

The Georgia Communicator

GAESP

Spring 2008



Georgia Association of Elementary School Principals

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Hats Off To “You” The Principal



Hal Beaver
GAESP Executive
Director

You hold in your hands the “Communicator,” a great way to communicate I may add, no pun intended. As I travel the state and visit your schools, I see how you “operate” and how you demonstrate your leadership skills. You are all to be commended!

Albert Schweitzer once said “Example is not the main thing influencing others; it is the only thing.” Principals, thanks to all of you for inspiring me and others during 2007-2008.

As we reflect on next year and prepare to “orchestrate” success in our schools we must understand that we are the conductor. As the conductor, we must frame changes, face challenges, and form connections that create quality schools. There is no shortage of changes and challenges in our Georgia schools today.

- We know change is ever present and always necessary. “Everything changes but change itself.” (John F. Kennedy)
- We know that challenges are what we face everyday. “Life is a challenge. Meet it.” (Mother Teresa)
- We know that connections are the way we move forward. “It is easy to get the players. Getting them to play together, that is the hard part.” (Casey Stengel)

Putting you, the “conductor,” in charge of the three “C’s” – Change, Challenges, Connection – is an art. You are the artist.

So, as we move into the late spring and summer, seize every opportunity to make the connections, changes, and challenges become an opportunity.

Continue to find ways to make the connection with our students, our parents, our staff, our communities, and our colleagues. The more we make these connections, the clearer the changes and challenges become and the better our schools will be.

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A Message From Your President



Lynn K. Clark
GAESP President

The joys of being an elementary principal! Hmm...just how many surprises will fit into a day? I'd venture to say that elementary principals would win any award offered for being able to handle unexpected surprises and still maintain composure. A typical morning may include talking with teachers who love to visit during the early moments of the day, doing bus duty, joining in on breakfast duty, encouraging some special youngsters in the hallway each day, doing morning announcements, coaxing a little one who just needs "the talk", answering a PTO question, fielding construction questions, settling an upset parent, dealing with a bus referral, cleaning up a little "throw-up" situation, finding someone to cover duty for an absent staff member, signing checks, and the list could just go on. That's not to mention the daily business of running a school, making classroom visits, doing staff evaluations, analyzing data, checking and responding to mail and e-mail, and more. Our team of elementary principals needs a huge pat on the back, a long round of applause, and an extended standing ovation. Thank you for the wonderful job you do each day to help Georgia's students

lead the nation in improving student achievement.

In addition to the various jobs of an elementary school administrator, we all have recently completed the testing season in Georgia. Thank you for taking an extra moment to calm the fears of your teachers, students, and parents. Thanks also for being such diligent task masters in preparing, distributing, monitoring, and verifying all aspects of the testing process. My prayer is that the efforts of all will be noted with outstanding test scores. Let us analyze our strengths and weaknesses carefully and make wise instructional decisions as we plan for the upcoming year. As Oliver Wendell Holmes states, "The greater thing in the world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are going." The responsibility of leading a school to excellence is phenomenal, but our great team of elementary principals in the state of Georgia is up to the task. Helen Keller sums it all up in one simple quote, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

May you have a blessed and peaceful ending to this 2007-08 school term. I look forward to seeing each of you at Summer GAEL this July.

From the NAESP Conference



Chip Messer,
NAESP Representative

This year's NAESP Conference was held in Nashville, Tenn. with attendance exceeding 3,500. Friday, April 4th gave many early attendees an opportunity to gain insight into the principalship by attending pre-convention workshops on Learning Communities, Teaching Children Different Ways, Redefining the Principalship, and Thriving as a Leader. Authors and consultants did a wonderful job with their presentations.

The Opening General Session provided a great beginning to the conference as Daniel Pink (Keynote Speaker) talked about the rise of right-brain thinking and what we can do to help our students learn the skills they will need in the future. Concurrent sessions included topics on "How Thinking Governs our Experience," "Rapid Response Achievement Practices," "Challenges of Change," and many other timely topics to assist principals in their daily work.

The NAESP is focusing on "Vision 2021.... Transformations in Leading, Learning, and Community." Gail Connelly, our new Executive Director, states that "the world is moving at a pace that stretches the mind and staggers the imagination." NAESP is working hard to keep pace with research and forces that affect the principal and classroom. In this effort, the association is reaching out to help and assist principals and school leaders to meet the challenges that will ensure that our students reach their full potential of development. As the next few years "promise to be exciting for principals and for the Association," the commitment of our members and state affiliates will be to become partners in enabling students to prepare for a rapidly changing world. We will need to stand and work together to educate all of the children of our Nation.

To conclude, we need to take this time to thank and congratulate Eddie Pollard (Zone 4 Director) for the wonderful job he did at the conference representing Georgia and all of the states of Zone 4. Eddie, we thank you for a job well done and for representing all of us.

News from the Gold Dome - April 2008



Julie Raschen
GAESP Legislative
Chair

The 2008 Legislative session can easily be characterized as a highly feared hurricane season that produced a little less than a thunderstorm or two. Most of the session was spent fiercely debating tax reform measures, school accountability, and vouchers; however, neither house could agree on most plans and as a result very little actually passed by the final day.

Upon the close of the legislative session, the bills which passed were sent to the Governor for final signature. Governor Perdue has 40 days in which to sign or veto the legislation after which time those bills will become law. The effective date for the legislation will be July 1, 2008.

The following is a summary of some the most highly debated education bills that were passed during this legislative session.

HB 1209: IE2 Legislation

This bill is based on a recommendation from the Governor's Education Finance Task Force. This legislation creates a "partnership" between the state and local boards in which systems contract with the State Board for increased flexibility from state laws, rules, and regulations in exchange for increased accountability and defined consequences.

HB 881: Charter School Commission

This bill creates the Georgia Charter Schools Commission that would be empowered to approve "commission charter schools." This bill mandates that charter schools created by the legislation will receive, in addition to all state and federal funds, the local portion of education funding.

SB 327: Retired Educators Return to Full Time Work with Retirement Benefits

This bill allows educators who retired at age sixty with at least ten years of service and veteran teachers who retired with thirty years of service, to return to work full time after one full calendar year and still draw retirement benefits.

HB 1133: Tax Credits for Student Scholarships to Non-Profit Organizations

This bill allows taxpayers to form non-profit student scholarship organizations and receive tax credits for donations to Georgia's private schools.

HB 1321: Addressing Alleged Inappropriate Behavior by Teacher or School Personnel

This bill addresses falsified reports of inappropriate behavior of educators toward students, establishes a complaint procedure, requires notice of the procedure in teacher and student handbooks, provides for statements to the media, and provides penalties for students who falsify reports.

HB 1300: Makeup School Days Canceled Due to Disaster, Emergency, Act of God, and Other Occurrences

This bill allows local school systems to decide whether to make up four or fewer days missed because of disaster or emergency, regardless of the day of the week systems planned to end the school year (currently school calendars must end on Friday for makeup day forgiveness).

SR 996: Authorizes Local Boards of Education to Use Tax Funds for Redevelopment Purposes

This proposed constitutional amendment will allow local school tax dollars to be part of TAD (Tax Allocation District) projects and will be on the November ballot for statewide vote. This proposed amendment is in direct response to the recent Supreme Court decision which reiterated that school tax funds can only be used for educational purposes and not on redevelopment purposes.

It is just as important to note some of the most highly debated bills that did not pass during this Legislative session. In many instances it was the power of our voices which helped to cease the momentum that appeared to be moving in both houses against public education during this session.

SB 458: Vouchers for Students in Non-Accredited Systems and Schools in Needs Improvement Status

This bill would have required systems and schools to be accredited with specific consequences (student vouchers) if accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is lost. It also provided vouchers for students in schools identified as "Needs Improvement" for 7 years or more.

SB 566: The Shape Bill

This bill mandated fitness exams twice annually in elementary and secondary schools, local schools teaching at least the minimum state PE curriculum, aggregate reporting of fitness data to the DOE (which will be made public), creation of a PE coordinator position at DOE, designation of "unhealthy schools or school systems," and recognition programs for "healthy schools or school systems."

Tax Reform Initiatives

Although tax reform initiatives were widely debated throughout the session both in the legislation and in the public, none of the bills including "The Great Plan" and the property tax amendment were passed.

In addition to the new legislation, the House and the Senate passed the 2009 Budget and sent it to Governor Perdue for final approval. Highlights from the 2009 Budget include:

- o 2.5% state salary increase for teachers, administrators, bus drivers, and state funded kindergarten paraprofessionals
- o \$100 "gift cards" for teachers and media specialists;
- o \$50 million to apply against the "temporary austerity cuts" that have appeared in every budget since 2003 (FY09 austerity cuts would remain approximately \$91 million).
- o \$10.7 million towards the \$30 million deficit for the equalization grant program
- o \$6,373,221 to serve 2,265 students through the state virtual charter school
- o \$5,656,726 in funding for school vouchers, the Georgia Special Needs Scholarship program
- o \$1,000,000 to provide 11 new Math Mentor positions

It appears that we have made it through the hurricane of the 2008 Legislative session with little storm damage but do not be too quick to put all precautionary measures aside. Although the General Assembly has gone home, we must wait to see what storms Governor Perdue's final actions will brew for public education in Georgia.

This information was taken from GSBA Capitol Watch Online and GAEL Reports from the Capitol.

GAESP Member “Serving” as Principal Advisor in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) *By Marilyn S. Taylor*

I must say that the job of Principal Advisor in the Madares Al Ghad (MAG) Program in the UAE has not been an easy task; however, it has been a wonderful and fulfilling experience just getting to know the people here and trying to understand and adapt to their culture. Educators profess that change is inevitable and difficult for most people. In many instances, it has been that way here. Other Principal Advisors and I have encountered many UAE principals who have embraced change; others have been reluctant to do so. This is predictable because with all change initiatives, there are late comers who have to be enticed to “get on board.”

Every initiative has barriers. One major barrier with the MAG Program has been our inability to communicate. Why? Because too few UAE principals speak and understand English, and most of us, Principal Advisors, speak no Arabic. It has been helpful that the MAG teams in my schools are bridging the communication gap. In both schools, team members have served as translators. This has allowed the school staffs and our teams “to get to know each other” and to dialogue about issues resulting in steady progress.

From August to November, respective school(s) developing pupils, gaining an understanding missions for their schools, get-parents, and sharing our personal Beginning in November, the prin-the Peers Assisted Leadership Ser-targeted areas (i.e. communica-for the UAE principals to consider taken from Standards 1, 2, and Communities—NAESP Standards and Be Able To Do. This book serves as the basis of our work in transforming the UAE principals from school managers to instructional leaders.



the principal advisors worked at their relationships with their UAE princi-of the principals’ beliefs, visions, and ting to know the staffs, students, and experiences as instructional leaders. cial advisors began participating in vices (PALS) training which outlined tion, code of conduct, PD, using data) for implementation. These areas are 3 from the book *Leading Learning for What Principals Should Know*

Additionally, the UAE principals began attending the Principals Certification Program in November. The principals are required to complete 8 modules which focus on instructional leadership. Each module is a 3-hour/week session for 6 weeks and 1 week for project presentations. As of this date, the UAE principals have completed Module 1 (Vision and Change Theory in UAE Schools) and Module 2 (Effective Use of Data). For Module 1, I assisted my principals in completing projects titled: “A Motivational Program to Increase Student Achievement” and “Differentiated Instruction” respectively. They were apprehensive about presenting their projects because of their limited English proficiency. However, I must say, that because of their commitment, conscientiousness, and persistency to achieve, they both did very well. Really, “My pride was showing.” For Module 2, they completed projects which focused on using data analysis to “Increase Parental Involvement” and “Meet the Needs of Diverse Learners.” I am fortunate to be working with two Arabian women who want to make and see “real” instructional changes in their schools.

Listed below are a few examples of the international best practices that we are engaging in at my schools in Ajman and Umm Al Quwain and throughout the other schools in the UAE:

- teacher providing professional development
- staff participating in book studies
- public display of aggregated data by teacher
- teachers developing student-centered activities
- teachers creating print rich and engaging classrooms (center areas, word walls, concept boards, every day counts area, number lines)
- principal implementing a teacher accountability system





- teachers instituting guided reading
- posting quality student work with commentary
- establishing norms
- developing budgets and maintaining ledgers
- communicating using weekly bulletins and parent newsletters
- differentiating instruction
- increasing parental involvement and engagement

I have made a special effort to participate and engage in the varied school activities (i.e. attending parent meetings, accompanying teachers and students on field trips, serving as a ceremonial judge, attending Ramadan and National Day Celebrations, weddings, etc.). Thus, my willingness to serve and to be of service has been welcomed and appreciated by staff members in both of my schools. Hence, signs of deepening relationships and trusts are becoming evident daily.

As we forge ahead in our quest to support the principals in bringing educational reform in the UAE on par with international standards and prevalent best practices, we must remain steadfast and mindful that it will take “working together to make things happen, and working together to make a difference” in delivering students with a quality education which will equip them with skills to utilize beyond high school in a global society.

A Day on Capitol Hill

Jeanie Miller, GAESP Federal Relations Coordinator, and Eddie Pollard, NAESP Zone 4 Director, recently attended the Federal Relations Conference in Washington, DC. As part of the conference, they spent a day on Capitol Hill meeting with our Georgia Congressmen or their legislative aides. They carried the following NAESP recommendations:

- Reauthorize the ESEA to provide resources and technical assistance to schools and reject the use of labels and sanctions based on high-stakes testing;
- Provide for the use of growth models in gauging student achievement, measuring the progress of the same students over time;
- Require that professional development opportunities be provided specifically for principals and provide funds dedicated solely to that purpose;
- Enact provisions calling for coordinated services to address the needs of the whole child;
- Fully fund the law and reserve public funds for public schools;
- Increase Title I grants to districts by at least \$2 billion, to serve more students at all levels;
- Reject any budget resolution that fails to provide a significant increase in federal education funds;
- Increase funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by at least \$2 billion, to move closer to full funding;
- Provide \$16 million for the School Leadership Program; and
- Reserve public funds for public education.



From left to right:
*U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson,
Jeanie Miller, and Eddie Pollard*

Mrs. Miller and Mr. Pollard urged Congress to include NAESP’s recommendations in the next version of the ESEA.

GAESP/NAESP Breaking New Ground PALS Mentoring Program

As the GAESP Executive Director, I have participated in the PALS Program and have mentored new principals all over the United States.

I want to compliment GAESP for being proactive to work on training “rookie principals.” A recent publication by the Southern Regional Education Board said that “too many leaders are left to ‘learn on the job.’” (Imagine your surgeon training that way.) A Georgia principal’s first opportunity to plan and implement school improvement is typically without much guidance from successful peers.

In an ever increasing accountability environment from the statehouse to the schoolhouse, this “sink or swim” approach to principal leadership development is not only counter productive but helps explain why school reform efforts often “sputter.”

Thirty Georgia elementary principals will have the opportunity to be trained by national mentor trainers with the nationally recognized PALS Program, during a 3-day training for mentors, this November. These thirty principals will be matched with rookies, called protégés, across the state. Imagine how powerful it would have been to have a knowledgeable, caring, supportive mentor during your first or second year as a principal. Most of us had a “buddy or friend” at best. Almost none of us truly had a mentor trained to help us discover solutions and utilize our strengths.

GAESP leaders have displayed the wisdom to invest in this PALS training program to be conducted prior to our November Fall Conference. Please be looking for registration information coming this summer. Remember only thirty principals will be allowed to register for this program.

OVERVIEW OF THE TRAINING CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The three day Leadership Immersion Institute (LII) is the opening event of the program. Participants explore the theoretical foundations of adult development, adult learning, and mentoring. Once grounded in these theoretical foundations, the participants learn various practical techniques and strategies of the mentoring relationship under the guidance of the LII training team. Technology training is also provided for on-line activities.

Upon completion of the LII, the National Principal Mentoring Certification Program (NPMCP) participants transition into the Mentors-In-Training internship component of the program. The internship component is a nine-month process of mentor-protégé engagement. The process begins with the Mentor in Training identifying and selecting a protégé who agrees to participate in the MIT program. Each month the mentor and protégé interact (electronically or in person) for a total of 72 contact hours. The 72 hours include your preparation time, phone calls, e-mails, etc. The mentor reports his or her work to the coach who has been assigned to his or her team of MITs. Electronic on-line chats or conference calls are also held monthly for discussions of the mentoring process, lessons learned, and recommendations. A final project is completed regarding the mentoring experience.

The Certification process is an application of the Leadership Immersion Institute skills and knowledge. (The three day On-site Leadership Immersion Institute must be completed prior to the Certification program.)

Professional Standards for Principal Mentors

NAESP/NSU National Principals Mentoring Certification Program



Educators are well aware of the growing shortage of qualified effective candidates for principal positions and the challenge of retaining highly experience principals in their field. In addition, federal and state legislative mandates are placing greater burdens of accountability on school principals and directing the introduction and use of mentors for principals. NAESP and NSU (Nova Southeastern University) are committed to promoting excellence in instructional leadership and management, as evidenced by the National Association of Elementary School Principals' NAESP Leading Learning Communities document and programmatic focus. The profession of principal-to-principal mentoring is evolving in response to these changes.

The goals of the NSU/NAESP National Mentoring Certification project are:

- 1) To create a core of experienced principals with the appropriate skills and tools to promote leadership consistent with Leading Learning Communities: What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do standards.
- 2) To create a model for instructional leadership mentor training which is consistent with professional standards and which addresses the specific needs of school principals and other administrators.

National Principals Mentoring Certification Program Standards

1. Traits and characteristics
To include experience, skills in communication (written/oral/technological), the capacity for effective listening, acceptance of multiple solutions to complex problems, clear vision.
2. Training in Mentoring skills in an approved program
3. Professional activity in the Field of Instructional Leadership
4. Code of ethics- To include a respect of confidentiality and promotion of integrity of the mentor-protégé relationship.
5. Completion of an objective self-assessment to determine mentoring skills.
6. Recognition of mentoring characteristics-To include the strengths and weaknesses of the protégé.
7. Objective assessment to determine protégé skill level
8. Foster a culture which promotes formal and informal mentoring relationships
9. Contribute to on-going assessment and refinement of mentoring programs through action research.

National Mentor Certification Criteria Summary:

1. Cohort groups of Mentors In Training work with a coach for nine to twelve months as they guide and nurture a protégé.
2. Monthly on-line discussions or conference calls are required
3. 72 Contact hours (include preparation time, e-mails, phone calls, face-to-face meetings, etc.)
4. Monthly reflections based on the NAESP Principal Standards
5. Final project that is the culmination of the Certification work.

Following the awarding of certification, NAESP involves mentors in a reunion at each NAESP Convention and Trade Show. Many certified mentors have developed programs for school districts, been hired as consultants, published articles, used the program in doctoral work, etc.

2008 Georgia National Distinguished Principals



Jeanie Miller,
National Distinguished
Principal

Congratulations to Jeanie Miller as the 2008 National Distinguished Principal!

Georgia Distinguished Principals

- District 1 - Todd Williford, Bulloch County Schools
- District 2 - Dr. Jeannie Johnson, Lee County Schools
- District 3 - Harold Sapp, Houston County Schools
- District 4 - Rachel Zeigler, DeKalb County Schools
- District 5 - Jimmy Zoll, Fulton County Schools
- District 6 - Jeanie Miller, Fayette County Schools
- District 7 - Angela Garrett, Dalton City Schools
- District 8 - Pam Colvin, Glynn County Schools
- District 9 - Dr. Merrienne Dyer, Gainesville City Schools
- District 10 - Bill George, Walton County Schools

“Life Lessons”



Rhonda Rowland,
GAESP President-
Elect

Although I intend to be around a long time with many lessons to learn, these are the ones I have mastered so far.

1. Wear comfortable shoes - When I first began my teaching career I wore high, three-inch heels to work everyday. How I did it, I still don't know, but I learned better. When I wear shoes that don't hurt my feet my disposition is bright. My whole outlook on life is positive. Simple truth, but a long time learning it.

2. Lipstick is the best makeup - If I were stranded and could only pick one form of makeup it would have to be lipstick. As a young woman I believed that mascara was most important. Now I know that lipstick lights up the whole face – eyes, cheeks and mouth. You know what I'm talking about don't you girls?

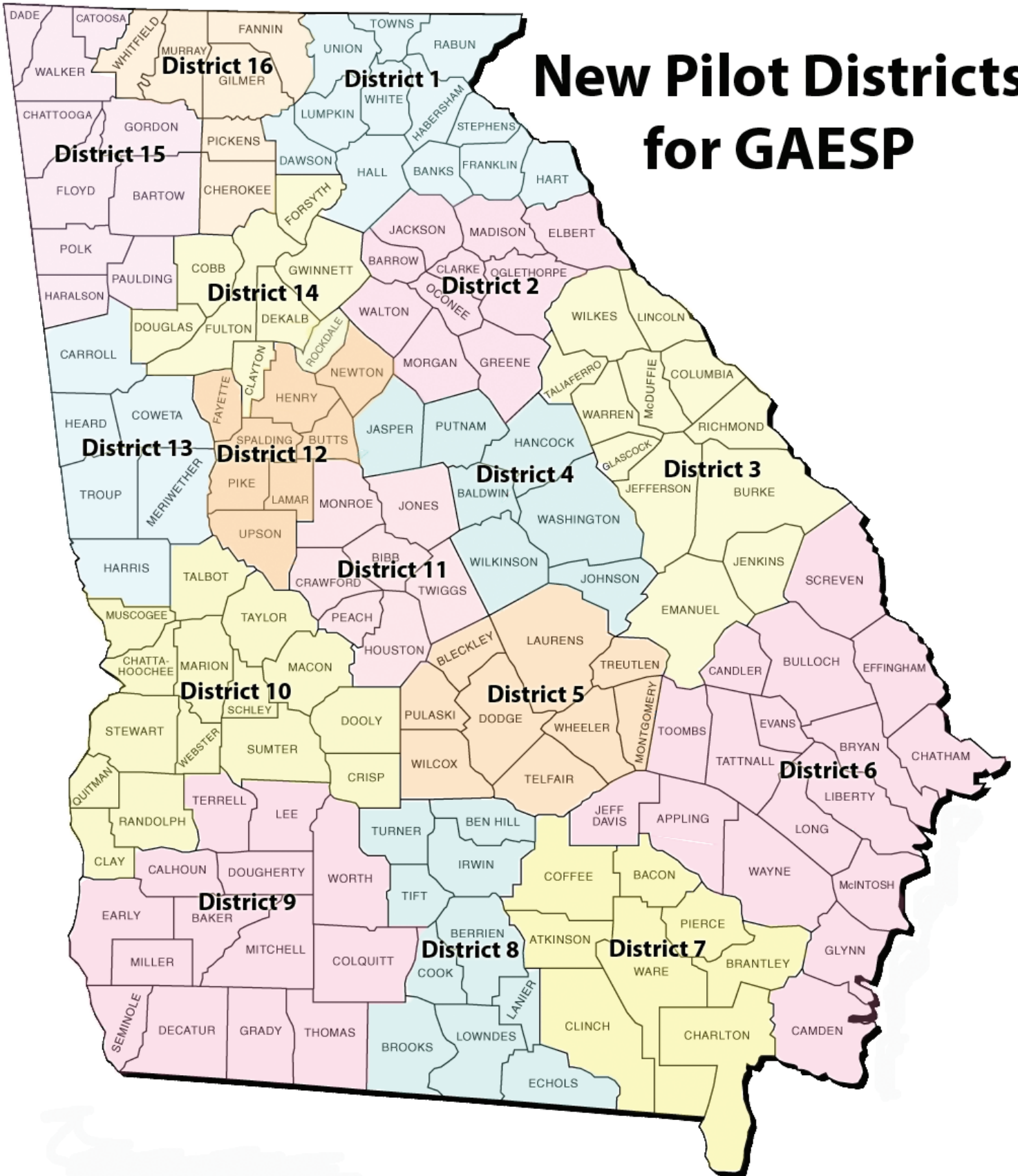
3. Grandchildren are the gift of age - Nothing recharged my life like the birth of my grandchildren. There is this magical kind of love that I feel for them – full of pleasure not the pressure of responsibility.

4. Work is a privilege – When I was 21 and getting out of college I couldn't imagine a lifetime of work. It seemed a punishment. As I count the years and add to my 401K, I can see retirement over the horizon. Now I can't envision life without work. The great joy of having a purpose and (hopefully) making a difference in children's future is a blessing not a chore.

5. God has a will and a plan for every life – There was a poem in college that I can't recall the name of which has the words “he also serves who only stands and waits.” Those words express that even the most sedate life is in the plan of the Almighty. Whether we see the purpose or not we are fulfilling a work by just being. If you wake up it is because God isn't finished with you yet.

6. Eat candy! – Don't miss out on the small pleasures of everyday. Stop resisting the sweet things and indulge a little. Candy makes us all feel better. Keep some in your purse or pocket. Share some and make new friends.

New Pilot Districts for GAESP



Upcoming Events

Renew Your Membership Now
On line membership renewal available

2008 GAEL Summer Conference
July 13-16 on Jekyll Island, Georgia

2008 GAESP Fall Conference
November 9-11 on St. Simons Island, Georgia

Go to www.gael.org for membership and conference information!

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