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## TELEVISION

# Kathy Cox outsmarts 5th-graders, wins a million

## State superintendent will donate her TV show winnings to three Georgia schools

By [JEFFRY SCOTT](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Friday, September 05, 2008

The fifth-graders never had a chance. Georgia State school superintendent Kathy Cox became the first \$1 million winner Friday night on the FOX TV series “Are You Smarter Than A Fifth Grader” by answering correctly the question: Who was the longest reigning British monarch?

It was a giddy performance on screen, recorded Aug. 6 in Los Angeles. Cox watched the show with about 100 supporters and friends at Smokey Bones Bar & Fire Grill in Peachtree City, all whooping at her big game show gamble that paid off.

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She said her entire winnings will be donated to three schools: Georgia Academy for the Blind in Macon; Atlanta Area School for the Deaf in Clarkston and Georgia School for the Deaf in Cave Spring.

When word got out that Cox was on the show, critics said she was risking her own reputation and that of the state school system. What happened if she missed a simple category such as Second Grade Animal Science? She got that right, too.

Despite the win, she took some political heat. State Representative Rob Teilhet (D-Smyrna) ran an ad on the show Friday night criticizing her for being on TV while students are struggling in crowded Georgia classrooms. That brought boos from the crowd.

She said the toughest of the 10 questions was naming which country, besides Nicaragua, bordered the country of Costa Rica. She answered correctly: Panama.

Cox's next-door neighbor and fifth grade teacher, Sally Porter, who was watching alongside Cox at the restaurant, said she had no doubt Cox, who was sworn to secrecy and didn't reveal she had won before the show, would win. "She had a 3.8 average at Emory, and is the superintendent of Georgia Schools," said Porter. "Yeah, she's smarter than a fifth-grader."

When she was vocally sorting through all the British monarchs who might be the longest reigning, she dismissed Elizabeth I, then Henry VIII, with the line: "He wasn't there the longest. He got fat. He died."

The studio audience erupted. So did the throng at Smokey Bones.

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