



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Connections Academy Virtual School Comes to Georgia – Approved to Open for 2011-2012 School Year

-- First Full-time Virtual Charter School for Grades K–12 in the State; High-Quality, Tuition-Free, Public Education Option for Georgia Families –

ATLANTA, GA (December 22, 2010) – Starting in the 2011-2012 school year, Georgia students in grades K-12 will have an exciting new public school option that delivers exceptional public schooling to students online. **Georgia Connections Academy (GACA), Georgia's first statewide, full-time, virtual charter school for grades K-12, was recently approved by the Georgia Charter School Commission and will begin enrollment in spring 2011 for the 2011-12 school year.** GACA can enroll students in grades K-12 from anywhere in the state and will offer a high-quality, highly accountable, tuition-free, public education option. GACA's administrative office and teaching center will be based in the Atlanta area.

GACA will combine Georgia-certified [teachers](#), a standards-aligned [curriculum](#), unique technology tools, an extensive selection of electives and clubs, and community experiences to create an **individualized alternative to the bricks-and-mortar classroom.**

All GACA students will participate in the nationally accredited [Connections Academy program](#) that combines high quality resources from leading publishers with cutting-edge, yet easy-to-use, technology and hands-on materials. Learning from home, students will work closely with a parent, or another "Learning Coach" and a licensed Georgia teacher using detailed daily lesson plans that can be [personalized](#) to meet individual student needs.



[VIDEO: A Day-in-the-Life of a Connections Academy Family](#)

GACA is expected to serve a wide range of Georgia students, including those who are significantly ahead or behind in the classroom, those who need a flexible schedule or learn at a different pace from their peers, and those who need more individualized attention or live in isolated rural settings. Homebound and previously home-schooled students can also thrive in Connections Academy's program.

Interaction between teachers and students will be frequent. [Accountability](#) is central to the school's mission and students must meet the same levels of accountability and complete the same state standardized tests as traditional public schools.

"Georgia Connections Academy has been nine years in the making, a shining tribute to the hard work, commitment, and determination of all those who helped make it happen," said Stephanie A. Reid, GACA board president. "K-12 students in need of non-traditional routes to academic success now have an excellent virtual option in GACA. Georgia families can count on GACA to provide a total educational experience that leads to superior student academic performance and readiness for college, career, and life. We're thankful for the Commission's unanimous and glowing approval of our charter application -- it was a long time coming. We see it as a tremendous vote of confidence in our board and the quality of our educational program." Reid added.

GACA already has begun preparation for a fall 2011 opening. A search for a school principal already is underway.

"We are especially proud to bring Connections Academy's innovative program to Georgia students and to offer the first full-time K-12 virtual school in the state. And we are grateful for all of the families who expressed interest in our school and supported its development, commented Barbara Dreyer, president of Connections Academy. "What we are offering is a new education option -- and for many families, a solution. There are students who, for a variety of reasons, are not achieving academic (and/or emotional) success in the traditional classroom. Virtual school is a wonderful choice for them. At Georgia Connections Academy these students will receive a personalized education experience delivered to them -- wherever they reside in the state."

Andrew Lewis, Chief Programming Officer for the Georgia Charter Schools Association said, "Every child is different -- which is why families are being afforded a variety of options in public education when deciding how to most effectively educate their children. Georgia Connections Academy, our state's newest virtual charter school will be empowering families across Georgia with one more public school option to determine the best educational setting for their child."

"Georgia Connections Academy is poised to provide a consistently high -quality education experience that challenges all of our students to reach their highest potential and to strengthen their self motivation skills for personal advancement, said Dr. Joy Berry, GACA board member and past member of the Georgia State Board of Education. "The intent of the Academy's personalized focus on mastery and intensification of knowledge and skills is the achievement of significant reduction in the intellectual and technological divide between resource-advantaged and disadvantaged students. With commitment of the vast expertise and experience of members of the Board of Directors to serve in the best interest our students, these goals will be realized. It is an honor for me to participate in this worthy educational endeavor."

Families seeking more information about Connections Academy and its innovative approach to personalized public education can visit <http://www.ConnectionsAcademy.com> or call 800-382-6010. Informational meetings will take place throughout the state starting in early spring 2011.

Connections Academy opened its first schools—serving 400 K-8 students—in 2002. Since then, strong parental demand for this innovative public school alternative has led Connections Academy to grow both its school network and student body by double-digits annually. With its authorization, GACA joins the national network of 19 Connections Academy schools in 18 states that is serving more than 30,000 students in grades K–12 in 2010–2011.

About Connections Academy

Connections Academy is a leading, fully accredited provider of high-quality, highly accountable virtual schooling for students in grades K through 12. Through tuition-free public schools, full-time and part-time private school programs, and turnkey online programs for bricks and mortar schools, Connections Academy delivers superior, personalized education for students, with the freedom and flexibility to experience our online learning community from anywhere. The combination of certified teachers, a proven curriculum, technology tools, and community experiences creates a supportive and successful online learning opportunity for families and children who want an individualized approach to education. In the 2010–11 school year, Connections Academy will serve students in Arizona, California (Southern and Central), Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Wisconsin, and Wyoming through its public school programs. It serves students worldwide through the online private school, National Connections Academy. Connections Academy offers grades K through 12, though some public school programs do not offer all grades. For more information, call 800-382-6010 or visit www.ConnectionsAcademy.com

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