



# The Georgia Communicator

Conducting Georgia's Education



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## The Georgia Communicator

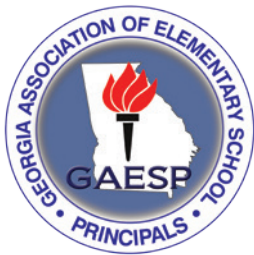
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[www.gael.org](http://www.gael.org)





It is that time of year? - Yes, that time again! —Taking time to be Thankful!! Giving from the heart!! What a wonderful reason to have holidays. This is and always will be my favorite time of the year and favorite “seasons”. My favorite part is when all of our family gets together and we eat, socialize, play golf, watch TV, eat again, nap, eat again, and just plain enjoy each other for a few days.

I am also thankful for our GAESP members and all they do for the children in Georgia. I am thankful for the nurturing, mentoring, and values that you instill, and for all the wonderful instructional programs that you have in progress in your school. When I visit your schools, I am extremely impressed with the “yes sirs” and “yes mams” from your students. All elementary principals should be thankful that you have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the children you serve.

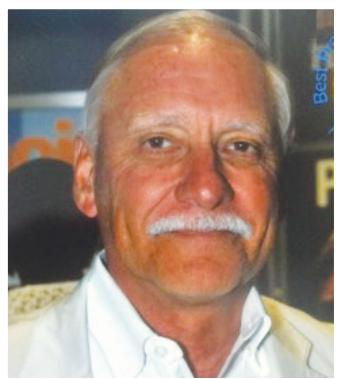
I am thankful for our Executive Board and Board of Directors, who give countless hours to volunteer for our organization. I am thankful to work for and with Dr. Jimmy Stokes and the GAEL staff, who help and support me and our GAESP organization.

On a lighter side, I am thankful for:

Georgia beating Auburn!  
The Atlanta Braves and their future success  
“Old Motown music” it has soul  
1/2 inch of snow equals 2 school holidays  
The Varsity, we all need grease  
My three children-they turned out well despite me  
My grand-daughter and grandsons they are beautiful  
“Old” church hymns-I know the words and don’t have to use my glasses  
The doctors at St. Joseph’s and Eggleston who fixed my heart and my grandson’s

But, I am especially thankful for all our elementary principals. Let us continue to network and support each other, we do make a difference. We encourage all our elementary principals to be a part of our wonderful organization.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you!



Bless you all,

*Hal Beaver*

GAESP Executive Director

Do you remember Aesop's fable about the mouse and the bull? In this story, a small mouse bit a bull on the nose and then slipped into a hole in a stone wall before the bull could react. The bull, now angry and annoyed, charged at the wall. He did this again and again without making any impression until he had worn himself out. Exhausted, he sat down. That's when the mouse darted out and bit the exhausted bull on the nose again. The bull could do nothing except fume with anger. "You big ones don't always win," squeaked the mouse from his hole. "Sometimes we little ones come off best."

When I think of the overwhelming job of the school principal, I understand how easy it can be to grow annoyed and frustrated with "little things" that occur during the day. We have so many demands on our time, resources and energy. We can have a list of things we plan to accomplish in a day, and then something happens to derail our plan. A parent complains about the lunchroom on Facebook, a grandfather vents at the grocery store about the new traffic flow in your parking lot, a teacher is passive aggressive in a PLC meeting...these kinds of things happen and will consume a leader's time if we allow them. Instead of focusing on our goals for the year, we often function as this bull did, reacting to small situations that occur. We can end up angry and frustrated.

At the GAESP fall conference in Savannah, our theme was "Finding Joy in the Journey." Despite Hurricane Matthew's recent visit to the area, our Executive Director Hal Beaver worked closely with Savannah officials to ensure everyone had a comfortable stay. The speakers were fantastic, and we had a great time laughing and learning together. It was truly one of the most memorable conferences ever. If you were not there, you missed a blessing. As we begin a new semester of learning and leading our schools, don't let anyone steal your joy. Remember why you chose this path, and don't let anyone or anything cause you to bang your head against a wall. Shake off those distractions and focus on what's important in your school and district. After many years as a competition cheerleading coach, I grew thick skin. I often joke that if I had to say what best prepared me for a school leadership position, it was coaching cheerleading. If you can manage cheerleaders and their parents, you can do anything!

This organization has been a great blessing to me over the years. From my days as a young assistant principal to my time as an elementary principal with a high school background, I have received invaluable support from the friends and mentors I met through GAESP. They have helped me find and implement new instructional strategies and programs, manage difficult personnel, and most of all helped me maintain a larger perspective on educational issues impacting our state. If you have not joined GAESP, let me encourage you to make this a part of your professional life. Happy New Year to each of you. Make it the best year yet!



Fondly,  
Amy

*Dr. Amy Duke is Principal of Northwest Laurens Elementary School in Dudley, GA and is President of the Georgia Association of Elementary School Principals. She was named National Distinguished Principal in 2013 by the United States Department of Education and the National Association of Elementary School Principals.*

# GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

## 2016-2017 Legislative Priorities

*GAESP strongly encourages the State to “fully” fund the K-12 funding formula.*

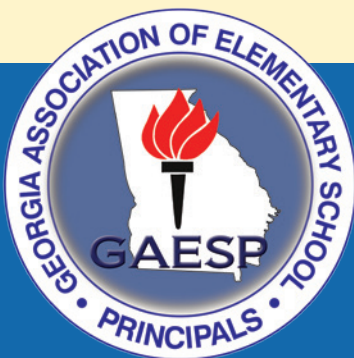
### Priority #1– Provide Adequate Funding

- ◆ Provide adequate funding for professional learning opportunities at the school and district level that are necessary for the implementation of new curriculum and state directives.
- ◆ Provide adequate funding to support Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESA's) as they are critical in providing professional learning.
- ◆ Provide appropriate funding to restore maximum class size to FY 2009 levels.



### Priority #2– Provide Appropriate Support

- ◆ Continue years of experience and degrees as a part of the comprehensive compensation model
- ◆ Reduce the burden of student learning objective assessments on local districts.
- ◆ Support the implementation of Georgia Standards of Excellence in all K-12 public schools.
- ◆ Provide for a full-time assistant principal and school counselor in every elementary school.
- ◆ Provide for elementary media and technology specialists and Art, Music, Physical Education teachers.



**G.A.E.S.P.**

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[http://www.gael.org/gael/advocacy\\_and\\_legislation](http://www.gael.org/gael/advocacy_and_legislation)

# How can we fix America's teacher shortage?

Cait Harrison



The U.S. is facing a shortage of teachers in its K-12 schools, and the situation doesn't seem to be improving much.

Teacher shortages across many districts became a hot topic in 2015, and [a new study](#) from the Learning Policy Institute details the causes of the shortage — primarily, teachers leaving the profession and fewer studying to become educators in the first place.

The study finds that between 2009 and 2014, teacher education program enrollments dropped from 691,000 to 451,000 — a 35 percent reduction.

Additionally, U.S. teachers are leaving the profession at high rates — hovering around 8 percent over the last 10 years. Compare that to other high-achieving regions like Finland, Singapore and Ontario, Canada, where attrition rates are 3 to 4 percent.

The teacher shortage first began about six to eight years ago with the start of baby boomer retirements, said Anne Udall, executive vice president of program strategy at New Teacher Center (NTC), a nonprofit that aims to improve teacher effectiveness.

"That was one of the major factors that led to a teacher shortage, along with changing economics and changing opportunities for people coming into the workforce," Udall told MultiBriefs Exclusive.

More than 50 percent of teachers in high-need districts leave within five years, according to data compiled by NTC.

"People leave because they feel very overwhelmed; they don't feel supported by their administrators," Udall said. "The working conditions are very tough."

The Learning Policy Institute study agrees, finding that administrative support — or lack thereof — is the most common reason teachers decide to stay in or leave a school. Other factors affecting teachers' decisions to leave include professional learning opportunities, instructional leadership, time for collaboration and planning, colleague relationships and decision-making input.

Additionally, salaries may play a part in the decline, Udall said. She believes creating equity in education could help retain more teachers, and it starts with paying teachers better salaries.

"It's about priorities in our communities," she said. "If we can spend a lot of money building football stadiums, we should be able to afford working salaries for teachers."

And not all school districts are funded the same way. More than a quarter of states provide less money to schools with higher concentrations of students from low-income families, according to NTC. That gives higher-quality teachers incentive to work in wealthy districts, resulting in less prepared teachers in lower income districts, Udall said.

Another way to boost teacher retention rates? Give each new teacher a mentor or coach, Udall said. This is especially helpful for new teachers, since the learning curve can be steep from day one in the classroom.

"Teaching is one of the few professions I know of where you are supposed to be as good on your first day as you are on your last," she said. "The day-to-day management and expectations can be overwhelming."

NTC has implemented its own two-year mentoring program in districts in 38 states across the country.

Udall also recommends mapping clear career paths for teachers. For example, give educators options outside the classroom within their profession, whether that's becoming a mentor or curriculum specialist, or having some other form of mixed teaching options.

For now, though, the numbers still stand: 250,000 to 300,000 new teachers are needed in the U.S. every year, and we may not be able to overhaul the shortage right away, Udall said.

"If we continue to put the kind of attention on it that it needs, we will continue to improve," she said. "We need to make sure once teachers are in, they stay in. That is a really important piece of the puzzle."

~MultiBriefs: Exclusive  
October 2016

## Obama Administration Releases Final Testing Regulations for ESSA

Alyson Klein

The U.S. Department of Education on Wednesday released final regulations and new guidance governing how testing is supposed to work under the Every Student Succeeds Act. It also announced \$8 million in grants to states to improve science tests.

If you've read through the proposal for assessments that a group of educators and advocates negotiated last spring, these final regulations will probably look very familiar to you. Like No Child Left Behind, ESSA requires states to test students every year, but provides a bit more flexibility for states to try out new kinds of tests or use a nationally recognized college entrance test at the high school level. The regulations flesh out these and other testing provisions of the law.

And the Obama administration also said that it is giving \$8 million to two state consortia—one led by the Maryland Department of Education and one led by the Nebraska Department of Education. Both groups will be working on improving and developing science tests.

The Maryland-led consortium—which includes Missouri, New York, New Jersey, and Oklahoma—will be working on new tests aligned the Next Generation Science Standards, which have been adopted by more than a dozen states. The consortium led by Nebraska includes Montana and Wyoming and aims to improve the quality of statewide science exams.

The release of the grant, the regulations, and the guidance is timed to coincide with a summit at the White House highlighting the Obama administration's efforts to improve assessments and reduce testing. That's been a focus of the administration's K-12 work at the end of the president's second term. You can watch a webcast of the summit starting at 9 a.m.

President Barack Obama's thinking on testing has gone through twists and turns through his eight years in office. The administration initially enticed states to tie teacher evaluations to test scores through the \$4 billion Race to the Top program and later through waivers from the No Child Left Behind Act.

But, last year, the president acknowledged that there was too much testing in schools, and put together a "testing action plan" to address the problem. The White House says these new testing regulations build on that plan, but there isn't much in them to cut back on assessments that aren't in the underlying law.

What's more, it's unclear if the incoming Trump administration will keep these regulations on the books, decide to hit the pause button on them, or not go out of their way to enforce them.

### So what is in these assessments regs? Here's a quick overview:

**Testing Regulations:** These govern sections of ESSA that include the option for school districts to choose a nationally recognized high school test (like the SAT) in lieu of the state test, along with sections dealing with tests for students in special education and English-language learners, and computer-adaptive tests. The regulations also laid out ground rules spelling out when 8th graders who are performing above grade level can take advanced math tests instead of the state exam.

The final regulations make a couple of changes to the proposed regs, which were crafted earlier this year by a cadre of advocates and educators through a process known as negotiated rulemaking. Two key changes to note, according to a White House fact sheet:

- The final regulations tweak the criteria for deciding when a state can get a waiver for exceeding the 1 percent statewide cap on the percentage of students who can be given alternate tests because they have severe cognitive disabilities. This cap and the waiver were the subject of intense discussion during the negotiated rulemaking
- The changes also clarify when Native American language tests can be used for accountability purposes.

**Innovative Assessment Regulations:** These govern the Innovative Assessment Pilot, which allows up to seven states to try out new kinds of tests—including performance-based tests—in a handful of districts before going statewide. Proposed regulations for the pilot released over the summer sought to clarify how states can prove these district tests are comparable to the state exam.

### The final regulations released Wednesday make several changes, including:

- Making it clear that an innovative test can include material above or below the tested grade level, as long it ultimately measures student performance based on grade-level expectations.
- Additional information about how a state can show that its innovative test results can be compared to the state exam
- Making it clear that not only do the innovative tests in a particular district need to be comparable to the state test, they also need to be comparable to the test results from other districts.

The guidance, which isn't legally binding, offers states tips for using federal funding to review the number and content of the tests they require, with an eye toward getting rid of low-quality or redundant tests.

~Education Week  
December 7, 2016

## GAESP Happenings



Andrea McGee celebrates recognition as Georgia's National Distinguished Elementary School Principal in Washington DC.

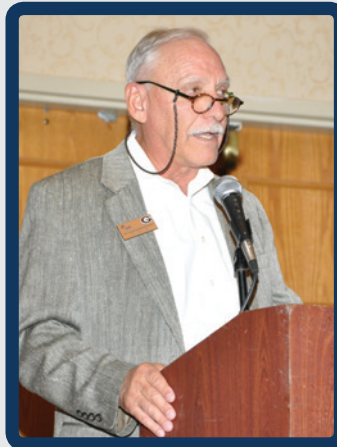
# GAESP Happenings



Fall  
Conference



# GAESP Happenings



## GAESP Happenings



# 7 Easy Ways

## to Improve School-Wide Communication

*Surprisingly simple ideas to improve communication, from informal teacher huddles to professional culture surveys.*

Folwell Dunbar

Like businesses and relationships, schools live and die (or pass and fail) by communication. So what can they do to make it better? The following are just a few things our school did to improve communication.

### 1. The Monday Memo

An endless barrage of emails, texts, handouts, and announcements can lead to a communication overdose. The message, scattered about, gets lost when there are too many outlets. The easiest remedy is to consolidate these communications in a single, consistent package. We called ours the Monday Memo. It contained operational nuts and bolts, calendar events and deadlines, observations and insights from the school leader and others, weekly goals (which were shared with students as well), and at least one professional article aligned with the school's mission and vision. The Monday Memo was like a Napoleonic bulletin—it kept the troops well-informed and on the path to victory.

Note: Whenever possible, add a little levity. A cartoon or humorous story usually does the trick. A Monday morning smile can often carry a teacher all the way over to hump day.

### 2. The Huddle

At big schools with lots of grades, teachers often work themselves into silos. Freeing them from these silos is a scheduling challenge, but one well worth taking up. A teacher of ours came up with a simple solution: The Huddle. (We actually called ours “The Herd” because our mascot was a yak.) Once a week for just 15 minutes, we would all gather (with refreshments, of course) to share team plans and to look for opportunities for collaboration across grade levels.

And just like a football huddle, we would break with a unified clap.

Note: This can be accomplished electronically, but being eyeball to eyeball makes a world of difference.

### 3. Tea With Teachers

Once a month, I would meet with parents in the morning to discuss anything and everything having to do with the school. I called it Donuts With Dunbar. (We served lots and lots of coffee as well.) One day a teacher came up to me and asked, “Why don’t you ever have donuts with us?”

“Y’all are always too busy in the morning,” I said.

“Then let’s do refreshments in the afternoon,” she said. And thus Tea With Teachers, or TWT, was born. Unlike most faculty meetings, TWT was voluntary and the agenda was set by the participants. There were no time limits nor goals—only open, honest, real discussion.

### 4. Shout-Outs

There are a number of ways to acknowledge and celebrate best practices and excellence in schools. One of the best and easiest is the humble shout-out. Throughout the week, faculty and staff would submit nominations for academic, artistic, and cultural achievement. Every Friday, we would recognize those students, teachers, and community members who had gone above and beyond the call of duty. We would also note progress toward weekly and annual goals. It was a way of keeping all eyes firmly on the prize.

### 5. Art Jams

During the school day, it’s almost impossible to think creatively. Grading papers and juggling deadlines doesn’t exactly foster creative thinking. Yet such thinking is more important today than ever. So how and when do you generate new, innovative ideas? For us, it took place after school and off campus, surrounded by art and with plenty of adult beverages. Being an arts-integrated school, we called it an Art Jam. It was a time to brainstorm crazy ideas—ideas that might just lead to improved teaching and learning.

### 6. Social Media

A board member once asked me why I managed the school’s Facebook page. “Don’t you have more important things to do?” she asked.

“Believe it or not,” I said, “Facebook is one of the most important things I do.”

The principal is the vision keeper for a school. That vision has to be shared with all stakeholders. Social media—Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.—is one of the best ways to accomplish this. Use it to promote instructional best practices, to celebrate excellence, and to recognize all of the things that make your school unique.

### 7. Professional Culture Surveys

So with all of this improved communication, how do you know if it’s working? As with student achievement, there has to be an end goal or measure for success. At our school, we developed a professional culture survey and gave it out three times a year. It was anonymous, and the perception data was shared with the entire faculty and staff. We used the results to, among other things, further improve communication.

When it comes to communication in schools, less is not more, and more is not necessarily better. It needs to be systematic, intentional, and transparent.

*~Edutopia  
November 2016*

**2016 GEORGIA'S  
NATIONAL  
DISTINGUISHED  
PRINCIPAL**



**Dr. Andrea McGee**

**2016 GEORGIA'S DISTINGUISHED PRINCIPALS**



**Ty Snyder**



**Karen Carl**



**2016 GEORGIA'S  
NATIONAL  
DISTINGUISHED  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**

**Rachel Wasserman**

### *MEMBERSHIP MATTERS*

There are over 2,000 elementary administrators in Georgia. That is a large group! Approximately 600 are members of our state association. This means that the majority have not taken the opportunity to join GAESP! The Georgia Association of Elementary School Principals commits itself to help meet responsibilities through our professional organization.

Please share with your colleagues these very valid reasons to join GAEL and GAESP:

1. **Professional Development**-Affording opportunities for principals and educational leaders to improve and enhance their leadership skills.
2. **Recognition of Accomplishments**-Focusing attention on outstanding leaders and outstanding schools, including the Georgia Distinguished Principals, National Distinguished Principal, Outstanding Assistant Principal, Business Partners, Scholarships, and School Program Recognitions.
3. **Networking and Sharing Ideas**-Featuring annual conference with breakout sessions, informative workshops, updated school law information, and exhibitors of high quality educational resources.
4. **Strength in Numbers**-GAESP and the other GAEL affiliates are becoming “major players” in watching and shaping newly introduced legislation, bills.
5. **Educational Resources**-Providing access to many educational websites and instructional proven materials, as well as communicating current and upcoming conferences and workshops.
6. **A Voice in Atlanta and Washington**-Keeping principals and school administrators informed of federal and state developments and advocating on behalf of children.

*Please visit GAESP at [www.gael.org](http://www.gael.org) and remember,  
informed school leaders make informed decisions!*



Georgia Association of Elementary School Principals  
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## GAESP Districts Map

### Executive Board

President	Amy Duke	Principal
President -Elect	Donna Bishop	Principal
Past-President	Richard Bazemore	Principal
Tres.	Rick Little	Principal
Sect.	Shawn	Williams Principal
GAEL-Rep.	Richard	Bazemore Principal
NAESP/State Leaders	Kim Halstead	Principal
Awards	Julia Mashburn	Principal
RESA	Leigh Ann Putman	Ex. Director
Federal Relations	Kim Halstead	Principal
Newsletter	Julie Raschen	Dir. Of Assessment
At-Large/IT/New	Katie Johnson	Principal

### Board of Directors

District 1	Cindy Kinney	Principal
District 2	Anissa Johnson	Principal
District 3	Leeann Fleischauer	Principal
District 4	Bonnie Green	Principal
District 5	Quent Floyd	Principal
District 6	Carter Akins	Principal
District 6	Brittany Mobley	Principal
District 7	Sonya Bennett	Dir. of St. Achivement
District 8	Richard Fisher	Principal
District 9	Trina Muse	Principal
District 10	Lisa Whitaker	Principal
District 11	Elgin Mayfield	Principal
District 12	Hedi Pfannenstiel	Principal
District 13	Christi Hildabrand	Principal
District 14	Amy Bartlett	Principal
District 14	Michael Forehand	Principal
District 14	Donna Bishop	Principal
District 15	Brandi Hurston	Principal
District 16	Nicole Holmes	Dir. Operations Cherokee
DOE	Pam Smith	Dir. Of Curr./Inst.

