

NAME: John Barge
PARTY: Republican
SEEKING: State School Superintendent

1. Why are you seeking your office?

Media reports across the nation point to the fact that education has gone “woke”. Parents identified as “domestic terrorists” in Virginia; kindergarteners in TN learning their “GayBCs”; and, an Atlanta school district is being sued over its policy allowing children to use the bathroom of whatever gender they identify with by the parents of a 6 year-old girl who they say was sexually assaulted in her bathroom at school by a boy who claims he’s a girl. We must have educational leaders who will stand in the gap for our children to ensure they are educated and not indoctrinated.

2. What do you expect to accomplish if elected?

My first priority will be to establish an Office of Transparency and Accountability within the Department of Education to assist parents with concerns when they don’t believe they are being addressed at the local level. I will put a stop to the Department of Education’s lowering of expectations and standards in the name of “Equity.”

I will “right the ship” so to speak. The overemphasis the past 7 years on the “woke” agenda, including equity, has resulted in our educational national ranking in the annual “Quality Counts” study to fall from 7th in 2013 to 31st in 2020.

3. What distinguishes your candidacy?

The State Superintendent should have broad, successful public education experience. My 30-year career in Georgia’s public education system includes being a teacher, assistant principal, principal, curriculum director, State Director of Career, Technical, and agriculture education, local superintendent and State Superintendent. During my tenure as State Superintendent, Georgia achieved its highest scores in history on the National Assessment of Educational Progress in 4th grade reading AND math; I developed Georgia’s Career Pathway System that has been the key to increased graduation rates; and, the 2013 Annual Quality Counts Report ranked the overall quality of Georgia’s educational system 7th in the nation.

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

While there are numerous issues that need immediate attention, I believe it’s essential that we stop the rapid academic decline of Georgia’s students. Our 4th and 8th grade reading and math scores have consistently declined since their peak in 2013. Our national Quality Counts ranking has fallen from 7th to 31st in 7 years. We must stop focusing on

the woke agenda of CRT, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Social Emotional Learning, and restore the foundation of teaching reading, writing, math, and teaching children how to think and not what to think. We must allow teachers to teach their content.

5. What are your ideas on curbing all the many area-wide shooting?

First, we must ensure that all school districts have the resources they need to provide for a safe learning environment for children which includes ensuring that all schools employ full-time, certified, and armed law enforcement officers. Encourage districts to expand and update school video surveillance systems. Ensuring that surveillance systems are accessible by local law enforcement will help provide for a seamless partnership between schools and local police. Finally, let's develop innovative public/private partnerships between churches and other faith-based organizations within our communities with schools to address the root causes of community violence.

6. Please give a 100-word summary on your background

I am a life-long educator with 30-years of highly successful experience as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, curriculum director, State Director of Career, Technical, and Agriculture, local school Superintendent and State School Superintendent. I've been recognized as a STAR teacher, Georgia's Assistant Principal of the Year, Career, Technical and Agriculture Education Policy Maker of the Year, and twice named to Georgia's list of 100 Most Influential People.

I developed Georgia's Career Pathway System that became a national model and led Georgia to become one of the first states in the nation to ditch the disastrous No Child Left Behind.