President Allan Taylor and the NASBE Board of Directors welcome you to Atlanta for the Association’s annual business meeting and conference. A special thanks is due our host state, the members and staff of the Georgia State Board of Education.

This year’s Annual Conference features an array of speakers and panelists aimed at bringing the best thinking in education from around the world. That American students’ achievement scores generally land in the middle of pack when compared with their peers worldwide is well known. What to do about it remains a matter of debate. As NASBE President Allan Taylor notes, “rather than listening to pundits decry the state of American public education,” this conference is designed to help policymakers understand how some other nations have reformed their education systems, the links between education and global and national economies, and how other high-performing countries tackle students’ nonacademic issues that affect achievement.

Other sessions covering critical issues for board members include the release of the 2011 study group report on creating state systems for teacher effectiveness, a breakout session on education and immigration, and another on economics and workforce development. General sessions will focus on Common Core standards and the interface between NAEP and common assessments.

Overview and Lessons from PISA Featured at Opening Luncheon Keynote

In the last few years, the Programme for International Student Assessment, or PISA, has become the global standard by which student academic achievement is compared across countries. But PISA is much more than a test, as it offers a wealth of student and teacher indicators and other information to help inform the decisions of policymakers. Today’s keynote speaker, Andreas Schleicher, oversees PISA for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

As head of OECD’s Indicators and Analysis Division (Directorate of Education), Schleicher’s responsibilities include PISA and the OECD Indicators of Education Systems, in addition to steering the development of new projects such as the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey and the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies.
Teachers have lately fallen under the national microscope far more than any other aspect of public schooling. The convergence of sluggish growth in student achievement, high turnover in the ranks of teachers, continuing achievement gaps, and state and federal actions that have zeroed in on the capacity of the current education system have set the stage for changes that are unparalleled in recent education history.

The public and political drumbeat over these issues led NASBE to create a study group charged with developing policy recommendations for a strong teaching profession. The panel’s report, *Gearing Up: Creating a Systemic Approach to Teacher Effectiveness*, will be released in an Annual Conference session Friday morning. Working from the belief that teachers are the most important in-school factor for student success, the study group held that state policies should ensure that all teachers meet high professional standards before receiving a license, participate in a high-quality induction program once on the job, and continue learning and growing throughout their careers.

In the report, the study group arrived at three separate sets of recommendations that begin with teacher preparation at the college level, continue through teacher retention and induction, and finish with policies for teacher evaluation. Included are recommendations that:

- Every teacher of record, no matter his or her pathway to the profession, must have significant exposure and clinical experience in the field teaching with a diverse set of students.
- State and district education leaders should ensure that all teachers complete multi-year induction programs, which have been shown to increase new teacher effectiveness and decrease attrition rates.
- Evaluation systems should be designed and used for the purpose of improving instructional practice and student achievement.
Rehema Ellis of NBC News to Moderate Session on International Best Practices in Education

Rehema Ellis, education correspondent for NBC News, will moderate a panel of distinguished education experts from Canada, Finland, and South Korea as they discuss the steps each is taking or has already taken in education reform. The session will take place this afternoon at 3:45 in Salon D.

Our panelists have helped shape the reforms occurring in each of their homelands, or are especially well-versed in the methods and climate surrounding the changes that have been implemented.

Carol Campbell is associate professor, Leadership and Educational Change, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. She has international experience in bringing together evidence and strategies to advance policies and practices for high-quality education systems with improved outcomes for students.

Kiyong Byun is an associate professor, College of Education, and the vice director of the Higher Education Policy Research Institute at Korea University. He was appointed a deputy director at the Korean Ministry of Education in 1992 and since then has been working for the Ministry.

Jenni Jarventaus represents the Press and Public Affairs department of the Embassy of Finland. She has worked closely with numerous American journalists covering Finland’s successful education system and coordinated several U.S. education policy delegations’ visits to Finland. She has discussed the Finnish approach to education at various conferences in Washington and elsewhere.

Silent Auction!!

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Friday 5:30 – 7:00

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NASBE is pleased to welcome a number of distinguished guests as keynote, general session, and breakout session speakers at this year’s conference. As always, we have made an effort to include speakers who represent a diversity of opinions. While all conference participants will not agree with all of the viewpoints expressed, please join us in showing these guests our respect and appreciation. In addition, kindly silence your cell phone and other electronic devices during the sessions. Thank you, and enjoy the conference!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NASBE would like to thank the staff members of the Georgia State Board of Education and Department of Education for their assistance in organizing this meeting. NASBE’s Annual Conferences would not be possible without the continuing support and assistance of our host states.

NASBE would like to thank the following companies for donating promotional items to the Annual Conference Tote Bag:

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