



# The Newsletter

December 2007

The Georgia Association of Educational Leaders

## President's Comments

by Larry Johnson

(Larry Johnson is GAEL president and principal of County Line Elementary School in Barrow County.)

As the leaves burst forth with the last brightness of fall color and winter's chill begins to be felt, it marks the beginning of another season – that of the annual session of the Georgia General Assembly.

Of all the services provided by GAEL, none has more potential impact on its members than the monitoring, reporting, and influencing of the lawmaking process. The Constitution of Georgia makes it clear that education is a primary responsibility of the state. Therefore, much of the work of the legislature revolves around crafting, debating, and passing educational legislation.

Sadly, too many educational leaders feel that they have no role in the political events that take place in Atlanta during the winter. To them, politics is a dirty business, one that takes place in an arena in which they have no responsibility.

Yet, who knows better about making decisions that impact children; the principal, assistant principal, or curriculum director in a local school district, or the legislator whose only knowledge about public education came during her/his tenure as a student many years ago? By nature, legislators must be generalists. They must consider proposed laws that run the gamut from water conservation to health care to transportation. Few have much background in administering public education programs.

Enter the local educational leader. Since legislators tend to know little about the ins and outs of public education, those with expertise in public education have an obligation to the profession and to the children to share that expertise. Invite legislators to schools, call and write with accurate information on topics being debated, send brief articles for review. Become the educational consultant for your local legislative delegation.

Only by becoming involved can we help transition our elected representatives into advocates of public education who support effective educational legislation and oppose the rest. It's a part of our job we must take seriously. After all, we owe it to ourselves, we owe it to our profession, and we owe it to the children in our schools. ◆

## 2008 GAEL Winter Conference

February 3-5  
Renaissance Waverly Hotel  
Atlanta, GA

*Register now  
Click Here*

## Reflections

by Jim Puckett, GAEL Executive Director

GAEL has a long and storied history. For years, the Association has been the 'go to' organization for accurate and timely education news, for political influence, for networking opportunities, etc. The list is long.

All of that is still true. While changing with the times (e.g. utilizing electronic communications media instead of hard copy, registering for events on-line instead of by snail-mail, etc), GAEL is still in the information business. Timely, accurate, and dependable information, essential in order for the modern educational leader to do the best job possible.

Sometimes I wonder, however, if GAEL is taken for granted by its membership. GAEL is always there, always carrying the torch for the common good, always representing educational leaders as decisions are made that impact their careers. It's easy then, to forget that the revenue to perform these tasks is generated primarily through membership dues. It's easy to forget to encourage others to join the Association so they may reap the benefits of membership. It's easy to assume that the work goes on without participation of the many instead of the few.

That's no longer the case. We have a new generation of educational leaders in Georgia who may not know about the benefits of being a GAEL member. They may not know who is standing in the legislative, state board, and other agency halls representing them when educational decisions are made. They may not know where to go to network with others who have similar problems and issues with which they are dealing.

It's the job of the membership to tell them.

I urge you to make a special effort to recruit members from your school district and others you may know in other districts to join your professional organization. To keep up the good fight, we've got to have the associational resources to do it. Each member can do her/his part – send a potential member to [http://www.ciclt.net/sn/events/e\\_signup.aspx?ClientCode=gael&E\\_ID=1347](http://www.ciclt.net/sn/events/e_signup.aspx?ClientCode=gael&E_ID=1347) today. Our profession will be stronger if you do. ◆

## GAEL Winter Conference Overview

Plan now to attend the upcoming 2008 GAEL Winter Conference to be held in Atlanta on February 3-5 at the Renaissance Waverly Hotel. The Conference theme "Transitioning Public Education" features general session and special interest presentations that will support educational improvement efforts going on in schools all across the state.

For example, Tom Clark and Karen Mort will share transition initiatives found to be successful in their native England, which is a leader in transforming schools leading to student success. Internationally known author and consultant Carl Glickman provides insight into successful school improvement efforts both in Georgia and across the nation. Sam Harben and Phil Hartley bring unsurpassed knowledge and insight to legal issues facing educational leaders. Also, a wide range of special interest sessions on cutting edge educational issues are scheduled.

Register now by going to [www.gael.org](http://www.gael.org) or by completing and returning the form found in this Newsletter.

You will be glad you did! ◆

The Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL) is a non profit organization that provides unity of educational leadership groups in Georgia, bringing together the Georgia Association of Middle School Principals, Georgia Association of Elementary Principals, Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals, Georgia Association of Curriculum and Instructional Supervisors, Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education, and Georgia School Superintendents Association on issues of common interest. The GAEL Newsletter is published during the school year as an informational service to members. Articles do not necessarily reflect the positions or views of GAEL; products/services/resources mentioned do not imply endorsement by GAEL. GAEL Board of Directors: President: **Dr. Larry Johnson**, principal, County Line Elementary; President elect: **Dr. Suzi Bonifay**, assistant superintendent, Decatur Co.; Past president: **Dr. Bob Heaberlin**, Principal, Lee Middle; Treasurer: **Jan Schrum**, director, Coastal GLRS.; **Dr. Jim Arnold**, principal, Shaw High; **Dr. Richard Bazemore**, principal, T. G. Scott Elementary; **Stuart Bennett**, chief deputy state

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# General Assembly Report

## 2008 Legislative Session:

The 2008 session of the Georgia General Assembly begins on Monday, January 14. While a significant number of education bills will be carried over from last year, it is expected that the following topics will generate much discussion:

*Tax reform*—replacement of the property tax with a sales tax for support of public education will be debated early in the session. While several bills are pending in this area, HR 900 is the most prominent. Sales taxes would be collected by the state and sent back to local school districts by a still to be determined formula. School districts would be prohibited from levying property taxes to provide enhancements such as local salary supplements, etc.

*Charter schools*—bills to expand the authorization of charter schools to entities beyond local boards of education (city and county commissions, universities, RESAs, and other organizations) are being fine tuned. While control of these charters would be beyond local school boards, financial support would still be the local school board's responsibility. In addition, a new state bureaucracy would be created to approve such charters, not the State Board of Education.

*Student discipline*—2008 is an election year. It's always popular to introduce legislation dealing with student discipline, even though funding for alternative programs, etc. never seems to be available.

*Testing*—the amount and cost of testing students has been on the minds of legislators in the past several years. This year, one issue to be debated is the expansion of secondary end of course tests vs. the use of the current Georgia High School Graduation exam.

## SB 10 Update:

Five percent of the state's special education students eligible for private school vouchers are using them this school year, according to the Georgia Department of Education. There are 199,509 students with disabilities - ranging from dyslexia to severe learning disabilities - enrolled in public schools statewide, and 899 received vouchers to attend private schools. This school year, 117 private schools across the state accepted the vouchers.

GAEL will again this year be monitoring and reporting on activities of the General Assembly. Go to [www.gael.org](http://www.gael.org) for daily reports and analysis. ◆

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## GAEL Needs You...

Increasing the membership of GAEL is essential if the association is to truly represent educational leaders before state decision-makers. If you are not a member, please join today. If you are already a member, please recruit a non-member colleague. ◆

## National, State and Local News

Gov. Sonny Perdue says the idea to hire high school graduation coaches to prevent students from dropping out of school is working. This past school year the number of high school dropouts statewide was down 2,272 students from the previous school year, the governor said in a news release. Currently, 336 coaches are working in the state's high schools; the state's graduation rate is 72.3 percent.

According to a study released by the Southern Education Foundation, for the first time in 40 years, the majority of children in Georgia's public schools live in low-income households. The study tracked the number of students who qualify for the federal free- and reduced-price lunch program.

The South leads the nation in providing state-funded pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds, a new report from the Southern Regional Education Board says. Last year, nearly five out of eight 4-year-olds attending publicly funded pre-K in the U.S. were enrolled in programs in the 16 member states of the Atlanta-based education nonprofit. Five Southern states in the study enrolled 40 percent or more of their 4-year-olds in public pre-K programs last year: Oklahoma with 70 percent, Georgia with 51 percent, Florida with 47 percent, Texas with 44 percent and West Virginia with 40 percent. To view the report, go to [http://www.sreb.org/main/Goals/Publications/07E09\\_Ready\\_to\\_Start.pdf](http://www.sreb.org/main/Goals/Publications/07E09_Ready_to_Start.pdf)

Recently, the Georgia Supreme Court issued what appeared to be a sweeping decision that struck down residency restrictions for all 15,000 registered offenders, regardless of whether they owned or rented a home or lived in a place for free. In a follow up clarification, the Court narrowed the decision enormously. The clarification says the residency restriction does not apply to registered offenders who own property in proximity to schools and other places where children gather. ◆

## Jekyll Notes

Much has been reported in the media of late about improvement initiatives underway at Jekyll Island, home of the popular annual GAEL Summer Conference. To date, the following has occurred: (1) the Holiday Inn and Ramada have been demolished. Demolition of the Buccaneer is to be completed in December. Construction on replacement hotels is expected to be completed in 2009. (2) The Jekyll Island Authority has accepted a proposal from a developer to construct a new hotel and convention center in the general area of the current miniature golf course and Buccaneer Restaurant. Once that occurs, the existing Conference Center and shopping area will be replaced with a pedestrian friendly 'town center' including shops and restaurants. A completion date for these projects has not been announced and a lawsuit filed by another developer who bid on the project may delay the project. (3) the south beach area is to remain as is, with soccer fields and the 4-H Center. For updated information, go to <http://www.rediscoverjekyll.com/>

GAEL has been assured that the initiatives planned for Jekyll Island will not have a negative impact upon future GAEL Conferences. Adequate hotel space will be available, with some of the current properties undergoing renovation. Conference events will continue at the current Convention Center until the new facility is ready.

Bottom line, make your plans now to attend the 2008 GAEL Summer Conference at Jekyll Island on July 13-15. ◆

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superintendent, GA Department of Education; **Pat Blenke**, principal, Duluth High; **Emily Bolton**, assistant superintendent, Chattooga Co.; **Dr. Maria Bradley**, principal, Gladden Middle; **Winnette Bradley**, principal, Richmond Co. Evening School; **Lynn Clark**, principal, Funston Elementary; **Jerry Davis**, assistant superintendent, Coweta Co.; **Dr. Buster Evans**, deputy superintendent, Forsyth Co.; **Tracie Fleming**, principal, McIntosh High; **Dr. Steve Hankla**, vocational supervisor, Colquitt Co. High; **Ray Jordan**, superintendent, Turner Co.; **Becky Maddox**, principal, Huddleston Elementary; **Dr. Jack Parish**, superintendent, Henry Co.; **Keith Porter**, assistant superintendent, Dawson Co.; **Dr. Bettye Ray**, superintendent, Social Circle City; **JoAlice Ray**, director, student services, Rabun Co.; **Dr. Rhonda Rowland**, principal, Chatsworth Elementary; **Dr. Bonnie Seery**, director, special education, Thomas Co.; **Christi Teal**, director, special education, Douglas Co.; **Peggy West**, director, exceptional students, Muscogee Co.; **Dr. Willie Wiley**, assistant principal, Collins Elementary.

## Moving

**Roy Nichols** has been named superintendent of the Mobile, Alabama County Schools.

Henry County superintendent **Jack Parish** has announced his retirement, effective June 30.

**Debbie Gay** has joined the staff of the Georgia Department of Education as project manager in Exceptional Education.

Montgomery County superintendent **Dale Clark** has left that position.

Valdosta superintendent **Sam Allen** has announced his retirement, effective next year.

**Trudy Sower**, superintendent in Paulding, will be joining the staff of the Georgia School Boards Association in January.

Crisp County superintendent **Judy Bean** accepted a contract extension and has delayed her retirement.

Habersham County superintendent **Judy Forbes** has announced her retirement.

GSSA staffer **Alan White** is leaving the Association to take a position promoting economic development in Butts County.

Professional Standards Commission chief **F. D. Toth** is leaving the Commission to become interim president of Valdosta Tech. Floyd County superintendent **Kelly Henson** became secretary of the Commission on December 1.

**Holly Robinson** is commissioner of the Department of Early Care and Learning replacing Marsha Moore.

**Allan Gee** is principal of Centerville Elementary in Gwinnett, replacing the retiring Barbara Schmich.

In Valdosta, **Bill Cason** has been named superintendent, replacing the retiring Sam Allen.

**Larry Ragsdale** has been named superintendent in Paulding County. ◆

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## In Memory:

Athens/Clarke County educational leaders **Howard Stroud** and  **Homer T. Edwards, Sr.**

Long-time Gwinnett County educator, **Glenn C. Jones.** ◆

## Resources

The University of Georgia College of Education has established an Education Policy and Evaluation Center. The Center will “provide evaluation expertise to assess educational programs, assist policy makers and educators to expand knowledge of policy options, and disseminate research on education policy issues. [www.coe.uga.edu/epec](http://www.coe.uga.edu/epec) ◆

## Kudos

Savannah-Chatham County has been awarded the federal Small Learning Communities Grant, an award of approximately seven million dollars over a five year period for the redesign of high schools into small learning communities focused on career pathways. **Marcia Clanton** is Executive Director of Special Programs.

Elbert County associate superintendent **Janet Wiley** received the GACIS Distinguished Service Award. **Amy Fouse**, 6-12 coordinator of Language Arts in Houston County, received the Flanders Scholarship. GACIS past president **Mike Mattingly** was recognized for his service to the Association.

**Ron Saunders**, superintendent of Barrow County Schools received the 2007 Georgia School Public Relations Association Outstanding Service in Community Relations Award. Ron also was named GSSA Superintendent of the Year and will compete for the national title of Superintendent of the Year.

Ben Hill County schools ranked second in the nation in the medium enrollment category for the 2007 Digital School Board Survey. **John Key** is superintendent.

North Gwinnett High principal **John Green**, received the school district's "Excellence in Leadership" Award.

Forsyth County Schools was one of three districts nationally to be recognized as a NSBA Technology Salute District. **Paula Gault** is superintendent and **Bailey Mitchell** is director of technology.

GAESP Assistant Principal of the Year is **Mike Smith**, Sara Harp Minter Elementary, Fayette County. GAMSP Assistant Principal of the Year is **Shawn Carpenter**, Mossy Creek Middle, Houston County. GASSP Assistant Principal of the Year is **Al Darby**, Winder Barrow High, Barrow County. GASSP/AGSL Assistant Principal of the Year is **Lisa Fine**, McIntosh High, Fayette County. ◆

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## Ed Leaders In the News

**Beth Kieffer**, principal of Silver City Elementary School in Forsyth County, pictured in NAESP's 'Principal' magazine. Beth is Georgia's NAESP National Distinguished Principal.

Four Georgia public schools are featured in the article "What's Right With Public Education?" in the December issue of Georgia Trend magazine. Kudos to **Vicky Addison**, principal of Davidson Fine Arts Magnet School in Richmond County, **Bill Moon**, principal of International Community School in DeKalb County, **Eddie Pollard**, principal of Tyrone Elementary School in Fayette County, and **Kip McLeod**, principal of Hahira Middle School in Lowndes County.

(Been in the news? Send clippings or announcements to GAEL!) ◆

## Did You Know?

According to published reports, the percentage of lottery ticket sales transferred to the state treasury has dropped nearly every year since 1998. State law requires 35 percent of lottery proceeds go to education. Thirty-three percent of net proceeds was sent to the education fund nine years ago. Last year, 26.8 percent was placed into the account. State law also specifies that about 45 percent of ticket sales can be spent on prize money. Last year, 62 percent went to payouts. ◆

## Numbers

**75,429** The number of retirees currently receiving TRS benefits. (Source: TRS)

**\$2,728** The average monthly payment to TRS retirees. (Source: TRS)

**\$55,197,102,031** The amount held in trust for TRS pension benefits. (Source: TRS) ◆

**2008 GAEL Winter Conference**  
**February 3-5**  
**Renaissance Waverly Hotel, Atlanta**

**Don't Miss this Amazing Agenda of Speakers!**



**Tom Clark** is an Associate Director of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust which creates international innovative networks (iNet) of schools to support change leading to improved student performance. As principal, his school showed continuous examination improvement for 13 consecutive years and achieved 'best-ever results' for 17 out of 21 years making it a nationally high-achieving school. He is also an executive director of the Foundation and Aided Schools National Association in the United Kingdom which promotes school autonomy, self-governance and local management in the UK, innovations being promoted in Georgia by Superintendent Kathy Cox.



**Dr. Carl Glickman** is "Scholar-in-Residence" in the Educational Administration and Policy Program at The University of Georgia. His career has been centered at the University of Georgia where he was founder and chair of the Georgia League of Professional Schools; a nationally validated network of K to 12 schools devoted to democratic learning of all students. In addition, he has worked internationally on school improvement efforts with schools in Europe, the Mid-East, Asia, and Africa. Carl is the author of thirteen books on school leadership, educational renewal, and the moral imperative of education.



**Sam Harben and Phil Hartley** are partners in the law firm Harben and Hartley. The firm limits its practice exclusively to the representation of public educational entities in the state of Georgia and presently represents over 100 public school districts throughout the state. The firm also serves as general counsel to the Georgia School Boards Association and as an advisor to the Georgia School Superintendents Association and Georgia Association of Educational Leaders.



**Karen E. Mort** is 'headship' of Hipperholme and Lightcliff High School in Halifax, West Yorkshire England. Participation as a member of iNet, along with implementation of cooperative learning strategies and inclusion of students in planning for improvement, is credited with helping make the school a "High Performing Specialist School". Lessons learned by this educational leader – empowering faculty, developing leadership within the school, investing in student leadership, raising standards, implementing site based decision making, effecting change in the school climate – are part of the success story to be shared with Georgia educational leaders.



**Kathy Cox** is the State Superintendent of Schools for Georgia. Under the State Superintendent of Schools, the Georgia Department of Education functions as a service-oriented and policy-driven agency that meets the needs of local school systems as they prepare all students for college or a career in a safe and drug-free environment where we ensure that no child is left behind.

**For Registration and Information *Click Here***  
**or Visit the GAEL website at *www.gael.org***

# GAEL WINTER CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

February 3-5, 2008 -- Renaissance Waverly Hotel, Atlanta

◀ Conference Registration deadline is January 25, 2008 ▶

If you prefer, you can register on-line at [www.gael.org](http://www.gael.org) and SAVE \$20.00!!

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Please PRINT as you wish your name to appear on name badge.

System \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ E M S

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**E mail address Required** \_\_\_\_\_

Please print

### Check one Registration Option:

- MEMBER REGISTRATION** [Current 07-08\* GAEL Member and one of the following Affiliate Associations:  
GACIS, GAESP, GAMSP, GASSP, G-CASE, GSSA] \$245.00  
(includes Conference materials, refreshments, and Monday EXPO box lunch)

\* Not sure you are a GAEL Member? Go to [www.gael.org](http://www.gael.org), click on "GAEL," and then "all members by name."

- NON MEMBER REGISTRATION** [GAEL/Affiliate Non Member Registration (Includes Complimentary membership in GAEL and one Affiliate through June 30, 2008)] Check one affiliation:
- |                                     |          |   |          |
|-------------------------------------|----------|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> GAEL/GACIS | \$360.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> GAEL/GASSP     | \$360.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GAEL/GAESP | \$360.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> GAEL/GSSA**    | \$385.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GAEL/GAMSP | \$360.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> GAEL/G-CASE*** | \$335.00 |

- REGISTRATION GAEL Non Member BUT 07-08\* Member of one of the following Affiliate Associations:  
GACIS, GAESP, GAMSP, GASSP, G-CASE, GSSA (non-superintendent)**

(Includes Complimentary membership in GAEL through June 30, 2008) Check one affiliation:

- |                                     |          |   |          |
|-------------------------------------|----------|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> GAEL/GACIS | \$310.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> GAEL/GASSP     | \$310.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GAEL/GAESP | \$310.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> GAEL/GSSA**    | \$310.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GAEL/GAMSP | \$310.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> GAEL/G-CASE*** | \$310.00 |

\*\* Additional fees to be assessed by GSSA at a later date.

\*\*\* Additional fees including CEC and CASE assessed at a later date.

- If you wish to participate in additional Affiliates, please circle here and enclose additional amounts:  
GACIS \$50; GAESP \$50; GAMSP \$50; GASSP \$50; GSSA (non supts.) \$75; G-CASE \$25 \_\_\_\_\_

- Additional **MONDAY BOX LUNCH TICKET** (one ticket included in Registration fees) No. \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$28.00 each \_\_\_\_\_

### PAYMENT OPTIONS

TOTAL REMITTANCE \$ \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK # \_\_\_\_\_ Purchase Order # \_\_\_\_\_

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Credit Card – please circle your credit card type

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Please make checks payable to GAEL and mail to:

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Flowery Branch, GA 30542

Phone 770-967-2050 • Fax 770-967-2021

Faxed in registration forms without purchase order or credit card information will not be accepted.

**THIS IS YOUR INVOICE.** PLEASE PAY FROM THIS FORM. PLEASE FORWARD A COPY OF THIS REGISTRATION FORM TO THE APPROPRIATE OFFICE FOR PAYMENT. ADDITIONAL INVOICES WILL NOT BE SENT.

**LODGING INFO:** Contact the Renaissance Waverly Hotel – 770-953-4500 by January 2, 2008.

Conference agenda will be posted at the GAEL Website – [www.gael.org](http://www.gael.org).

**CANCELLATION REFUNDS:** In general, any registered Conference participant will receive a full refund if they cancel more than 5 working days before the event (minus a \$35.00 handling/processing fee.) Due to the commitment to the facility, advanced preparation of materials, and food vendor, participants that cancel less than 5 working days (for whatever reason) or do not attend, will be billed the full fee.

If you have questions or need additional information,  
please contact Alan Fisher, [afisher@gael.org](mailto:afisher@gael.org) or Martha White, [mwhite@gael.org](mailto:mwhite@gael.org) or call 770-967-2050, fax 770-967-2021.