

NAME: Otha E. Thornton Jr.
PARTY: Democratic
SEEKING: State School Superintendent



Why are you seeking your office?

Through all the struggles that my family has had to overcome; there was one constant, Education. I am running because I want to make education a priority for every child in Georgia. I am running because poverty shouldn't be a barrier to a quality education. We have the ability to provide the necessary resources which will make this a reality. I am running to restore hope.

What do you expect to accomplish if elected?

When you elect me as Georgia's next State School Superintendent I will bring the voice of our educators, support staff, parents, and stakeholders to our leaders and policymakers to ensure that all are fully represented in policy decisions. We will work to change our approach to testing and increase the number of trade programs within our schools. Together we will focus on the needs of the whole child by creating more effective wraparound services to ensure students are ready to learn while in the classroom. I will build better working relationships with districts across the state and ensure that they (100)

What distinguishes your candidacy?

Several things separate me from the other candidates in this race; most importantly is the twenty plus years of service and leadership experience in our armed forces, and as a public school advocate. These experiences give me the unique ability to identify, draw attention, and address the issues that the other candidates would rather sweep under the rug. Georgia needs a leader willing to tackle the needs in our classrooms head-on, i.e. funding, overcrowding, over testing, the flawed implementation of the teacher evaluation system and our antiquated funding formula . I will work with our leaders to make sure we (100)

How can we improve school safety?

Addressing school safety will require a multi-pronged approach. First, we need more mental health services. We need to be proactive, rather than reactive. Studies show that when you address the needs of the whole child, you improve self-esteem and confidence. Second, we need to back to community schools where everyone has a stake in the health and security of the people on the inside. And third, we will need to provide more comprehensive security measures without making our schools feel like prisons to the people they serve.

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

As I have traveled around Georgia, I have noticed one common concern, and that is the disconnect between the needs of the classroom and decisions made at the state and federal levels. We have great leaders on all levels of education; however, we have to listen to all stakeholders when we are creating these policies. We hear about, testing, funding, teacher pay, overcrowding, lack of support systems, and wrap-around services but I do not see any solutions. I can bring everyone to the table to move towards solving the issues we face.

Please give a 100 word summary on your background:

I am an 8th generation Georgian, from the city of Elberton. I retired as a Lieutenant Colonel from the United States Army, then went on to become an educator and advocate. My wife Caryn and I married 29 years ago. We have two beautiful and successful children. I have a degree from Morehouse College and Michigan Technical University where I also taught.

During my military service, I served in Iraq and worked as a Presidential Communications Officer, J1 Director with the Whitehouse Communications Agency for both Republican and Democratic Administrations.

I was the first African American Male President of the (100)