out the other videos playing on the [Georgia Read More Program Videos page](#).

## Download Writing Assessment Resources

One of the main objectives of the [Office of Standards, Instruction and Assessment \(SIA\)](#) is to produce well-designed assessments that are aligned to the state curriculum. In fact, [SIA](#) has made many [downloadable writing rubrics](#) available to teachers. These Microsoft Word formatted writing rubrics are available to educators in the elementary, middle and high school levels. K-5 teachers may select from a plethora of informational, narrative or persuasive writing rubrics. The Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT), Georgia Grade 8 and Georgia Grade 5 Writing Assessments are based on the following four Domains:

- Ideas
- Organization
- Style
- Conventions

The [Georgia Writing Assessments Weighting of Domains](#) is an important PDF you can download to better understand how the score ratings on the writing assessments are determined by the Georgia Department of Education Testing Division.

# Continuing Education

## ETCs Offer Professional Learning and Consulting

The [Educational Technology Centers \(ETCs\)](#) work collaboratively to provide professional learning, consulting, and service for Georgia educators to promote the appropriate use of technology in support of teaching, learning and leadership. Thirteen ETC training centers are located throughout the state for your convenience. All the ETCs offer comprehensive curriculum, administrative, and technology support training and services for P-16 educators, administrative staff, support personnel and technology support specialists. Check to see where the closest [Educational Technology Center](#) is located to you.

## Free Online Training Through Verizon Thinkfinity

The goal of Verizon Thinkfinity's professional development is to help educators, parents and afterschool practitioners engage students and enhance learning using online resources. There are free online [training courses \(webinars\)](#) that you can register for the one that best meets your needs. Many [webinar sessions](#) are available for an educator audience and are intended for K-12 educators and administrators, and college of education students and faculty/instructors. There are even sessions designed for parents, after-school practitioners and adults working with school-age children. The [Verizon Thinkfinity General Audience sessions](#) would also be a great solution for schools and classrooms that have volunteers and tutors. The draft of the new [Georgia Performance Standards for Health Education](#) was approved by the State Board of Education and will be posted for 60 days for public review and comment on GeorgiaStandards.Org. The [draft of the standards and survey](#) will be accessible for review and comment from September 14, 2009 through November 13, 2009.

## FREE Online Training Opportunities delivered by Verizon's Thinkfinity.org

### General Audience

These webinar sessions are intended for parents, after-school practitioners and adults working with school-age children.

[Strategies for Sharing Verizon Thinkfinity](#)  
45 min

[Think Family!](#)  
30 min

[Think Possibilities-Verizon Thinkfinity's FREE Online Tools!](#)  
30 min

### Educator Audience

These webinar sessions are intended for K-12 educators and administrators, and college of education students and faculty/instructors.

[Captive Students with Verizon Thinkfinity](#)  
1 hour

[History in a Hurry: Using Smithsonian's History Explorer Web Site](#)  
1 hour

[Integration Framework & Plan: Next Steps for Using Verizon Thinkfinity Resources](#)  
1 hour

[Reaching 21st Century Students with Verizon Thinkfinity](#)  
1 hour

[School Administrators: Leading with Verizon Thinkfinity](#)  
45 min

[Strategies for Sharing Verizon Thinkfinity](#)  
45 min

## GPS Glossary

### Common Assessments

Common assessments are the result of teachers collaborating and coming to consensus about what students should know, understand and be able to do according to the standards. Common assessments assess the standards and provide teachers a means for looking at student work.



## Michael C. Carlos Museum Teacher Programs

The [Michael C. Carlos Museum](#) is an educational partner of the Department of Education. The museum offers a memorable experience by exploring the world's art and cultures through tours, outreach programs, online exhibits and professional development. You can even bring the museum to your classroom by having students listen to [podcasts](#) prepared as audio only or enhanced audio with images. The Carlos Museum also has a [Teacher Programs webpage](#) that includes information for field trip funding, workshops for teachers and PLU courses for teachers. Emory's Office of Community Partnerships has provided a grant to the Carlos Museum to subsidize transportation to the Museum for up to \$200 per bus. For additional details on all the education programs, contact Julie Green by [email](#) or by phone at 404-727-2363. The Carlos Museum is located at [Emory University](#) in Atlanta, Georgia.

### Carlos Conversations

Below is a preview of one of the [podcasts](#) about the works of art at the Michael C. Carlos Museum. This [podcast series](#) was voted "Best Use of New Technology for Exploring Ancient Ideas" in the 2008 "Best of Atlanta" issue of Atlanta Magazine! So be sure to tune in!

### Sacred Spots

[Audio Only/MP3](#) | [Enhanced Audio with Images](#)



# Celebrating December



## communicate

### Dec. 7

**1941** - [Pearl Harbor](#) was attacked by Japan.

### Dec. 9

**1845** - Georgia Author Joel Chandler Harris was born.

### Dec. 21

**1864** - Sherman's [March to the Sea](#)

## collaborate

For more Georgia facts, visit [The New Georgia Encyclopedia](#).

[GeorgiaStandards.Org](#) is the Thinkfinity State Education Partner in Georgia. GSO provides [Thinkfinity professional development](#) for educators and trainers.

## connect

### Downloads

> [December calendar template](#)

### Links

> [GSO Contact Information](#)  
> [Connect with GSO on Twitter](#)  
> [GPS by Grade Level, K-8](#)

### December Writing Prompt

Winter can make people excited for snow, chilled from the cold, blue over gray skies, or cheery for a holiday. Have students write a poem about their feelings for winter. Eduplace also offers the following [December themes](#) for grade levels K - 8.

## December in Georgia History

Did you know that every article and image on the [New Georgia Encyclopedia \(NGE\)](#) features an aspect of Georgia? The NGE has many notable events and influential Georgians you can peruse with your students that are highlighted for [December in Georgia History](#). Challenge your students to use the [NGE](#) to find out what city General William T. Sherman offered President Abraham Lincoln as a Christmas present in 1864. The [Sherman's March to the Sea article](#) may come in handy for your students as they research Sherman. While your students are collaborating with each other to find the answer on the [NGE site](#), you know you are covering the following social studies GPS on General William T. Sherman:

- [SSUSH9c](#) - United States History
- [SS5H1c](#) - Fifth Grade
- [SS8H6b](#) - Eighth Grade

Social studies teachers may want to expand on General Sherman and The Civil War by using [Civil War Reenactments](#), a GPS-aligned unit.

## December EDSITEment Calendar of Holidays and Special Events

As we close out the year, [EDSITEment](#) has posted an abundance of educational links with its [December 2009 calendar](#). The [EDSITEment calendar](#) codes daily links by website feature (W), lesson plan (LP), Picturing America (PA) and We the People Bookshelf (WTP). December 1, 1955 is the day Rosa Parks was arrested, which led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Teachers can draw attention to this important historical event by using the [Ordinary People, Ordinary Places: The Civil Rights Movement lesson plan](#) with their students. Fifth grade teachers would address [SS5H8b](#) and can use The [Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s teaching activity](#) that spans the course of one week. President Polk confirmed that gold was discovered in California on December 5, 1848, which started to the [Gold Rush!](#) And December 7, 1941 is a date the United States will never forget; it's the day that Pearl Harbor was attacked by Japan.

[EDSITEment](#) provides links to the following three Pearl Harbor lesson plans:

- [The Road to Pearl Harbor](#)
- [Turning the Tide in the Pacific, 1941-1943](#)
- [Victory in the Pacific, 1943-1945](#)

On December 12, 1800, Washington D.C. becomes the capitol of the United States. You can link to From the [White House of Yesterday to the White House of Today](#) as an appropriate lesson plan to teach about the house at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Then on December 20, 1773 The Boston Evening Post wrote an article about the events that occurred in the Boston Harbor better known as The Boston Tea Party. [EDSITEment](#) poses some interesting questions to ask students in [The Boston Tea Party: Costume Optional? lesson plan](#). December 18, 1865 marks the day the U.S. Constitution was ratified to include the 13th Amendment that abolished slavery. Why was the Emancipation Proclamation by Abraham Lincoln so important? The [Emancipation Proclamation: Freedom's First Steps lesson plan](#) can be utilized by teachers to teach about Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation policy and the impact it had on the United States.

## December Holiday Celebrations



There are many holidays that occur in the month of December. What a wonderful opportunity to teach your students about the different celebrations that occur all over the world. Education World has a great article that emphasizes [December Holidays Across Cultures](#). There are [ten lessons](#) about the various December Holidays and additional lesson plans with [Christmas Around the World](#). You can also teach your students through these links about [Kwanzaa](#), [Hanukkah](#) and [Ramadan](#). Education World also is featuring holiday crafts and gift-making ideas with their [December Holidays Archive](#). And just for good measure, Education World searched the World Wide Web for you with these additional [Holiday Classroom Resources](#). And not to be outdone, TeacherVision.com has compiled a [great collection](#) of December themes, lesson plans, activities and quizzes.

## Additional Dynamite December Links and Downloads

There are many festive web-based resources that are available for teachers in December. Elementary teachers will enjoy Education World's [December Coloring Calendar \(PDF\)](#) or the [editable version](#) (Word). Education World also has a [December word search puzzle](#) along with an [answer key](#). Teachers can also set-up some great holiday computer-based centers with [Dress-up a Snowman](#), [Chanukah Connect the Dots](#) or [Interactive Weather Maker](#).



## Meet the GSO Staff

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## Subscribing to GSO to GO



Subscribe to the GSO to GO Monthly Newsletter to stay informed about general information about the Georgia Performance Standards, new GSO website content, continuing education and monthly teaching themes. Get on the list by sending an email with the subject line 'GSO to GO Subscribe' to [GSOwebmaster@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:GSOwebmaster@doe.k12.ga.us) with your full name and email address.

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<http://twitter.com/GaStandardsOrg>

## Other GaDOE News

### GSO to GO Archives

[Click here](#) to view previous issues of GSO to GO or to listen to a [GSO to GO Voices Podcast](#).

### Media Matters

A newsletter for people who love Library Media Centers. The Media Matters newsletter, a customizable newsletters for media center specialists and librarians, has been posted on the [GaDOE website](#) or access the [Media Matters archives](#).

### GaDOE Press Releases

[Click here](#) to access media information for encouraging K-12 education in Georgia.

### GSO News

Read the [latest news](#) regarding GeorgiaStandards.Org and the Georgia Performance Standards in the Announcements section of the GSO home page.

### Subscribe to GaDOE Newsletter or Updates

If you would like to receive the e-newsletter or updates from GaDOE, [click here](#).

### About GSO

GeorgiaStandards.Org is a program under the office of Instructional Technology within the Georgia Department of Education

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