

STATEMENT : 2Q 2019

GEORGIA BUSINESS LEADER STATEMENT

IN SUPPORT OF CHARTER SCHOOLS

 **BUSINESS FORWARD**
FOUNDATION

**GA BUSINESS LEADERS AND PARENTS TO THEIR GOVERNOR:
TO PRODUCE “FUTURE READY” GRADUATES, WE MUST
SUPPORT CHARTER SCHOOLS**

Business Forward has organized hundreds of briefings across the country on education reform, workforce development, and the future of work. These briefings have included dozens of mayors, governors, Members of Congress, and senior Administration officials. This year, we asked business leaders and parents of students in Georgia to sign the following statement in support of charter schools. More than 700 Georgians responded.



TO THE GOVERNOR AND STATE LEGISLATURE:

Today, 3 million students attend charter schools, and 5 million more students would switch to a charter if they could.

With charter schools, families decide what's best for their kids. Teachers have more control over their lessons. Principals have more control over their budgets. Schools can specialize. High-performing charter schools grow; underperforming schools are replaced. Best of all, students come first.

As states weigh new education reforms, business leaders are speaking out to support successful charter schools.

WORK IS CHANGING

BY 2030, WORKPLACE DEMAND FOR SKILLS IN TECHNOLOGY WILL INCREASE BY 60%, FOR CREATIVITY BY 40%, FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP BY 33%, AND FOR ADAPTABILITY BY 24%.

THE AVERAGE YOUNG AMERICAN WILL HAVE AT LEAST 11 DIFFERENT JOBS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18 AND 50.

WORKERS MUST CHANGE

2/3 OF JOBS ARE FILLED BY WORKERS WITH SOME COLLEGE EDUCATION

ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE + LIFE SKILLS + CHARACTER

STATES MUST ACT

ENSURE THAT CHARTERS QUALIFY FOR EQUAL FUNDING

REQUIRE BETTER ACCESS TO BUILDINGS FOR CHARTERS

STRONG OVERSIGHT OVER CHARTER SCHOOLS

SIGNATORIES

Over 700 Georgians signed this statement, including:

Adrienne Mintz, Marietta
Aida Gonzalez, Rocky Face
Alisha Lee, Hampton
Allyn Wiley, Marietta
Alma Karamesic-Kelley, Decatur
Alvin Turner, Riverdale
Amanda Bond, Macon
Ammie Espitia, Nicholls
Amy Cadenhead, Lumpkin
Amy Childress, Fort Gaines
Amy Whitaker, Cleveland
Amy Pittman, Cuthbert
Andrea Moreno, Temple
Andrea Murano, Avondale Estates
Andy Alford, Vidalia
Angela Foust, Canton
Angeleda Pritchard, Mount Vernon
Anita Middleton, Atlanta
Anna Altfeder, Maysville
Anna Lemieux, Valdosta
Anna Sharp, La Fayette
Annette Campbell, Lawrenceville
Ashli Martel, Mableton
Baloay Coleman, Kennesaw
Barbara Hobson, Augusta
Barbara Wiley, Waycross
Barbianne Roe, Savannah
Belinda Bournes, Atlanta
Beth Fasnacht, Cumming
Beth Oglesby, Statesboro
Beverly Askea, Carrollton
Beverly Mitchell, Stone Mountain
Bisa Wilson, Atlanta
Blanche Tate, Brunswick
Bonita King-House, Gainesville
Bonnie Monroe, Albany
Brenda Carter, Albany
Brenda Maddox, Stone Mountain
Brian Hill, Marietta

“

School boards just talk and don't take action regarding schools in the lower income areas.”

- OUIDA RANDLE
ACCOUNTING CLERK,
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,
ATLANTA, GA

“

There is too much red tape. We can't use common sense anymore to solve issues. There is too much political control.”

- DEBORAH DOEBEREINER
BUSINESS EXECUTIVE,
ACWORTH, GA

“

The education system is driven from the county level. It's so top heavy with administrators.”

- VICKIE CARR
TEACHER,
SAVANNAH, GA

“

Monies need to be put toward children and teachers payroll. Teachers should not have to buy supplies for children and classrooms.”

- SUSAN SMITH
ELLABELL, GA

SIGNATORIES

Brian McDonald, Silver Creek
Brian K. Mayfield, Lawrenceville
Bridgette Nelson, Atlanta
Bryan Scott, Ellijay
C Cunningham, McDonough
Callina Harris, Columbus
Cara McKinney, Atlanta
Cari McClure, Stockbridge
Carmen Jones, Flowery Branch
Carol Ann Archer, Savannah
Carrie-Ann MacArthur, Canton
Catherine Pelzer, Atlanta
Cathy Shea, Alpharetta
Cathy Suggs, Gainesville
Celeste Jones, Sharpsburg
Charity Wilmore, Thomasville
Charles Roberts, Chatsworth
Cheryl Kepperling, Marietta
Chris Beasley, Rocky Face
Chris Thomas, Atlanta
Christian Evans, Port Wentworth
Christina Brennen, Wildwood
Claude Flerin, Atlanta
Connie Hutchins, Conyers
Connita Ransom, Lithonia
Coti Perez, Marietta
Crystal Simmons, Smyrna
Cyndy Marvin, Albany
Cynthia Crawford, Riverdale
Cynthia Radford, Rome
Dale Myers, Saint Marys
Daniel Pitts, Loganville
Darlene Meyer, Suwanee
David Hooton, Buford
David Hooton, Buford
David Marple, Carnesville
Dawn Earle, Lithonia
Dawn Leonard, Douglasville
Debbie Doebereiner, Acworth
Debbie Schuber, Lithia Springs
Deborah Greene, Decatur
Deborah Linenger, Gainesville

“

Our schools are at least 10 to 15 years behind most schools in the US. Our public schools and most importantly our students K-12 deserve much better.

”

- ERICA PARKS
PARENT,
ALBANY, GA

“

There are no good schools [in my area] except charter schools or private schools. In public schools, there is no support from administrators or the school boards. I agree more with charter schools.

”

- JESSIE JOHNSON
ENTREPRENEUR,
MACON, GA

“

Charter schools, if done correctly, are a solution for parents who cannot afford to put their children in private school. [Public school] teachers are overburdened with federal and state mandated paper work and red tape. Quite frankly the government needs to get out of the business of running the schools. If a district doesn't measure up, then they should have to provide transportation to a district that does. Schools [should] get money based on student population.

”

- JACQUELIN TWISS
ENTREPRENEUR,
WINDER, GA

SIGNATORIES

Deborah Wolfe, Savannah
Demetria Russell, Atlanta
Denise McGrain, Villa Rica
Denise Storm, Forsyth
Denise Moreno, Atlanta
DeWayne McNeill, Villa Rica
Diana Anderson, Jefferson
Diane Jessup, Blue Ridge
Diane Strickland, Bloomingdale
Dolores Bills, Sharpsburg
Donielle Bryant, Hinesville
Donna Browning, Adel
Donna Flanders, Macon
Donna Pinson, Gainesville
Donna Cochran, Atlanta
Donna Jones, Macon
Doris Howdeshell, Fort Valley
Dorothy Dent, Forsyth
Drenda Davis-Jackson, Pooler
Earl Thigpen, Grovetown
Edward Crisp, Stockbridge
Edward Czyz, Lawrenceville
Eli Sauv, Alpharetta
Elise Wilder, Locust Grove
Elissa Corrie, Cumming
Elizabeth Brown, Forsyth
Elizabeth Tarpley, Covington
Ellen Dent, Hahira
Ellen Kilpatrick, Savannah
Elsa Zicarelli, Powder Springs
Emily Lee, Dawsonville
Emma Smith, Decatur
Eraina Wilborne, Augusta
Erica Parks, Albany
Erika Beeson, Augusta
Evalyn Coleman, Jonesboro
Evelyn Bell, Atlanta
Faye Harper, Atlanta
Felicia Gray, Lithonia
Fiona Murnane, Decatur
Frannie Whitmore, Saint Marys
Fredrick Reeves, Griffin

“

In the county I currently live in they seem to have very good schools. I do believe students need practical skills and technical training in the upper grades. Financial responsibility and learning about budgets. Understanding that hard work can pay off and being a good moral person is part of having good work ethics.”

- DARLENE MEYER
FORMER PRESCHOOL TEACHER,
SUWANEE, GA

“

I'm in East Cobb, where the best schools are educating upper- and middle-class students with every advantage. The schools have parent-supported nonprofits that fund art and other options not offered to less fortunate kids by their schools. Our schools are terribly underfunded.”

- ADRIENNE MINTZ
PARENT
MARIETTA, GA

“

Low-income areas are not funded well.”

- OUIDA RANDLE
ACCOUNTING CLERK,
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,
ATLANTA, GA

SIGNATORIES

Gabbie Horton, Savannah
Gail Martens, Acworth
Gail McGregor, Jesup
Gary Ledbetter, Blairsville
Georgia Miller, Decatur
Gilles Kouadio, Stone Mountain
Glenn Conner, Dallas
Gloria Beverly, Atlanta
Gloria Breeland, Atlanta
Gloria Davis-McArthur, Pooler
Gwangi Dorsey, Union City
Gwen Pounds, East Dublin
Heather Crane, Newnan
Heather Fizer, Hamilton
Henrietta Hughes, Atlanta
Herbert Hickey, Woodstock
Hugh Lane, Atlanta
Ian Smith, Ellenwood
Jack Dempsey, Atlanta
Jacquelin Twiss, Winder
Jade Owens, Acworth
Jai Muhammad, Atlanta
Jamela Franklin, Atlanta
James McKenzie, Stone Mountain
James Hendrix, Blackshear
James Oritz, Conyers
Janee Glass, Douglasville
Janet Adams, Jefferson
Janet L Hill, Ailey
Janice Clemens, Jasper
Jay Buege, Marietta
JB Bruneau, Lawrenceville
Jeanette Gaston, Decatur
Jeanine Casey, Tallapoosa
Jeff Alderman, Waycross
Jeffery Lanham, Atlanta
Jennifer Cruse, Hartwell
Jennifer Hicks, Atlanta
Jennifer Peacock, Douglas
Jennifer Wynter, Fairburn
Jennifer Stevens, Springfield
Jeremy Glover, Lawrenceville

“ In the charter school system, we can offer every child the opportunity to succeed at their own pace, in their own time-frame so that 100% have the ability to graduate. ”

- TONY EWERS
MOUNTAIN EDUCATION CHARTER HIGH
SCHOOL,
CANTON, GA

“ My county school district is one of the worst, not only in the state, but in the nation. Stewart County, GA also happens to be one of the poorest counties in our country. The schools have consistently shown below average on test scores and the literacy rate is below the national average. ”

- AMY CADENHEAD
PARENT,
LUMPKIN, GA

“ Our charter school — AMCS — is great and is not fully funded as other public schools. ”

- DOROTHY PIRZAD
PARENT,
ATLANTA, GA

SIGNATORIES

Jerry Holloway, Moultrie
Jessica Johnson, Macon
Jill Massey, Dawson
Jo Weeks, Canton
Joanne Patton, Appling
Joanne Reese, Grovetown
Joanne Cromedytaylor, Smyrna
John Gartland, Canton
John Powers, Hiram
John Shuman, Jesup
Johnny Blackmon, Dallas
Josh Harshbarger, Byromville
Joycelyn Andrews, Atlanta
Juanita Morton, McDonough
Judith Baird, Duluth
Julian Nation, Conyers
Julio Elda, Lawrenceville
Kara Martin, Woodstock
Karen Rhodes, Atlanta
Karl Elze, Rome
Kat Burkett, Gainesville
Kate Phillips, Smyrna
Kate Watkins, Canton
Katelynn Cooper, Temple
Kathy Mote, Decatur
Kathy Garcia, Canton
Katrina Simmons-Griffin, Savannah
Kelly Craig, Savannah
Kelly Kirkland, Columbus
Kelly Brooks, Lake Park
Kenisha Hartman, Atlanta
Kim Watts, Austell
Kim Wilford, Douglasville
Krista Polane, Douglasville
Kristen Wilcox, Madison
Larry Geoghagan, Tifton
Lasonia Powell, Valdosta
Latonia Seals, Macon
Latoya Byers, Atlanta
Latricia Deal, Port Wentworth
Laura Huitt, Atlanta
Laura Beatty, Greensboro

“
Consider contracting professionals to extend training in soft skills, social, and other key workforce skills to students as early as elementary school.
”

- ANGELIA O'NEAL
FOUNDER & PRESIDENT
MEN'S WEAR, INC.
VILLA RICA, GA

“
I was impressed by the charter school my son attended. The staff and parents both had more control than the county did.
”

- MECCA HERSHEY
ENTREPRENEUR,
CARTERSVILLE, GA

“
My autistic son is being pushed through public schools because teachers in my area do not know how to teach autistic kids. My kid's school put me through so many years of turmoil because the school refused to test my son for special needs classes.
”

- MELISSA CLARK
PARENT,
SAINT MARYS, GA

SIGNATORIES

Laurie Clark, Blairsville
Laurie Clements, Cobb
Laverne Whetstone, Roswell
Leanna Thompson, Mcdonough
Lee Bone, Lizella
Leigh DeNucci, Douglasville
Lena Kenedy, Cleveland
Lenia Garrison, Macon
Lesley Phinazee, Atlanta
Leslie Prouty, Savannah
Linda Olinger, Lithonia
Linda Peterson, Rex
Linda Schlomer, Columbus
Linda Wilcox, Abbeville
Lisa Moore, Kennesaw
Lisa Owens, Lizella
Liza Jimenez, Canton
Lois Atkins, Mcdonough
Louise Holmes, Hampton
Lucie Lott, Cartersville
Lydia Torres, Americus
Lynn D Burke, Gainesville
Maegan Ashley, Americus
Malvise Roberson, Savannah
Marci Alt, Decatur
Maria Singman, Atlanta
Marianne Brooks, Baldwin
Maribel Diaz, Lilburn
Marie Edwards, Rome
Marie Umberger, Cumming
Marie Williams, Brunswick
Mark Rowe, Lilburn
Mark Wolchko, Young Harris
Martah Harvey, Thomaston
Martha Bohannon, Albany
Marty Goldman, Evans
Marva Langhorne, Ellenwood
Mary Davis, Dalton
Mary Johnson, Marietta
Mary Jones, Jefferson
Mary Register, Fayetteville
Mary Locklear, Gillsville

“ My son attends the Academy for Classical Education (ACE) in Macon, Georgia. We are a local charter school. We are outperforming all the local public schools in the district. ”

- NANCY KISTLER
PARENT,
MACON, GA

“ College preparatory classes in high school help kids prepare for college work. There needs to be more hands-on training in both high school and college. More employers prefer job specific training and certification. ”

- QUONTWAIS HUDSON
CEO & FOUNDER,
HUDSON LOGISTICS GROUP
SNELLVILLE, GA

“ It is essential that all high school students are presented with various avenues for success. Not all students are college material, but that does not mean they cannot be well prepared for jobs that will meet their needs for making a living and will also meet the growing needs of the communities in which they reside. ”

- ELIZABETH RICHARDSON
CEO,
ELIZABETH'S ESCAPES FOR TRAVELING SINGLES
LLC,
DOUGLASVILLE, GA

SIGNATORIES

Mary Sullivan, Alma
Mary Harris, Newnan
Maryjo Omans, Thomasville
Meagen Hassinger, Dalton
Mecca Hershey, Cartersville
Megan Kalos, Lithia Springs
Meisha Jones, Atlanta
Melba Delgado, Cumming
Melinda Dixon, Americus
Melissa Clark, Saint Marys
Melissa Steward, Atlanta
Melody Battlr, Macon
Mercedes Bauldwin Perez, Snellville
Michael Bartlett, Atlanta
Michael Nungesser, Dallas
Michael Walters, Saint Simons Island
Michael Sterling, Columbus
Michaela Hicks, Coolidge
Michelle Watson, Snellville
Miriam Pledger, Lexington
Mo El, Norcross
Monica McClain, Jasper
Monique Ibrahim, Stone Mountain
MP Vital, Fairburn
Myra Crawford, Douglasville
Nadine Alexander, Milledgeville
Nancy Duenas, Atlanta
Nancy Flanders, Alpharetta
Nancy Kistler, Macon
Nelson Mendez, Mableton
Nichole Rader, Augusta
Norine Simmons, Columbus
Norma Smith, Norcross
Olivia Fields, Covington
Ouita Vartuli, Stone Mountain
Palace McMichael, Jonesboro
Pam East, Savannah
Pam Floener, Dacula
Pam Terrell, Springfield
Pamela Bryant, Lilburn
Pamela Phillips, Chatsworth
Pat Flowers, Coleman

“

Students should know what a business wants from them by communicating with business representatives directly.

”

- BENJAMIN BACON
OWNER,
PLANE SPACE DESIGN
SAVANNAH, GA

“

Students should receive technical training and internships.

”

- THOMAS ROBINSON
ATTORNEY
THOMAS ROBINSON AND ASSOCIATES
POWDER SPRINGS, GA

“

All students K-12 should begin having Financial Literacy courses throughout each grade level. Also, every student when entering the 9th grade should be required to take a vocational course along with the regular school courses.

”

- ANDRE MAYFIELD
MANAGING DIRECTOR
WORLDSAPES-LPG LLC
ATLANTA, GA

SIGNATORIES

Pat Gessner, Cartersville
Pat Smith, Augusta
Patrice Sims, Smyrna
Patrizia Vicne, Pooler
Patti Hammett, Rockmart
Paula Williams, Marietta
Paula Ballew, La Fayette
Rachel Benjamin, Hinesville
Raquel Asturias, Decatur
Raymond Espinosa, Lawrenceville
Rebecca Brooks, Doerun
Regina Bidby, Gay
Renate Diebold, Hiawassee
Rhoda Moss, Thomson
Rhonda Cook, Marietta
Rita Hinesman, Jonesboro
Rod Robinson, Baxley
Ron Henry, Warner Robins
Roscoe Solley, Jonesboro
Rose morales, Marietta
Roslyn Williams, Atlanta
Roxane Foster, Evans
Sally Lindberg, Jesup
Samantha Carter, Bainbridge
Sana Mujahid, Atlanta
Sandra Evans, Macon
Sandra Spencer, McDonough
Sara Coleman, Savannah
Sarah Caldwell, Bremen
Sarah Evelex, Macon
Scott Miner, Cumming
Scott Deal, Powder Springs
Sharese Beasley, Columbus
Shawanna Shannon, Atlanta
Sheeba Thomas, Cumming
Sheena McDonald, Atlanta
Sheila Prince, Darien
Sheila McLendon, Bainbridge
Shelly Hall, Augusta
Sherry Bostic, Louisville
Shirley Logan, Acworth
Shirley Shaffer, Rome

“ It is important that children are prepared for the world that they will encounter coming out of high school. What is the point of them learning if their learning isn't applicable to the environment that they will interact in? ”

- RACHEL BENJAMIN
FSW,
CGAA,
JESUP, GA

“ As go the community schools, so goes the community. Improve the schools and by default you improve the community. ”

- NELSON JACKSON
VICE PRESIDENT,
LINKAGE & ASSOCIATES, INC.,
ATLANTA, GA

“ Schools focus so much on kids being lawyers, doctors, astronauts. We are an industrialized country. It wasn't the doctors, lawyers, etc. that were the backbone to the rise of this American experiment — it was handwork and the training of the youth. Get back to the basics that's what will make our communities thrive, not just survive. ”

- ANNA SHARP
FAYETTE, GA

SIGNATORIES

Simon Shea, Canton
Sonia Clarke, Snellville
Sonia Harmon, West Point
Stacy Oliver, Colbert
Stephanie Lynch, Decatur
Stephanie Cates, Macon
Stephanie Welch, Fort Valley
Stephen Hill, Americus
Steve Wilkey, Cartersville
Susan Smith, Ellabell
Suzanne Chadwick, Canton
T. Johnson, Augusta
Tacha Greene, Atlanta
Tamara Croy, Gainesville
Tammy Willis, Winder
Tanaya Washington, Fayetteville
Tara Nash, Hamilton
Taraji Wootson, Decatur
Taunya Alexander, Greensboro
Telisha Moore, Alpharetta
Teresa Boyd, Columbus
Teresa King, Waco
Teresa Russow, Mableton
Teresa Willis, Evans
Terilyn Callicott, Atlanta
Terri Newsom, Snellville
Terri Davis, Sharpsburg
Terry Landreth, Kingsland
Theresa Morrison, Sylvania
Thomas Brown, Watkinsville
Tiani Williams, Atlanta
Tiffany Green-Abdullah, Stone Mountain
Tiffany Meador, Atlanta
Tim Thompson, Morrow
Tina Coalson, Albany
Tippie Shierling, Americus
Tommy Eskew, Lavonia
Toni DeLong, Valdosta
Tony Ewers, Canton
Tonya Jackson, Duluth
Tonya Wynn, Camilla
Tonya Manning, Cobbtown

“

Local schools should listen to the business community and prepare students to be knowledgeable contributors as members of the workforce.

”

- NELSON JACKSON
VICE PRESIDENT,
LINKAGE & ASSOCIATES, INC.,
ATLANTA, GA

“

Parents should have the option to enroll their child in whatever school they want. Or home school.

”

- LAURIE CLARK
BUSINESS OWNER
BLAIRSVILLE, GA

“

Let the money follow the student and not the other way around. Failing schools are turning out failing citizens and don't seem to care.

”

- SCOTT MINER
CUMMING, GA

SIGNATORIES

Torrey Sumlin, Atlanta
Tracee Brown, Grayson
Tracey Hill, Decatur
Tracey Radney, Statesboro
Tracy Taylor, Thomson
Tronza Ware, Augusta
Trudie Carmichael, Atlanta
Ulinfa Gilbert, Riverdale
Vera Causey, Mableton
Veronica Williams, Augusta
Vic Towery, Lawrenceville
Vicki Ray, Atlanta
Vickie Carr, Savannah
Vincine Brown, Decatur
Virginia Cox, Fitzgerald
Vonda Bloemer, Kathleen
Wanda Weir, Union City
Wanda Hockaday, Georgetown
Wendy Tarpley, Monroe
William Solomons, Guyton
Yvette Green, Duluth
Yvonne Canchola, Loganville
Yvonne Spaulding, Thomasville

“

Teachers don't have enough autonomy in their classrooms.

”

- **CONNITA RANSOM**
NURSE
LITHONIA, GA

“

Public schools are not equally funded. Sadly, most inequity can be seen in low-income areas where equal funding is needed most!

”

- **VERA CAUSEY**
FORMER PUBLIC SCHOOL
ELEMENTARY TEACHER,
MABLETON, GA

“

When education is centered around test-taking and passing through to the next grade, as opposed to teaching critical thinking, grammar, arts and sciences, I am left with the burden of teaching what should have been taught in school.

”

- **WILLIA JOHNSON**
CEO,
DISCOVER WHOLENESS COUNSELING,
SAVANNAH, GA

ABOUT BUSINESS FORWARD

The Business Forward Foundation is an independent research organization that takes a business-minded look at policy issues affecting America's economic competitiveness. The Foundation combines insights and advice from more than 100,000 local business leaders across the country with rigorous policy analysis to educate the general public on some of the most important issues of our time.

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