

[View this email in your browser](#)

GEORGIA COUNCIL ON ECONOMIC EDUCATION

GCEE Newsletter - May 2022

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Here Comes the Sun

As the school year winds down, it's a good time to reflect on several positive things we've experienced during the last four and a half months. I'm thrilled to report the GCEE program team has served nearly 750 teachers since the beginning of 2022. Even better, 455 of those teachers attended in-person professional development workshops! Slowly, but surely, we're getting out into communities across the state to work with K-12 teachers from school systems large and small.



We also recently conducted our first in-person Econ Challenge competition in more than two years. Hats off to the teams from South Forsyth High and the Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology for taking home top honors in their respective divisions.

On the program development side of things, positives include the creation of new workshops and resources for 3rd, 6th, 7th, and 12th grade teachers and students. Each new offering addresses the need to continually update our approach to helping teachers teach economics and personal finance in creative and engaging ways.

We also just released "Earl and Starla Go to the Farm", our second economics-themed children's book, and are busy at work creating an entrepreneurship-

themed online game that will debut in August.

We look forward to a summer filled with numerous program offerings and to the start of the 2022-2023 school year. GCEE Associate Director Chris Cannon and GCEE Program Manager Angie Battle are busy working on several exciting programs and resources they will be delivering soon.

Finally, everyone at the Georgia Council would like to congratulate all K-12 teachers in Georgia for making it through another year, and for the tireless efforts they put in during these incredibly challenging times.

Happy summer break to one and all!

- *Mike Raymer*

2022 GEORGIA ECONOMICS TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Misha Thompson: Proving It's Never Too Early To Learn Economics

As a Zoology major at Auburn University, Misha Thompson planned to go into the medical field. But when a friend urged her to take an educational psychology course, everything changed. "That's when my love affair with education began," she says.



She immediately changed her major to education and decided to become an elementary school teacher. After teaching first grade for several years, she earned her gifted certification. Now in her 27th year, she currently teaches third to fifth grade gifted students at Mt. Zion Elementary in Clayton County, where she's been since 2013.

Beyond teaching the standards, Thompson believes in infusing economics into her lessons whenever she can.

"Teaching economics at an early age gives them power as a consumer," she says. "I want them to be productive citizens working as part of the economy."

For her fourth and fifth graders, she uses an entrepreneur-themed unit where they create a business, earn a grant to fund the business (she serves as the “grant master”), develop a business plan and create a replica of their business front. At the end of the unit, students pitch their product and service ideas during a Business Expo.

“They learn a lot of math, higher order thinking and the risks and choices involved in starting a business,” says Thompson.

Her fourth and fifth graders also play the Stock Market Game, which she calls a “tool of empowerment.”

In a unit on topography, Thompson’s third graders plan a road trip “driving” from east to west. They have to create a budget and a daily expense sheet that factors in the cost of a rental car, gas and meals.

In coming up with creative ways to teach, Thompson tries to keep it fun for both herself and her students. “I want them to learn without realizing they are learning,” she says.

She also depends on Georgia Council workshops for new ideas. “They give you all the tools you need to apply the lesson the very next day,” she says. “The workshops enlighten me to resources and new places.”

After nearly three decades of teaching, Thompson still values the relationships she has with her students. “They are like my own children,” she says. “My former students still keep in touch and check in with me. You can’t pay for that – it’s an amazing connection.”

2022 GEORGIA ECONOMICS TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Jay Travis: Finding Creative Ways to Teach Economics

Because his mother is a teacher, Jay Travis figured he might follow in her footsteps. But it was his high school social studies teacher who really “sealed the deal” for him. “He used games and simulations in his class to make it fun and help us learn,” remembers Travis. “I decided that was the kind of teacher I wanted to



be.”

For the last 21 years as a social studies teacher, Travis has made it his goal to make every lesson he teaches fun, interactive and engaging to help students understand and connect with the concepts.

He currently teaches Economics, AP Macroeconomics, AP U.S. Government and AP Research Methods at Luella High School in Henry County.

In his economics classes, he has designed themed units around Star Wars to demonstrate how supply and demand shapes a market, a “Fast and Furious” FOREX game in which students buy and sell cars with different currencies to understand the dynamics of currency fluctuations, a game where students build products with Legos that represent the factors of production, and many others. As a result, students look forward to coming into his classroom to learn.

His efforts have paid off. Since coming to Luella High School in 2016, students’ end-of-course-test and AP test scores have significantly improved, and in 2021, a team he led placed first in the Georgia Personal Finance Challenge.

While he comes up with many creative ideas on his own, Travis has also depended upon to GCEE for help. “I always come back with so much helpful material,” he says, “so I try to attend every GCEE workshop I can.”

To Travis the most rewarding thing about teaching is knowing that his students are able to use what they learn to make good decisions and make the world a better place.

“I teach mostly seniors, so the focus of my teaching is preparing for life beyond high school. We still make it fun, but they are acutely aware that they will be responsible for their own finances and that money management will have a real impact on their well-being. It’s so important for them to learn those skills.”

PROGRAM OF EXCELLENCE

Coweta County Schools: Setting Students Up for Success

Phil Sykes, Social Studies Content Specialist for Coweta County School System, often gets emails from teachers immediately after they've attended a GCEE workshop, thanking him for the opportunity and asking him when the next one will be.



“GCEE teaches teachers how to teach economics in fun and creative ways,” says Sykes. “They receive resources and lesson plans to use in their classrooms the next day. That is so powerful.”

Sykes, who was a middle school social studies teacher for six years, used to attend GCEE workshops and knows firsthand the benefits they provide to teachers. That’s why he is always eager to direct teachers to the Council’s workshops and programs. In the past few years, the school system has hosted 15 GCEE workshops. Students play the Stock Market Game and elementary students have competed in the Econ Games (for fourth and fifth graders). High School Economics teacher Rachael Boyd was a 2022 Georgia Economics Georgia Teacher of the Year Finalist.

“We appreciate the support Coweta County has given us over the years and their teachers are always eager learners who often reach out after workshops and events to share GCEE's impact on their classroom,” says GCEE Program Manager Angie Battle.

Sykes says elementary teachers enjoy the workshops that include literacy and are so grateful they receive the books used in the workshop to use in their classrooms. “They feel like they have won the lottery” says Sykes. “Anytime literacy can be used with social studies, it’s very popular.”

His teachers also appreciate the site visits GCEE sponsors, such as trips to the Kia Plant in West Point and Pinewood Studios (now Trilith Studios) in Fayetteville. “These visits give teachers the opportunity to bring bits and pieces of the community into the classroom. It’s a beneficial thing for them to see and share with their students.”

Sykes says Coweta’s commitment to economic education is part of the system’s overall mission. “The mission of the district is to empower students for success,” says Sykes. “If we don’t do a good job explaining how the economy works, they are not going to be successful. They have to make choices, and choices have a cost. By

providing students with a solid understanding of how things work, they can make good, responsible choices themselves. If not, then they can't sustain themselves in a world driven by choices and money management.”

WILLIAM J. VANLANDINGHAM COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION AWARD

Georgia Partnership on Excellence in Education

Barriers to education. Equal access to educational tools and resources. School culture. Workforce readiness. These are just a few of the key educational issues facing the state that the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (Partnership) has identified and communicated to state leaders.

It is for this commitment to education that the Georgia Council honored the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education with its 2022 VanLandingham Commitment to Education award.

“By working to increase student achievement and workforce development, the Georgia Partnership has made Georgia a better place to live, work, and prosper,” say Mike Raymer, Executive Director of the Georgia Council. “Their work has improved education and educational outcomes for tens of thousands of Georgia students over the years.”

Founded in 1992 by the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia Economic Developers Association, the Partnership was created to be a voice and an advocate for change in the public education system to foster economic development, workforce development and prosperity for the state. For the last 30 years, the Partnership has worked to inform and influence Georgia leaders with the goal of improving student success.

“We are designed to be a convening place where education, business, workforce development and public service officials come together to discuss and advocate for strong educational policies that help move Georgia forward,” says Dana Rickman, Ph.D., president of the Partnership. “Our work tends to have a workforce development and economic development lens to ensure there are good career pathways and economic opportunities for all Georgians.”



Through research reports, regional and statewide events and presentations to educational leaders and stakeholders, the organization aims to bring everyone to the table to discuss the state's most pressing educational issues and shape policies to address those issues.

"We are trying to elevate the discussion of state education policy above the political noise and focus on what works well for kids in schools and families," says Rickman.

One of the Partnership's areas of focus is teacher quality. The organization advocates for policies that would prioritize the development of a teacher pipeline that would be filled with effective teachers prepared to serve all students well.

"Like the Georgia Council, we understand that high quality instruction delivered by high quality teachers is paramount to students' success," says Rickman.

Strategic priorities for the next three years include expanding regional engagement, enhancing communications and sustaining organizational effectiveness with the goal of creating and ensuring high-quality education and workforce opportunities for all Georgians.



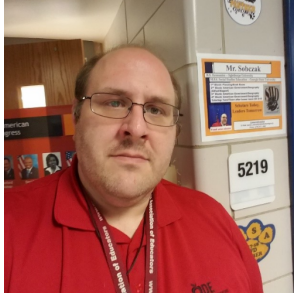
TEACHER RECOGNITION

Featuring Excellence in Teaching

Each month of the school year, GCEE's "Featured Teacher" program spotlights the incredible work of Georgia teachers who are using effective and engaging methods to teach economics and personal finance. Winners this year include **Daniel Sobczak** from South DeKalb High School (DeKalb County - February), **Teandra Storey** from Grayson High School (Gwinnett County - March), **Sheree Patton** from Westwood Elementary (Dalton City - April) and **Dr. Joseph Haig** from Cedar Grove High School (DeKalb County - May). Fun Fact: Dr. Haig is retiring after teaching for more than 40 years and has attended 57 GCEE workshops over his long career.

Winning teachers receive Amazon gift cards and signed certificates to acknowledge their fantastic work. To nominate an outstanding K-12 teacher of economics and personal finance for this honor, please contact GCEE Program

Manager Angie Battle.



Sobczak



Storey



Patton



Haig

SPRING COMPETITIONS

Recognizing Amazing Students...

Congratulations to the thousands of students who participated in Georgia Council competitions this spring. 2022 spring winners include:

Georgia Economics Challenge:

Adam Smith Division: Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science and Technology (Gwinnett County)

David Ricardo Division: South Forsyth High School (Forsyth County)

Personal Finance Challenge:

Jackson County High School

Stock Market Game:

Woodville-Tompkins High School (Savannah-Chatham County)

Econ Games (Metro Atlanta)

Fourth Grade: Crabapple Lane Elementary (Fayette County)

Fifth Grade: Newnan Crossing Elementary (Coweta County)



The Spring 2022 Stock Market Game statewide winning team from Woodville-Tompkins High School in Savannah. The team was coached by teacher John Cook.



*Copyright © 2022 Georgia Council on Economic Education, All rights reserved.
GCEE Newsletter, May 2022*

Contact Us:

P.O. Box 1619, Atlanta, GA 30301
404-413-7820
www.gcee.org

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).