



Strategic Goals 2016

***Building Georgia's Next Generation
of Science Education***

Written by the 2015-2016 GSTA Board of Directors

www.georgiascienceteacher.org

2015-2016 Board of Directors

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GSTA FAST FACTS:

State Chapter of the National Science Teachers Association

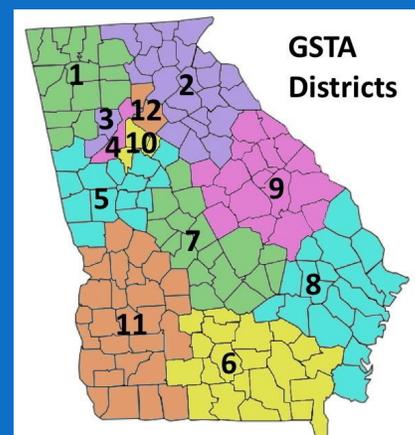
Non-profit, fully volunteer-run professional organization

Members include K-12 teachers, pre-service teachers, higher education faculty, informal educators, & education leaders

23 Volunteer Board Members

12 Districts Covering Georgia

1550+ Active Members



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Introduction

*The Georgia Science Teachers Association (GSTA) is committed to supporting excellence in science teaching for the students of Georgia. GSTA works to **CONNECT, INFORM, SUPPORT, and ADVOCATE** for science teachers in Georgia. We also seek to **PARTNER** with like-minded formal and informal science education organizations to further GSTA's mission and goals.*

GSTA's guiding documents shape the organization's work toward achieving this mission. After updating GSTA's constitution in 2014-2015, the GSTA Board of Directors moved on to GSTA's other main guiding document, the strategic plan. These documents are to be reviewed and revised on a five-year cycle. The current strategic goals were developed by the 2015-2016 GSTA Board of Directors, with input from the membership. The board began with initial goal setting in the spring of 2015. In fall 2015, the board sought member input through a strategic planning survey. Based on that input, the board worked to craft this final set of strategic goals, which will frame the work of the organization over the next five years. We are pleased now to share these goals with our membership, and we invite you to continue to engage with the organization as we work to bring these goals to fruition.

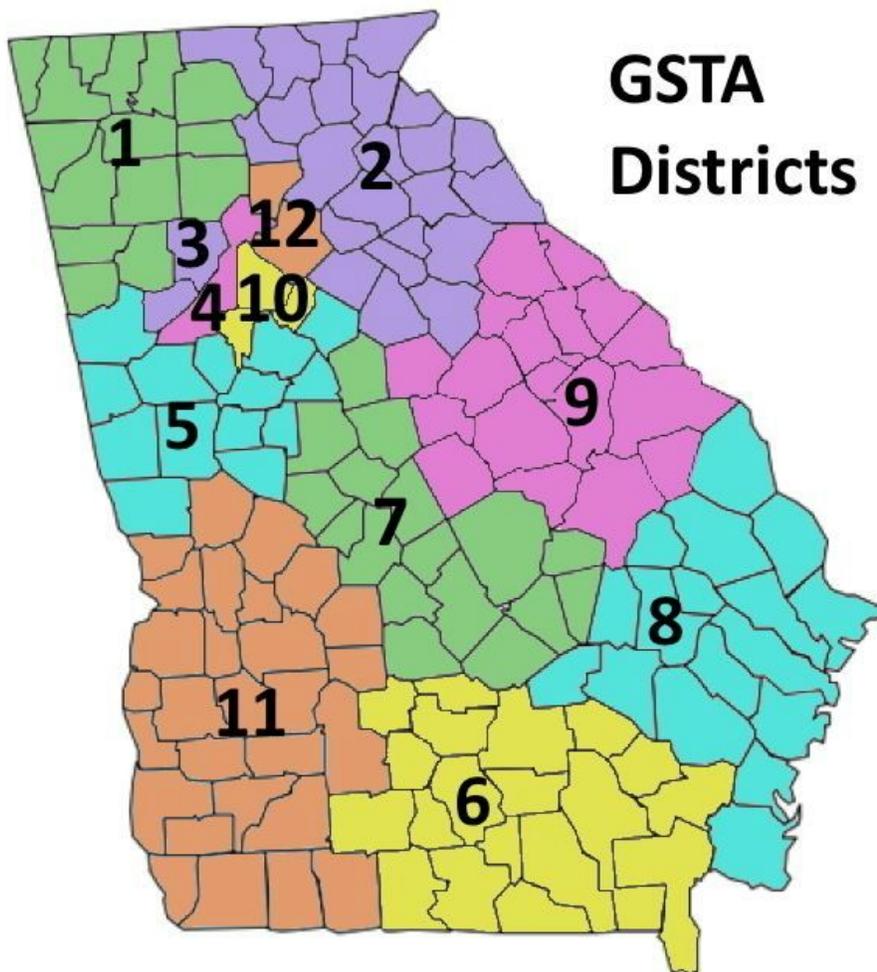
The following strategic goals are based on the GSTA board's recognition that excellent science teaching results from research-based best practices translated through the experience of expert teachers and connected to students' diverse identities and interests. The research base from which to draw those best practices for the science classroom is presented in *A Framework for K-12 Science Education* and associated research. The *Framework* sets out a vision for three-dimensional science learning in which students engage simultaneously in science and engineering practices (e.g., developing and using models) while learning and applying core ideas (i.e., content standards) and crosscutting concepts (i.e., big ideas like matter and energy) as they explain real-world phenomena and solve authentic problems. This three-dimensional approach should be reflected in curriculum, instruction, and assessment in Georgia's science classrooms.

In order to fulfill this new vision for science education, Georgia's teachers will need resources, support, and professional learning. GSTA will play a key role in implementing and sustaining this vision over the coming years. This vision comes along at the same time as an intense focus on STEM careers and STEM education. GSTA will lead the effort to promote a vision of STEM education that recognizes and builds upon the central role of science in STEM learning and careers.

Strategic Goal 1: Membership

CONNECT Georgia science teachers to vibrant local and statewide professional networks that enhance their classroom practice and the value of their membership.

Professional growth happens best when teachers are supported by collegial networks of like-minded professionals. GSTA should provide value to Georgia science teachers and grow the organization's membership by connecting members to active professional communities within GSTA districts and statewide that build on teachers' interests, grade-level needs, and content expertise.



GSTA membership districts, effective spring 2016

- Recognize excellence in science teaching through awards and grants.
- Develop services and resources that meet the unique needs of elementary, middle, and high school science teachers.
- Foster local professional networks through GSTA district events.
- Facilitate communication and collaboration through special-interest (grade-level, disciplinary, STEM, etc.) areas on the GSTA website and through targeted events at GSTA's annual conference.
- Leverage online social networks to enhance value to members, build awareness of the association, and foster collaboration among GSTA members and their colleagues.

Strategic Goal 2: Professional Learning

INFORM GSTA members through a variety of professional learning opportunities that enhance access to current, research-based practices for teachers at all levels, for all disciplines, and in all settings across Georgia.

GSTA professional learning will provide members with resources and programs, both in person and through virtual programs, that actively engage all members of the GSTA community in continuous professional growth, designed to increase the success of all students in science. Through an environment of collegiality and collaboration, all GSTA members will have opportunities to increase knowledge, improve performance, and enhance professional satisfaction.

- Provide the premier science professional learning experience in Georgia through the annual conference.
- Develop virtual opportunities to extend the reach of the GSTA conference.
- Increase statewide access to professional learning through face-to-face district events and by increasing the number of those events that include virtual access.
- Develop GSTA branded professional learning opportunities available online to members.



Teachers attend a GSTA 3D Science Saturday workshop

Strategic Goal 3: Professional Resources

SUPPORT GSTA members through professional resources that help teachers improve their practice, the academic lives of their students, and their school communities.

In the ever-changing world of science education, it is vital that teachers stay up to date with instructional resources and materials that will enable them to provide the best education to their students. Two key factors make it increasingly difficult for teachers to find and vet resources that are of high quality and appropriate for their students and learning goals. These include a move toward digital resources, which places a greater onus upon teachers to filter through a large number of unvetted resources to make ongoing curriculum decisions. Another factor is that Georgia's teacher-driven, state-specific standards require great care as teachers adopt and adapt instructional materials designed for other standards. The result is a void of high-quality, vetted resources that support mastery of Georgia's science standards within the specific contexts of classrooms across our state. GSTA must take the lead in filling the gap by creating, curating, hosting, and disseminating professional resources that meet the particular needs of Georgia's science teachers and students.

- Reimagine GSTA's website and publications to improve access to and increase awareness of existing resources and content, while engaging more GSTA members with new resources.
- Leverage the experience and expertise of GSTA leaders and members to create and curate resources that support research-based best practices for science and STEM education.
- Collaborate with science support organizations (RESAs, GYSTC, NSTA, etc.) to create or disseminate high-quality professional resources.

The screenshot shows the August 2014 issue of the eObservations newsletter. The header includes the date 'August 2014' and the title 'Building a Framework for Science Education in Georgia'. The logo for the Georgia Science Teachers Association is on the left, and the title 'eObservations' with the website 'www.georgiascienceteacher.org' is in the center. The main content is divided into three columns: 'In This Issue' with links to 'Building a Framework', 'Teacher Voice', 'Integrating with SEs', 'TKES Feedback & Improving Instruction', 'GSTA Recommends: DefinedSTEM Lessons', and 'GSTA/NSTA News'; 'From the Editors' featuring the article 'Building a Framework for Science Education in Georgia' with a summary and highlights; and 'General Highlights' featuring 'GSTA 2015 Conference: Make Plans to Attend & Present' with a graphic of puzzle pieces labeled with science topics (CCC, SEP, STEM, TKES) and a summary of the conference theme 'Science for All: Putting the Pieces Together'.

GSTA's eObservations *newsletter*

Strategic Goal 4: Advocacy

ADVOCATE for excellent science education in Georgia on behalf of teachers and students and encourage our members to raise their own voices in support of excellent science education for all students in our state.

While the STEM movement is bringing important attention to science education at all levels, other social and political forces are working to undermine the importance of science and science education in our society. To support excellent science teaching for all students in Georgia, GSTA and our members must advocate for the importance of science, science education, and the science teaching profession at local, state, and national levels. GSTA must work to support the central role of science in STEM education, along with approaches to science curricula, instruction, and assessment that are based on research and best practices and that engage all students, including traditionally underrepresented student populations, in authentic science learning.

- Engage and support GSTA members and other science educators in advocating at the local, state, and national levels.
- Position GSTA as a resource representing science teachers' perspectives to relevant state policy makers.
- Promote a positive image of science, science education, and the science teaching profession among other stakeholders.



GSTA representatives meet Governor Deal during 2016 Day at the Capitol

Strategic Goal 5: Community Outreach

***PARTNER* with informal science education stakeholders to facilitate science literacy opportunities for learners of all ages in real-world communities.**

Participation in science experiences and opportunities in the home and community promotes lifelong learning and a scientifically literate society. Students that come to school with exposure to and acceptance of science concepts through immersion in science experiences at home and in the community are better prepared to learn in the science classroom. Some examples of informal science learning opportunities can include museums, nature centers, science festivals, competitions, camps, science cafes, community science activities and more.

- Create and maintain a statewide informal science asset map and database to support teachers in making classroom-to- community learning connections.
- Seek local and statewide partnerships with informal science education organizations to further GSTA's mission and goals.

2016 GSTA FIELD TRIPS

Wednesday Evening: Thursday Afternoon:



GSTA Night at the Fernbank Science Center & Planetarium Show



F. Wayne Hill Water Resource Center



Fernbank Natural History Museum



Lockheed Martin Aerospace Company, Marietta Production facility

Friday Morning:



Stone Mountain Geology Tour



Yellow River Wastewater Treatment Plant



Yerkes Primate Research Center

Friday Afternoon:



Gwinnett County Environmental and Heritage Center



Chattoochee River National Recreational Area

Conference Field Trips, highlighting informal science learning opportunities