



**Georgia Students Test their Work Readiness**  
*Statewide Boys & Girls Club Members “Gear Up” for Careers*

**July 25, 2008, Athens** – More than 280 Georgia students learned how they can gain the skills they need to land a great career by playing “Are You Ready to Work?” at a seminar showcasing the state’s Work Ready initiative at the Boys & Girls Club’s annual Gear Up conference at the University of Georgia. The “Are You Ready to Work?” contest was designed to test students’ knowledge of core skills needed for employment and to motivate students to gain those skills before leaving school.

The event, sponsored by the Governor’s Office of Workforce Development (GOWD) and the Fanning Institute at the University of Georgia, was created after a survey conducted by Georgia Tech’s Enterprise Innovation Institute and the Fanning Institute showed that nearly 80 percent of Georgia’s young people are interested in earning a Work Ready certificate to verify their skill set to potential employers. In creating the game-show style contest, GOWD successfully engaged students in a fun, competitive way that underscored a very serious opportunity.

“Students entering the job market for the first time can gain a competitive advantage by demonstrating mastery of foundational job skills the businesses need,” explained Debra Lyons, director of GOWD’s Work Ready initiative. “The job market today is highly competitive, and we are providing job seekers with a way to match their skills with the right job. Ultimately, this program is designed to help Georgians achieve career success.”

Work Ready is the state’s work force development initiative, comprising a skills assessment and certification for job seekers and a job profiling system for businesses. By identifying both the needs of business and the available skills of Georgia’s workforce, the state can more effectively generate the right talent for the right jobs. Since January 2007, more than 16,500 Georgians have earned Work Ready Certificates.

“Georgia’s students are the future of our state and it is important that they have the skills necessary to land the best jobs,” said Lyons. “By introducing them to the Work Ready Certificate early, we can ensure our future generation land great jobs and help our economy grow.”



The event, attended by rising eighth through 12<sup>th</sup> graders from Boys & Girls Clubs around the state, included sample questions from each of three core skill assessment areas – reading for information, applied mathematics and locating information. The questions began at the bronze level and progressed to platinum, the highest Certificate level.

“For students who had never seen the Work Ready assessment, they scored well,” said Lyons. “This tells me that our students take their futures seriously and want to do all that they can to ensure success.” The winning team scored 32 correct answers out of 36 questions.

Only high school seniors may take the assessment to earn a Work Ready Certificate prior to graduation, either as a tool to help them enter the workforce or continue their education.

GOWD is working with school systems around the state to educate students on the value of earning a Work Ready Certificate, how to use the Certificate in their job searches and how to access free skills gap training to boost their skill levels.

#### **About Boys & Girls Club Gear Up Conference**

The purpose of the Gear Up for the Future Program is to expose middle and high school students to college life and career opportunities in order to increase their awareness of possibilities for the future. Members of Boys & Girls Clubs from across the state attended the Gear Up for the Future Programs at Georgia Southern University and University of Georgia.

#### **About Work Ready**

Georgia Work Ready was launched in August 2006 by Georgia governor Sonny Perdue and the Georgia Chamber of Commerce to improve the job training and marketability of Georgia’s workforce and drive future economic growth for the state. It is the only initiative of its kind to be conducted through a partnership between a state government and state chamber of commerce, ensuring that companies can more reliably match the right people with the right jobs. For more information on the Work Ready initiative please visit the Web site at [www.gaworkready.org](http://www.gaworkready.org).

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