

The Foreign Language Association of Georgia (FLAG) has prepared the following information to assist you in making an informed decision at election time. The same questions were sent out to all candidates for governor and state school superintendent for Georgia, and the following is the information we received. Candidate responses appear in alphabetical order according to the last name of each candidate, with the gubernatorial candidates appearing first.

Feel free to share this information with your colleagues.

Responses from gubernatorial candidates

Thurbert Baker, Democrat

Candidate for Governor

<http://www.thurbertbaker.com/splash>

No response.

Roy Barnes, Democrat

Candidate for Governor

<http://www.roy2010.com/>

No response.

Carl Camon, Democrat
Candidate for Governor
<http://www.camonforgovernor.com/>

Background information

Are you proficient in any languages other than English?

No

Describe your experiences learning other languages.

I am very interested in learning another language, and I intend to do so in the very near future.

How often have you traveled outside the country?

I have traveled to Canada, Guam, Japan, Korea, England, and the Dominican Republic.

Describe one of your most interesting experiences while traveling abroad, if applicable.

One of my most interesting experiences was in England. I remember visiting Warwick Castle, London Bridge, and watching the changing of the guards at Buckingham Palace, during my stay in England.

Broader questions

What is the role of language instruction in the 21st century?

I believe that language instruction should take center stage in the 21st Century. It is very apparent that we are living in a global economy and our world is ever changing. As Governor of Georgia, I will wholeheartedly support the teaching of Foreign Languages beginning in Middle School.

What, if anything, should the state of Georgia do to improve international education at all levels?

The State of Georgia should encourage the learning of foreign languages and increase opportunities for Georgians to study abroad as often as possible. I believe that our state can increase its understanding of international education by supporting educator exchange programs. These and other programs help break down barriers and increase needed dialogue between countries, which could result in greater business opportunities for Georgia.

At what age do you believe that foreign language education should begin?

I believe that foreign language education in middle school.

Are you aware of the shortage of foreign language teachers in Georgia? And if so, what do you feel needs to be done to increase the number of foreign language teachers?

As an educator, I am aware that there is a foreign language teacher shortage in Georgia. As Governor, I will support foreign language education, because of my understanding of the global concept. I believe that those in have supported issues that they felt were important to them. Foreign Language Education is important to me.

Should language instruction be a requirement for all students? If so, how much language instruction should students have? If not, who should be required to have language instruction?

I believe that foreign language instruction should be encouraged at the middle school level, and at least one required course, at the high school level. Ultimately, all of the community and state stakeholders should be involved in making the decision as to whether to make Foreign Language Instruction a required course of study and at what age and grade level.

Jeff Chapman, Republican

Candidate for Governor

<http://www.jeffchapmanforgovernor.com/>

No response.

Nathan Deal, Republican

Candidate for Governor

<http://www.nathandeal.org/>

No response

Karen Handel, Republican

Candidate for Governor

<http://www.karenhandel.com/>

No response.

Eric Johnson, Republican

Candidate for Governor

<http://www.johnsonforgeorgians.com/>

No response.

Ray McBerry, Republican

Candidate for Governor

<http://georgiafirst.org/governor/enter.shtml>

No response.

John Monds, Libertarian

Candidate for Governor

<http://www.votemonds.com/>

No response.

John Oxendine, Republican

Candidate for Governor

<http://www.johnoxendine.com/>

Background information

Are you proficient in any languages other than English?

Functional in French. Can read Latin and Greek.

Describe your experiences learning other languages.

Self-taught in French because I felt it was important to learn modern spoken language. Always try to initiate conversations in French when in French Canada, Belgium, and France.

How often have you traveled outside the country?

Average of twice per year for 20 years.

Describe one of your most interesting experiences while traveling abroad, if applicable.

Broader questions

What is the role of language instruction in the 21st century?

It helps people learn to communicate socially and understand counterparts around the world. This helps with doing business and increases productivity.

What, if anything, should the state of Georgia do to improve international education at all levels?

Georgians are competing with people from across the globe for jobs and business opportunities and we need to prepare our children for that task. Language is a key tool.

At what age do you believe that foreign language education should begin?

As young as practical.

Are you aware of the shortage of foreign language teachers in Georgia? And if so, what do you feel needs to be done to increase the number of foreign language teachers?

Yes, I am aware and we need to work to increase the number of teachers so our kids can do business globally.

Should language instruction be a requirement for all students? If so, how much language instruction should students have? If not, who should be required to have language instruction?

That issue should be decided jointly between the state and local school boards. I know that my language instruction has been invaluable to me.

Dubose Porter, Democrat

Candidate for Governor

<http://duboseporter.com/>

No response.

David Poythress, Democrat

Candidate for Governor

<http://www.poythressforgovernor.com/>

No response.

Austin Scott, Republican

Candidate for Governor

<http://www.scottforga.com/>

No response.

Responses from candidates for State School Superintendent

Kathy Cox, Republican

Candidate for State School Superintendent (incumbent)

<http://www.votekathycox.com/>

Background information

Are you proficient in any languages other than English?

Not proficient - but I had four years of Spanish in middle and high school and one year of Latin in high school.

Describe your experiences learning other languages.

I loved my foreign language classes! They were challenging but always engaging. We had fun studying the cultures and the people as well as the language. They were some of my best teachers in middle and high school. I wish I had taken a fifth year of Spanish and continued studying in college.

How often have you traveled outside the country? Many times - numerous trips to England as well as the opportunity to travel to Scotland, Austria, Italy, Greece, Australia, New Zealand, China, The Bahamas, and Turks and Caicos.

Describe one of your most interesting experiences while traveling abroad, if applicable. They have all been fascinating! Each with a different purpose and hence a different "adventure"! I must say that a moment that was truly awesome was when I was chosen to represent the over 800 American educators on the trip to China. I was asked to bring greetings in the Great Hall of the People to a crowd of about 1400 - made up of people from China, South Korea and the United States. My remarks were translated into two languages - so I stuck to my script! It was such an honor and I was asked to come behind the scenes and meet the head of education for the Chinese government as well.

Broader questions

What is the role of language instruction in the 21st century?

Mastery of the English Language, as well as another language , is essential for our students in their global education. We have to be deliberate about providing a world class education that includes the expectation of learning a second language or more.

What, if anything, should the state of Georgia do to improve international education at all levels?

Be sure that the Georgia Performance Standards are taught at all grades and in all subjects. We can not allow accountability to so narrow the curriculum that Social Studies and World Languages suffer. I have worked hard to try and prevent this, but parents must be vigilant about it too at the local level. I have also been promoting more IB programs in elementary as well as high school. We need to continue to push the Board of Regents for recognition of the IB diploma.

At what age do you believe that foreign language education should begin?

We should be starting foreign language instruction at the latest in 6th grade. It was my hope that the IE2 commission was truly going to re-do the QBE formula to pay for this. I hope we can revisit this issue in the very near future.

Are you aware of the shortage of foreign language teachers in Georgia? And if so, what do you feel needs to be done to increase the number of foreign language teachers?

I think we can consider differentiated pay like we have done for science and math teachers. We will be collecting data on this effort this year and if it was successful in attracting people to the profession I think we need to consider it for this shortage area as well.

Should language instruction be a requirement for all students? If so, how much language instruction should students have? If not, who should be required to have language instruction?

In the development of the new standards for a Georgia High School Diploma, this was a topic of major debate. Interestingly, if you ask students, they believe a minimum of two years should be required of everyone. However, it was the adults who debated this and ultimately decided to not make it a requirement for all students and to keep it at the two year minimum for students entering the Regents system only. In my next term as Superintendent I want to work towards foreign language instruction beginning in earnest in middle school and then continuing into high school. I would eventually like to see all students take two years in high school, including sign language as an option for the credits.

Dr. Beth Farokhi, Democrat

Candidate for State School Superintendent

<http://www.bethforeducation.com/>

Background information

Background information

Are you proficient in any languages other than English?

I have reading knowledge of French and familiarity with Farsi.

Describe your experiences learning other languages.

In studying French in junior high, high school, and college, I had a very positive experience and loved the opportunity to explore another culture through language. I enjoyed advanced classes where we read French literature and translated it into English. In college my professor was French and he always complimented me on my correct French pronunciation.

In trying to learn Farsi, the experience has been more difficult. The structure of the language is very different. Even though I have heard it spoken for many years, I have difficulty speaking it, though I do understand some conversations.

How often have you traveled outside the country?

My international travel to date has included the four continents of Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America. Traveling both professionally and for pleasure, I have visited Australia, Canada, Mexico, Iran, Iceland, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, and France.

Describe one of your most interesting experiences while traveling abroad, if applicable.

The ability to speak French provided a unique opportunity to converse and connect with a local resident in Brussels. He lived close to the hotel where I stayed and provided guidance on what to see in the community. He shared his talent as a former opera singer, bursting into song on the street and later performed with an American couple that I introduced to him. Monsieur Leopold and I corresponded for several years.

Broader questions

What is the role of language instruction in the 21st century?

Language instruction is vital to the development and understanding of a people. As the world shrinks through technology and travel, language boundaries are loosened and the need to

communicate effectively becomes critical for a more civilized world. Many of our communities within the state are already becoming diverse and we need to speed up the process to provide a strong future for today's students so Georgia, not only becomes economically competitive, but also becomes a better neighbor.

What, if anything, should the state of Georgia do to improve international education at all levels?

Georgia must focus on the importance of foreign language as an ongoing part of improving international education. The public schools must prepare students for an increasingly interdependent world. The State should expand technology resources to connect students anywhere in the world to provide new opportunities to strengthen and explore ways for students to work on projects together, create pen pals, and foster understanding between cultures.

Suggestions within school systems could include the creation of magnet schools in international studies, incorporation of international music into music classes, and creation of international themes in middle school lesson planning. There are numerous ways to incorporate international education in all areas of the curriculum

There are resources to tap into to assist all teachers, not just foreign language instructors. These resources are also available to the community at large. There are many opportunities that exist within the state, e.g. The Carter Center and The Southern Center for International Studies. In addition there are ways to bring other resources into Georgia. For the past three years I have served on a Steering Committee to bring the Committee to Teach about the United Nations to the Atlanta area which provides a high quality program for educators from across the state focused each year on a different theme, e.g. Human Rights.

At what age do you believe that foreign language education should begin?

Pre-Kindergarten.

Are you aware of the shortage of foreign language teachers in Georgia? And if so, what do you feel needs to be done to increase the number of foreign language teachers?

Yes, I am aware of a shortage of foreign language teachers. Incentives could be put into place, e.g. state offers a reimbursement for the education courses for prospective students who commit to teach Foreign Language in Georgia for five years. Other recruitment efforts for foreign language teachers would be to tap into the numerous native speakers of a foreign language who live in the community to provide enrichment instruction and to set up a teacher exchange with other countries to provide the instruction needed.

Should language instruction be a requirement for all students? If so, how much language instruction should students have? If not, who should be required to have language instruction?

Language instruction should be a part of the curriculum starting in Pre-Kindergarten and continuing through the twelfth grade. There may be instances where a parent could have an option to have their child opt out, e.g. child has difficulty in language/reading and is behind a grade level.

Brian Westlake, Democrat

Candidate for State School Superintendent

<http://www.brianwestlake.com/>

Background information

Are you proficient in any languages other than English?

My wife is French, and I have communicative fluency in French. I was also a Spanish language cryptologic linguist when I was in the Marine Corps—although that was almost twenty years ago. I can still understand some Spanish, but I would need a refresher course in order to communicate effectively in the language.

Describe your experiences learning other languages.

I took Spanish in high school for two years. After graduation, I attended the Defense Language Institute in Monterrey, California for Spanish language instruction. This was part of the preparation to become a Spanish language cryptologic linguist. The job involved intercepting, translating and transcribing enemy communications in the target language.

While in the Marine Corps, I met Emmanuelle—my wife of eighteen years. Emmanuelle is French, and I began taking French classes not long after we met. My French improved due to extended and frequent stays in France—visiting her family.

How often have you traveled outside the country?

I have traveled to several places outside the United States. The list includes France, Canada, Mexico, Jamaica, Norway, Spain, England and the Netherlands. However, I have spent the most time in France. For most of our eighteen years of marriage, my wife and I have traveled to France to visit her family once or twice a year.

Describe one of your most interesting experiences while traveling abroad, if applicable.

My most interesting experience traveling abroad had to be when I spent three months in France my first visit to the country. I was able to make tremendous progress learning the language. But more importantly, I learned a great deal about the culture and what it was like to actually live abroad. I think this and subsequent visits helped me to more deeply reflect upon my own culture and provided invaluable experiences.

Broader questions

What is the role of language instruction in the 21st century?

Language instruction is at its best when it exposes our young people to other cultures and encourages an appreciation and respect for our global heritage.

What, if anything, should the state of Georgia do to improve international education at all levels? Georgia is a culturally diverse state that continues to attract international businesses, visitors, and immigrants who seek a great place to live, work and raise a family. We should be tapping into the extensive resources that exist in such a culturally rich community to promote increased cultural awareness and provide opportunities for cross-cultural learning experiences.

At what age do you believe that foreign language education should begin?

Ideally, foreign language instruction should be a part of early childhood education.

Are you aware of the shortage of foreign language teachers in Georgia? And if so, what do you feel needs to be done to increase the number of foreign language teachers? Yes. In addition to offering support to those entering the profession directly from college, we need to attract and facilitate the transition for career-changers who have foreign language proficiency and bring invaluable experience into their classroom.

Should language instruction be a requirement for all students? If so, how much language instruction should students have? If not, who should be required to have language instruction? Yes. Studies have shown that foreign language instruction aids in cognitive development and can help students in other subjects. Foreign language learning should be considered a requirement for any curriculum that is designed to challenge students to reach their fullest potential.

RICHARD WOODS, Republican

STATE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT CANDIDATE

<http://www.woodsforgeorgiaed.com/>

Background information

Are you proficient in any languages other than English?

No.

Describe your experiences learning other languages.

I took one year of French in high school and one year of Spanish in college.

How often have you traveled outside the country?

Until recently, I have not had the opportunity to travel outside of the U.S. Within the past few years, I have had the good pleasure of traveling to Venezuela and Kenya on church mission trips. If possible, I hope to have the opportunity to travel to Peru this summer.

Describe one of your most interesting experiences while traveling abroad, if applicable.

During my mission trip to Venezuela, my cultural ignorance did shine quite brightly until the error of my ways was brought to my attention. As I was telling people that Jesus loves them, I was unknowingly giving them the Latin American version of the middle finger.

Broader questions

What is the role of language instruction in the 21st century?

I believe it is twofold. First of all, it plays a major role in cultural awareness. This is necessary in the revelation and appreciation of contributions made by cultures outside of our country and the impact and influence they have had on our society as well. Furthermore, this exposure will help us to be more receptive of others and place world events in their proper context. Secondly, language instruction will help the U.S. become a stronger nation economically. Such diversity in language and cultural understanding is necessary in the age of advance communication and the emergence of the global economy. We must stay on the cutting edge if we are to keep our standing on the world stage both politically and economically.

What, if anything, should the state of Georgia do to improve international education at all

levels?

We should critically look at its current incorporation within our overall curriculum. Integration and appropriate exposure must be done and viewed not in the context of instructional isolation. Furthermore, it is imperative that we develop more effective partnerships with businesses on local, state, national, and international levels. Such partnerships will open the door to more resources and promote awareness to the importance and opportunities provided through foreign language education.

Broader questions

At what age do you believe that foreign language education should begin?

Obviously, the earlier the better for easier acquisition. However, I do firmly believe that the mastery of English is our top priority in education. Thus, I believe middle school is a logical place to begin such exposure on a large scale with the addition of gifted classes in grades 4 and 5.

Are you aware of the shortage of foreign language teachers in Georgia? And if so, what do you feel needs to be done to increase the number of foreign language teachers?

The deferment of college tuition, financial supplements, a school system recruitment merit program, and business sponsorships should be explored.

Should language instruction be a requirement for all students? If so, how much language instruction should students have? If not, who should be required to have language instruction?

Once again, the mastery of English should be our top priority. However I do believe that language instruction should be available to all students. I know that students who enter college, vocational college, the military, or enter the workforce upon leaving high school will benefit from such a path. This move will further provide them with more opportunities of choice in the future. I do believe in a minimum of two years for our college bound students. However, we lack the needed flexibility for effective foreign language exposure due to the rigidity of our current scheduling, curriculum mandates, and financial disposition of funding. The vision for such an incorporation and exposure from my perspective has been narrow and reflects how subjects have been viewed in isolation rather than pieces of the same puzzle. This rigidity must be overcome prior to the effective consideration and incorporation of meaningful foreign language instruction.

