Georgia School Superintendents Association
Fall Bootstrap Conference
October 14-15, 2026
Classic Center, Athens, Georgia

Believe in Public Education

Tuesday, October 13

9:30 a.m. **New Superintendent Workshop/Luncheon – *Olympia 2***

12:00 p.m. **Women In Network Event – *Meet @ Classic Center Box Office***

5:30 p.m. **GSSA Board of Directors Dinner – *Olympia 1***

6:30 p.m. **GSSA Board of Directors Meeting – *Olympia 2***

8:00 p.m. **GSSA Platinum and Gold Sponsored Welcome Reception** – Rooftop of Hyatt

GSSA's Platinum and Gold sponsors are sponsoring this event that will start at 8**:00 pm** at the Hyatt Place to kick start the start of the conference. In the past, many of our members have indicated the need for opportunities to network, collaborate, and socialize with colleagues. Having gone through the inevitable and varied experiences of the superintendency, opportunities to have dialog, problem-solving, and commiserate are typically highly valued by superintendents and educational leaders at every level. At this event, you will have the opportunity to meet with our new superintendents, other Georgia superintendents, GSSA staff, some of the speakers for our conference, and national educational leaders, in a relaxed and informal setting. We hope that you will plan to attend so you don't miss out on the refreshments, desserts, the music, and the fellowship with your colleagues.

Wednesday, October 14

7:30 a.m. **Registration Opens – *Thomas Street Lobby Area***

8:00 a.m. **CSRA RESA – Board of Control – *Parthenon 2***

8:00 a.m. **Pioneer RESA – Board of Control - *Parthenon 1***

8:00 a.m. **West Georgia RESA – Board of Control – *Olympia 2***

General Session I: – *Athena F-J*

9:30 a.m. **Welcome and Recognition**
GSSA President Craig Lockhart welcomes members and guests to the conference and recognizes sponsors and other special guests.

10:00 a.m. **Keynote Speaker – Phil Hartley – Legal Update**
Phillip L. Hartley graduated with honors from the University of Georgia in 1976 and then obtained his J.D. degree with honors from the University of Georgia Law School in 1979. He was a member of the Georgia Law Review, Order of the Coif and Phi Beta Kappa. After law school, he immediately began to practice law, including representing school districts, and in 1980, he became a founding partner in the law firm of Harben & Hartley. He has served as lead counsel in numerous cases involving Georgia's school districts in the federal and state courts. He serves as an officer of the National Council of School Attorneys. In the firm's capacity as general counsel to the Georgia School Boards Association, he works closely with GSBA, the Georgia School Superintendents Association and the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders to respond to and shape legislative and policy issues that affect public education in the state. Known for presentations on school law to a wide variety of audiences, he has also written extensively on school law topics.

11:15 a.m. **GSSA Awards**
The four finalists for the 2027 Superintendent of the Year Award will be recognized, the winner of the prestigious Bill Barr Leadership Award will be announced, and recognition of new Superintendents.

11:45 p.m. **Lunch** – ***Athena A-E***

General Session II: – *Athena F-J*

1:15 p.m. **Rick Jackson – Governor – Republican Candidate**

1:30 p.m. **Gail Rothman – Roadmap for Education Foundations**

2:15 p.m. **Richard Woods – State School Superintendent – Republican Candidate**

2:30 p.m. **Department of Community Health - State Health Benefit Plan Update**
SHBP Executive Director, Louis Amis and Deputy Director, Cathy Craven

3:15 p.m. **GOEWS Update** - Fran Dundore & Stacey Lutz

3:30 p.m. **Lydia Powell – State School Superintendent - Democratic Candidate**

3:45 p.m. **GHSA Update** – Tim Scott

4:30 p.m. **President's Reception** – ***Athena B, C, and E***
All conference attendees are invited to this reception honoring new superintendents and those who are retiring.

Thursday, October 15

7:30 a.m. **GSSA Breakfast**
Conference attendees are invited to enjoy breakfast and network with colleagues before the session starts.

General Session III – *Athena F-J*

9:00 a.m. **Welcome -** GSSA President-Elect Mary Elizabeth Davis presides

9:05 a.m. **GA DoE Update**

9:40 a.m. **Josh McLaurin- Lt. Governor – Democratic Candidate**

10:00 a.m. **GA PSC Update – Dr. Jody Barrow**

10:15 a.m. **GASROE Update – Murray Kogod & Danielle Rosa**

10:30 a.m. **Greg Dolezal – Lt Governor – Republican Candidate**

10:45 a.m. **Crisis Communication Support - Lesley Bruinton, School Spirit PR**

11:00 a.m. **School System Operation Survey - Claire Suggs**

11:15 a.m. **Keisha Lance Bottoms – Governor – Democratic Candidate**

11:30 a.m. **Governor Brian Kemp - Remarks**

12:00 p.m. **Conference Adjournment**

12:15 p.m. **Luncheon for afternoon meeting attendees** – ***Olympia 2***

12:15 p.m**.** **GSSA Legislative Committee Meeting – *Olympia 1***