

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

1. Why are you seeking your office?

Prior to the pandemic, I led Georgia on a path of strong performance: record graduation rates, across the board increases on test scores, and ACT/SAT scores beating the nation.

Since the onset of the pandemic, I've remained committed to keeping schools open and learning going. Despite challenges and disruptions, Georgia's graduation rate remained steady and we continued to beat the nation in ACT/SAT.

While we focus on addressing learning gaps, we cannot afford a gap in leadership. Our students cannot afford someone needing on-the-job training or doesn't have the grasp of the measures needed to meet this moment.

2. What do you expect to accomplish if elected?

My focus will be on protecting kids, empowering parents, and letting teachers teach.

Oftentimes, those running for office only talk about what they're going to do. I have a proven record of results that I plan to continue building upon if re-elected.

Working hand-in-hand with the General Assembly, I've delivered for students, parents, and teachers on multiple fronts – raising teacher pay, lowering high-stakes tests, protecting the rights of parents, ensuring our kids' learning materials are age appropriate, fully funding education, and promoting unity over divisiveness.

I will continue to pursue common sense and child-centered measures that positively impact our classrooms.

3. What distinguishes your candidacy?

My opponents either require on-the-job training or they have served in this role before, but abandoned it to run for Governor. I have remained steadfast in my commitment to our kids. I have the proven leadership we need at this pivotal moment.

I have worked with two Governors to enact positive change for our students, parents, and teachers. Not only have I been consistent in my positions and convictions, but I have a real record of getting results.

My major opponents have common thread, they are pursuing this office out of ambition, not conviction – our children deserve better.

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

One of the pressing issues is how do we bring all education stakeholders – parents, business/community leaders, and educators – together for the betterment of children.

Whether it's a parent who is personally invested in their child's future, community leaders who are invested in their community's future, or educators who have dedicated their lives to serving children, all parties must come together.

Enacting policies and programs to increase transparency, establish open processes, and enhance communication are essential in keeping conversations focused and productive. We'll be enacting measures to do just that: increase transparency, eliminate redundancy, and take things off teachers' plates.

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

I worked with the Governor and General Assembly to provide funding to every school in Georgia to upgrade security facilities. We're designing new schools not only to maximum instructional delivery, but to also integrate safety and security features. We've coordinated with state and local law enforcement agencies to train school leaders and staff in best practices and strategies.

In addition to "hardening" our schools, a key factor in safety is students having positive relationships with adults in the building. Having the comfortable level and established communication structure to report personal challenges or concerns with peers are essential in preventing tragedy.

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

I have been in education for nearly thirty years, serving as a classroom teacher, school leader, administrator, and currently as State Superintendent.

Having worked in a rural school system in southwest Georgia, I not only understand the impact of poverty, but the promise of strong community. I've worn many hats and performed many duties from delivering lessons and driving buses to running schools and serving lunches.

Whatever position I've taken, I've always strived to be a servant leader: rolling up my sleeves and pitching in however needed.

I am guided by faith and grounded in a commitment to our children.