Georgia Council for the Social Studies

News & Notes

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From the President

Sharon Coleman

MISSION POSSIBLE?

The Georgia Council for the Social Studies has had a constitution that defines its purpose for years, but this year the Board of Trustees, led by Dr. Glen Blankenship, our historian, has taken on the task of developing vision and mission statements that will be our guiding lights in future planning and decision-making. We hope to have the verbiage fine-tuned by conference time, so that GCSS members can learn and begin to articulate both the mission and vision in their GCSS roles and to other publics.

Interesting, but not surprising, is that the rough draft of the vision, which focuses on preparing knowledgeable and engaged citizens, parallels the visions of many of our schools. I find it *interesting* because the tasks defined by the school improvement plans of some of those same schools are limited

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Social Studies Matters: GCSS Annual Conference on October 20-21, 2011

Don't miss this year's conference. Highlights featured below. REGISTER now for the conference at www.gcss.net

Keynote: Dr. Jay Hakes

Dr. Jay Hakes, Director of the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, will be a featured keynote speaker at the annual GCSS conference. He will lead a lively discussion on "The Challenges of Energy: What We Can Learn From Abraham Lincoln, What We Can Learn From the Social Studies." Dr. Hakes' appearance is sponsored by the Georgia Humanities Council and the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, and will take place on Thursday, Oct. 20, from 2:45 - 3:30 P.M.

Keynote: Dr. Carole Hahn

Dr. Carole Hahn, the Charles Howard Chandler Professor of Educational Studies at Emory University, is also a featured keynote speaker at the conference. Her topic, "Social Studies from a Global Perspective: Insights from Outside the U.S." will be of major interest to all educators in these global times. Her appearance is sponsored by the Mary Hepburn Lectureship at the University of Georgia. Dr. Hahn speaks on Friday, Oct. 21, from 9:10 - 9:55 A.M.

The *GCSS News & Notes* now comes to you in digital format. The new format will allow more space for news and color photos, as well as permitting news to arrive more quickly and easily.

See you in Athens!

(From the President, from pg. 1)
to reading and math and do not explicitly address what it takes to produce effective citizens. I am assured, however, that social studies teachers will take the reins and make the vision a reality by engaging students in real world knowledge, products and processes that will prepare them for their roles as citizens.

I believe, however, that what we do to carry out our mission must delve even deeper. One of our great challenges is teaching our students how to travel on the high road in their interpersonal journeys. Several years ago, Joe Renzulli praised the United States for its wealth of social capital. We still do a good job of rushing to rescue victims of catastrophe at home and abroad. But from small personal interactions to the Presidential campaign to budget reform, the "all about me" philosophy seems to have become the rule rather than the exception—and, more often than not, at the expense of others. Whatever happened to the Golden Rule? Or even better, what about what our religious faiths teach us? If our students were asked to play the role of someone from another class, culture, or life situation, would they know where to begin? If not, why would we think they would have the information to consider all perspectives in civic decision-making? It seems we're becoming bankrupt in more than financial resources.

So, is it possible to address it all as we carry out our mission? I have found that there are those among us who have the same concerns and who can lead the way with practices they already incorporate. If our definition of citizenship includes character, and our vision focuses on being a good citizen, the interpersonal aspect cannot be overlooked.

We look forward to the rollout of our vision and mission statements. They are the work of the full board, whose members represent you. Once they are rolled out, we look forward to your ideas as to what other aspects are important to the realization of both.

Looking forward to seeing you in Athens!

Sharon

Governor's Awards in the Humanities Winners Longtime GCSS Members

On October 6, the 2011 Governor's Awards in the Humanities winners were honored at a luncheon at the Old Georgia Railroad Freight Depot in Atlanta. Among this year's winners were two who have been a vital part of the GCSS story. Congratulations to **Gwen Hutcheson** and **Annette Wise**, two extremely deserving recipients of this honor.

Gwen Hutcheson is no stranger to Georgians or GCSS members. Over a 60 year career, she has mentored countless educators in workshops, study tours, and GCSS conferences. She continues her work as a social studies leader, even beyond retirement. In 2009, the GCSS named its top teaching award in her honor.

Annette Wise shares Gwen's dedication to the teachers and students of Georgia. As a former teacher and the current Education Program Specialist for the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site Education Program and the Georgia DOE, she provides teachers innovative resources and activities related to our 39th president, and works tirelessly to preserve the history of the Plains area.

Mark Your Calendar:

GCSS Conference – this year's theme is *Social Studies Matters* and the conference is **October 20-21**, at the Classic Center in Athens, GA. Register NOW!!!! More details at www.gcss.net

NCSS Conference, **December 2-4, 2011** - this year's theme is *Dimensions of Diversity*. More details at www.socialstudies.org

Other News & Notes:

Check out news of the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program and Distinguished Teacher Awards at http://www.fulbrightteacherexchange.org/.

Ever since author, lawyer, and former District Attorney, J.Tom Morgan, released his highly acclaimed book, *Ignorance is No Defense, A Teenager's Guide to Georgia Law*, teachers have wanted lesson plans to accompany its use in the classroom. In response, Morgan teamed up with educators David Messer and Carol McCullough, to prepare those lessons and the curriculum is now available on CD. The 15 lesson plans contain age appropriate activities, vocabulary, concept lessons and assessments, and allow teachers to differentiate for readiness level, interest, or learning profile through different types of activities. Further, the curriculum reflects best practices in educational research, including using higher order thinking skills, summarizing, teaching vocabulary in context, processing data, charts and graphs and the use of graphic organizers. The lessons address Georgia Performance Standards in 8th grade Social Studies, 9th grade Civics, Health, and emphasizes reading and writing Performance Skills, among others. The goal of the book and the lesson plans is to educate teenagers about the laws in Georgia that affect them and to help them make wise, informed choices and avoid the devastating consequences of a criminal record. For more information or questions about ordering, contact pcmccullough@mindspring.com .

Think about for the 2011-2012 school year:

- Participating in this year's Social Studies Fair
- Attending the GCSS conference
- Becoming a more active GCSS member and recruiting more members
- Sharing your idea for *News & Notes*.

Need to contact GCSS? Please notify Eddie Bennett of changes in contact information at gcss1964@gmail.com or send notice to P.O. Box 675, Avondale Estates, GA 30002

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