

Georgia Council for the Social Studies 2018 Candidates for President-Elect

Laura Ambrose

In my role as social studies curriculum coordinator for the Clarke County School District, my main goal is to inform and inspire civic engagement. Social studies education is potentially one of the most important forms of political socialization and, in an ever changing social and political landscape, requires innovative approaches to updating and design. For the past two years, I have served on the Georgia Council for the Social Studies and am deeply committed to the organization and to keeping social studies at the forefront of curricula for Georgia's students and educators. I began my career in the classroom as a fourth grade social studies teacher. From there, I taught a variety of social studies courses in high schools in Hawaii and Illinois before moving to Clarke County. In Athens, I was department head and social studies teacher at Clarke Central High School for several years before becoming social studies coach and International Baccalaureate coordinator at Burney Harris Lyons Middle School. Currently, I am the social studies curriculum coordinator for Clarke County School District. While much of public education has understandably shifted toward a focus on STEM fields, in an era of "fake news" and a deeply polarized society the importance of social studies education and its effect on civic participation cannot be overstated. I look forward to continuing the work I have done to further this cause and would be honored to follow in the footsteps of previous GCSS leaders.

Kimberlynn Weston, Ed.D.

I am honored to be considered as president-elect of the Georgia Council for the Social Studies. As a 20-year educator, I have served as a high school civics and US history teacher, an assistant principal, and district administrator. I currently serve as the K-12 Social Studies Coordinator for the DeKalb County School District and as a member of the Board of Trustees.

I am passionate about high quality learning experiences for teachers and students in the social studies. With the diminishing focus of assessment in social studies, I think it is critical that we bring the joy of learning back into focus for our students. To that end, I am a consistent supporter of extracurricular activities such as the Social Studies Fair and National History Day.

Throughout my tenure as a leader, GCSS has made a positive impact on my professional growth. If chosen to be president-elect, I vow to be a champion for social studies by growing membership and connecting with community partners. Thank you again for the consideration.

2018 Candidates for Board of Trustees

Min. Shawn T. Lee

Shawn T. Lee is a dynamic community leader, teacher, mentor, and minister. He is married to Tyese Lee and has one son Kaden and currently two foster sons. Gaining many degrees, Mr. Lee graduated from Tuskegee University, Mercer University, and Reformed Theological Seminary School; now pursuing a Ph.D. at Mercer University, studying educational leadership. Currently, Mr. Lee serves as a Social Studies Instructional Coach for Gwinnett County Public Schools. Mr. Lee has mentored and served students across Atlanta for over 20 years, in pursuit of his motto- "Serving Today to Leave a Legacy for Tomorrow!!"

Outside of his professional duties Mr. Lee passionately serves his community as a member of New Mercies Christian Church, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Incorporated, and Young Life. Mr. Lee has also collaboratively partnered with members of the City of Snellville council creating the Snellville Youth Commission, serving students from three high schools within the city limits.

Social Studies Education is what Mr. Lee considers the parenthetical link to civic engagement. He believes the cultivation of this country's future leaders happens when students experience high-quality social studies instruction. As a member of the GCSS Board of Trustees, Mr. Lee plans to dedicate his service to ensuring every student in Georgia has access to education that promotes transformative leadership and civic engagement.

Brian Sirmans

I am a 2005 graduate from Valdosta State University with a Bachelor's of Science in History Education. I earned a Master's degree from Troy University in Post-Secondary education and a Specialist Degree from Valdosta State University in Teaching and Learning and Educational Leadership. I have served as a social studies teacher for the past fourteen years in two South Georgia schools, three years at Coffee High School and eleven years at Lanier County High School. I currently serve as the Social Studies Department Chair and as the Student Council and Student Ambassadors advisor. I am also serving as the 2018 Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Lakeland/Lanier County Chamber of Commerce.

As a member of the Georgia Council for the Social Studies Board of Trustees, I hope to be a voice for rural schools, educators, and students in South Georgia. I want to make sure that small rural schools like Lanier County High School has a seat at the table to help influence the shape and future of social studies for our state. I am a very dedicated and hardworking leader who believes firmly in the principle of "service above self". It would be an honor to serve on this prestigious board and I humbly ask for your vote and support! Thank you for the honor of this nomination and I look forward to seeing you around the state as we work together to improve our discipline and foster a deeper respect and understanding for social studies education.