

**From:** Gov. Deal's Communications Office  
**Subject:** Deal names Education Advisory Board

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Office of the Governor

## Deal names Education Advisory Board

Gov. Nathan Deal today announced the members who will serve on his Education Advisory Board. Comprised of four different groups of school superintendents, principals, teachers and school board members across the state, these groups will work with the governor to ensure the best decisions will be made for Georgia's students.

"With the members of my Education Advisory Board now in place, I look forward to meeting with them on a quarterly basis to discuss how we can continue to improve educational outcomes for Georgia students," said Deal. "The Georgians on these panels are leaders in their fields, and they are giving of their time and talents to help our state strive for educational excellence."

Deal first announced the creation of the Education Advisory Board during his Eggs and Issues speech last month:

"The minds of our children are our greatest resource," said Deal. "I am hopeful that by partnering with those on the frontlines, we can make better policy decisions for our educators and students."

### **Governor Deal's Education Advisory Board** (Bios attached for local media use)

#### **Superintendents:**

Susan Andrews, Superintendent of Muscogee County Schools  
Matt Arthur, Superintendent of Rabun County Schools  
Dr. Gayland Cooper, Superintendent of Rome City Schools  
Dr. Edmond T. "Ed" Heatley, Superintendent of Clayton County Schools  
Beauford Hicks, Superintendent of Mitchell County Schools  
Dr. Molly Howard, Superintendent of Jefferson County Schools  
Sam King, Superintendent of Rockdale County Schools  
Dr. Emily Lembeck, Superintendent of Marietta City Schools  
Leonard R. McCoy, Superintendent of Colquitt County Schools  
Dr. Gordon Pritz, Superintendent of Douglas County Schools  
Tim Ragan, Superintendent of Echols County Schools  
Paul Shaw, Superintendent of White County Schools  
J. Alvin Wilbanks, Superintendent of Gwinnett County Public Schools

#### **Principals**

Kevin Bales, East Hall Middle School, Hall County Schools  
Dr. Laurie Barron, Smokey Road Middle School, Coweta County Schools  
Dr. Melinda Dennis, Alternative Learning Center, Wilcox County Schools

Dr. Sheila Kahrs, Haymon-Morris Middle School, Barrow County Schools  
Ed Chang, Kipp Strive Academy, Atlanta, Georgia  
Dr. Miki Edwards, Rockdale Career Academy, Rockdale County Schools  
Kym Yoriko Eisgruber, Mableton Elementary School, Cobb County Schools  
Kylie Holley, Pataula Charter Academy, Edison, Georgia  
Dr. Alan Long, Jefferson County High School, Jefferson County Schools  
Dr. Steven Miletto, Centennial High School, Fulton County Schools  
Joe Parlier, Katherine B. Sutton Elementary School, Monroe County Schools  
Dr. Karen Smits, Marietta Center for Advanced Academics, Cobb County Schools  
Wes Taylor, Lowndes County High School, Lowndes County Schools

**Educators:**

Tom Appelman, Southeast High School, Whitfield County Schools  
Jai-Sun Bolden, Riverdale Middle School, Clayton County Schools  
Sara Lynn Bryant, Lake Oconee Academy, Greensboro, Georgia  
Jamie K. Frost, Schley County Elementary and Middle Schools, Schley County Schools  
Sue Burrell Gibbs, Hawkinsville High School, Pulaski County Schools  
Connie Jackson, Griffin Middle School, Cobb County Schools  
Christy McGill, Dacula Elementary School, Gwinnett County Schools  
Amy Steele, East Lake Elementary, Henry County Schools  
Bettina Polite Tate, Sol C. Johnson High School, Chatham County Schools  
Elizabeth Rhodes, Retired, Cobb County Schools  
Angie Thrivikraman, Museum School of Avondale Estates, Atlanta, Georgia  
Kurt Wheeler, Dean Rusk Middle School, Cherokee County Schools  
**Pam Williams, Appling County High School, Appling County Schools**  
Rachel Willis, Morningside Elementary, Atlanta Public Schools

**School Board members:**

Erik Charles, Henry County Board of Education  
Ann K. Crow, Forsyth County Board of Education  
Mark H. Dixon, Pierce County Board of Education  
Scott Flanagan, Social Circle Board of Education  
James Fleming, Jefferson County Board of Education  
Lara Hodgson, Atlanta Heights Charter School Board  
David W. Johnson, Floyd County Board of Education  
Dr. James Pope, Carrollton City School Board  
Janet Read, Cherokee County School Board  
Mike Sleeper, Columbia County Board of Education  
Sylvia Vann, Lee County Board of Education  
Valarie Wilson, City Schools of Decatur's Board of Education  
Kim Curtis Wright, Bleckley County Board of Education

Brian Robinson, Deputy Chief of Staff

[brobinson@georgia.gov](mailto:brobinson@georgia.gov)

Stephanie Mayfield, Press Secretary

[smayfield@georgia.gov](mailto:smayfield@georgia.gov)

404-516-5376

## **Superintendents**

**Susan Andrews, PhD, Superintendent of Muscogee County Schools**, is a thirty-four year veteran of public education having served as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent and superintendent. She currently serves as the superintendent of the Muscogee County School District, Columbus, Georgia. Andrews' credentials include a bachelor of science degree and a Masters Degree from Columbus College (currently Columbus State University), a Specialists Degree in Leadership from West Georgia College (currently University at West Georgia), and a Doctorate Degree from Auburn University. Andrews was named as 2007 Georgia Superintendent of the Year and was one of four finalists in 2007 for National Superintendent of the Year. She currently serves as the president of the Georgia School Superintendents Association (GSSA) and is on the Board of Directors for the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL). She served on the Transition Team for State School Superintendent, Dr. John Barge, and on the University of Georgia's Superintendents Advisory Council. Andrews serves on the Executive Board of the United Way of Chattahoochee Valley and on the Board of Directors for Historic Girl Scouts of Georgia. She is a member of the Columbus Rotary Club and a member of River of Life Church of God. Andrews and her husband have two adult children.

**Matt Arthur, Superintendent of Rabun County Schools**, is a native of Warner Robins, Georgia and comes from a family of educators. His father was Superintendent of Houston County Schools for a number of years and his mother is a retired teacher. He is married to Margie Arthur, also a teacher, and they have two daughters Jessica and Meagan. After graduating from the University of Georgia, Arthur began his career in education 27 years ago. He has been a teacher, assistant principal, principal and has been Superintendent of the Rabun County School System for the past 10 years where the system has made AYP for 8 consecutive years. Arthur recently served on Governor Sonny Perdue's Child Abuse Advisory Council.

**Gayland Cooper, PhD, Superintendent of Rome City Schools**, has served in this role for eight years. He served as assistant superintendent and principal in Rome City Schools prior to his appointment as superintendent. Before coming to Rome, Cooper was principal of Buchanan Junior High School, assistant principal at Paulding County High School and a science teacher at Cedartown High School where he was selected as Star Teacher for Polk School District in 1979. Cooper earned his undergraduate degree and master's degree in science education at the University of West Georgia. He earned an educational specialist degree in educational leadership at Jacksonville State University. Cooper earned a doctorate of philosophy degree in educational administration and planning from the University of Alabama. During Cooper's tenure as superintendent, Main Elementary School was named a 2006 National Blue Ribbon School and East Central Elementary was named a 2008 National Blue Ribbon School. In addition, East Central Elementary, Elm Street Elementary, West End Elementary, and Rome Middle School were named Georgia Schools of Excellence. Rome High School was named a 2008 and 2009 Bronze Award Winner by the U.S. News World Report for being "One of The Best High Schools in America." Cooper was one of four finalists for the Georgia School Superintendent of the Year in 2010.

**Edmond T. "Ed" Heatley, PhD, Superintendent of Clayton County Schools**, began his career in public education as a classroom teacher in the Norfolk (VA) Public Schools teaching students with disabilities in 1996. In 1998, Heatley traveled to California where he would spend the next 11 years of his professional life. He first served two years as Learning Director for the Clovis Unified School District in Fresno. Dr. Heatley followed this with two years as Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services with the Grant

Joint Union High School District in Sacramento. He then served three years as the Associate Superintendent for Personnel with the Oceanside Unified School District in Oceanside. In 2005, he was chosen to lead the Chino Valley Unified School District. He has also served as an Adjunct Professor of Education at the University of Southern California, California State University in San Marcos, and at Old Dominion University in Norfolk. Heatley earned his Doctorate of Education in Administration and Leadership at the University of Southern California. He holds two Master of Science degrees from California State University in Fresno in the area of Administration and Leadership, and from Old Dominion University in Norfolk in the field of Special Education. He also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. He is a retired Marine serving on active duty from 1983 to 1996 and was a member of the Marine Corps Reserves from 1996 to 2004. While serving as a Marine, Heatley was awarded a number of medals and ribbons. Heatley is married and has three children.

**Beauford Hicks, Superintendent of Mitchell County Schools**, has been in education for 34 years. Prior to his current position, he served as a superintendent of the Dooly County Schools and the Talbot County Schools, as well as held positions as a principal and teacher. He is a graduate of public schools in Taylor County. Hicks holds a B.S. in Health Education from Fort Valley State College, dual masters degrees from the University of Georgia in School Administration and Health Education, and earned his Specialists in Education degree from the University of Georgia as well. He attends Mother Easter Baptist Church, in Moultrie, Georgia.

**Molly Howard, PhD, Superintendent of Jefferson County Schools**, was appointed to this role in June 2010. Prior to her appointment, Howard served as principal of Jefferson County High School located in Louisville, Ga. She held this position since the school's opening in 1995. Before opening the new high school, Howard served as the director of Ogeechee Psychoeducational Services, a Georgia Department of Education program that serves students from seven area school districts with severe emotional and behavioral disabilities. Howard began her career in 1977 as a teacher at Wrens High School and continued until 1990. While a teacher at Wrens High School, Howard was chosen as the 1990 Georgia Teacher of the Year recognizing her work teaching students with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities. Howard was chosen as the 2007 Georgia High School Principal of the Year and was most recently named the 2008 National High School Principal of the Year, sponsored by MetLife and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

**Sam King, PhD, Superintendent of Rockdale County Schools**, became superintendent of Rockdale County Public Schools in July, 2005. Beginning his career as a 5th grade math and science teacher in Stone Mountain, Georgia, King has devoted more than 26 years to serving students within the public education system. He has taught on the middle and high school levels and served in various administrative capacities, including assistant principal, principal, area executive officer, and area assistant superintendent. Preceding his appointment, he was assistant superintendent for a district of more than 50,000 students. King attended Mercer University in Macon where he earned his bachelor of arts in Middle Grades Education. He later earned a Masters Degree and Specialist Degree in Education Administration and Supervision from State University of West Georgia and a Doctorate Degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Sarasota. King has been selected as a Georgia Superintendent of the Year finalist for two consecutive years, 2009 and 2010. In 2008, he was named Outstanding Educator by the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders. He is a graduate of the Governor's School Leadership Institute and the Superintendent Professional Development Program of the Georgia School Superintendents Association. King and his wife are residents of Rockdale County. They have three sons and a daughter.

**Emily Lembeck, PhD, Superintendent of Marietta City Schools**, assumed the Office of Superintendent on July 1, 2005, becoming just the 12th superintendent in the system's 113-year history, leading the

district's 12 schools, approximately 8,000 students and 1,200 employees. Lembeck served as associate superintendent for Curriculum and Operations of Marietta City Schools from 2001 until her appointment to the superintendence in 2005. As associate superintendent she oversaw the school system's overall instructional program. Before her successful career in school administration, she dedicated eleven years to the classroom as a teacher in Florida and Georgia. Beginning in 1991, she served as Instructional Lead Teacher at MCS' West Side Elementary for three years, followed by six years as principal of Dunleith Elementary School and then a year as principal of Marietta Middle School. In each of these positions, her student-centered approach to teaching resulted in improved test scores and increased parental involvement. A graduate of Brooklyn College in New York, Lembeck holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Georgia, a Masters in Administration and Supervision from Nova University in Florida, and a Bachelor in Early Childhood from Brooklyn College in New York.

**Leonard R. McCoy, Superintendent of Colquitt County Schools**, has held this position since July 2000. Before moving to Georgia, McCoy's career included the position of superintendent of Warren County School System, the Carroll County School System, and the Williamsburg Independent School System, all in Kentucky. McCoy began his career in education in 1972 and has also served in the capacity of teacher, assistant principal, principal, and assistant superintendent. He has been recognized as Kentucky Superintendent of the Year, and was named as a finalist for Georgia Superintendent of the Year in 2010.

**Gordon Pritz, PhD, Superintendent of Douglas County Schools**, has served in this role since 2010. Pritz has worked as an educator since 1977 as a teacher, coach, and administrator. He received his Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Taylor University, his Masters in Educational Administration and Supervision from Georgia State University, his Specialists Degree in Administration and Supervision from the State University of West Georgia, and his Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University. He is a member of the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders, Georgia School Superintendents Association and the American Association of School Administrators. Pritz and his wife Ginny have four sons.

**Tim Ragan, Superintendent of Echols County Schools**, has been in education for over 26 years. Prior to becoming Superintendent, Ragan served as the Principal in Echols County for eight years. Ragan is a 1984 graduate of The University of Georgia where he received his Bachelor of Science in Agriculture majoring in Agricultural Education. In 2001, he earned his Masters in Educational Leadership from Valdosta State University and he went on to earn his Specialist in 2002 from Nova Southeastern University. He completed the Superintendent Professional Development Program in August 2005. Along with his professional accomplishments, Ragan is also active in the community. He was a member of the Leadership Georgia Class of 2004. He also served as a Lanier County Commissioner from 1997 through 2004 while also a member of the Industrial Authority and the Parks and Recreation Authority Board. He is currently President of the Echols County Lions Club and a member of Unity United Methodist Church in Lakeland. Ragan's wife, Sylvia, is also an educator and they have two children.

**Paul Shaw, PhD, Superintendent of White County Schools**, has served in this role for 11 years. The school system is located at the foothills of the mountains in northeast Georgia and serves approximately 3850 students in grades K-12. Prior to moving to Georgia he served as superintendent for 15 years in South Carolina. He began his career as a social studies teacher and coach and then served in various capacities including assistant principal, principal, Dean of Men at St. Leo College, and assistant superintendent. Also, he serves as part-time faculty for Piedmont College having taught Research, Communication in the Schools, and Current Trends in Education. Shaw recently served on the Executive Board of the American Association of School Administrators and has returned to the Governing Board of

AASA representing Georgia. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the National Center for Education Research and Technology. He served as president of the South Carolina School Superintendents in 1998. He was also selected as Superintendent of the Year for South Carolina in 2000 and Georgia in 2010. He is active in numerous community and professional organizations. He earned a Bachelor of Science from the University of South Carolina, has a Masters degree from Western Carolina University and has an Education Specialist and Doctorate from the University of South Carolina. He and his wife Cindy have two children and four grandchildren.

**J. Alvin Wilbanks, Superintendent of Gwinnett County Public Schools** has served as superintendent since 1996. Wilbanks came to Gwinnett County from the Georgia Department of Education's Industrial Development Unit. He has traveled extensively abroad promoting technical/vocational education, and the US and International Skills Olympics. He also was employed as a teacher and administrator in DeKalb County Schools for a number of years. Under Wilbanks' leadership, Gwinnett County Public Schools has earned a reputation as one of the most successful school districts in the country. The Broad Foundation selected Gwinnett County Public Schools as one of the five finalists for the highly prestigious Broad Prize for Urban Education two years in a row—2009 and 2010.\* The Broad Prize honors urban school districts making the greatest progress nationwide in raising student achievement and reducing achievement gaps among ethnic groups and between low- and non-low-income students. It is the largest education award in the country. In October 2010, Gwinnett County Public Schools was named the winner of The 2010 Broad Prize for Urban Education, distinguishing GCPS as the best urban school district in the nation. Wilbanks was named "2005 Georgia Superintendent of the Year" and one of four finalists for "2005 National Superintendent of the Year." The Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce awarded him its highest honor, "2005 Citizen of the Year," and the Boy Scouts of America presented him with its "Distinguished Citizen Award" in 2008. Mr. Wilbanks is a leader in many civic organizations including the Gwinnett County Board of Public Health, Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce, Lawrenceville Rotary Club.

## **Principals**

### **Wes Taylor, Principal of Lowndes County High School,**

Taylor has served as a High School Principal for the past 20 years in both Florida and Georgia. He is currently principal of Lowndes High School in Valdosta, Georgia. Taylor was selected by the National Association of Secondary School Principals as the 2011 National High School Principal of the Year. He was also named the 2010 Georgia High School Principal of the Year by the Georgia Association of Secondary Principals. Taylor serves on the Georgia State School Superintendent's Principal Advisory Council, the Georgia Association of Secondary School Principal's Board of Directors and the Georgia High School Association Executive Committee. Lowndes High School has been recognized by the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, the Professional Association of Georgia Educators, the United States Department of Education, the National Governor's Association, the Georgia Department of Education and the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future for its excellence in education. Taylor earned his bachelor's from the University of Georgia, a master's from Georgia Southwestern State University and an Educational Specialist Degree from Florida State University.

### **Kylie Holley, Superintendent/Principal of Pataula Charter Academy**

Holley is the superintendent and principal of a charter school in Southwest Georgia. She served on the original founding board and assisted in writing the petition application for the school. Holley earned a degree in Early Childhood Education from Georgia Southwestern University, a Masters of Education in School Counseling from Albany State University, and an Educational Specialist Degree from Valdosta State University. She has 10 years of teaching experience and is an active member of Georgia Charter

School Association. Holley participated in CharterStart, a school governance training program, and CharterLeader, a school leadership training program. She also serves as school coordinator for the Professional Association of Georgia Educators. Holley lives in her hometown of Edison, with her husband have two boys. She is an active member of Edison United Methodist Church, where she has served as Sunday school teacher and Children's Director.

**Laurie Barron, Ph.D., Principal of Smokey Road Middle School**

Barron has worked for fifteen years in education as a high school English teacher, a middle school assistant principal and the principal of Smokey Road. She earned her undergraduate degree in English Education from the University of Georgia and completed her graduate degrees in Administration and Supervision and Educational Leadership at the State University of West Georgia and the University of Sarasota. Barron is a National Board Certified Teacher and was the Newnan High School Teacher of the Year in 1999, the Newnan High School STAR Teacher in 2000, and the Newnan High School, Coweta County, and Georgia District V STAR Teacher in 2001. Barron serves on the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education Partnership Council and is an active member of the Georgia Association of Middle School Principals. She has also received the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders Outstanding Middle Level Educator Award and the Georgia Association of Middle School Principals Mike Campbell Exemplary Leadership Award. Smokey Road Middle School is also a State of Georgia Title I Distinguished School and has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for five consecutive years. Barron lives in Newnan with her husband and three daughters.

**Miki Edwards, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer of Rockdale Career Academy**

Rockdale Career Academy (RCA) is a career-technical school in Conyers where Edwards serves as CEO. Prior to that, she served as the assistant principal of instruction there. Edwards has also served as a middle school teacher, middle school assistant principal and principal. She is a graduate of Shorter College, where she earned Middle Grades Education. Edwards received her master's degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Georgia and her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from Mercer University. She lives in Conyers with her husband and two boys.

**Ed Chang, Principal of Kipp Strive Academy**

Chang most recently served as the Director of Strategic Initiatives for KIPP WAYS Academy, an urban charter school in Northwest Atlanta. He was also recently selected to become a Fisher Fellow, a rigorous training program designed to prepare future school leaders to run KIPP schools. In 2006, he was also selected as one of thirteen outstanding leaders from across the country to participate in the highly competitive Building Excellent Schools Fellowship. Prior to being selected as a Building Excellent Schools Fellow, Chang attended Washington University in St. Louis, where he earned a B.S. in biology and psychology and attended the Master's Program in Physical Therapy through the School of Medicine. He went on to serve for four years as a Teach For America corps member and taught seventh grade science teacher at Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School. During his tenure at King, he was selected as the Teacher of the Year and was a semi-finalist for the Atlanta Public Schools Teacher of the Year. He was also recognized as an Atlanta Hawks All-Star Teacher. Chang worked as a Corps Member Advisor and Science Learning Team Leader for the Teach For America Summer Training Institute. In 2005, he was a founding teacher and played an integral part in the founding of the Atlanta Charter Middle School in Southeast Atlanta, where his students posted some of the highest scores on the GCRCT.

**Steven Miletto, Ph.D., Principal of Centennial High School**

Miletto has been an educator in Georgia for 23 years. His career as a history teacher, an assistant principal and a high school principal has spanned several school systems (DeKalb, Rockdale, Gwinnett, Walton, Cobb, and Fulton). Miletto has been a high school principal for eleven years. In 2009, he was

recognized by the Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals as Georgia's High School Principal of the Year and was chosen by the National Association of Secondary School Principals as one of three finalists for the National Principal of the Year. In 2010, Miletto was recognized by GAEL as the President's Professional of the Year. He was recognized by the Ben Marion Institute for Social Justice as A Hero of Social Justice in 2009 and by the Atlanta Braves and AT&T Educator of the Year in 2007. Miletto earned his doctorate degree from the University of Georgia. He and his wife have two sons.

#### **Kevin Bales, Principal of East Hall Middle School**

Bales has earned two advanced degrees, a master's degree from the University of Georgia and a specialist's degree from Liberty University. He completed his undergraduate work and received his bachelor's degree from Georgia College and State University. As a former Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship recipient, Bales has worked in education for eighteen years and has served as a middle school teacher, elementary school assistant principal, middle school assistant principal, and principal. Bales and his wife live in Gainesville with their four children.

#### **Joe Parlier, Principal of Katherine B. Sutton Elementary School**

Parlier has served Georgia's public schools in a variety of capacities during his career. Prior to becoming a school administrator, he taught at the elementary and middle school levels. After serving in the Griffin-Spalding County School System as a middle school administrator, Director of Elementary Education, and Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Parlier returned to the high school from which he graduated, Mary Persons High School, to serve as principal. The school had never made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and was on Georgia's Needs Improvement (NI) list. Parlier worked to remove the school from the NI list and Mary Parsons was recognized by the state as a model for secondary redesign and improving student achievement. After serving at Mary Persons High School, Parlier worked for the Department of Education as the Associate Superintendent for School Improvement. During this time, the Georgia was recognized by the Center for Educational Policy for improving low performing schools. Parlier and his wife have three daughters. They live Monroe County.

#### **Karen Smits, Ph.D., Principal of the Marietta Center for Advanced Academics**

Smits has been a Georgia public educator for twenty-one years. She began her career in Douglas County as a teacher and assistant principal. Since then she has served in a variety of leadership positions with the Marietta City Schools including assistant principal, Director of Testing, Director of School Improvement, and most recently, as principal of the Marietta Center for Advanced Academics. Under the direction of Smits, the Marietta Center for Advanced Academics has earned three consecutive Platinum Awards for Highest Student Achievement and was recently named a 2010 Georgia School of Excellence for student achievement in the top 10 percent of the state. She has presented at national conferences including the National Science Teachers Association and National Association of Gifted Children with members of her school. In 2010, Dr. Smits was named Administrator of the Year by the Cobb School Counselors Association and by the Georgia PTA. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Smits holds a Doctorate in Educational Policy Studies from Georgia State University, a Masters in Educational Leadership from Georgia State University, and Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

#### **Alan Long, Ph.D., Principal of Jefferson County High School**

Long has spent the last 27 years in education, as a high school classroom teacher, assistant principal, and now in his role as a high school principal. He has served on the Board of Directors for the Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals and the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders, and was a member of the State Superintendent High School Principal Advisory Committee. Long earned a Bachelor of Science in Education from Tennessee Tech University in 1982, a Master's Degree from



Lincoln Memorial University in 1999, and his doctorate from the University of Alabama 2009. He and his wife have four children.

**Kym Yoriko Eisgruber, Principal of Mableton Elementary School,**

Eisgruber has been an educator for twenty-five years. She graduated from Ball State University in 1986 with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and a minor in dance. She began her teaching career in the Washington, DC area as a 1st grade teacher working for Montgomery County Public Schools, Maryland. In her four and a half years in Maryland, she was selected to be a team leader, taught summer school to impoverished students, organized staff development sessions for the county, was appointed speaker for the county at the new teacher orientation, and was selected to meet former President George Bush Sr. as a representative of the Montgomery County Public Schools. Under her direction, Mableton Elementary has been honored with Title I Distinguished School for 6 consecutive years, Georgia School of Excellence in 2009 for greatest academic gains and Governor's Office of Accountable School-wide State Assessment System 2009 Gold Award for academic gains. Ms. Eisgruber received her Masters, Specialist and Leadership add-on degrees from the University of West Georgia. She and her husband have two children.

**Teachers**

**Pam Williams, Economics, Appling County High School**

Williams is the 2011 Georgia Teacher of the Year. She received her undergraduate degree from Brewton Parker College, and her master's and specialist degrees from Georgia Southern University. She began her teaching career at Bacon County Middle in 1991 and moved to Appling County in 1992. Williams taught sixth grade for two years and then taught Language Arts, Reading and Georgia Studies at Appling County Middle for 13 years. She's taught high school economics and American government for the past three years. Williams has three children and attends of Red Oak Baptist Church, where she teaches Sunday school and sings in the choir.

**Jamie K. Frost, Instructional Math Coach, Schley County Elementary and Middle Schools**

Frost has been a Georgia educator for 17 years. She holds a B.S. Ed. and M. Ed. in Early Childhood Education, an Ed. S. degree in Educational Leadership, and an endorsement in Gifted Education. In her second year as a math coach, Frost designed and facilitated staff development training for Pre-K through twelfth grade levels to identify needs-improvement areas. She currently serves on the school's leadership and school improvement teams. Before coming to Schley County, Frost worked in Forsyth County Schools for twelve years, serving on the local Southern Accreditation of Colleges and Schools team and as an Assessment for Learning (Ann Davies) Focused Choice Leader for administrators and educators. As part of Chattahoochee Elementary School's Leadership Team, she has presented at the Georgia Association of Educational Leadership and League of Professional Schools conferences. She is a member of the Delta Kappa Gamma Professional Honor Society for Women Educators and the Professional Association of Georgia Educators. Frost resides in Ellaville, Georgia with her two daughters.

**Amy Steele, Fifth Grade Teacher, East Lake Elementary, McDonough**

Steele has taught fifth grade for the past three years. Prior to that, she taught eighth grade for fourteen years at Union Grove Middle School and Stockbridge Middle School. She earned a bachelor's degree in Education at the University of Georgia, her master's degree from Georgia State University and her education specialist degree from State University of West Georgia. She and her husband have three children and are active members at Salem Baptist Church in McDonough.

**Angie Thrivikraman, First Grade Teacher, the Museum School of Avondale Estates**

Thrivikraman has taught first grade for the past seven years. A native of Ft. Myers, Florida, she moved to Atlanta in 1997 to attend Emory University, where she earned her bachelor's degree in 2001. Thrivikraman worked as a paralegal in a law firm for two years before becoming an educator. In 2005, she completed the GTAPP program at Georgia State University, earning her teaching certification and master's degree in early childhood education. Thrivikraman resides in Decatur.

**Rachel Willis, Third Grade Teacher, Morningside Elementary in Atlanta**

She received her B.A. in Government from Smith College, her Certificate in Elementary Education (P-5) from Agnes Scott College, and her Ed.M. in Education Leadership from the Teachers College, Columbia University. Upon her graduation from Smith College, Rachel Willis joined the field of education in 2004 as a Teach for America corps member. After teaching 2nd-4th grade in the system, Rachel was named the 2009-2010 Atlanta Public Schools Elementary Teacher of the Year. The following year Rachel was honored nationally as a Milken Educator Award recipient. The Milken Family Foundation honors early and mid-career teachers for what they have achieved and the promise they possess in impacting education in the future.

**Kurt Wheeler, Georgia History Teacher, Dean Rusk Middle School, Cherokee County**

Wheeler served in the United State Air Force and earned a bachelor's degree in professional aeronautics from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. After receiving an honorable discharge from the military, Wheeler pursued his teacher certification from Kennesaw State University. Wheeler also holds a Master's of Ministry degree from Saint Michael's Seminary and a Masters of Math Education from Piedmont College. He has taught fourth through eighth grade literature, math, speech and drama in both private and public schools. He has also coached various sports teams. Wheeler has been a pastor for 14 years. As a featured speaker at many conferences, Wheeler has presented programs on relationships and connecting with youth. He is currently pursuing a Doctorate of Education degree in Instructional Leadership. He and his wife have two children.

**Christy McGill, Kindergarten Teacher, Dacula Elementary School**

McGill has been a teacher in Gwinnett County for nine years. She earned her bachelor's, master's and specialist degrees in early childhood education from Georgia State University. McGill also received her Teacher Support Specialist endorsement through Gwinnett County and holds training in mentoring teachers. McGill was named a Teacher of the Year Finalist at Dacula Elementary for the 2008-2009 school year. She currently serves on her school's literacy team and will attend Gwinnett County's Math Institute this summer. McGill has supervised a Georgia State University student teacher, coordinated Dacula Elementary summer pre-kindergarten camp and served as grade level chair for two consecutive years.

**Sue Burrell Gibbs, Honors Biology and Physics Teacher, Hawkinsville High School, Pulaski County**

Gibbs has taught for the past five years at Hawkinsville High School. She completed both her B.S. and M. Ed. in Biology at Mississippi State University. Gibbs taught for six years in Mississippi before moving to Houston County, where she taught Advanced Placement courses at Northside High School for eighteen years. At Northside, she was recognized as Star Teacher three years was twice selected by her colleagues as Northside's Teacher of the Year. She was unanimously elected by Georgia's Beta Club sponsors to serve as the Georgia State Beta Club Sponsor from 2005-2007. Gibbs received her Ed. Spec in Biology from Georgia College and has been a GIFT teacher on two separate occasions. She has been a speaker/presenter at the Georgia Science Teacher's Convention, the PAGE Summer Conference, and the Consortium for Secondary Instruction for the past several years. In 2006, she was named Science Teacher of the Year by GSTA. Gibbs resides in Hawkinsville, where she works with city leaders in and the

Georgia Historic Trust Foundation to revitalize historic neighborhoods and educate the public about local and regional history.

**Tom Appelman, Math Teacher, Southeast High School, Dalton**

Appelman is in his 29<sup>th</sup> year teaching. In addition to his role as the math department chair, Appelman also serves as a School Design Team Member and Instructional Leadership Team Member. In 2007, he was named Southeast Teacher of the Year, and he was a part of the Whitfield County Leadership Academy in 2008-2009. He is married to Valerie Taylor, a Full Professor of Business at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

**Sara Lynn Bryant, Third Grade Teacher, Lake Oconee Academy**

Lake Oconee Academy is a public charter school in Greene County. Bryant has 17 years teaching experience, both in public and private schools, and is in her third year at LOA. She is a graduate of the University of Georgia, holding a bachelor's degree in Journalism, a master's degree in Early Childhood Education, and will receive her specialist degree in Teacher Leadership from Piedmont College in May of this year. Bryant is a lifelong resident of Greene County. She is married to Benjamin Bryant, formerly of Macon, and they have two teenage daughters. She is an avid Georgia Bulldog fan and enjoys spending time on Lake Oconee with her family and friends.

**Connie Jackson, Special Education Teacher, Griffin Middle School, Cobb County**

Jackson attended Mississippi Valley State University and majored in Criminal Justice – Pre-Law. She was named Criminal Justice Student of the Year and President's Scholar two times. She graduated with a 4.0 GPA as the Valedictorian. Jackson began her teaching career when she moved to the Washington, D.C., area in 1997. She started working for a Private Psychiatric Day School, working with students who had severe emotional and behavioral disabilities. She discovered a love of teaching and earned her M.Ed. from Marymount University, majoring in Special Education, Emotional and Learning Disabilities. In 2002, Jackson moved to Cobb County and began teaching at Tapp Middle School. In 2006, Connie transferred to Griffin Middle School, where she found her teaching home. Jackson is the mother of two sons, ages 13 and 10. Upon moving to Georgia, Connie also was blessed to add Cliff, 22, Devante, 21, and Kimberly, 21, to her family and is helping raise a grandchild, Alina, 3.

**Bettina Polite Tate, Marketing and IB Business Management Teacher, Sol C. Johnson High School, Chatham County**

In addition to her teaching position, she serves as co-chair of the Career Tech Department, the High Schools That Works Site Coordinator, Primary DECA Advisor, Student Leadership Program Teacher Advisor, 2011 SCCPSS District Teacher of the Year, 2011 Georgia Marketing Teacher of the Year, and one of the Georgia Top Ten Teachers of the Year 2011. She was recently appointed to serve on the Ethics Committee with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. Tate holds a Bachelor's of Business Administration degree (Cum Laude) and a Master's of Public Administration degree from Savannah State University, and a Specialist degree in Educational Leadership from Mercer University, where she is pursuing her doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. Tate's community involvement includes membership in Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, founder of Youth of Elite Community Organization and Fully Armored Teen Camp and co-chair of the Education Division of the Coastal Empire 2010 United Way Campaign Cabinet. She also serves on the Georgia DECA Foundation Board. She is a member of Connor's Temple Baptist Church.

**Jai-Sun Bolden, Riverdale Middle School, Clayton County**

He graduated from Morehouse College in 2000 with a major in English. He started teaching immediately after college and joined Teach for America. After three years of teaching in the Atlanta Public Schools

System, he served as a co-founder of KIPPWAYS Academy charter school. Bolden has been certified to teach gifted children and is in the process of obtaining his master's degree in Education from Georgia State University. He is also a certified teacher support specialist (teacher mentor). He is married to Marji Bolden and has a son, Robert.

## **Board Members**

### **Mark H. Dixon, Pierce County Board of Education**

Dixon graduated from Blackshear High School in 1979, and he served in the U.S. Air Force from 1982 to 1986. He currently works at his family's 50 year old tractor and farm equipment business (Dixon Tractor Co.), along with continuing the operation of his family farm. He is in his 13<sup>th</sup> year of serving on the Pierce County Board of Education, 9<sup>th</sup> year as chairperson. He is also into his second year of service to the Georgia School Boards Association on the Board of Directors. Dixon and his wife have three children and one grandson

### **Sylvia Vann, Lee County Board of Education**

Vann, a retired mathematics teacher, has served on the Lee County Board of Education for ten years. She received a BS degree from Auburn University, a Masters from Georgia Southwestern College and a Sixth Year Specialist Degree from Valdosta State University. Vann serves as a director representing District 2 on the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) and also serves GSBA on the nominating committee, the governmental operations committee, the Federal Relations Network and is a member of the GSBA/GSSA Vision Planning Team. Vann is a member of Covenant Presbyterian Church, Albany, Georgia, serves as an elder on the Session Board, and teaches an adult Sunday School Class. She is married to Lawson Vann and they have three sons.

### **James Pope, Ph.D., Carrollton City School Board**

Pope has served on the Carrollton City School Board since 1983 and is in his fifteenth year as Chairman of the Board. He graduated from West Georgia College with a degree in Mathematics, and then completed medical school at the Medical College of Georgia in 1969. He then went on to complete his surgical training at the University of Tennessee at Memphis, followed by three years of service in the military. He returned to Memphis as a Vascular Fellow. He has been a surgeon with Carrollton Surgical Group since 1978. His wife Carmen is a registered nurse at Tanner Medical Center, while his daughter and two step-daughters work in education, and his son is a banker.

### **Valarie Wilson, City Schools of Decatur's Board of Education**

Wilson was elected to the City Schools of Decatur's (CSD) Board of Education in 2002 and reelected in 2006 and 2010. In addition to her five years of service on the CSD board, Wilson serves as Vice Chair of the Georgia School Boards Association. She is also a member of the Decatur Education Foundation and the Decatur Arts Alliance. She has been a member of the Parent Teacher Association since her son Nicholas – now a freshman at Hofstra University in New York – entered elementary school at Winnona Park Elementary School. She also works with the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA), where she participated as a Planning Team Member on the Visioning Project for Public Education in Georgia, as a GSBA New Board Member Mentor, and served as a member of the Nominating Committee for GSBA Officers. She has on behalf of CSD about public education in the Georgia Legislature. Wilson serves as Executive Director of the Atlanta BeltLine Partnership and is a graduate of Clark College. She earned a graduate degree at Troy State University in Public Administration. She and her husband live in Decatur.

### **Lara Hodgson, Atlanta Heights Charter School Board**

Hodgson co-founded Insomnia, LLC, an Atlanta-based firm specializing in investment, development and management of complex and innovative “world-changing” projects. Her current work is focused on finding solutions for and funding large scale infrastructure projects globally. She is a frequent speaker at industry conferences on innovative thinking that can reshape our infrastructure and our communities. Hodgson received an MBA from Harvard Business School and a BS in Aerospace Engineering with highest honors from the Georgia Institute of Technology. She was featured in USA Today as one of the top 20 students in the US and was the ODK National Leader of the Year in 1993. Wilson was a scholarship member of the varsity Track & Field team at Georgia Tech. She has served on many public and private Boards including: Flag Bank, Central Atlanta Progress, Georgia Tech’s Alexander Tharpe Fund, Society of International Business Fellows and HERO for Children. She is a member of the Leadership Georgia Class of 2005, the Leadership Atlanta Class of 2004 and the Midtown Leadership Class of 2003. Lara is a full member of ULI and a member of the Society of International Business Fellows. Hodgson teaches Real Estate Finance as an adjunct professor in Georgia Tech’s MBA Program. She currently serves as an appointee of the Governor on the Transit Planning Board.

#### **Janet Read, Cherokee County School Board**

Read became involved in public education in 1998 when her oldest son started kindergarten. She served as the PTA President at Bascomb ES as well as numerous committee chairs at all four schools her sons have attended. Ms. Read is a former principal’s secretary and substitute teacher, and this is her seventh year as a school board member, where she has served as vice chair for one year and chair for two years. She also serves on the Cherokee County Child Advocacy Council. Read earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Milligan College. She and her family reside in Woodstock.

#### **Scott Flanagan, Social Circle Board of Education**

Flanagan makes his home in Social Circle Georgia with his wife Shaye Flanagan and daughter Neely Flanagan. Scott is a graduate of Longwood University, where in 1995 he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science. Scott is currently employed with Credability as a Foreclosure Prevention Housing Counseling Manager. In March of 2010, Scott ran for and won a special election to fill the Social Circle Board of Education District Three seat vacancy. Scott is an active participating member of Social Circle United Methodist Church. Flanagan enjoys spending time with his family and being active and involved in his community.

#### **Kim Curtis Wright, Bleckley County Board of Education**

Wright, a graduate of the University of Georgia’s Terry College of Business majoring in finance, is currently a home maker after working six years as a warranted contracting officer for Robins Air Force Base. Her dedication to education and community began with volunteering in the classroom and later inspired her to represent her district on the Bleckley County Board of Education. Now serving as chairperson, she continues to volunteer in Mrs. Kitchens’ 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom working one on one with students in reading. Being in the classroom, she sees first hand the needs of teachers and students. Mrs. Wright also serves as parliamentarian on the Board of Trustees for the Georgia Baptist Children’s Home. She is a member of First Baptist Church of Cochran where she teaches Bible Drills and sings in the praise band. She and her husband, Lee, have two children.

#### **Ann K. Crow, Forsyth County Board of Education**

A graduate of Auburn University, Crow is a native of Atlanta with deep roots in Georgia. Her family moved to Forsyth County in 1984 where she supported the public schools her three daughters attended through various local school leadership positions until they graduated. She is president of Matrixtbsc, Inc., a family owned business services company. Recently, Crow was re-elected to her third term on the

Forsyth County Board of Education. She has been Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board and currently serves as the Ninth District Director for the Georgia School Board Association. Prior to this, she has served in numerous leadership roles including director, officer and organizer of the Education Committee for the Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce, and president and campaign chair for United Way of Forsyth County. For her community work, she has received the Jean Harris Rotarian Club Award, the Optimist Club Award for Outstanding School Volunteer and the Chamber of Commerce Volunteer of the Year Award. Crow enjoys attending local high school sporting events and theater productions to show her support for the students. She is a diehard college football and basketball fan, enjoys spending time with her family and serving as a greeter at First Baptist Church of Cumming.

**Mike Sleeper, Columbia County Board of Education**

Sleeper was recently elected to his third term on the Columbia County Board of Education. He graduated from the Georgia public school system and enlisted in the Army serving with the 1/75th Airborne Ranger Regiment. He went on to do his undergraduate work in Computer Science at Augusta State University and graduate work in Artificial Intelligence at the University of Georgia. He volunteers in many organizations including Chairing the Leadership Augusta Class of 2011 and serving on the Greater Augusta Arts Council. Sleep is a Computer Security Engineer at Savannah River Site. He and his wife Kelley, have one son. They reside in Evans, Georgia.

**David W. Johnson, Floyd County Board of Education**

Johnson has been a member of Floyd County Board of Education for 12 years, serving as Chair or Vice-Chair several of those years, and currently holds the office of Vice-Chair. He is President-Elect of the Georgia School Board Association, and was appointed by Governor Perdue to the Professional Standards Commission in 2009. Johnson also serves on the Board of Directors of E-Board Solutions, the Board of Director of Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education and the Executive Committee for Georgia Visioning Project sponsored by GSBA/GSSA. In his community, he serves on the Hospital Authority of Floyd County as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Development Authority of Floyd County, the Board of Directors of the Specialty Hospital and the Floyd Medical Resource Board. He and his wife, Cathy, have two adult children and one grandchild. He is currently President of United Community Bank, in Rome. Johnson received his MBA from Berry College.

**James Fleming, Jefferson County Board of Education**

Fleming has served on the Jefferson County Board of Education since July of 1983 and has been chairman of the board for nearly 20 years. A graduate of Jefferson County schools and the University of Georgia, Fleming is a local pharmacist. He and his wife, Sharon, have five children and reside in Wrens.

**Erik Charles, Henry County Board of Education**

Charles is a small business owner of A&E Insurance And Financial Services, Inc. as well as represents District 4 as its Board of Education member. Charles reelection to his third term on the Henry County Board of Education and was recently elected Vice-Chair. During his tenure as board representative, Mr. Charles has shown leadership working with parents, teachers and principals to ensure success for Henry County Schools' students. He attended Grambling State University. He is a member of Eagles Landing First Baptist Church. Charles has two boys who attend Henry County schools.