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NEWS RELEASE

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HCHS & PHS Recognized for Graduation Rates

HOUSTON COUNTY, GA – Houston County High and Perry High Schools are two of only 15 high schools in Georgia to achieve at least an 85 percent graduation rate in 2008 after an increase of at least 10 percentage points beginning in 2004. The “85/10 Schools” were identified through research conducted by the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education.

The research sought to identify high schools that fit three criteria:

1. a graduation rate of at least 85 percent in 2008;
 2. an increase in the graduation rate by at least 10 percentage points from 2004 to 2008; and
 3. sustainment of the 85 percent graduation rate and 10 percentage point improvement through 2009.
- The schools that met the criteria for this research are referred to as “85/10 Schools.”

Each of the 15 schools improved their graduation rates noticeably over time with unique strategies. The research also uncovered common characteristics such as:

- a culture of high expectations for all and support for students who are struggling academically;
- an integrated system of curriculum, assessment and instruction;
- multiple safety nets of intervention provided for students who need them;
- administrators and teachers routinely collaborate to create innovative approaches to ensure challenging courses and effective practices; and
- continuous improvement processes are in place such as using data to inform decisions.

Graduation rates for Houston County High, Perry High and the state are listed below.

	Grad Rate 2004	Grad Rate 2005	Grad Rate 2006	Grad Rate 2007	Grad Rate 2008	Grad Rate 2009	Amount of change, 2004-2009
HCHS	77.2	88.6	85.4	84.6	89.8	87.7	10.5
PHS	72.8	81.2	83.8	84.5	86.6	86.4	13.6
GA	65.4	67.8	70.8	72.3	75.4	78.9	13.5

MORE

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Superintendent David Carpenter said, “Our strategies include a process of continuous academic improvement which is evident beginning in the elementary years. The support from our parents and the dedication of our teachers, support staff, and administrators is a testament to this accomplishment. Congratulations to our Houston County High and Perry High families!”

Perry High Principal Dr. Darryl Albritton said, “We are excited about this latest distinction! This truly gives credence to our mission statement – ‘All students will earn a high school diploma.’ I applaud our very dedicated Panther teachers and also recognize the tremendous job our feeder schools do in preparing our students for the rigors of high school.”

Houston County High Principal Sherri Freeman commented, “We are pleased to be included in the 85/10 schools! This honor is a testament to the diligent, focused work of our students, parents, faculty and staff. We are proud of the results thus far of our efforts to promote a culture consistently focused on supporting all students and improving student achievement. We will not be satisfied, however, until 100 percent of our students graduate in four years.”

The full report is available on the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education Web site at www.gpee.org. For more information, contact Freeman at either (478) 988-6340 or Sherri.Freeman@hcbe.net or Dr. Albritton at (478) 988-6298 or Darryl.Albritton@hcbe.net.

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NOTE: The GPEE news release is provided.



For immediate release

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Contact: Bill Maddox

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TWO HOUSTON COUNTY HIGH SCHOOLS AMONG 15 STATE SCHOOLS RECOGNIZED IN STUDY

High Graduation Rate, Considerable Improvement Since 2004 Stand Out

ATLANTA -- Houston County and Perry High Schools are two of only 15 Georgia high schools to achieve at least an 85 percent graduation rate in 2008 after seeing an increase of at least 10 percentage points starting in the base year 2004. The schools also sustained that level through the 2009 graduation year. The results of a recent Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education study pinpoint the good work of the schools.

Dr. Steve Dolinger, president of the Georgia Partnership – a non-partisan, non-profit organization focused on improving student achievement – said his organization decided to take a close look at the state graduation rate that has shown a steady increase over the past few years. “When we started to look at the numbers, a group of schools stood out,” he said. “It was apparent they were following winning formulas.”

He added that various strategies were used by the “85/10” schools, but mutually dependent commonalities emerged. “It is these similar winning formulas we want to share across Georgia.” For example:

- Each school has a culture of high expectations for all and support for students who are struggling academically.
- The schools provide an integrated system of curriculum, assessment and instruction.
- Multiple safety nets of intervention are provided for students who need them.
- Administrators and teachers routinely collaborate to create innovative approaches to ensure challenging courses and effective practices.
- They use continuous improvement processes such as working in teams and using data to inform decisions.

Dr. Donna O’Neal, who conducted the study for the Georgia Partnership explained, “Education is a very complicated process, yet, these schools have an atmosphere of continually improving the factors that are necessary to improve graduation rates.

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HOUSTON SCHOOLS RECOGNIZED 2-2-2

“They have very high expectations for students and faculty alike, and they provide additional instruction and supports to ensure all students graduate on time. We congratulate them all!”

The schools joining Houston County and Perry High Schools on the “85/10” list are:

- Buford High School (Buford – Buford City Schools)
- Gilmer High School (Ellijay – Gilmer County)
- Grady High School (Atlanta – Atlanta Public Schools)
- Greenbrier High School (Evans – Columbia County Schools)
- Hardaway High School (Columbus, Muscogee County Schools)
- Loganville High School (Loganville, Walton County)
- Lumpkin County High School (Dahlonega – Lumpkin County Schools)
- Mays High School (Atlanta – Atlanta Public Schools)
- Redan High School (Stone Mountain – DeKalb County Schools)
- Riverwood International Charter High School (Atlanta/Sandy Springs – Fulton County Schools)
- Union County High School (Blairsville – Union County Schools)
- Washington-Wilkes Comprehensive High School (Washington – Wilkes County Schools)
- Westlake High School (Atlanta – Fulton County Schools)

Both a synopsis and the longer, detailed report are available on the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education web site at www.gpee.org.

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Founded in 1992 by the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia Economic Developers Association, the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education consists of business, education, community and government leaders who share a vision of improved education. Now an independent organization, the Partnership is working to be Georgia’s foremost change agent in education. The non-partisan, non-profit organization takes lead roles in efforts to impact education policies and practices for the improvement of student achievement. More information is available at www.gpee.org. Follow the Georgia Partnership on www.twitter.com/GAPartnership.