



**GEORGIA PARTNERSHIP
FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION**

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**GEORGIA COLLEGE EARLY COLLEGE NAMED
STOP ON 17TH BUS TRIP ACROSS GEORGIA**

Annual Event Showcases Achieving Schools, Emphasizes Best Practices

ATLANTA -- Georgia College Early College (GCEC), a partnership among Baldwin and Putnam County Schools, Georgia College and State University, and the Oconee Regional Educational Service Agency, has been selected by the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education as one of six stops on the 17th Annual Georgia Bus Trip Across Georgia. GCEC is one of twelve Early Colleges across the state implemented and supported through the University System of Georgia Early College Initiative (www.gaeearlycollege.org). The GPEE Bus tour showcases achieving public schools and shares best practices with educators, business, government and community leaders from around the state.

The event began in 1993 and has been a fixture in state education circles ever since. Schools selected as stops have a proven track record of academic excellence, educational innovation and sustained performance. This year the focus will be on innovation that has led to increased student achievement.

Dr. Steve Dolinger, president of the Georgia Partnership, explained that Georgia College Early College, as well as the other 2009 bus trip schools, represents what is right in Georgia's public education system. "In the case here, our bus trip participants will see a challenging program that provides an exciting option for area students as they plan their futures."

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The Partnership president explained the annual visits accomplish two things. “While we are bringing much deserved recognition to these programs, schools, their school systems, and supportive communities, we are also showcasing best practices to influencers who might adopt or adapt some of these great ideas for use in their own communities.”

He also explained another objective is to provide decision makers an opportunity to see how policy impacts the classroom. “Education decisions made at the state level will ultimately reach the grassroots level. It is important for these leaders to see firsthand the results of their actions.” He added that the annual trip helps highlight where and how Georgia needs to be focusing its efforts in improving student achievement.

The event will be conducted Oct. 27 – 29. Details, including the day the Georgia College Early College will be visited, are being worked out.

Also on the 2009 tour will be the Amana Academy, Alpharetta, Fulton County Schools; Centennial Arts Academy, Gainesville City Schools; Morgan County High School, Madison; Unity Elementary School, LaGrange, Troup County School System; and W.L. Parks Middle School, Atlanta Public Schools. More than 60 schools were nominated.

Susan Walker, the Georgia Partnership’s policy and research director, said the selection process was difficult. “After reviewing the nominations, one thing is clear, there are many good news stories when it comes to public education in Georgia.”

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Visit the Partnership web site (www.gpee.org – Annual Bus Trip page) for more information about the organization and the event. The Bus Trip 16 video is available on the site. The “Photo Gallery” page also records the visits to the 2008 schools.

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Founded in 1990 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 education excellence. Working to be Georgia’s foremost change agent in education, the independent non-profit, non-partisan organization takes lead roles in efforts to shape policy and reform education.