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## COMMISSION FOR SCHOOL BOARD EXCELLENCE

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### Opportunity

In 2008, the Clayton County School System in the metro Atlanta region lost its accreditation. If Warren County School System loses its accreditation this year, Georgia will have the dubious distinction of having the only two school systems in the nation to lose their accreditation in the past 40 years. These systems' loss of accreditation has jeopardized the educational future of students and the economic vitality of these communities.

In the last decade, roughly one-fifth of school boards across Georgia have experienced problems, according to AdvancED, the parent organization of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which accredits more than 90 percent of the schools in Georgia.

School board difficulties range from micromanagement of staff and lack of strong decision-making, to mismanagement of funds and refusal to follow a board's own policies.

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### History of Chamber Leadership

In 2008, the State Board of Education passed a resolution asking the Metro Atlanta Chamber, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education and AdvancED to form a **90-day task force** to recommend improvements to strengthen school boards across Georgia.

The **Commission for School Board Excellence** launched in June 2008.

The group – which included business leaders, educators and state representatives – studied best practices in Georgia and in the nation, as well as research on the characteristics of effective school boards.

In September 2008, the commission recommended changes to state law governing local school boards in the following areas: training, accountability, clarity in board members' roles, additional qualifications, and changes in board elections.

The Chamber's current work to strengthen school boards across the state builds on past work to strengthen the **Atlanta School Board**, which resulted in the recruitment of Superintendent Dr. Beverly L. Hall, who was named national Superintendent of the Year for 2009. For that system, the Chamber:

- created **EduPAC** to recruit, screen and endorse school board candidates, with 80-100 percent of EduPAC-endorsed candidates getting elected
- enlisted funding from the national Broad and Panasonic Foundations to **train boards**
- pushed the state legislature to revise Atlanta Public Schools' **charter**. The board's attorney and CFO now report to the superintendent – not the board

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### Success Story

Gov. Sonny Perdue included legislative recommendations of the Commission for School Board Excellence in his education package in 2009 and 2010. Senate Bill 84 includes a majority of the commission's recommendations. **The bill finally passed late in the 2010 session.** The commission continues to shepherd non-legislative recommendations including implementing new standards for school board members and performance-based training and a model code of ethics for all school boards in Georgia.

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Board Excellence  
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