

# 2010 candidate questionnaire

NAME: **John Barge**

PARTY: Republican

SEEKING: State Superintendent of Schools



**1. Why are you seeking your office?**

After a short stint at the State Department of Education I realized that we needed common sense leadership at the GADOE. I have dedicated my life to educating Georgia's children. I believe we need common sense returned to educational leadership. We need someone who is willing to evaluate the budget and work with the legislature to reallocate funding so that critical programs are not touched and waste is eliminated at the state level. I believe that Career Technical and Agricultural Education are critical to Georgia's success and we must bring them back to the forefront.

**2. What do you expect to accomplish if elected?**

I will return the high school math curriculum from an experimental, failed program to a more traditional program. I will create multiple exit points for graduation from Georgia's public schools. I will eliminate waste and help reallocate funding to protect the integrity of Georgia's public schools. I will return common sense to testing and assessment in Georgia. I will restore the SDOE to its rightful place of overseeing education. Meaning, less mandates from Atlanta so that local educators can educate. We will help teachers remember the joy of teaching that caused them to choose the profession from the beginning.

**3. What distinguishes your candidacy?**

I believe my experience in education distinguishes me from every other person in the race. I have served as a classroom teacher, an assistant principal, principal, a system curriculum director, a state curriculum director and an adjunct college professor. I have worked in rural, urban, and suburban schools. This means that I know how policies in Atlanta affect the teacher and administrator across the state. I have spent the last 19 years educating. Additionally, I earned my doctorate degree in educational leadership from the University of Georgia, while continuing to work. I have paid the price to succeed.

**4. What are the key issues in your race?**

The most critical issue facing education in Georgia is the economic crisis. We have to better allocate our funding, this will require working closely with the legislature, to protect the critical programs that provide our core education. This also means that we must decrease the size of the GADOE. Additionally, we need to return to a traditional math curriculum and create multiple exit points from

our schools through a number of valid diplomas, including Career Tech. Finally, we have to return common sense to assessing our students and end federal control of state education.

**5. Pick one issue. Expand on how you will address it.**

Funding the State Department of Education budget—education receives a majority of the state’s budget. We have to better utilize our resources as we know they will continue to decline. I will go through the budget line by line to find and eliminate all waste as the state level. This includes getting rid of layers of administration that stand between the local schools and the Superintendent’s office. I will reduce testing/assessment which will reduce/save funds. We will realign funding, cutting pet projects that do not further our educational goals, to work within the limits of a shrinking budget.

**6. Let me also ask for you to give me a 100 word summary of your background.**

I was raised in Cobb County by working class parents. I learned early that education was the key to success and I dedicated myself to getting a quality education in public school. I attended Berry College in Rome, Georgia on academic and journalism scholarships. I worked and continued in school, earning my master’s, specialist’s, and doctorate degrees while working full time. I have dedicated my entire professional career to educating Georgia’s students. I am a Conservative with strong Christian beliefs and morals. I believe that the GADOE should be responsible for overseeing education, while control remains at the local level.