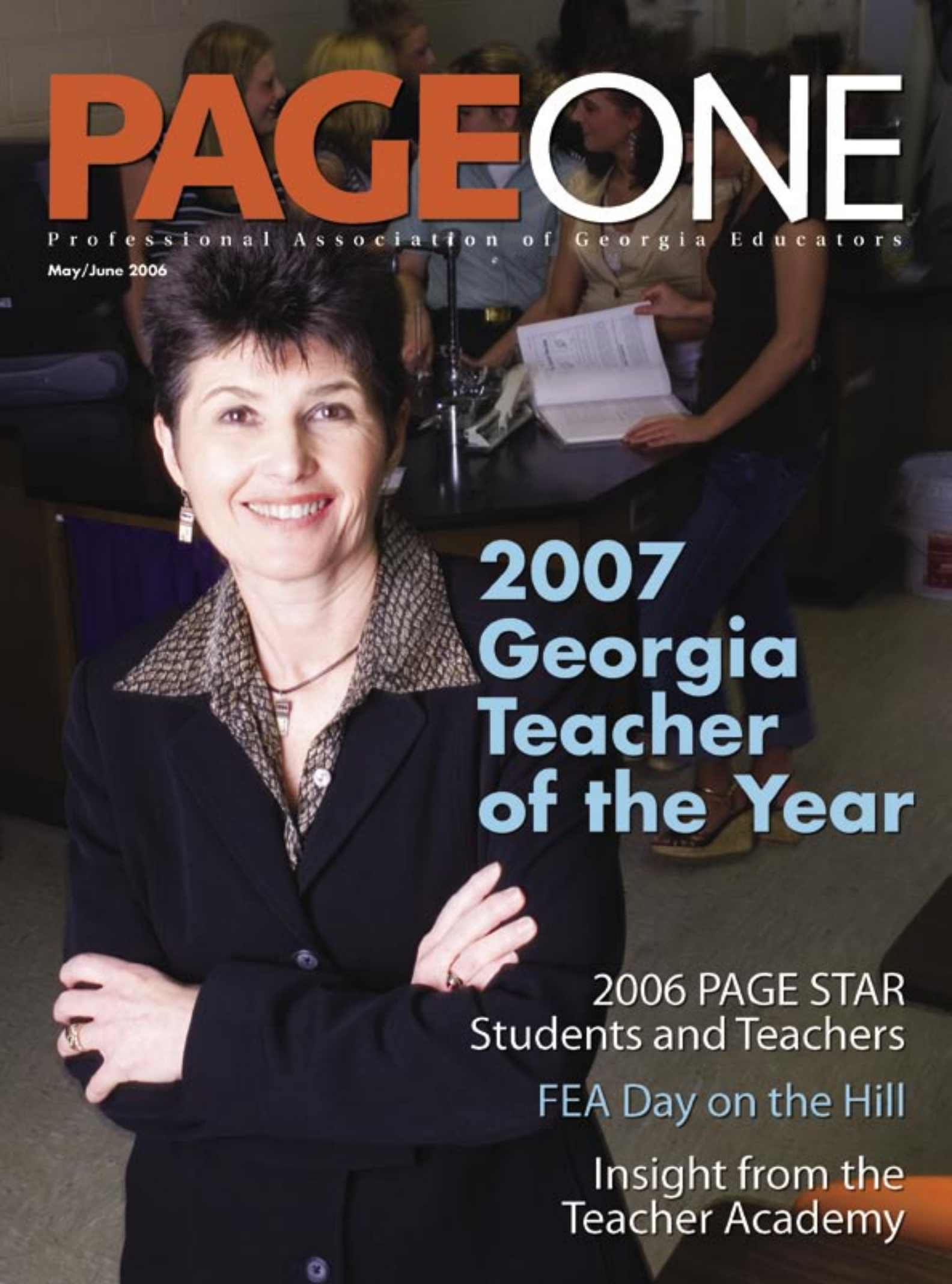


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May/June 2006



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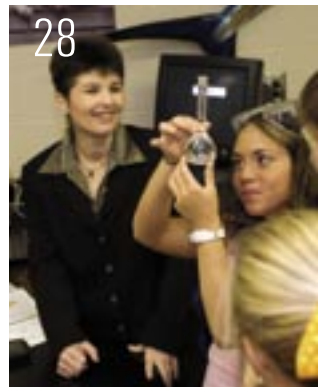
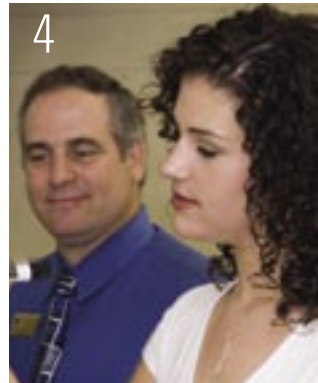
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Grassroots Education 101

Our leaders need to be reminded that our sentiments are important—not at just reelection time.



KEN RUSSELL

PAGE's February Day on the Hill was a major event for our organization. Standing before the Georgia House of Representatives was an especially exciting experience. I appreciate the kind comments and words of support my representative John Meadows presented in his resolution. Politics has always been a significant part of my life. My father, a WWII vet, gave me my sense of civic necessity and involvement. My wife and students deserve great pity for all the sermons and pronouncements they hear regularly. However, we all have a responsibility to make those who run our political systems know what we think and believe. As educators, that role is essential if we expect the America in which we live to be a better place.

It is our civic duty to take an active role. As American citizens, we all know that our system depends on our positive and practical involvement to keep the process going. Our leaders need to be reminded that our sentiments are important—not at just reelection time. Any American Government student will tell you that civic virtue should drive a politician's mindset.

Secondly, educators know we lead by example. We cannot model the behavior we expect of our students if we don't vote and take an active role ourselves. The track record of U.S. history is full of examples where average people seized their moment and led this country to phenomenal accomplishments. We need tomorrow's youth to make this desire their dream too. This Government teacher is still ready to believe that one of his students can and will become president one day.

In addition, like so many other facets of our lives, we should practice our civic skills and abilities in order to improve their effectiveness. It is unfortunate that the population voting least often is the 18-30 age group. Perhaps there are reasons for this lack of involvement, but what a waste of talent and ability, especially when so many of these people recently have taken political science classes.

Educators can do a better job of instilling civic virtue. I welcome recent moves to celebrate national and patriotic values, but our own civic virtue needs to be a daily habit. It's easy to forget about the significance of the pledge to the flag when we have some of the mornings we have. Even so, our students see our moods and reactions and don't recognize the circumstances. What examples are we setting?

I will admit I get emotional when I hear the Star-Spangled Banner and also confess that "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" is my favorite movie. In spite of my cock-eyed optimism, we do have serious problems with our systems, and they require our active involvement.

As educators we are indeed practitioners of our craft, and we also know what our students need to become productive, lifelong learners. Why then are many of us content to stay in our classrooms and expect reform just to happen? If we don't let those who legislate know what's really happening in the classrooms of Georgia, we will have to contend with possibly more of the same or perhaps experience even more detrimental actions.

I challenge you as a teacher leader to make your voice heard where it counts. PAGE is on the forefront of making your voice heard in very practical and professional ways "under the Gold Dome." Even so, it's your job to involve yourself in a proactive and positive role as well, especially as a constituent with your local representatives and senator.

Let me also warn you that when I spoke before the Georgia House, I invited them to visit our classrooms. We can be professional enough to realize that some great work is going on with our students, and our policymakers need to recognize that the relevance of the school environment goes well beyond the halls of government. We need to champion our accomplishments as well as tackle the challenges we are handed. Let me challenge you to invite your elected officials to come to your schools and really see where tomorrow is really happening. ♦

Your PAGE Board of Directors, at its February meeting, made the difficult decision to raise dues for the upcoming 2006-2007 school year. This increase, the first in four years, was not approved lightly. Cost of living increases in every budget category have been absorbed over the past four years, and the point had been reached where they can no longer be absorbed without a dues increase. An article elsewhere in this magazine provides additional detail. Please know that your board consists of educators just like you, and we are very cognizant that dues increases, while periodically inevitable, ought to occur as infrequently as possible. It has been an honor serving as your president this past year.

2007 Session: Good News, Bad News and Some Ominous Signs

This issue of the magazine is the one in which we traditionally assess the just-completed legislative session. A year ago, I gave a decidedly mixed rating to the work of the legislators. More troubling back then, I detected the beginnings of a “don’t bother us with your views—we have the answers” approach to public policymaking.

I regret to report that, even though the arrogance for the most part was muted because 2006 is an election year, there was a continuation and even extension of the attitude we found so disconcerting last year. To assess the session I would have to divide it into three parts: good news, bad news and ominous news.

Under the good news, we would have to list class size reduction, salaries and health care premium relief. While the class size reduction will create serious challenges in the short term, it is the right thing to do, and in the long term will be seen as a major educational improvement. The four percent salary increase (approximately seven percent for those receiving a step increase) will be welcomed by educators who have seen scant increases over the past three years. Equally welcome will be relief from double-digit percentage increases in health care premiums.

(Little substantive action was taken on the structural problems with the way the state health benefit plan (SHBP) is administered. Legislation which drew on a PAGE proposal died in committee—caught in a power struggle between the executive and the legislative branches. Until the governor allows some study, analysis and public input, the SHBP will continue to frustrate its participants—and drain their wallets as well.)

Bad news was abundant. The “65% Solution” was a catchy phrase, lent itself to bumper stickers, but was devoid of any true research base. This micro-managing of school systems by those who pontificate regularly on “local control” will be lost on no one. Speaking of micro-managing, the legislation on Bible classes and the paperwork and red tape that will surround the new rules on after-school and extra-curricular clubs and activities is yet another blow

to local control. The former legislation may well place teachers in the untenable spot of choosing between antagonizing the bill’s sponsors or triggering ACLU lawsuits.

The faith-based amendment failed as did an attempt by the governor’s staff and floor leaders to raid Public School Employee Retirement System funds. Both pieces of legislation were presented as good ideas, but both had serious flaws. Both will likely return in 2007, which brings me to the “ominous” news of this session: Taken as a whole, we got the distinct feeling that our current political leaders have as their primary goal a drastic reduction in state revenues. Whether discussing eliminating the corporate tax, property taxes, the tax on car tags or wholesale tax exemptions for various groups, the direction we may be heading doesn’t bode well for public education, which without any apology from this source—takes a large share of the state budget. No one wants to pay any more taxes than necessary, and we join those who want effective and efficient government. We part company with those who want to dismantle government and the public services it provides—chief among those the education of 1.5 million students.

Equally ominous were the incursions on local control—financial incursions as already listed, but in curricular matters as well. Unfortunately our schools can sometimes become ground zero for what have been called the “cultural wars.” While some of the zanier ideas at the Capitol quickly got a lid put on them in this, an election year, we don’t expect that they have gone away. Safely re-elected, some of the sponsors of legislation that would mandate not only what we teach, but how we teach it, may feel emboldened to help run the schools from Atlanta, despite their “local control” mantras.

We’re pretty confident that educators around the state have been paying close attention and hope that everyone uses the months between now and November to assess all the incumbents and candidates for their views, their voting records, and the impact both will have on public education over the next several years. ♦

We’re pretty confident that educators around the state have been paying close attention and hope that everyone uses the months between now and November to assess all the incumbents and candidates for their views, their voting records, and the impact both will have on public education over the next several years.



DR. ALLENE MAGILL

Georgia's 2006 PAGE STAR Students and Teachers

What Makes Them So Special?

BY LEE RAUDONIS

Each year since 1958, the Student Teacher Achievement Recognition (STAR) program has recognized the academic accomplishments of some of Georgia's most gifted students, and the teachers who helped inspire their academic success. The STAR Student in each school is the graduating senior who has the highest score on the SAT and is also in the top 10 percent of his or her class in Grade Point Average (GPA). The STAR Teacher, chosen by the STAR Student, is the teacher that the stu-

dent believes has had the greatest influence on his or her academic success.

This year nearly 450 high school seniors and the teachers they selected were identified as the STARs of their high schools. One hundred and seventy-five of these students were also school system STARs, meaning that they had the highest SAT scores in their respective school systems, and 14 of these were named Region PAGE STAR Students. These were the students with the highest SAT scores in the 12 PAGE STAR Regions (there were ties in two regions).

With three perfect scores (2400) on the new three-part SAT and no score below 2200, these 14 students (eight boys and six girls) are certainly among the most gifted in the state, but is it fair to set them apart from other exceptional students based primarily on scores on a single test? And is it fair to call the teachers they select STARs simply because they happen to be fortunate enough to teach gifted students? Beyond an ability to absorb knowledge and perform well on tests, what other qualities do these STARs possess that make them stand out among their peers? And what qualities do their teachers possess that cause these gifted students to pick them from among all the exceptional teachers they may have had in their years of schooling?

Perhaps the best way to explain how truly gifted these STAR Students are is to have their STAR Teachers tell you about them and their many talents that go far beyond the ability to take standardized tests. Likewise, the best way to understand how truly special the STAR Teachers are, is to allow the students to tell you in their own words why they selected them.

In PAGE STAR Region 1, the 2006 STAR Student is Samuel Robert Abney of Haralson County High School. According to his STAR Teacher, Jane Goldin, "There isn't much that Sam cannot accomplish if he puts his mind to it."

"Sam is truly a Renaissance man. He is an excellent math student and from a very early age began developing advanced computer skills, operations and applications. He is an accomplished musician and artist and loves to travel and explore the world. However, it is his ability in language and communication that makes him extraordinary. He is a voracious reader and a talented writer, but more than that, he understands the power of communication. He is insightful about human relationships, and his grasp of social and political issues is mature beyond his years. Sam is a thinker and a philosopher who will use his incredible intellect to make a difference in the world around him."

One of the common misconceptions about the STAR program is that the only teachers selected as STARs are high school teachers—and generally those who teach an advanced placement (AP) class in the STAR Student's favorite subject. That certainly isn't the case with Jane Goldin, who was Sam Abney's middle school gifted advanced literature teacher.

"Mrs. Jane Goldin taught me throughout my middle school years—some of the most important years of my life—a time when I was very susceptible to all sorts of influences, and helped me to develop my passion for learning in a way no other teacher ever has or could. She shared many of my interests and was eager to introduce me to new things, directing my reading choices and getting me involved with the academic team. Mrs. Goldin is a real lifetime learner as well as a teacher. I am proud to have called her my teacher, but prouder to call her my friend."

In PAGE STAR Region 2, the STAR Student is Jonathan Nathaniel Armour of Habersham Central High. Here is how his STAR Teacher, Wanda Morris, describes him:

"In my judgment, Jonathan is distinctive for his humble and patient spirit. It would be easy for one so young and intellectually gifted to become intolerant and impatient with those less gifted, even to the point of becoming arrogant. In my AP Chemistry class, Jonathan was always willing to help his peers



Samuel Robert Abney and Jane Goldin,
Haralson Co. High School

with whatever questions or problems they had. Jonathan has confidence in himself and his ability, but I don't believe he takes it for granted. He was such a pleasure to teach because I felt he truly appreciated the knowledge and guidance he received. He realizes that there is so much more to be learned and that learning is truly a lifelong adventure."

And here is how Armour explains why he chose Dr. Morris as his STAR Teacher:

"Being in the honors and advanced placement programs at my school, I have had several excellent teachers," says Armour, "but, even with such stiff competition, Dr. Morris's love for her subject, chemistry, her devotion to teaching and her students, and her ability to always tell a good joke at the right moment practically forced me to honor her, most deservedly, with this award. She has an abundance of knowledge in her subject-area and brings the practical and abstract portions of chemistry alive in her lessons to capture the minds of interested students and inundate them in the field. Her instruction in my junior year has further solidified my will in the pursuit of a physics doctorate, and in exchange for the portrayal of science that she presented to our class—of a great star lighting all of the natural phenomena of the world in the light of reason—she will be a shining star in the story of my development, both mentally and philosophically."

In PAGE STAR Region 3-A, there was a tie this year between two students who scored a perfect 2400 on the SAT—Amanda Nicole Brouillette of Parkview High School in Gwinnett County and Michael Christopher Clark of Lassiter High School in Cobb County. Brouillette chose as her STAR Teacher, Dr. Doug Wagner. Clark selected his mathematics teacher, Debbie Poss. Here is what their STAR Teachers have to say about these STAR Students:

Georgia's 2006 PAGE STAR Students and Teachers

"Michael loves to learn, is highly motivated, communicates well on an individual basis and has high aspirations of helping humanity," says Poss. "Armed with an incredible memory, Michael absorbs knowledge like a sponge. He truly enjoys the educational experience and easily makes connections both within and among the various disciplines. For nothing more than personal curiosity, he studied and learned aspects of calculus and physics on his own, going beyond the curriculum covered in these AP classes. He sees education and a deeper understanding of the world as the key to solving many of the world's problems. Highly motivated, he enjoys working with other students as gifted, knowledgeable and curious as he is."

And how does Clark describe his STAR Teacher?

"It takes great skill to be a hard teacher and still have just about everyone you've taught love you to death. Mrs. Debbie Poss is just such a teacher. I've never known any teacher to match Mrs. Poss' pure energy. Math itself has a tendency to seem a cut-and-dry subject for the casual onlooker. Many question its relevance to the real world. Mrs. Poss, however, excels at helping her students connect seemingly disparate mathematical truths into a greater framework. She is the power that makes the light bulb of epiphany and understanding light up in her students' minds. Also, her contagious laughter can bring a room to life, and I've seldom known her to become angry or flustered. Her classroom is no different from home for her students, myself included."

The other STAR from Region 3-A, Amanda Brouillette, is described by her STAR Teacher in glowing terms.

"Amanda Brouillette is an outstanding young lady of excellent character," says Wagner. "She has a brilliant mind and an incredible work ethic. What makes Amanda even more distinctive is that she has tremendous interpersonal skills. She is able to effectively relate to people of all ages and stages in life. She



Michael Christopher Clark and Debbie Poss,
Lassiter High School, Cobb Co.

is a natural born leader who is able to rally people to a cause, whether dealing with the Color Guard as their Captain, or leading other students in all different kinds of volunteer work as an officer or as a co-worker. Amanda possesses a most positive, outgoing and humble personality that endears her to her peers and to the faculty. She has all the abilities necessary for success, and she possesses all the intangibles necessary to go beyond greatness to significance. She will make an incredible contribution to every field of endeavor she decides to pursue."

Brouillette is equally as enthusiastic about her STAR Teacher:

"Being in Dr. Wagner's class has stimulated me to work as hard as humanly possible at overcoming each oncoming obstacle. Math has always been a personal forte, though not a personal favorite; Dr. Wagner has, however, as if by magic, made the most difficult of all courses one of my favorites of the day. Only a truly magnificent scholar and teacher has that innate ability. But perhaps, the reigning factor in Dr. Wagner's teaching glory is his commitment to 'teaching people, not calculus.' Dr. Wagner ensures that his students truly do learn something new every day. He is a paradigm of fairness, compassion, brilliance and personality. This man is a role model for people of all ages as the pinnacle of well-rounded abilities."

In PAGE STAR Region 3-B, the STAR Student is Victoria Foxgrover of Pace Academy in Atlanta. Foxgrover, who also scored a perfect 2400 on the SAT, selected as her STAR Teacher, Helen Smith. Here is how Smith describes her exceptional student:

"Foxgrover is not satisfied with easy answers, and her work in vastly different subject areas reveals her taking the initiative to tackle original topics, to pursue them with intensity, to support her conclusions with compelling detail and to make broad connections. Whether she is Rousseau in our 18th century salon or a researcher examining Putin's changes to the Russian constitution, she actually "lives" her subject, always going far beyond the best work of other students. She persistently aims

Dr. Doug Wagner and Amanda Brouillette,
Parkview High School, Gwinnett Co.





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Oatha Davis Mann III
Ed.S., administration & supervision,
2004, & B.A., history, 1993
Principal, Flat Rock Middle School



"I chose West Georgia because of the personal attention it offers, and I have learned so very much! Without exception, the faculty has been excellent in their field, and I have learned information that is relevant to my job and on the leading edge of the current issues and concerns in Media and Instructional Technology. I love the fact that most classes are online or mostly online. That makes it much easier for someone like me who is working full time."

Jane E. Roberts
Add-on certificate, media, 2004,
& candidate, Ed.S., media,
instructional technology
Media Specialist, Milford
Elementary School



Georgia's 2006 PAGE STAR Students and Teachers

for understanding, not just memorizing to complete a task.”

Foxgrover explains why she selected her social studies teacher to honor:

“I chose Helen Smith as my STAR Teacher for her dedication and consistent support throughout the three years I have known her. From the very first day I sat in Ms. Smith’s class, she constantly checked to see if I was keeping up, always reassuring me that I would succeed even without the same background as the other students. Before coming to Pace, I had never even heard of Model U.N., so I was very hesitant when Ms. Smith approached me about it one afternoon. By convincing me to step outside my comfort zone and try something completely new, by constantly raising the bar on my performance both inside and outside the classroom, and by always being there to talk to, about history or politics or simply life, Ms. Smith has earned a permanent place in my heart, and I can think of no one more deserving to be a STAR Teacher.”

In PAGE STAR Region 4, the 2006 STAR Student is Peter Owen Scheidt of Westminster Christian Academy in Oconee County. He selected as his STAR Teacher David Fish.

Fish describes what makes Peter a STAR:

“Peter is the most academically gifted student I have ever taught. Having only taught for three years, I was uncertain as to how well Peter’s abilities would match up with his peers on a national level. I was not at all surprised when he earned a five on his Advanced Placement Biology Exam or when he earned his exceptional SAT score. It merely confirmed what I already suspected: Peter is one of the best students in the country.

as his ability to motivate students.

“There have been many teachers that have had a tremendous impact upon me, but Mr. Fish has been one of the most influential in my life,” explains Peter. “He is very easygoing in the classroom yet still ensures that we accomplish what we need to. But Mr. Fish’s influence goes beyond the purely academic. He is a man of strong character and integrity, which shows through in everything he does. While he is not perfect, Mr. Fish is an exemplary role model to everyone associated with Westminster, and he is always striving to be a man of honesty and character. All in all, Mr. Fish is an excellent teacher and an incredible man, and he has meant a lot to me over the past three years. I am honored to be able to call him my STAR Teacher.”

In PAGE STAR Region 5, Columbus High School’s STAR Student is Carole Noelle House. Her STAR Teacher, Paul Hampton, describes her abilities and accomplishments:

“The world is always looking for a good leader,” he says. “I think sometimes we forget how important it is to know how to be a good follower. Carole House is a leader and a follower. I have worked with her in many endeavors at Columbus High School—in our drama productions, in our math department and as her teacher. She is an exceptional young lady in and out of the classroom.

“Carole has led our math team to many victories at local and state competitions. She is currently president of the math team and was president of her freshman class. Carole is one of the driving forces of the award winning Science Olympiad team. She also worked with a team of students on a project that got selected to go into space on a shuttle flight by NASA.”

In turn, House chooses the words of scholar William Arthur Ward to describe her STAR Teacher: “The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.”

“Mr. Hampton is my STAR Teacher simply because he is just that: a brilliant, shining North Star that guides me and so many others along our journeys throughout high school and life. His wisdom is priceless and his friendship invaluable; I will always remember him as the teacher who changed my life and made me significant to the world. To remind us of what all we can aspire to and to light up the dark world with hopes for our futures: is this not what a star is meant to do?”

In PAGE STAR Region 6, Sameer G. Gupta of Central High School in Bibb County is the STAR Student. He selected his IB History teacher, Stanford Brown, as his STAR Teacher.

“Sameer is the most outstanding student I have taught in my twelve-year career (including two earlier STAR Students),” says Brown. “He combines really exceptional intellectual gifts and academic abilities with a sense of civic-mindedness and social justice, as well as true humility. He has accomplished more as a student and a leader than any student our school has produced before.

Sameer makes top grades, but he is never satisfied to make an A, or make the top grade, but constantly strives to learn more and to improve. He continues to ask questions every day in class, striving to understand historic events and forces more fully. He never dominates a discussion though, since he truly wants to hear his classmates’ views and analysis. Sameer does



Helen Smith and Victoria Foxgrover,
Pace Academy, Atlanta City

High SAT and AP scores, however, are not what set Peter apart as the type of student that the University of Georgia would want. Not only does Peter achieve academic success, but he also raises the performance of everyone around him. I know that his curiosity and work ethic have challenged me to be a better teacher, and I have witnessed first-hand how he has elevated the level of academic achievement in his peers.”

Scheidt admires his teacher’s character and integrity as well

not just work to build a resume. He genuinely cares about the things he does, and he somehow manages to carry a heavier load of academics, community involvement and varsity sports (tennis and cross country) than anyone else, and still excel in every class."

Sameer, who wants to pursue genetic research explains why he selected his social studies teacher as his STAR:

"Stanford Brown, my IB History of the Americas teacher, has been the most influential educator that I have ever been lucky enough to have as a friend, mentor and teacher. Within the classroom, he is more knowledgeable than any social science teacher I have ever had. In any given day, he can discuss in great depth the findings of anthropologists, events in the Roman Empire, emperors from the Chinese Dynasties, or the implications and intricacies of Cold War ideologies.

Because I hope to pursue genetic research in the future, Mr. Brown once asked me why I had chosen a social science teacher rather than a teacher directly linked to my interests. My answer to this is that he has taught me a great deal more inside and outside of the classroom than any other teacher. He taught me the meaning of true commitment, friendship and patience. His passion for his own subject has taught me to be passionate about my interests. It does not matter that I may not pursue the social sciences directly in and after college. I will never forget this wonderful teacher, and I know that I will continue to be in contact with Mr. Brown in the coming years, asking him for his advice and friendship."



Carole House and Paul Hampton, Columbus High School, Muscogee Co.

The PAGE STAR Region 7 STAR Student is Kaitlyn Frazier of Augusta Preparatory Day School. Her STAR Teacher, Timothy Shafer, describes Frazier as a true lover of learning.

"Kaitlyn Frazier is truly brilliant and dedicated; she is a lover of learning, and she has the intellectual swiftness and diligence to handle the most challenging work encountered. In summary, she has a passion for learning; is a diligent worker who combines her intellectual gifts with the perseverance needed for mastery; is both a proven leader and a willing servant; and is gracious in accepting honors that she has earned, honors that

continued on page 22

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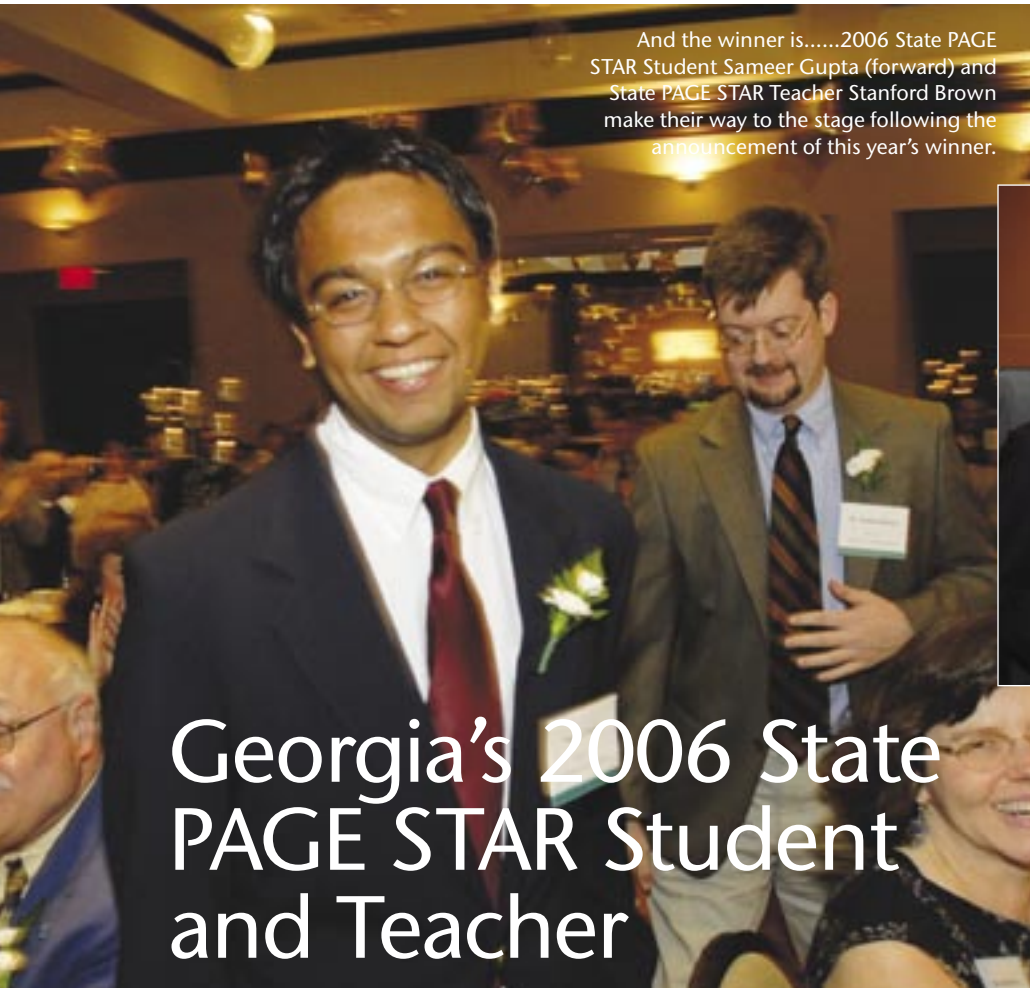
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And the winner is.....2006 State PAGE STAR Student Sameer Gupta (forward) and State PAGE STAR Teacher Stanford Brown make their way to the stage following the announcement of this year's winner.



Georgia's 2006 State PAGE STAR Student and Teacher

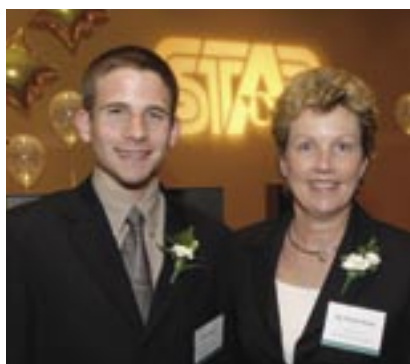


2006 State PAGE STAR Student Sameer Gupta (left) and State PAGE STAR Teacher Stanford Brown (right). Gupta is a senior at Bibb County's Central High School and Brown is his IB History teacher.

Announced by the PAGE Foundation

Sameer Gupta, a senior at Bibb County's Central High School, is the 2006 State PAGE STAR Student. He named his IB History teacher, Stanford Brown, as his State PAGE STAR Teacher. Adam Steiner, a senior at Effingham County's South Effingham High School, was named First Runner-up State PAGE STAR Student, and chose Christa Martin, his Honors Analysis teacher, as his STAR Teacher.

The announcement came on April 26, 2006, at the State PAGE STAR Banquet held at the Sheraton Buckhead Hotel in Atlanta. Fourteen STAR Student Region Winners were finalists in the culminating event of the STAR program, which began earlier this year with the naming of 448 STAR Students selected from participating public and independent



First Runner-up State PAGE STAR Student Adam Steiner (left) and First Runner-up State PAGE STAR Teacher Christa Martin (right). Steiner is a senior at Effingham County's South Effingham High School and Martin is his Honors Analysis teacher.

schools from across the state. The STAR program is coordinated and sponsored by the PAGE Foundation. The Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia Department of Education are co-sponsors. Now in its 48th year, the program has honored more than 20,000 students and their teachers for academic excellence. Three of this year's finalists scored 2400 on one administration of the new SAT test that now includes Critical Reading, Math and Writing.

Gupta plans to attend Princeton University, where he will study Biological Anthropology. As this year's State PAGE STAR Student, he was honored with a \$5,000 scholarship from BellSouth, presented by BellSouth Regional Manager of External Affairs Dennis Boyden. His chosen State PAGE STAR Teacher, Stanford Brown, received a \$2,500 cash award from

the Frances Wood Wilson Foundation, presented by its Executive Vice President Blich Ann Bird. When asked how the judges were able to make their final choice from this year's outstanding group of finalists, State STAR Student Selection Committee Chair Dale Lyles said, "We were impressed with all the students, but Sameer's involvement with helping other people helped him stand out. His medical mission work last summer and his HIV Awareness Program that he developed and took to India were outstanding. Plus his sunny disposition and obvious love of learning made him our first choice in an outstanding field of competitors."

First Runner-up Adam Steiner plans to attend North Carolina State University in the fall, where he will study Nuclear Engineering. PAGE President Ken Russell presented him with a crystal bowl and a \$1,000 scholarship from the PAGE Foundation. Bill Covington, key account manager for The Coca-Cola Company, also presented the First Runner-up with The Coca-Cola Scholarship of \$1,000. Mozelle Christian, the first director of the STAR program, presented the First Runner-up State PAGE STAR Teacher Christa Martin with the Mozelle Christian Award of \$500.

PAGE, the PAGE Foundation and The Coca-Cola Company sponsored the State Banquet. The Coca-Cola Company also sponsored the evening's reception, and presented each of the fourteen finalists with a \$100 award. PAGE Executive Director Dr. Allene Magill and PAGE Foundation President Tom Wommack presented each of the finalists and their teachers with a hand-blown glass star. At their region events, Regional Winners received a \$500 cash award from the Cecil B. Day Foundation. Sponsors of this year's event were represented by Georgia Chamber of Commerce President George M. Israel, III, and Georgia Department of Education Chief Information Officer Dr. Howard Woodard. Jack Keen, a Gifted Honors Calculus teacher at Jefferson County's Jefferson High School, received a special award commemorating his being honored as a STAR Teacher for the 28th time, and the Ringgold Rotary Club was honored with a plaque commemorating their 40 years of service as a local STAR sponsor.



Pictured immediately following the awards presentation are (left to right) PAGE Foundation President Tom Wommack, Executive Vice President of the Frances Wood Wilson Foundation Blich Ann Bird, BellSouth Regional Manager Dennis Boyden, 2006 State PAGE STAR Student Sameer Gupta, State PAGE STAR Teacher Stanford Brown and PAGE Executive Director Dr. Allene Magill



First Runner-up State PAGE STAR Student Adam Steiner (center left) and his STAR Teacher Christa Martin (center right) are joined by presenters (left to right) PAGE President Ken Russell, Key Account Manager for The Coca-Cola Company Bill Covington, Mozelle Christian, the first director of the STAR program, and PAGE Executive Director Dr. Allene Magill.



The statewide STAR recognition program is made possible through the generosity of over 170 local sponsors, 44 of which have served as STAR sponsors for over 40 years. In recognition of Catoosa County Ringgold Rotary Club's 40th year as a STAR Sponsor, PAGE Foundation President Tom Wommack (far right) presented a plaque to club members Randall Peters and Denia Reese, Catoosa County school superintendent.



Jefferson High School Gifted Honors Calculus Teacher Jack Keen (left) was honored with a plaque commemorating his 28th time at being selected as a STAR Teacher. He is shown here with this year's Jefferson High School STAR Student Kristie Champlin (right), who selected Keen as her STAR Teacher.



Each year the Regional Winners gather to have a luncheon with members of the State STAR Student Selection Committee. Pictured here are the 14 finalists (left from bottom of stairs to top) Kaitlyn Frazier, of Evans; Victoria Foxgrover, of Atlanta; Jonathan Armour, of Alto; Sameer Gupta, of Macon; Carole House, of Midland; Kayce Mobley, of Brunswick; Adam Steiner, of Rincon; Jacob O'Neal, of Hahira; Steven Sumners, of Leesburg; Tamesha Derico, of Albany; Amanda Brouillette, of Lilburn; Michael Clark, of Marietta; Peter Scheidt, of Watkinsville and Sam Abney, of Tallapoosa.



Presenting the Class of 2006 STAR Students and Teachers: Seventy-three local high school STAR Students and Teachers attended the 2006 State PAGE STAR Banquet and were presented with a memento of the evening by the PAGE Foundation.

SYSTEM STAR TEACHERS

Appling County.....Mary Ann Ellis	Calhoun CityGreg Stanley	Coweta County.....Barbara Landreth	Floyd County.....Randall Young
Atkinson County.....Ed Myers	Camden County.....Wendy Pierce	Crawford County.....Jeff Ikner	Forsyth County.....Kevin Denney
Atlanta City.....Helen Smith*	Carroll County.....Wanda Johnson	Crisp County.....Helen Hunt	Franklin County.....Jason Macomson
Bacon County.....Danny McLean	Carrollton City.....Sheri Davis	Dade County.....William Emmett	Fulton County.....Jill Bounds
Baldwin County.....Tanya Trent	Cartersville City.....Brenda Worley	Dalton City.....Susan Brigman	Gainesville City.....Michael McCann
Banks County.....Johnny Gardiner	Catoosa County.....Sandy Kilgore	Dawson County.....Sherry Browning	Gilmer County.....Linda Miller
Barrow County.....Ginger Sims Crosswhite	Charlton County.....Mary Eve Blair	Decatur City.....Gerard Pendrick	Glascock County.....Theresa Brumfield
Bartow County.....Joseph McMahan	Chatham County.....Lorraine Breen	Decatur County.....Jeanine Halada	Glynn County.....Wayne Ervin*
Ben Hill County.....Connie Cox	Chatham County.....Vicky Guenther	DeKalb County.....Uwe Neuhaus	Gordon County.....Kim Watters
Berrien County.....Angie McCorvey Lovein	Chattooga County.....Alan Perry	Dodge County.....Marcie Jones	Grady County.....Margot Evans
Berrien County.....Skeeter Parker	Cherokee County.....Krista Webb	Dooly County.....Michelle Ingram	Greene County.....Chris Williams
Bibb County.....Stanford Brown*	Cherokee County.....William Burton	Dougherty County.....Polly Stadnik*	Gwinnett County.....Doug Wagner*
Bleckley County.....Elaine Wade	Chickamauga City.....Kevin McElhaney	Douglas County.....Sandra Chandler	Habersham County.....Wanda Morris*
Brantley County.....Keena White	Clarke County.....Ellen Harris	Dublin City.....Susan Thornton	Hall County.....Donna Stringer
Bremen City.....Lynda Wheeler	Clayton County.....Robert Steve Price	Early County.....Ann Lewis	Hall County.....Laurie Ecke
Brooks County.....Laura Walton	Clinch County.....Bonny Moylan	Echols County.....Rolla Hendrickson, Jr.	Hancock County.....Linda Holtz
Bryan County.....Sharon Worsham	Cobb County.....Debbie Poss*	Effingham County.....Christa Martin*	Haralson County.....Jane Goldin*
Buford City.....Timothy Harris	Coffee County.....Duane Tony	Elbert County.....Nan Teasley	Harris County.....Carla Hubbard
Bulloch County.....Linda Fix	Colquitt County.....Rebecca Bevacqua	Emanuel County.....Cindy Brett	Hart County.....Alan Tolbert
Burke County.....Karen Reeves	Columbia County.....Timothy Shafer*	Evans County.....Logan Porter	Heard County.....Jonathan Copeland
Burke County.....Lynda Moore	Commerce City.....Robert Bryan	Fannin County.....Jennifer King	Henry County.....Sandra Swindall
Butts County.....Christa Miller	Cook County.....Pat James	Fayette County.....Stephen Clark	Houston County.....Anthony Richard Jones

Irwin County..... Elizabeth Portier
 Jackson County..... Todd Chandler
 Jasper County..... Michael Cooper
 Jeff Davis County..... Leslie Mills
 Jefferson County..... Jack Keen
 Jefferson County..... Stephanie Hildebrand
 Jenkins County..... Donna Kennedy
 Johnson County..... Virginia McAfee
 Jones County..... Wesley Vonier
 Lamar County..... Scott Turner
 Lanier County..... Deborah Bailey Raines
 Laurens County..... Judy Rowland
 Lee County..... Kelly Dowling*
 Liberty County..... Jamie Wisner
 Lincoln County..... Helene Rhodes
 Lowndes County..... Teresa Hall*
 Lumpkin County..... Juanita Tipton
 Macon County..... Joanie Jones
 Madison County..... Latana Coile
 Marietta City..... Michael Arjona
 Marion County..... Olin Lewis Hollomon
 McDuffie County..... Kelly Flanders

McIntosh County..... Jacqueline Dorminy
 Meriwether County..... Emily Byrd
 Miller County..... Joye Bailey
 Mitchell County..... Azalee Vereen
 Monroe County..... John Whitehead
 Montgomery County..... Rose Dixon
 Morgan County..... Amy Saylor
 Murray County..... Mark Miles
 Muscogee County..... Paul Hampton*
 Newton County..... Sandra Manson
 Oconee County..... David Fish*
 Oglethorpe County..... Brian Lance
 Paulding County..... Brian McBrayer
 Peach County..... John Beck
 Pelham City..... William Wesley White
 Pickens County..... Roger Bennett
 Pierce County..... Jo Ellen Aspinwall
 Pike County..... Brenda Bates
 Pike County..... Dan Dunnahoo
 Polk County..... Robyn Teems
 Pulaski County..... Roberta Morrison
 Putnam County..... Eugenia Specht

Rabun County..... Richard Anderson
 Randolph County..... Victoria Beard
 Richmond County..... Aletha Snowberger
 Rockdale County..... Chuck Garner
 Rome City..... Donald Sweeney
 Schley County..... David Bond
 Screven County..... Krista Aaron
 Seminole County..... Linda Hicks
 Social Circle City..... Mary Margaret Whitley
 Spalding County..... Catherine Callan Pursley
 Stephens County..... Jonesy Haygood
 Sumter County..... Anne Argo
 Talbot County..... Jacqueline Noble
 Tattnall County..... Stan Parker
 Taylor County..... Ronald DiQuattro
 Telfair County..... Sheryl Johnson
 Terrell County..... Tina Ivey
 Thomas County..... David Grooms
 Thomaston-Upson County..... Gwendolyn Sharpe
 Thomasville City..... Dean Farrell
 Tift County..... Deborah Salter
 Toombs County..... Vicki Moore

Towns County..... Brent Brookshire
 Towns County..... Darren Berrong
 Trion City..... Bryan Edge
 Troup County..... Christy Jennings
 Turner County..... Gertrude Hadley
 Twiggs County..... Brian Wynne
 Union County..... Glenn Kough
 Valdosta City..... Narci Drossos
 Vidalia City..... Rebecca Barfield
 Walker County..... Michael Jenkins
 Walton County..... Carolyn Thigpen
 Ware County..... Deborah Dixon
 Warren County..... Beth Patterson
 Washington County..... Ron Burkhart
 Wayne County..... Melba Murphy
 White County..... Michael Pickett
 Whitfield County..... Miles Tanenbaum
 Wilcox County..... Ann Titshaw
 Wilkes County..... Amy Wheatley
 Wilkinson County..... Robert Brantley, Jr.
 Worth County..... Cecilia Burns

* Indicates Region STAR Teacher

Wachovia Foundation Awards PAGE Foundation \$25,000

The Wachovia Foundation of Georgia has donated \$25,000 to support the PAGE Teacher Academy and the 2006 "PAGE-Turning Event," according to PAGE Foundation President Tom Wommack.

"The Wachovia Foundation of Georgia has consistently supported PAGE and PAGE Foundation initiatives that break new ground for educators and help teachers reach higher levels of professionalism," said Wommack. "Wachovia was one of the first corporate leaders to see the value of National Board Certification, and several grants were awarded to the PAGE Foundation as a conduit for scholarships that helped teachers pay the financial costs associated with the certification process. Today, Wachovia is stepping forward again to invest in the PAGE Teacher Academy, Georgia's first such academy for novice teachers. We feel very fortunate to benefit from a corporate foundation that understands the value of professional educators and invests in them repeatedly and generously." Wommack credited Wachovia Foundation executive Ben Boswell, who is also the vice-chair of the PAGE Foundation,

for creating the opportunity that allowed the PAGE Foundation to compete for this most recent charitable donation. "Ben is a former teacher who appreciates the knowledge and skills required to be a capable educator," observed Wommack. "He is also a pragmatic business and community leader who looks incisively at what we and other charitable organizations do. We always know that our programs must have merit if they are to earn the financial support of the Wachovia Foundation and its trustees."

"Every Georgia child is entitled to a high-quality education, and the work being done by the PAGE Foundation is essential to helping teachers deliver that quality to our students. We view our partnership with PAGE and other local education organizations as an important part of our responsibility to help make the communities where we do business better because we're there," said Bill Linginfelter, Wachovia's Georgia CEO.



(left to right) PAGE Foundation President Tom Wommack, Wachovia Senior Vice President and Community Affairs Manager for Georgia Ben Boswell and Executive Vice President and Wachovia's State CEO for Georgia Bill Linginfelter.

Wommack noted that Wachovia's most recent donation will also be used to help sponsor the 2006 "PAGE-Turning Event," a major PAGE Foundation annual gala that honors outstanding corporations and business leaders with a demonstrable commitment to public education. BellSouth and BellSouth CEO of Planned Communities Services Phil Jacobs will be honored at the Sept. 18 banquet to be held in the Egyptian Ballroom of the Fox Theater in Atlanta. Tickets for the \$150 per plate dinner will be available for purchase by PAGE members and others in the weeks preceding the event. ♦

Record Number of Students Attend FEA Day on the Hill

A record number of students attended this year's 2006 PAGE FEA of Georgia Day on Capitol Hill.



More than 530 middle and high school students from across the state participated in the 2006 Future Educators Association of Georgia (FEA of GA) Day on Capitol Hill, held on March 14, 2006, at The Georgia Railroad Freight Depot in Atlanta. The extracurricular program, a partnership with the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE) Foundation and Phi Delta Kappa International, provides Georgia students a realistic, meaningful and substantive means for the exploration of teaching as a viable career option. The state of Georgia faces projected teacher shortages for the remainder of this decade and into the next. In an effort to forestall these shortfalls, the PAGE Foundation is working to establish at least one FEA Chapter in each of Georgia's 180 school systems by the end of 2006. To date, there are 78 chapters in 48 school systems.

"In the face of worsening teacher shortages, it is encouraging for us to observe that so many young people are considering a career as professional educators. In fact, the numbers of high school students attending this annual event has increased significantly in recent years; we had 201 attend in 2004 and 369 in 2005," says PAGE Foundation President Tom Wommack. Donors to the annual event include AT&T Foundation, BellSouth, Copeland Insurance Services, Inc., Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE), Scientific Atlanta, The UPS Foundation and Wachovia Foundation.

This year's participants at FEA Day on Capitol Hill had the opportunity to hear from several of Georgia's Teachers of the



Muscogee County's Hardaway High School FEA of GA Chapter celebrates their First Place win in both the 2006 Scrapbook and Chapter Display Competitions, (back row, left to right) Kamilah Brown, Amberly Ash, 2005 National Teacher of the Year Jason Kamras, Blake Rivers, Tara White and Hayley Wise; and (front row, left to right) PAGE Foundation President Tom Wommack, FEA Advisor Wendy Harding, FEA Co-Advisor Jocelyn Thompson, Keasha Chaney, Adrianna Barron, Jennafer Lester, Donielle Dunn, Michelle Ekwoge, Erica Walker, Merian Lee, Shannon Bradford and PAGE Executive Director Dr. Allene Magill.

Year during a breakout session entitled, "How to Decide What to Teach." The session was hosted by TeachGeorgia Program Manager Robert Maxson, who provided students with information about Georgia's growing demand for teachers and those colleges that have approved teacher preparation programs. Students and their advisors also toured the State Capitol and met with some of their local legislators.

A highlight of the day's activities came during the noon luncheon as students, legislators, FEA Advisory Board members and other special guests had the opportunity to hear from the 2005 National Teacher of the Year Jason Kamras. Kamras told the audience how pleased he was to see so many students interested in pursuing a career in teaching, and he shared many inspirational, personal experiences as a classroom teacher at John Philip Sousa Middle School in Washington, D. C. In addition, Georgia

Association of Secondary School Principals Executive Director Melton Callahan was honored for his continuous support of the FEA of Georgia program. Callahan serves as a member of the FEA of Georgia Advisory Council, offers his tireless support, and regularly provides FEA space in the GASSP newsletter, keeping the message of the organization before Georgia's high school principals.

The day's activities culminated with the announcement of this year's Chapter Display and Scrapbook Competition winners. Muscogee County's Hardaway High School won First Place in both the 2006 Scrapbook and Chapter Display Competitions. Second Place honors in the Scrapbook Competition was awarded to South Gwinnett High School, and Second Place honors in the Chapter Display Competition was captured by Gwinnett County's Peachtree Ridge High School. ♦

Gwinnett County's Berkmar High School

is the 2006 PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon State Champion



Gwinnett County's Berkmar High School's Decathlon team accepted the Howard Stroud State Championship trophy at the 2006 GAD Awards Banquet. Presentation participants include, (back row, left to right) GAD Founding Director Howard Stroud, PAGE Executive Director Dr. Allene Magill, Berkmar Assistant Principal Eric Spoto, teammates Ian Marra, Chris Peter, Richard Dempsey, Chris Parsons, Chris Shields and Coach IV Bray; and (front row, left to right) teammates Katie Harazin, Kelly Shaul, Dua Hassan and Liana Nisimova.



Catoosa County's Lakeview-Ft. Oglethorpe High Decathlon team captured first place honors in Division II (small schools) and the Apple Computer Super Quiz Oral Relay Championship. Pictured here during the Division II Championship award presentation are (back row, left to right) PAGE Foundation Trustee and Co-Owner of A2Z Imprints Anita Farmer, Coach Ian Beck, Coach Lisa Beck, David Hall, Mike Somsanih, Zack Turner, Eric Sinclair, Aaron Clarke and PAGE Foundation Trustee and Dean, College of Education, Kennesaw State University Dr. Yiping Wan; and (front row, left to right) Adam Underwood, Cassandra Cooksey, Erica Thomas and Kyle Osborne.



PAGE Foundation President Tom Wommack (far left) presented Ruth Cowan with a cut-glass bowl and plaque to commemorate her outstanding service as the PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon State Director. Cowan, now retired, served as GAD State Director for the past 14 years. Joining in the awards presentation are (left to right) Cowan's daughter, Cindy Gottlieb, a 6th grade math teacher at Shiloh Middle School, Cowan's husband, Dr. Raymond Cowan, retired DeKalb College professor of history, PAGE Executive Director Dr. Allene Magill, PAGE President Ken Russell and GAD Founding Director Howard Stroud.

This year's PAGE (Professional Association of Georgia Educators) Georgia Academic Decathlon State Champion and Division I (large school) winner is Gwinnett County's Berkmar High School, coached by IV Bray. Catoosa County's Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe High School, coached by Ian Beck and Lisa Beck, is the Division II (small school) champion. The announcement came at the PAGE GAD Awards Banquet, the culminating event of the two-day academic competition held Feb. 24 and 25, 2006, at Berkmar High School in Gwinnett County. Berkmar High School's team scored the highest points overall in Division I and II, and was awarded the Howard Stroud Championship trophy for the fourth consecutive year. The team represented Georgia at the United States Academic Decathlon National Finals held in San Antonio, Texas, in April. The PAGE Foundation, The UPS Foundation, Apple Computer, Inc., the Georgia Power Foundation, the Georgia Department of Education and The Coca Cola Company sponsor the Decathlon. Kennesaw State University serves as a partner with the PAGE Georgia Academic Decathlon by providing and coordinating the more than 150 volunteers needed for the weekend event. The Gwinnett County Public School System serves as host.

Other winners include, in Division I (large school), First Runner-up Forsyth County's Forsyth Central High School,

Other Awards Presentations:

coached by Jennifer Garner, and Second Runner-up Barrow County's Winder-Barrow High School, coached by Kevin McReynolds and Whitney Neufeldt. In Division II (small school), Muscogee County's Columbus High School, coached by Lina Yates and Jan Carter, was named First Runner-up and Carroll County's Villa Rica High School, coached by Cynthia Cox, Sarah Triplett, Janet Dulock and Martie Abney, was named as Second Runner-up.

More than 230 high school students from 27 high schools, representing 23 school districts, competed in the academic event. During the competition, students were tested in seven content areas: economics, art, language and literature, mathematics, science, music and the Written Super Quiz. In addition, students earned points individually in three communication events: public speaking, a personal interview and a written essay. The program is unique because each nine-member team is made up of three "A" students, three "B" students and three "C" students. Each year the program features a different overall curriculum topic. This year's topic was: "The European Renaissance."

On Saturday afternoon, students participated in the exciting Super Quiz Oral Relay, sponsored by Apple Computer, Inc. During the relay, team members competed in a quiz bowl format, keying in answers to questions regarding this year's topic, "The European Renaissance: Renewal and Reform." Catoosa County's Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe High School, coached by Ian Beck and Lisa Beck, was named this year's Apple Computer Super Quiz Oral Relay Champion; Gwinnett County's Berkmar High School, coached by IV Bray, was First Runner-Up; and Habersham County's Habersham Central High School, coached by Wayne Bailey, was Second Runner-Up.

This year, USAD initiated a Small School Online national competition, which was held in April. Marion County's Tri-County High School, coached by Margie Hollomon and Olin Hollomon, won the opportunity to represent Georgia in this competition.

The Decathlon culminated with the PAGE GAD Awards Banquet held



Division I (Large Schools) First Runner-up Forsyth Central High School, (pictured, back row, left to right) Jason Evans, Blake Buchanan, Erik Carlson and Joe Briggs, and (front row, left to right) PAGE President Ken Russell, Alex Jones, Katie Barlow, Meghan Webber, Ellen Barrett, Allison Dudziak, Anna Lugus and Coach Jennifer Garner.



Barrow County's Winder-Barrow High School's Decathlon team won Division I (large school) Second Runner-up honors. Shown here the team prepares to participate in the Speech and Interview Competitions held on Friday night of the two-day event. Team members include (back row, left to right) Janna Patrick, Jim Bundtrock, Jeremy Hamm and Coach Kevin McReynolds. (front row, left to right) Song Xrong, Caitlyn Hentenaar, Spencer Duncan, Tyler Catlin and Whitney Neufeldt (coach).



Division II First Runner-up Muscogee County's Columbus High School (pictured back row, left to right) PAGE Foundation Trustee and Co-owner of A2Z Imprints Anita Farmer, Joyce Gallatin, Konrad Kalpen, Savannah Donahue, Emily Burden, Justin Konsler, Cameron Tommey, Coach Jan Carter, Coach Lina Yates, PAGE Foundation Trustee and Dean, College of Education, Kennesaw State University Dr. Yiping Wan, and (front row, left to right) Khrysthene McCracken, Puja Chebrolu and Lillian Burdette.



Division II Second Runner-up Carroll County's Villa Rica High School (pictured back row, left to right) Kelly Vines, Michael Couch, Russell Bennett, Donny Abercrombie, Tai Shell and Lisa Smith, and (front row, left to right) Coach Cynthia Cox, Coach Sarah Triplett, Jessica Partin, Joey Brooks, Patrick Smith, Coach Martie Abney, Coach Janet Dulock and PAGE Foundation Trustee and Dean, College of Education, Kennesaw State University Dr. Yiping Wan.

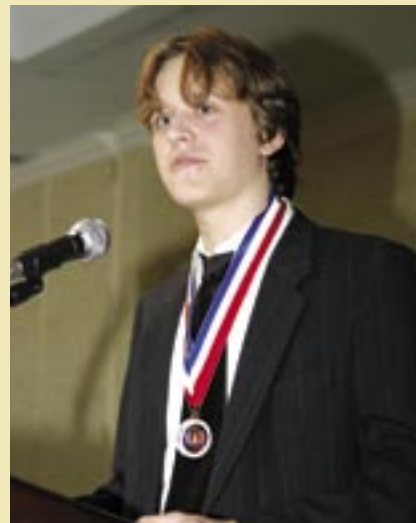
2006 Prepared Speech Winners:



Ameenay Khan, Honors Winner,
Mill Creek High School, Gwinnett County



Alexander Deal, Scholastic Winner,
Kendrick High, Muscogee County



Chris Parsons, Varsity Winner,
Berkmar High School, Gwinnett County

Saturday evening, during which the highest-scoring students were awarded both team and individual medals in the various categories and the state champion was announced. As a part of the evening's festivities Dr. Ruth Cowan, who recently announced her retirement as GAD State Director, was honored with a special award in com-

memoration of her 14 years of service to the program. In addition, a special award was presented to individuals who had served as coaches for five or more

years. David Chandley, meteorologist for Atlanta's Channel 2, WSB-TV, served as Master of Ceremonies for the Awards Banquet. ♦

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GAD coaches who have participated in the program for five or more years were recognized with a special presentation at this year's Awards Banquet. PAGE Foundation President Tom Wommack (far left) presents Jan Bovaird of Muscogee County's Kendrick High with her award. Ms. Bovaird holds the record in Georgia with her 19 years of service as a Decathlon Coach. She retires from teaching this year.

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Honor Your Favorite Teacher

By IV Bray, Berkmar High School Teacher, Gwinnett County

Despite your view of the origins of life, life itself is an evolution—that of mind, body, and spirit. Things that were once very easy (like immediately recovering after a church-league basketball game) eventually become a chore. Some things that were once quite daunting (like simultaneously changing a diaper while talking on the phone) are not so bad after all. Beyond all that, we spend our lives spending lots of time working hard on the things that are merely important in life at the expense of the things that truly matter. Salary and work are important. Recognition and accomplishments are also important, as are houses and cars and belts that match shoes. However, there are only a few things in life that really matter and they can all fit on one hand. Family and friends matter. A spiritual life matters. Integrity matters. Education matters. And what one does to help others matters. Teaching and preaching are the only two professions I know of that combine all five of the things that truly matter into a fulfilling yet life-challenging vocation. As far as preachers go, my favorite is and will always be Charles Boleyn, my grandfather. I can not imagine a more spirit-filled man and the favorite teacher I never had in class. As far as teachers I actually did have in class, I fondly remember many. I remember Ms. Becky Paulk on my very first day of first grade. She wore pink, and she was pretty. I remember learning a life-long lesson about “following directions” from my history teacher, Andrew Jackson, who is now the principal. I remember the pull-out program for gifted students in seventh grade and the really cool things we did. I sure hated missing class, though. Had I been STAR Student my senior year (it was Henry Hammond Garrard), I always told myself that Esper Lee, master of geometry, would have been my STAR teacher. He wore a three-piece suit to school every day. And it went home with chalk on the vest, every day. In Trigonometry/Calculus, Mark Ward showed me how to create a parabola using wax paper – how cool! There are many others. My favorite teacher of all time is the man who taught me the most.



IV Bray



William Ralph Bray V (left) and William Ralph Bray III (right)

My name is William Ralph Bray IV and my whole life I have gone by IV (pronounced like the abbreviation for intravenous). My father is William Ralph Bray III, and he has always been Ralph. After playing football for the University of Georgia, my father started teaching in 1967 at Lakeside H.S. in DeKalb County. My mother started teaching the same year for the Atlanta Public School system. My father taught Industrial Arts and Drivers Education and my mother taught Physical Education. In 1972 we moved to Washington in Wilkes County. For the next 28 years, my parents would teach and coach and love and rear thousands of

children that entered their classes and some that just happened to be passing by. My brother Bo (named after my grandfather) and I were always their favorite students. Sure, I had three classes from my father from 10th through 12th grade, but he taught me the good stuff away from school. He taught me how to hit a baseball. He taught me (and some of the teachers I now teach with oddly enough) how to drive a car. He taught me how to be honest and how to do the right thing all while doing what is right. He taught me how to be a neighbor, how to be a husband, and how to be a friend.

By watching him with his father,

I learned how to love my parents even when I didn't agree with them. In fact many of the things he taught me were not intentional, nor did they have learning objectives or lesson plans written out anywhere. I learned from him as he lived his life. I learned from what he said and what he did. I learned from what he didn't say and from the things that he didn't do. From my father, I also learned how to be a father. Will (Bray V) is three years old now. We read stories and play outside. We say our prayers at night and we say “Yes Ma'am.” Recently, I returned home from playing golf with my dad and Will told me that he wanted me to teach him how to play golf so he could go with us next time. He always wants to go places and do things with me just like I always wanted to go places and do things with my dad. I guess all little boys grow up wanting to be just like their dad. For little boys, their dad is their first hero. My dad is still my hero!



Professional Insights

Perspectives from Within the Teacher Academy: *Participants, Faculty and Administration*



DR. ANN STUCKE

By Dr. Ann Stucke, Assistant Director for Professional Learning

June 23, 2006, will mark The Professional Association of Georgia Educators' first Teacher Academy graduation. Members of the class of 2004-2006, TOPGUN (Teachers Operating Professionally: Georgia's Up and Coming Novices) will be honored at the PAGE Summer Conference, to be held at the Atlanta Marriott – Gwinnett Place, Duluth, Ga. Prior to the dinner ceremony, the Academy's class of 2005-2007, ELITE (Educators Leading and Inspiring Toward Excellence) will present a session sharing their first year's impressions. The occasion marks the beginning of many graduations of novice teacher leaders from the PAGE Teacher Academy.

The Teacher Academy was established to support novice educators across the state and to address the alarming rate of novice teacher attrition. Georgia's teacher attrition trends reflect those across the nation, where the number of teachers leaving the profession has exceeded the number of new teachers entering the field (Ingersoll, 2001). Georgia loses 35 percent of its novice teachers during the first five years of their careers. In response to these alarming statistics, PAGE is working to retain high-potential novices by exposing them to leading authorities on today's educational issues and classroom challenges, providing them with current resources and providing time to network and share experiences. The learning culture that has been created by the coalescence of these activities has been synergistic. It has been reported by some that the Teacher Academy has saved their career. "Saved" is a strong word. It has not been used by the PAGE staff or by the Academy faculty, but has been used by the teachers who participated in the Academy, such as Nina Greene and Melissa McClure of Cobb County. Nina shared that, "if it weren't for my participation in the Teacher Academy, I would have left teaching. It saved my career." This sentiment is echoed by Melissa

when she related her feelings by saying, "Thank you for the Academy. The Teacher Academy has saved several of us." In order to give a view of what the Academy accomplishes from the view point of the participants, faculty and administration, the following section will provide excerpts from several educators involved in different capacities within the Academy.

TEACHER PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVES:

As the administrator of the Academy, I wanted to learn what the teachers, after two years of participation in the Academy, felt was important and if the responses would reflect the Academy's intentions. I asked the teachers, "What, how, or who (if anyone) has effected you related to this experience (i.e. participation in the Academy)?" The following excerpts are from conversations and feedback given by TOPGUN participants. These comments are representative of the majority of responses given by the Teacher Academy participants to Dr. Angelika Pohl, who is the external evaluator for the Academy.

Several of the participants discuss the importance of networking, strategy integration, the sharing of ideas, leadership development and professional relationships in the following excerpts:

"I enjoyed meeting other new teachers from across the state that were going through the exact same things I was. I was surprised to find how many good ideas I got from teachers of other grades or subjects. The camaraderie we experienced was invaluable. After hearing what other members were doing at their schools and the ideas from the presenters, I was inspired to try new programs, teach different classes, take on leadership roles within my school, write grants and do more community outreach activities. The Teacher Academy has lead me to become a better teacher leader."

-Erin Fesler, Gwinnett

The voice of leadership, empowerment and pride is evident through the Teacher Academy participants' words as well as through their actions. The next generation of Georgia teacher-leaders is rising from the Teacher Academy.

"I feel like the PAGE Teacher Academy provided a stable foundation of networking that is so crucial to the development and growth of new teachers. Many of us feel isolated from peers, administration and by the mere nature of our career. This program has given me peers that I can and will utilize for methods of support and creativity throughout my career. Thank you for everything the PAGE staff has done for us throughout these two years."

-Kara Helweg, Murray

"My experience in the Teacher Academy has made me feel more confident and competent as a teacher. I no longer feel like the new and naïve teacher fumbling through each semester. I feel ready to take on more leadership roles within my school and among my colleagues."

-Amanda Wilson, Madison

Perhaps Nick Zomer of Forsyth best sums up the overall perspectives of the participants when he writes:

"The Teacher Academy has been one of the most useful and worthwhile opportunities of my teaching career. I have learned that I am not alone with many of the problems that face young teachers. During my first year in teaching I often wondered how long I would be able to last in this profession. The Academy has helped me overcome many of those difficulties. I learned that what I do in the classroom really does make a difference. I also have learned how to be a leader in my school and that leadership does not simply mean being on a chosen team or committee. Leadership means influencing and helping students and teachers. It's providing your insight and experiences to help others. I have gained priceless knowledge and expertise that will undoubtedly take me farther in my career."

FACULTY PERSPECTIVES:

Several faculty members have expressed the uniqueness of the Teacher Academy. The faculty comes from across the United States and they articulate that they have not seen another project that provides such quality professional learning for novice educators. Dr. Michael White, who teaches the "Using Instructional Data Strand," describes his participation in the Academy by stating that it has been, "One of the most rewarding experiences I have had over the past few years. The participants are learning how to apply Georgia's new Performance Standards, so we discuss realigning our curriculum...

the conversation gets exhilarating as some of the best teachers in the state imagine teaching fewer concepts but teaching them richer and deeper."

Dr. Michael Grant, who teaches the Technology Strand adds, "The PAGE Teacher Academy offers one path to improve the competence and confidence of novice educators. The Teacher Academy is a comprehensive program that, along with improving the skills of teachers, also develops camaraderie among the participants, which we also know helps provide a professional network to sustain teachers throughout their careers. The commitment that Georgia and PAGE have to improving the technology integration skills of these dedicated teachers is one that is cursory or often forgotten in other programs. I am proud to be a part of the Teacher Academy Faculty and have found the experience valuable in my own work in Tennessee."

One of the most demanding strands presented in the Academy deals with the new Georgia Performance Standards and was presented by Ms. Mary Lou Jordan. Ms. Jordan shares her thoughts on the Academy by saying, "If public education in Georgia is to remain a real choice for parents who want a quality education for their children, and is to evolve into a system that provides a vehicle for all of our children to be successful in life, then I believe the graduates of the PAGE Teacher Academy will have had a large part in that accomplishment. This concept of selecting a cadre of teacher leaders each year to form a web of highly motivated, well-informed and trained teacher leaders across the state is one of the most important initiatives I have witnessed in my 35 years in public education. I personally have been involved with the first two groups of the Academy and have seen the potential that is there to make education in this state all that it must be in order to meet the demands that await us in the decades ahead. I have no doubt that my association with this exciting new approach to teacher training will be a great source of pride to me in the coming years, and as I look back on my chosen career as a public school educator and supporter."

Our external evaluator, Dr. Anjelika Pohl, provides the unique perspective of the participant researcher. As one who attends each class and has direct, constant access to the Academy, she expresses her thoughts on the development that she has seen in the participants: "I am continually struck by how serious these young teachers are in their

efforts to become the best teachers they can be. Whether in structured sessions, talking among themselves, or sharing reflections on a survey, they are thinking and probing at a remarkably deep level. I've seen them grow and mature almost right before my eyes, and I'm sure they are leaders of tomorrow -- and some of them already of today!"

ADMINISTRATIVE PERSPECTIVE:

The Teacher Academy has been a rewarding learning experience for me. As a veteran educator I am excited for the Academy participants and for the children in Georgia who will be influenced by these competent teachers. I wish that all novices could be a part of a program that allows for the collegial growth as well as professional discourse that the Academy experience gives its participants. It is apparent from the comments offered by TOPGUN that they feel more confident, realize and value that their pedagogical knowledge is growing and appreciate the new professional relationships they are developing across the state. The voice of leadership, empowerment and pride is evident through the Teacher Academy participants' words as well as through their actions. The next generation of Georgia teacher-leaders is rising from the Teacher Academy. They are thriving and doing amazing things that include establishing a "Novice 2 Novice" website, sponsoring an after school theater to build community, publishing art lessons, presenting at national conferences, implementing unique strategies, suggesting and implementing new programs in their schools and ultimately helping Georgia's students.

Has the Teacher Academy achieved its goal to retain, to mentor and to offer meaningful professional learning for novice educators? I think the Academy has been successful. The Teacher Academy is helping teachers, new in the profession, to develop into teacher leaders. The Academy will continue to evolve and grow to meet the needs of Georgia's novices. It is obvious when one listens to the voices of the Teacher Academy participants that they are well on the road to more satisfying long-term careers. ♦

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2006-2007 TEACHER ACADEMY PARTICIPANTS



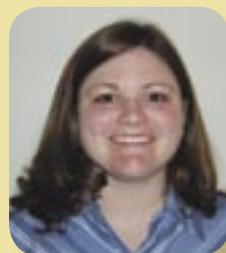
Jessica Blackwood
East Lake
Elementary School
Henry



Tenia Boone
Lamar Reese Magnet
School of the Arts
Dougherty



Kimberly Burroughs
Liberty Middle School
Forsyth



Audry Caswell
Madison County
Middle School
Madison



Sheena Cooper
Lanier County
High School
Lanier



Monica Dyess
Hahira Middle School
Lowndes



Allen Edwards
Colquitt County
High School
Colquitt



Beth Fordham
St. Mary's
Elementary School
Camden



Mindy Griffis
Spalding High School
Spalding



Jania Hoover
Jonesboro High School
Clayton



Evelyn Hall
Swainsboro High School
Emanuel



Carrie Keller
Unity Elementary School
Meriwether



Jamie Lanning
Spring Place
Elementary School
Murray



Evie Mackey
Austin Road
Elementary School
Henry



Ragan Pollock
Jefferson County
High School
Jefferson



Gordina Simmons
Walker-Inman
Elementary School
Mitchell



Stephanie Smith
Jackson
Elementary School
Butts



Franleata Sorrells
Madison County
Middle School
Madison



Mary Stokes
Salem High School
Rockdale



Sarah Valentine
Windsor Forest
High School
Chatham



Wendi Williams
Madison County
Middle School
Madison



Rachel Withers
R.S. Alexander
High School
Douglas

Georgia's 2006 PAGE STAR Students and Teachers

Continued from page 9

are for her a reward, not a goal.”

Frazier selected Shafer for his passion for mathematics.

“To the ‘Gentle Giant’—as he is affectionately called by our BC class—math is not just a subject taught in schools, it is a way of thinking that is universally applicable to life. His perpetual quest to comprehend the field more fully, to take the material to yet a higher plane of understanding, has constantly driven me to do the same, even when I did not particularly feel like finding out what would happen if we were to consider a problem in three dimensions instead of just the original two. This passion for math is what has led me to pursue a career that unites the mathematical and medical fields. I can truly say that his tutelage changed the course of my future.”

In PAGE STAR Region 8, South Effingham High School STAR Student Adam Michael Steiner chose Christa Martin as his STAR Teacher.

“Adam Steiner is that one special student an educator is fortunate to have during a career,” says Martin. “By far, he is the most intelligent, well-rounded student with whom I have had the pleasure to work. Adam stretches himself, and at the same time, inspires those around him to also reach higher. He is never too busy to help or offer encouragement to fellow students. He is completely within his element when teaching and guiding his peers. He has selflessly given his time to assist me with countless hours tutoring before school. All of this is done without any recognition, except an occasional ‘thank you.’ He is a natural leader and teacher, and his special insight into the needs of others has been a gift that he offers freely. It is exciting to see a student as remarkable and distinctive as Adam embark on a new journey in life where I know he will continue to grow, learn, excel and



Tamesha Derico and Polly Stadnik,
Westover High School, Dougherty Co.

ration for Ms. Martin stems from something deeper than our personal interactions. In the two years I have had classes with this exemplary teacher, she has demonstrated a characteristic that I have found to be quite rare among educators: she possesses the courage and insight to teach in a manner that is truly conducive to the learning process. Ms. Martin never lowered her standards for her students because she knew the level of work we were capable of achieving. Because of the conviction and passion for teaching that Ms. Martin demonstrates, she truly deserves the honor of STAR Teacher.”



Kaitlyn Frazier and Timothy Shafer, Augusta Preparatory School, Columbia Co.

In PAGE STAR Region 9, there was another tie for STAR honors. Tamesha Shanté Derico of Westover High School in Dougherty County and Steven M. Sumners of Lee County High School had identical SAT scores.

Derico's STAR Teacher, Polly Stadnik describes what makes her special:

“I have been a foreign language teacher in Georgia for 27 years and during that time, I have been most fortunate to teach many exceptional students. However, I do not believe that I have ever met a young person quite like Tamesha Derico. Her excellence and leadership in the classroom and in our school is only a part of what makes her so very special! She is as fine a young lady as she is a student, and I can think of many ways that she has distinguished herself as a shining STAR. Tamesha defines excellence in everything she does. I am continually amazed by her maturity, her insight and her ability to accomplish all she has done in her short lifetime. She is a capable class leader, an active community volunteer, an award winning public speaker, a talented musician and an inspiring role model for other students.”

In turn, Derico describes what makes her teacher special:

“After just five minutes in Mrs. Stadnik's classroom, her enthusiasm becomes contagious. I find myself deeply interested in her explanations of Spanish painters, colloquial Spanish terms and even irregular verb conjugations. Her years of experience become apparent as she responds to students' inquiries

contribute significantly to the betterment of mankind.”

And here is how Steiner describes Martin:

“Throughout my high school career, my STAR Teacher—Ms. Christa Martin—has been more than merely an educator; she has been a trusted advisor and friend. Whether I needed help on a problem for a math competition or required assistance on scholarship forms, her doors were open. However, my admi-

with first-hand accounts of Spanish life, or as she uses various teaching styles until each student understands the lesson. Her tall figure, deep voice, and passionate eyes immediately command my respect. But as the year progresses, my respect deepens as I discover new elements of her character. I respect her more each day, and I feel honored to be her student.”

Steven Sumners’ STAR Teacher, Kelly Dowling, describes why Sumners deserves to be a STAR:

“I have had the pleasure of teaching Steven for two years and he is now in my 2nd year AP Calculus (BC) class. He has amazed me by almost deriving theories many sections before we study them. His questions in class never cease to amaze me, and have made teaching him a very fun challenge. He connects ideas and theories from many different topics in a way that I have never seen in a student and even many adults. He has a brilliant mind and is very self-disciplined. He is also graduating a year ahead of schedule as he has completed all of the high school requirements by his 3rd year in high school. I was an engineer for Procter and Gamble for many years before becoming a teacher, and even compared with my engineering colleagues, Steven’s thought process and intelligence rivals anyone I have been associated with. He is not just one the brightest students I have encountered, but one of the most brilliant people I have had the pleasure of working with.”

Sumners describes why he chose Dowling as his STAR Teacher:

“Mrs. Kelly Dowling, my Calculus and AP Calculus BC instructor for the past two years, has affected me more profoundly than any other school official in the past 14 years. Whether I was in a general classroom, an independent-study environment, or an extracurricular activity, Mrs. Dowling has always strived to accomplish more than what is required and to be more than what is necessary.

Above all, she showed herself to be entirely devoted to leading her students to an understanding of all aspects of the curriculum. It is true that I am largely a self-motivated student. I would work hard under any teacher. However, some educators have the ability to prompt an extra amount of effort from even the most diligent pupils. Mrs. Kelly Dowling is one of those educators.”

In PAGE STAR Region 10, the STAR Student is Jacob Stalvey O’Neal of Lowndes County High School. For his STAR Teacher, O’Neal reached back to the beginning of his academic career, choosing his kindergarten through second grade teacher, Teresa Hall.

“Jake O’Neal is an outstanding stellar among the stars,” Hall says. “When I think

of Jake’s merit as a student I think of a five-year old boy with eyes that ignited with the thrill of discovery. He was quiet and reserved, yet an aggressive learner. It was amazing how easy it was for this little boy to apply knowledge and investigate new understanding. He remembered everything he saw, read, did and heard. He had a thirst for learning that could not be satisfied. Jake had a phenomenal vocabulary, yet the word “bored” was one we never heard him use. His ability to write went beyond anything I have ever seen in early childhood. His stories had remarkable depth, and his poems had so much rhythm that it felt like you were singing when you read them. He began his study of music at the piano during those early years. This was the foundation for four years with the



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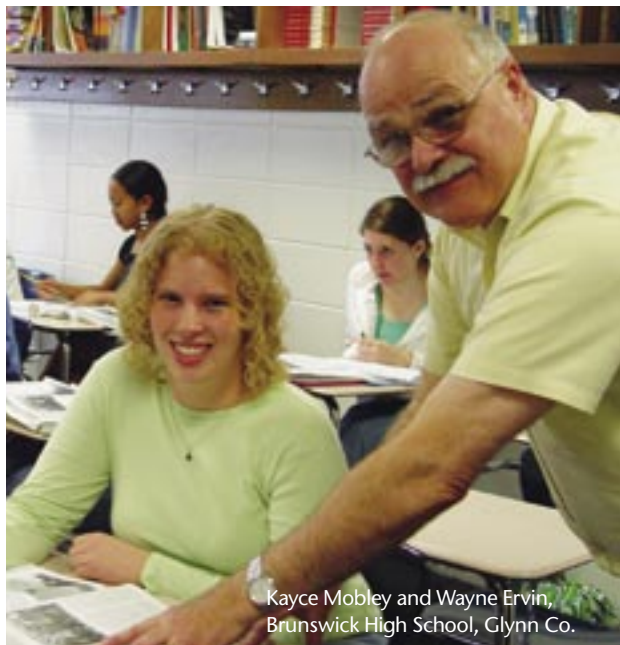
award—winning Marching Bridgemen and the Lowndes High School Jazz Band.”

This is how O’Neal remembers his first teacher:

“Mrs. Teresa Hall is deserving of the honor of being named my STAR Teacher for many reasons. She opened my eyes to the possibilities the world held for me, to the importance of education in success, and she awakened in me a passion for purpose and the pursuit of excellence in every aspect of my own life. However, perhaps the single most important reason I have chosen to honor Mrs. Hall is that she was my very first teacher and, incidentally, the one who taught me for the longest time—in kindergarten and first and second grades. She was always ready not only to provide information, but to wipe away tears, to bandage scraped knees, to cure runny noses and to open up the world. She was my mentor in my most formative early years, and her lessons have lasted with me throughout my education.”

The PAGE STAR Region 11 STAR Student is Kayce Marie Mobley, who chose Wayne Ervin as her STAR Teacher.

“Self-discipline and modesty are two distinctive characteristics that come to mind when one thinks of Kayce Mobley,” says Ervin. “I have been continually amazed and impressed by Kayce’s ability not only to master some of the most challenging courses at Brunswick High, but to remain involved in many clubs and sports as well. This has been made possible by her daily planning of sleep as well as study. She has planned and disciplined herself daily, not only for academic endeavors, but



Kayce Mobley and Wayne Ervin, Brunswick High School, Glynn Co.

for Model United Nations preparation, soccer and the demands of the National Honor Society. That daily structure was her schedule night and day for four years and has been her trademark. Not only has she been successful, but additionally, she is a modest young lady unfazed by success and recognition.”

Mobley lauds Ervin for his skills and passion as a teacher:

“Never in my life have I met someone quite like Mr. Wayne Ervin. Through more than thirty years of teaching and nearly that amount coaching Model UN, he has perfected his skills. With every class, he effectively convinces his students that no one in the world could possibly know more about U.S. history and that no one else could have as much fun teaching it. From personal experience, I know that ‘Erv,’ as I tend to address him, is most comfortable when in his classroom and teaching. He has a passion for history and politics, and has the power to transfer his love to students who never before had an interest in social studies. One of life’s rarest, most beautiful gifts is the influence of a true teacher like Mr. Wayne Ervin. For him, teaching is not an occupation, but a lifestyle.”

Having now heard from all of the 2006 PAGE Regional STAR Students and their STAR Teachers, it should be clear why they deserve the title of “STARS.” Without exception, these students are not just good test-takers, they are exceptional young men and women with a variety of talents and interests. And their STAR Teachers are not just fortunate to teach the “gifted” students, they are truly gifted teachers who are exceptional educators, mentors and friends to their students. Georgia is fortunate to have all of these STARS to brighten and enlighten our schools. ◆

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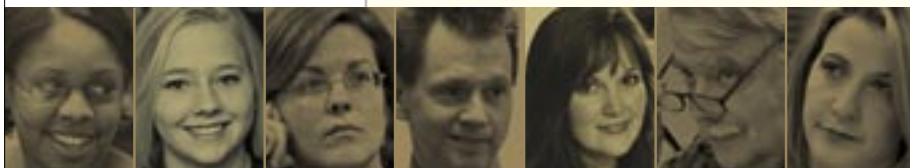


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MARGARET PRICE

2006 PAGE Final Legislative Report

Increased state budget revenues and election year politics blended to create an interesting environment for education in the Georgia Legislature during the 2006 session. The following bills passed the 2006 General Assembly and have been sent to the Governor for his signature. Governor Perdue has 40 days after adjournment to sign or veto any bills or joint resolutions. At the end of this 40-day period, bills that are not yet signed or vetoed become law. The effective dates of these bills will be July 1, 2006, unless otherwise specified within the bill.

GOVERNOR'S LEGISLATION

SB 390, Gov. Perdue's 65 percent spending initiative, has already been signed into law. The final version of this controversial legislation mandates that 65 percent of all education dollars be spent on direct classroom expenditures but contains several changes allowing local systems to apply for one-year renewable hardship waivers if the systems are unable to meet the 65 percent classroom spending requirement due to Acts of God, unexpected fuel costs or other emergencies. Costs to comply with any state mandate effective after Jan. 1, 2006 will not be calculated as part of the 65 percent formula. In both House and Senate Committees, PAGE testified with concerns regarding this bill, pointing to diminishing local control and asking for the inclusion of additional personnel such as counselors, media specialists and others, within the legislation's definition of "classroom." Ultimately, the definition includes salaries and benefits for teachers and paraprofessionals, and costs associated with materials and supplies, field trips, physical education, music and art. The definition does not include costs for administration, plant operation and maintenance, food service, transportation, instructional support including media centers, teacher training and student support such as nurses and guidance counselors. This law will become effective on July 1, 2006.

HB 1358, Gov. Perdue's Truth in Class Size Act, is PAGE-supported legislation that does away with system averaging and provides maximum class sizes as follows:

- Kindergarten program (without paraprofessional): 18
- Kindergarten program (with paraprofessional): 20
- Grades 1-3: 21
- Grades 4-5: 28
- Grades 6-8: 28

Class size maximums only apply in core subjects, not in art, music or physical education and other classes. High school class sizes will remain the same. A waiver provision will allow systems to waive the class size requirement. The state board of education may grant such a request when the waiver is educationally justified and where an Act of God or other unforeseen event leads to a precipitous rise in enrollment within that school system or leads to another occurrence which resulted in the local board's inability to comply with the law. PAGE testified in strong support of the legislation, citing reduction in class size as a top legislative priority for several years. In committee, PAGE expressed a desire that the waiver will only be granted in necessary emergency circumstances and that this initiative will clearly communicate to legislators, parents and teacher what the maximum class size is.

SB 468 is the Governor's grant program, which allows needs improvement schools to employ High Performance Principals. The State Board of Education will establish this program to attract proven high performing principals to secondary schools that have not made adequate yearly progress for two or more consecutive years. Such principals will be eligible for a one-year salary supplement of up to \$15,000, and this supplement may be renewed for up to two additional school years.

OTHER EDUCATION LEGISLATION

HB 972 states that, should the Professional Standards Commission include a requirement to demonstrate computer skill competency, educators can elect to fulfill that requirement by completing a course in computer skill competency, including but not limited to the InTech program, or educators may receive satisfactory results on a test in

basic computer skill competency, which the local school system must make available for the educator to take at the educator's school site.

HB 543 allows a local board of education to establish a spousal sick leave bank so that an employee of the local board may donate up to ten sick leave days to his or her spouse if such spouse is also an employee of the local board for purposes of maternity leave, illness, illness of a family member, or death of a family member.

SB 618 requires that local systems enroll and educate students who are under the supervision of the Department of Human Resources and the Department of Juvenile Justice and are housed in residential facilities located within the boundaries of such local systems.

SB 79 allows school systems to offer elective courses in the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible. The stated purpose of the course is to familiarize students with the contents of the Old and New Testaments and the impact of the testaments upon law, history, government, literature, art, music, customs, morals, values and culture. The State Board of Education will develop a curriculum for these courses no later than Feb. 1, 2007.

SB 515 is a PAGE-supported bill which expands remedial education to include middle grades. The final version of the bill also made some minor technical changes to equalization grants.

SB 442 requires reporting by a mandated child abuse reporter with reasonable cause to suspect abuse no later than 24 hours after that suspicion arose. Additionally, persons in charge of hospitals, schools and other agencies to whom abuse has been reported must not exercise any control, restraint, modification, or make other changes to the information provided in the original report when relaying this information to the Division of Family and Children Services or other agencies. Such intermediary reporters may provide additional relevant information when necessary. PAGE has worked closely with the Office of the Child Advocate and other

groups on this legislation for several years.

HB 1219 provides for a sales tax holiday Aug. 3-6, 2006. Items included under the temporary sales tax repeal include certain school supplies, clothing, footwear, computers and computer related accessories.

HB 1483 requires local systems to hold two public hearings before lowering the local salary supplement in a year in which educators receive a state salary increase. Currently, only one such hearing is required. PAGE lobbyists testified in strong support of this legislation, citing numerous complaints by PAGE members regarding the lowering of their salary supplements. The bill includes a PAGE-suggested provision which would require local systems to notify educators of the public hearings individually at least seven days prior to the meeting. Notification is also required in the local legal organ. This bill's effective date will be July 1, 2006.

SB 610 allows for the creation of virtual charter schools.

HB 1227 creates an Agricultural Education Advisory Commission with members appointed by the House, Senate, Governor and State School Superintendent. The commission will periodically review the conditions, needs, issues and problems related to the agriculture education program, and issue an annual report on such to the General Assembly. This provision sunsets on Dec. 31, 2012.

HB 1228 creates the Career and Technical Education Advisory Commission with members appointed by the House, Senate, Governor and State School Superintendent. The commission will periodically review the needs, issues and problems related to the career and technical education program, and issue an annual report on the commission's findings to the General Assembly. This provision sunsets on Dec. 31, 2012.

HB 1241 provides that no high school shall participate in, sponsor, or provide coaching staff for interscholastic sports events which are conducted under the authority of, conducted under the rules of, or scheduled by any athletic association unless the charter, bylaws, or other governing documents of such athletic association provide that a student will not lose eligibility to participate as a team member on an interscholastic sports team solely because such student participates during the school year in a national competitive event, such as an all-star or showcase event, that is not sanctioned by such athletic association.

HB 1316 creates a twelve-member High School Athletics Overview Committee.

HB 984 applies to students with parents or legal guardians in the military. When the parents or guardians are on leave or are close to military deployment, students should be granted up to five excused absences in order to visit such parents or guardians.

SB 413 is a PTA sponsored and PAGE-supported bill which seeks to prevent high school drop outs by requiring parental permission before a student can withdraw from school. If a student does wish to withdraw, SB 413 requires that a conference convene within two days at which a school designee will make a reasonable attempt to share information with the student regarding lifetime earnings and employment possibilities for persons lacking a high school diploma. The final language of the bill requires each local board of education to adopt policies and procedures for notifying parents regarding school clubs and an opportunity for parents to withhold permission for a child to join a club. Another small amendment allowing school systems to stop publishing school bus routes was also added to the final bill.

HR 410 creates the House Study Committee on Reporting Requirements for Local School Systems to determine whether such reports are necessary to the goals of public education or whether such reports are obsolete. This resolution needs no signature from the Governor before becoming law.

HR 1048 creates the House Study Committee on Market-Demand Skills Education in High Schools. The committee will study ways in which students can obtain skills in automotive technology, computer technology, construction trades, health care technology and hospitality, to combat youth unemployment and improve Georgia's economic development. A report from the committee will be made before Dec. 31, 2006, at which point the committee shall stand abolished. This resolution needs no signature from the Governor before becoming law.

HB 1055 mandates that public schools adopt an Internet Safety Policy no later than Jan. 1, 2007. The policy shall contain provisions which are designed to prevent students and employees of the school system from using computer equipment to send or receive obscenity, child pornography, or material that is harmful to minors. The

policy must establish appropriate measures to be taken against students and school employees who willfully violate such policy and provide for an expedited review process to resolve claims that the policy is denying students or employees access to non-prohibited material.

RETIREMENT

HB 400 allows for a post-retirement increase for TRS members who retired before June 30, 1987. TRS members who retired before July 1, 1974 would receive a 10 percent retirement benefit increase while those who retired after that date but before June 30, 1982 would receive a 6 percent increase. TRS members who retired after June 30, 1982 and before June 30, 1987 would receive a 2 percent increase in their retirement benefit. This act will become effective on July 1, 2006.

2007 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- Provide for a 4 percent increase in the base salary for all school system certified personnel, bus drivers, food service workers, kindergarten paraprofessionals, RESA employees and DOE employees. \$226,235,147
- Reduce class size in grades K-8. \$163,164,787
- Increase the employer share of state health insurance for certified employees. \$138,410,487
- Reduction in funding for state teacher liability insurance. (\$200,000)
- Redirect monies from central office contracts to fund an evaluation of the Reading and Math Program. \$150,000
- Eliminate funding for the Global Achievers Contract. (\$35,000)
- Reduce personal services, regular operating expenses, and computer charges. Reduce funding for the Educational Technology Training Centers and RESAs. (\$619,262)
- Redirect funds from Education Go Get It to Communities in Schools to provide for high school completion counselor training and funding for new Performance Learning Centers in Ben Hill County, Troup County, Cobb County and Dublin, Ga. \$982,500
- Provide grant funds for school districts to recruit 150 high performance principals for target schools. \$1,500,000
- Provide funds for Fund Accounting. \$2,000,000
- Remove one-time funds in Migrant Education for the Bulloch County poultry plant. (\$250,000)
- Provide funds for \$100 purchase cards for teachers. \$10,000,000

- Provide grants to schools for summer remedial education in grades 6-8. \$1,400,000

- Provide funds to restore half of the FY 2003 reductions to the QBE Formula funding for media materials, increasing the rate from \$9.77 to 14.65 per FTE. \$5,106,071

- Expand the web-based classroom accountability model. \$800,000

- Provide funds to align the Georgia Alternate Assessment with the new Georgia Performance Standards. \$250,000

- Provide funding for an assessment for English Language Learners to measure English proficiency. \$500,000

- Improve Graduation rates by providing grants to school systems to fund one high school completion counselor for every high school. \$15,429,069

- Provide funds to increase the benefit accrual rate for members of the Public School Employees' Retirement System by \$0.50 per month for each year of service, increasing the rate from \$13.50 to \$14.00. \$2,850,000

- Expand the virtual charter school by 2,000 seats. \$800,000

- Add funds for student transportation costs to assist with rising fuel costs. \$5,000,000

- Finance the purchase of new school buses. \$45,000,000

FAILED LEGISLATION

SB 427 would have allowed investment of several large retirement systems, excluding the Teachers Retirement System, in risky venture capital investments. Because educators who are part of ERS and PSERS may have had portions of their retirement invested in these risky ventures, PAGE testified in committee with concerns that legislators were trading the possibility of large growth with the acceptance of a very large risk to fiscally sound retirement systems. Though SB 427 passed the Senate, it was stopped in the House and failed to pass due to PAGE'S efforts.

HR 1345 proposed a constitutional amendment which potentially would have allowed for school vouchers. PAGE lobbyists testified in support of similar legislation in the past, citing PAGE'S support of faith-based organizations, while strongly advocating the need for language to be included in any amendment that specifically excludes vouchers. Representatives from Gov. Perdue's office and some law-

makers insisted that HR 1345 was not intended to allow vouchers. Sponsors of the bill then rejected several requests to amend the bill to specifically exclude vouchers. Ultimately, many lawmakers seemed to agree with PAGE's concerns, as the sponsors could muster only 95 votes in favor of the legislation—far from the necessary 120-vote majority needed to pass such a constitutional amendment.

During the 2006 session, PAGE put forth a package of bills which sought to enhance the policy making procedures regarding the State Health Benefit Plan. Unfortunately, all such pieces of legislation, including HB 975, SB 407, SB 410, SB 411 and SB 412, did not pass. PAGE hopes that these failed proposals, which included adding an educator to the board of the Department of Community Health, may be considered in the future.

In addition, PAGE also had Representative Jamieson introduce a number of retirement bills including a 25-year retirement bill and a bill to increase the retirement multiplier. Unfortunately, none of these bills were acted upon due to the substantial costs to the state. ♦

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Members in the News

PAGE MEMBER NAMED 2007 TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Pam Walker, a science teacher at Alexander High School in Douglas County, was named the 2007 Georgia Teacher of the Year. Walker, a 25-year veteran of the classroom, taught in Telfair County, Fitzgerald City and Laurens County before joining Douglas County schools in 1990.

Beginning in July, Walker will serve as educational ambassador for all Georgia public schools and advocate for all school systems, students and teachers. She will take a one-year sabbatical during which she will speak throughout the state, conduct staff development activities and participate in statewide committees and conferences. She will also be entered in the National Teacher of the Year competition.

At this year's Teacher of the Year banquet,



State Superintendent of Schools Kathy Cox stated, "Pam Walker has a passion for science and a passion for teaching. She realizes that her students learn by doing science, not hearing about it. She also knows that every child learns differently and she has risen to the challenge of individualizing instruction to meet each student's needs."

One the featured speakers at the awards

PAGE Planner
2006
May 2006
13 NBPTS Workshop – Turner Co. Specialty School, Ashburn
June 2006
20-22 PAGE Pre-Conference
23-24 PAGE Summer Conference

banquet was Gov. Sonny Perdue. He commented on Walker's achievement by saying, "As we work to improve our science achievement and redesign our high schools, Pam's knowledge and energy will be a vital contribution." He also mentioned that great educators are a key part of keeping Georgia competitive in a 21st-century economy. "The very best teachers, like Pam Walker, instill in their students more than facts and skills. They inspire their students to develop a love of learning itself. That's the real key to education success. And that's why good teachers, and particularly good science teachers, are a critical element to increasing Georgia's competitiveness on a national and global level," said Perdue. ♦



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PAGE Board Votes Dues Increase

First increase since the 2002-03 school year

The PAGE Board of Directors has voted unanimously to raise dues. Professional dues will increase from \$125 to \$150, Support will increase from \$62.50 to \$75, Retired Annual (\$25), Retired Life (\$100) and Student (\$7.00) dues will remain at their current levels.

This is the first dues increase in four years, since the 2002-03 school year. The monthly payroll deduction for professionals, with this increase, will go from \$10.42 to \$12.50—an increase of \$2.08 per month.

From its founding, PAGE dues have been significantly lower than either of the other two teachers unions in Georgia. Professional dues have been approximately one-third the dues of the GAE and the GFT, and will remain at that ratio with the increase. NEA/GAE and the AFT/GFT have raised their dues four times since the last time PAGE dues increased. Both unions increase their dues every year, based on a calculation of the average teacher salary nationally and in Georgia.

PAGE Boards of Directors over the years have done a good job at “holding the line” and using member resources prudently. A comparison with other independent associations across the nation underscores that point.

The way PAGE dues are established reflects the organization’s grassroots approach. The Board of Directors periodically reviews services to members, organizational growth and inflationary factors and makes a dues amount decision—based on membership totals—that will meet the cost of operating the association. There is nothing “automatic” about dues increases.

Since it was formed in the mid-1970’s, PAGE dues have increased about every three to four years. Twice they have remained unchanged for as long as six years.

In making its decision to increase PAGE dues, the Board of Directors took into account a number of factors that included:

Professional learning for members has been greatly expanded, with the cre-

ation of a four- person Professional Learning Department that has created innovative programs for promising novice teachers (the Teacher Academy) and for outstanding veteran teachers (the Teacher of the Year Leadership Institute.)

With the leadership of the Professional Learning Department, PAGE has revamped its summer and fall conferences to include nationally known speakers who are addressing cutting edge topics. We are offering pre-conference and breakout sessions to enhance the professional skills of all PAGE members who participate. A series of drive-in conferences on special topics has enabled more members around the state to participate in PAGE learning activities.

PAGE lobbied for and won increases in professional salaries since 2002, along with continued legislative efforts and improvements in retirement and health care benefits.

Members requiring services have increased from 54,000 in 2002 to more than 65,000 currently. Legal services have greatly

increased during this time period, and two additional full-time lawyers have been added to the in-house staff, bringing it to four lawyers on staff with a statewide network of sixty attorneys.

PAGE has enhanced its full-time membership services team across the state. In 1996, just three PAGE districts were served by a full-time membership services representative. Today twelve MSRs serve an equal number of PAGE districts covering the entire state. Two recruiters are also working in the state’s private schools.

Forty-four full time PAGE staff now serve the membership. To accommodate increased staff, PAGE has acquired additional office space and equipment. Since moving to new offices in the fall of 1997, PAGE has expanded its office space to approximately 11,000 square feet. To better serve members in mid and South Georgia, PAGE maintains a branch office in Macon on the campus of Mercer University.

In 1998 a full-time coordinator of student programs was hired to meet the needs of more than 5,000 SPAGE members at college and university campuses across the state. SPAGE membership has now grown to nearly 9,000 and additional consultants are being retained to work with this growing population of future professional members.

Technological improvements have increased our ability to communicate with members and to foster improved communication between the state office and more than 2,000 schools. PAGE has developed a listserv capability to augment its already robust e-mail networks. In addition, online bulletin boards are enhancing communication among Teacher Academy participants and among the PAGE Board of Directors.

To communicate legislative activity more rapidly, PAGE added a legislative tracking and information system to its website and developed an e-mail communication system for members on legislative issues and created a listserv to allow members to sign up for daily legislative updates.

PAGE Boards of Directors over the years have done a good job at “holding the line” and using member resources prudently. A comparison with other independent associations across the nation underscores that point.

Our dues are lower than all but two other independent groups. A review of other independent state teacher organizations dues indicates that in this current school year, the average professional dues of sixteen such groups around the nation is \$152. Several states, with services and staffs comparable to ours, have significantly higher dues than PAGE. The average for those states is \$179.

- Pennsylvania\$276
- Missouri\$189
- Oklahoma\$195
- Louisiana.....\$175
- Tennessee.....\$149
- Texas\$130

PAGE will continue to budget prudently and operate in a fiscally responsible way while at the same time, offering the best benefits at the best prices to an increasingly large number of Georgia educators. ♦

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Capitol Tech Highlights Technology Integration in Georgia

Thirteen schools in Georgia were the focus of the second Capitol Tech, held at the Capitol in Atlanta during the recently concluded legislative session. This event was held to demonstrate to Georgia's legislators the positive impact that technology funding is having on instruction in Georgia's public schools.

Capitol Tech spotlights students using the fundamental technology tools necessary to succeed in the 21st century. "Today's education system faces irrelevance unless we bridge the gap between how students live and how they learn," according to the Learning for the 21st Century report. Students and teachers are eager for their local legislators to see firsthand how these tools are helping to increase student achievement and build community partnerships.

Capitol Tech is a collaborative effort between Georgia's schools and the state's Educational Technology Training Centers. Students are the presenters sharing their educational projects—student-designed Web sites that help other students resolve curricular issues, multimedia projects that demonstrate an understanding of curricular areas and projects in which students collaborate with teachers to produce lessons that effectively infuse technology into the teaching and learning process.

As part of the Georgia Department of Education, the thirteen Educational Technology Training Centers work together with school districts in their regions to improve and promote research-based methods of instruction with teachers. Their emphasis includes the integration of multiple technologies to enrich the curriculum, effective uses of technology to increase school productivity, and distance learning to provide opportunities that would otherwise be inaccessible. Educators believe today's students must be empowered to meet the challenges of tomorrow if Georgia's citizens are to be competitive in the world market of the 21st century. ♦

CAPITOL TECH PARTICIPANTS AND PROJECTS

Banks County Middle School,

Banks County and West Hall High School,
Hall County (Pioneer RESA)

"Student ePortfolios"—6th Grade
(Banks County)

"Student ePortfolios"—9th Grade
(Hall County)

Bradwell Institute, Liberty County
(Armstrong Atlantic University)

"Genetically Modified Foods - Pros and
Cons"—11th - 12th grades

Burdell-Hunt Magnet School,

Bibb County (Macon State College)

"Let's Assess, and Then Have Some Fun
Learning!"—K, 3rd, 4th and 5th Grades

Burke County Middle School,

Burke County (National Science Center)
"Hurricane Education in the Peach State"

—6th Grade

Chattahoochee County Elementary

School, Chattahoochee County

(Columbus State University)

"Sweet Rewards"—3rd Grade

Dodge County High School,

Dodge County (Heart of Georgia RESA)

"Designing the Future: The New Dodge
County High School Technology Lab"

—9th - 12th Grades

East Fayette Elementary School,

Fayette County (State University of West
Georgia ETTC)

"PROMOTE Georgia: Authentic Research
and Workplace Skills in Action"
—5th Grade

Elbert County High School,

Elbert County (University of Georgia)

"There's No Business Like Small Business"
—9th - 12th Grades

Gladden Middle School, Murray County
(Georgia Highlands College)

"Teaching to the Future by Exploring the
Past with Intel Educational Tools"

—8th Grade

Hembree Springs Elementary School,

Fulton County (Kennesaw State
University)

"The Mouseflower"—3rd Grade

Lee County Middle School, Lee County

(Albany State University)

Lowndes County High School,

Lowndes County (Valdosta State
University)

"Acid Rain in South Georgia"—11th Grade

Screven County Elementary School,

Screven County (First District RESA)

"Math for the 21st Century"—4th Grade



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