

**NAME: Richard Woods**  
**PARTY: Republican**  
**SEEKING: State School Superintendent**



**Why are you seeking your office?**

In 2014, I was elected with the commitment to create an education system that once again focused on our children, not a test, and to prepare them for life. We have seen the largest reduction in mandated testing to allow teachers to build relationships with students. Elementary reading and math has become a primary focus. No longer do we hold to the belief that all children must attend a four year university; we are seeing a resurgence in technical education with business support. Personal finance, fine arts, and foreign language opportunities are expanding. Georgia is on the move.

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

To complete the mission as stated above. It would have been an impossible order to transform Georgia from a consequence and compliant education system to one that is servant and support oriented in 4 years. The intent has always been to create a system that solely focuses on doing what is best for our children, regardless of who is in the office of state superintendent. By removing regulation, building on the basics, and providing students opportunities, we will create a educational system that all of Georgia will be proud of.

**What distinguishes your candidacy?**

Results. Since taking office in 2015, public education has been on the move. We have seen the largest reduction of mandated testing in our state's history. We have the highest graduation rate in our state's history. Georgia is recognized as the leading state in computer science and career tech education. Almost half of our schools are awaiting to become either STEM or STEAM certified. Georgia has the first economic development liaison embedded within an educational department and the first academic nutritionist in the nation. Our test scores in both the ACT and SAT are on the rise.

**How can we improve school safety?**

How can we improve school safety? The state currently approves new school facility plans throughout the state. We have instructed the staff to review request to ensure safety is a primary factor on any design to limit outside access. Mandatory statewide intruder drills must be initiated. Schools should consider establishing a school precinct within schools. This would be cost effective and provide an active law enforcement presence at our schools. Mental health issues must also be addressed by increasing our school counselor workforce. Furthermore, other

governmental agencies with this specific skillset must be brought on board to better address mental (100)

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

Reading. As a military child, I saw firsthand the impact of reading. It will always be the doorway to educational and life opportunity. As state superintendent, I brought on a state/national expert to lead reading reform in Georgia. We have created a statewide literacy strategic plan. We have formed a relationship with other agencies, such as the public library system, to broaden our reach. By the end of the summer, over 300,000 books will have been distributed to children in poverty. Reading has become a statewide movement.

**Please give a 100 word summary on your background:**

Current State School Superintendent/ Military child/ 14 years as a high school teacher/ 8 years as a K-12 administrator/ K-5 Curriculum Director/ undergraduate degree from Kennesaw State University/ graduate degree from Valdosta State University/ received state and national recognition for support of fine arts/ twice selected as Georgia Trend 100 Most Influential Georgians/ Bagwell College of Education Hall of Fame/ former lead purchasing agent/ former small business owner/ married to wife, Lisha, for 27 years/ lives in Tifton, GA