

GYSTC

2021 SUMMARY REPORT

JULY 1, 2020 – JUNE 30, 2021

"Just when the caterpillar thought the world was ending, it turned into a butterfly."

-author unknown

What a wonderful metaphor for science discovery! It brings to mind the picture of a child bored to tears in a classroom, staring out a window in search of any distraction, when suddenly, her teacher utters a word or phrase, or maybe conducts a simple experiment that lights a spark of fascination that lasts a lifetime!

These are the kinds of miracles that take place in GYSTC learning centers daily. They are the sparks that ignite young imaginations and propel our students forward to new avenues of discovery that lead to great things. Perhaps the 'great thing' is a satisfying future job in which those science basics are put to use; or perhaps it's that bit of knowledge that will stretch food crops and end world hunger; or maybe it will be an environmental discovery that powers the Earth without pollution.

Our anticipation, our expectation of 'great things' from our students are the engines that drive us as parents, educators, administrators, board, and staff. It is that promised potential that caterpillars can turn into butterflies that gives incentives to the work being done to ignite the minds of our children to create the jobs of the future.

This report is filled with profiles of some of the many high achievers who gave much of themselves over decades so that our children can dream and discover. As we turn a page to bid them farewell and usher in a new cohort of able leadership, we give thanks for the past, remain committed to the present, and are enormously hopeful about a future where all of our children can soar like butterflies in flight.

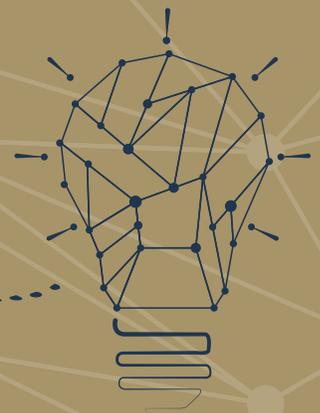


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MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BETSY GREEN

Dear Friends,

My time at **GYSTC** has drawn to a close. The years I've spent in Development and Executive Administration of this wonderful organization have been marked by steady progress in our climb toward excellence. Despite the inevitable bumps in the road every group endures, it is the steadiness of vision and our commitment to our mission of elevating science education that has sustained me most. I've been privileged to share and work toward our mission with many teams of the smartest and most inspiring leaders in Georgia. Their dedication, friendship, and energy have made my load light.

I have deeply enjoyed traveling around the state to see the creative, hard work our students do in classrooms, coaxed on by teachers who spend countless hours devising STEM activities that will challenge their curious, fresh minds to explore and discover. It's been a privilege to meet with parents who sacrifice precious time and every resource to give their children that priceless gift – education.

What can I say about the many individuals and institutions that literally make **GYSTC** possible, like **Kennesaw State University**, whose campus we call home – and the many other colleges, universities, RESAs, and museums that host our Regional Centers; the many board members who have served at the state and local levels; the Regional Coordinators who serve with pride and real ownership of the good work their Centers produce? I can never omit our teachers who share so much of themselves with their students and *all* of us. Already accomplished professionals, they continue to pursue *more* learning, and *more* techniques to make their classrooms true learning laboratories. Our corporate partners who share so generously of their dollars and technical expertise when needed deserve thanks and praise for their generous giving.

I can never say thank you enough to my support staff, **Dr. Tom Brown, Ms. Cheryl Cooley, Ms. Rhonda Harris, Ms. Jenna Henkel, Ms. Lynn Larsen, Mr. Cody Richards, and Regional Coordinators**. They have all been pivotal to whatever success I have had.

Finally, I can say with an honest heart, my tenure with **GYSTC** has been the adventure of a lifetime. There's an old proverb that tells us, "*It's not the destination, it's the journey.*" One leg of my passage has come to an end, and I hope to be nearby witnessing all the good things to come for **GYSTC**. Looking toward the future, I have great expectations for my journey ahead!

Best Wishes,

Betsy Green

"None of us got where we are by simply pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps. We got here because somebody — a parent, a teacher, an Ivy League crony or a few nuns — bent down and helped us put on our boots."

- Chief Justice Thurgood Marshall



WHAT IS GYSTC

The Georgia Youth Science & Technology Centers, Inc. provides quality programs for teachers of STEM subjects that improve the teaching and learning process at the K-8 levels. We present programs that change students' perceptions and inspire an appreciation for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics subjects.

Throughout its 32 year history, the Georgia Youth Science & Technology Center, Inc. has supported school districts with supplemental STEM education for K-8 students and professional development training for their teachers. GYSTC delivers these services on multiple platforms, both virtual and in-person, by suggesting and sponsoring student learning activities wholly focused on building exposure, aptitude, and enthusiasm for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Beyond students, teachers and school administrators, GYSTC's holistic approach to support STEM aptitude incorporates entire school communities of parents, siblings, community organizations, local businesses, and major corporations throughout the state.

For K-8 teachers, GYSTC offers professional training opportunities to bolster core competencies in STEM and keep educators abreast of cutting-edge information to enhance classroom instruction. In addition, GYSTC annually recognizes individual teacher achievement and creativity through competitive awards that bundle public acclaim with coveted prizes that support extra teaching resources for the classroom.

GYSTC currently maintains regional offices serving most of Georgia. While every regional center has access to all GYSTC core programs and benefits, there is much latitude for customization based on the unique features and needs of each demographic and region. Of highest concern are areas of greatest need where communities may be impacted by poverty, low literacy rates, little or no access to public or private transportation, and limited or no access to broadband internet. They require special attention. GYSTC rigorously pursues public and private funding through grants, contributions and donations from corporations, foundations, and individuals in support of its general programs and the urgent needs of these challenged Georgia communities.

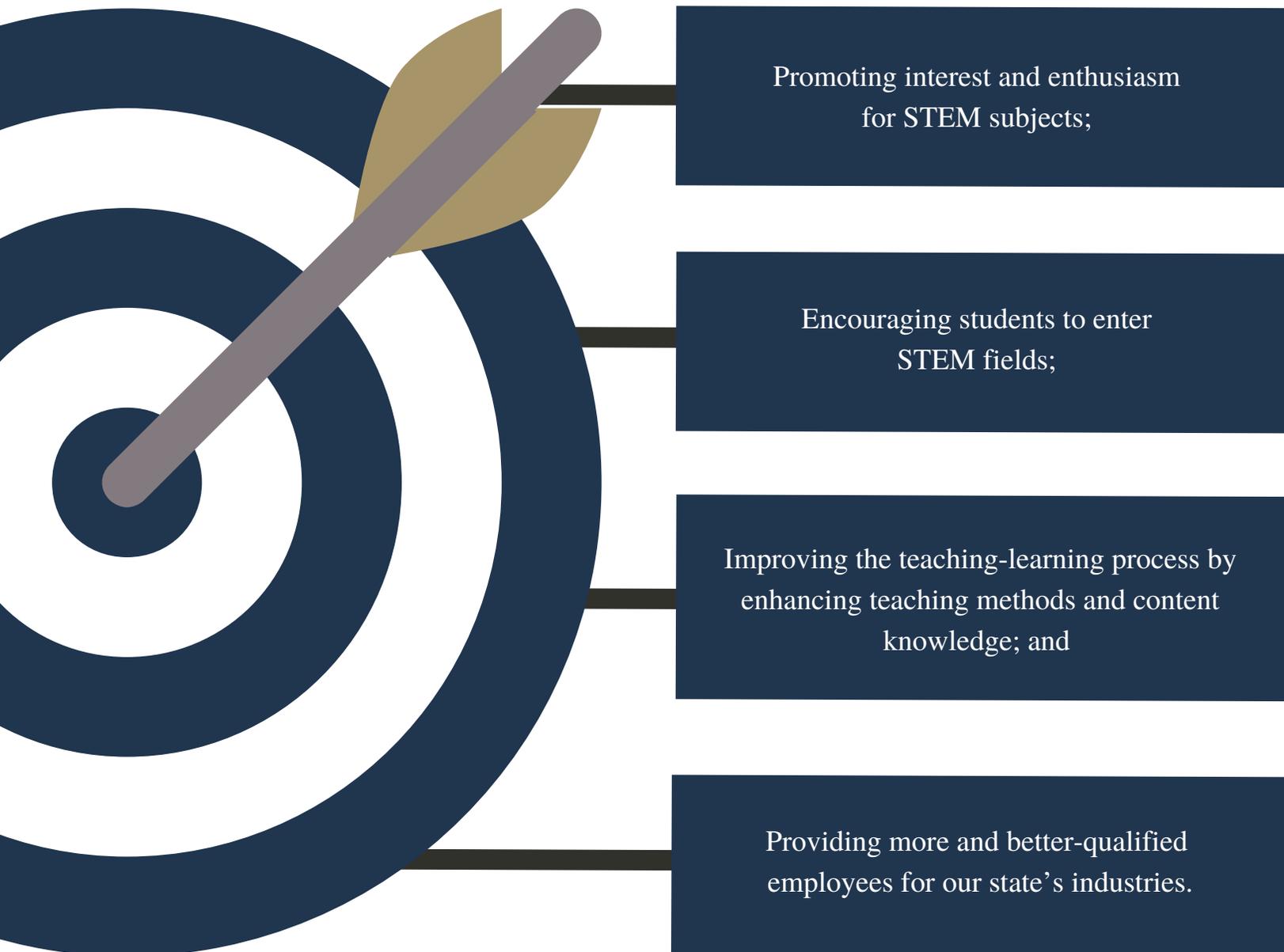


"Be a fountain, not a drain."

- Rex Hudler

GOALS

GYSTC focuses on four main goals aimed at enhancing teaching and learning in the STEM disciplines:



GYSTC BROADENS ITS OUTREACH AT ABRAHAM BALDWIN AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

One of the many sparks of genius that ignite and keep the fires of science education burning bright at **GYSTC** is the strategic placement of our Regional Centers on the campuses of some of Georgia's premier colleges and universities. Another such pairing has just occurred with the announcement of a new Regional Center in **Tifton, Georgia** to be located on the campus of the **Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC)**, a four-year college where students can pursue a full range of academic offerings with, as the college's name implies, a priority focus on all things green and growing.

The advantages of college co-locations are many. Both **Betsy Green**, outgoing **GYSTC Executive Director**, and **Dr. David Bridges**, **ABAC'S President** agree that the benefits are mutual. **Ms. Green** said, "We've had wonderful success tapping the multiple resources available in college settings, and an often-overlooked intangible is the early familiarity with college life young children are exposed to. It makes our children feel that college is an achievable goal for them because they've already been there," she said with a smile.

Dr. Bridges is equally enthusiastic, "We're delighted to host a new **GYSTC** program at **ABAC**," he said. "It extends our education pipeline down to the earliest learners which is especially important in this rural part of the state." No stranger to **GYSTC**, **Dr. Bridges** has followed its progress since its beginnings and was familiar with its program in nearby **Bainbridge**. **Dr. Bridges** continued, "Obviously, science is critically important to our world, but on a local level it's especially important to **ABAC** and Georgia with our strong emphasis on agribusiness. It's the top industry in our state." **GYSTC at South Georgia** located at **ABAC's Tifton Campus** and **Southwest GYSTC** located at **ABAC's Bainbridge site** are both under the **Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College** umbrella.

GYSTC at South Georgia will join the network of eleven regional centers and programs in addition to the **GYSTC Headquarters** and we are excited and grateful for this partnership with **Dr. Bridges** and the **ABAC** community. Stay tuned!

GEORGIA STEM SCHOLAR AWARDS

GYSTC honors 23 recipients of our coveted 2021 Georgia STEM Scholar Awards. This outstanding group of educators was chosen for their thoughtful engagement with their students which, over the last year, resulted in imaginative classroom lessons that taught and support science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. As parents, employers, and citizens we hope all our teachers are competent, enthusiastic and caring. Our awardees certainly meet and exceed these basic criteria. But what sets them apart and what they are being cited for in these awards are two key factors. First, they have shown a special aptitude for identifying the unique strengths and potential of their students and have conceived and executed classroom lessons that tap that promise. They have engaged and excited their students' capacity to learn and build confidence – not only in their ability to master STEM, but to master lessons of successful living. Second, our recipients also launched student projects whose impact reached past the classroom to involve their entire school community, parents, colleagues, and regional leaders who are STEM professionals and supporters. Our recipients are winners! Winners for their students. Winners for their communities. Winners for our state, and winners for the teaching profession. They exemplify everything we want and hope our teachers will be. It is our duty and delight to honor them!

2021 GEORGIA STEM SCHOLAR AWARD RECIPIENTS



Ms. Ashley Bailey
Barrow County Schools, Arts & Innovation Magnet Program
“MakerSpace”

Ashley facilitated receipt of a grant of \$5,000 in 2015 for Innovation in Teaching that resulted in ever-increasing benefits to student STEM and STEAM learning at her school. Most significantly, the grant helped secure a new 6,000 square foot MakerSpace where students can stretch their creative energies using ten 3D printing stations to bring their ideas to life. Guided exercises and solo experimentation are encouraged.

Ms. Gretchen Hollingsworth
Barrow County Schools, Barrow Arts and Sciences Academy
“Tiny House”

This engaging lesson introduced the concept of minimalism and showed how it can be used in multiple ways. Students observed rock formations and created a dance performance utilizing minimalist principles to convey how rocks might have been created when imagined through a dance lens. Their second project had them design, construct, and advertise a tiny house – all employing minimalist art forms and standards.



Ms. Katrina Vaughn
Ben Hill County Schools, Ben Hill Middle School
“Toy Performance Task”

The "Toy Performance Task" introduced students to the vocabulary of potential, kinetic energy, and simple machines. By rotating through interactive learning stations, they earned extra points through deeper engagement with the concepts then using virtual or recorded lab experiments to create a diagram or build an actual toy using simple machines. It was a great learning experiment in physical science.



Ms. Lauren Avant
Bryan County Schools, Richmond Hill Middle School
“What's That Smell?”

The lesson involved roadkill, engineering a mobile app, and local community partners. Students focused on how human activity affects local wildlife. They aimed to decrease animal fatalities due to vehicle traffic on local roads. They designed a mobile app and collected and evaluated data on traffic patterns that put animals at risk, then proposed building pathways to divert animals away from roadway harm. The exercise increased student sensitivity and heightened their awareness of the importance of animal preservation while using STEM skills to help the environment.



Ms. Tracey Cleek
Carrollton City Schools, Carrollton Elementary School
“Buffalo Creek Learning Experiences”

Students used a local creek to conduct multiple experiments involving force and motion; factors that cause erosion; how litter and pollution affect the ecosystem of fragile waterways and the experience of firsthand interaction with their environment. It was a unique and useful learning lesson that taught the vital role nature plays in the daily life of humans and other life forms that share our planet – even at the micro-level of a local creek.



Ms. Evonne Hackett
Catoosa County Schools, Lakeview Middle School
“Moveable Work of Art”

Students undertook an exercise to build a moveable work of art. They documented their design and build process on Google Slides and were excited with the results. They are eager to move into phase two which will bring their work to life using 2D and 3D printing.



Ms. Courtney Chastain
Carroll County Schools, Central Elementary School
“Tinkercad 3D Biome”

Fourth graders used the Tinkercad 3D design platform to build an ecosystem to examine the roles and responsibilities of biotic and abiotic factors and how energy flows through the system. Students learned the ins and outs of 3D printing as they designed on Tinkercad and watched their creations come to life. It was an exciting lesson that introduced children to new STEM technologies.



FY 2020 & FY 2021 Georgia STEM Scholar Award Recipients (Carroll County)

Front Row: Ms. Andrea Lawson, Ms. Courtney Chastain (accepted by Mr. Matthew Huckeba),
 Dr. Manda Campbell, & Ms. Jennifer Carroll

Back Row: Mr. Don Barbour, Mr. Ricky Murphy, Dr. Scott Cowart, and Mrs. Christi McLendon



Ms. Andrea Lawson
Carroll County Schools, Roopville Elementary School
“Pioneer STEM Day”

Andrea advised the third through fifth grade STEAM Club and coordinated a Pioneer STEM Day which showed how past generations may have relied on STEM techniques to carry out necessary chores with yesterday’s limited resources. Canning, quilting, churning butter, and similar tasks were used by example. Pioneer Day brought students and the community together to do the same tasks using today’s tools.



Ms. Daniele Deneka
Cherokee County Schools, ET Booth Middle School
“Go Baby Go”

“Go-Baby-Go” taught multiple lessons, the most important of which was empathy, compassion, and awareness of differently-abled students. Booth students used math, art, engineering science, imagination, and user-centered design to modify the seating and operation of Power Wheels – motorized wheelchairs which were then donated to the school district for use by students in need.

Mr. Scott Reece
Cherokee County Schools, Teasley Middle School
“Improve or Invent”

Students created a new product or improved an existing one by designing on paper then drawing it in Tinkercad. They then developed a full marketing and advertising campaign “Shark Tank” style and 3D printed the winning products.



Ms. Bonnie Kirkley
Colquitt County Schools, R.B. Wright Elementary School
“Invention Mash-ups”

Third and fourth graders learned about “forced connection,” a strategy used by companies to foster creativity in product design. Students used the Engineering Design Process to create their design models. Upon completion, they marketed their model, sought feedback from potential consumers, and used that information to refine their end product.



Ms. Kristina Glenn
Douglas County Schools, Arbor Station Elementary School
“Flood Prevention”

Students were introduced to the real-world devastation of floods – even small ones that result from heavy downpours or persistent, steady rainfall. All can pose a threat to humans, animals, property, and the environment. Students were challenged to build a flood-proof doghouse using STEM knowledge and tools. Their successful design resulted in feelings of accomplishment, empowerment, and bolstered problem-solving skills.



Ms. Kim Patterson
Fannin County Schools, West Fannin Elementary School
“Spring Exhibition”

Students met twice a week and were introduced to Scientific Investigative Research to study hydroponics, the sugar content of fruits, fruit fly mating habits, the resting heart rates of athletes, paper making, and using simple statistics to predict results of sporting game score outcomes. A Spring Exhibition invited parents to come out and view the results of the children’s hard work in conducting these diverse and amazing number of inquiries.



Ms. Kimberly Acosta
Harris County Schools, Harris County Carver Middle School
“Tinkercad Coins”

The Engineering Design Process was used in conjunction with Tinkercad and 3D printing to learn how coins are designed and made. Students fashioned coins of their own embellished with signs and symbols of importance to themselves like sports names and logos. The personalized coins served as tangible reminders of a fun lesson that produced a real product.

Ms. Andrea Rowe
Jackson County Schools, West Jackson Elementary School
“Chicken Coop Redesign”

First graders problem solved by remodeling the school’s chicken coop to safely house hens and roosters and ease the egg collection task. They used LEGOS, Play-Doh, and other creative toys for construction. This fun activity introduced STEM skills in math, drawing, design, and simple engineering. Both the chickens and the children enjoyed the project.



Mrs. ScottiAnn Benton
Jasper County Schools, Jasper County Middle School
“Biology in a Bottle Battle”

Students were given one work partner, one two-liter bottle, one organism, and one week to engineer a microsystem that could stand the test of time. As they worked through the engineering design process they discovered how to work in partnership, the balance of abiotic and biotic factors, the cycling of nutrients, and how to care for a living organism. A challenging lesson!



Ms. Donna Whitfield
Jefferson City Schools, Jefferson Academy
“Gravity Defying Magnets”

On paper, students wrote all they thought they knew about magnets and then penned all they wanted to learn. They were challenged to take on four gravity-defying tasks in which magnets were employed in scrap metal collection, magnetic resonance machines, and cargo and passenger trains. Students used small everyday materials to build scale models of their designs for this challenge. For example, they built an electromagnet that could lift varying amounts of magnetic objects like paper clips. It was an exciting, thought-provoking lesson.

Ms. Tracy Porter
Marion County Schools, L. K. Moss Elementary School
“Johnny Appleseed”

Students built self-confidence, leadership skills, personal growth, and leadership essentials through exposure to the STEM Johnny Appleseed Unit. Participant’s individual and collective confidence grew with each lesson resulting in enthusiasm for each new experiment.



Ms. Jennifer Haynes
Morgan County Schools, Morgan County Primary School
“Monarch Butterflies”

K-2 students became Citizen Scientists when they planted and cared for the school garden. Their study of the life cycle of the Monarch Butterfly during its peak migration season in October led them to harvest seeds from their garden milkweed plants and create seed packets to share with the school community. Students felt proud that their efforts will aid in the propagation of these important species.

Ms. Denisse Maddox
Oconee County Schools, Dove Creek Elementary School
“Grow Up a STEAMer”

Fourth grade students used the Wonder Workshop DASH Robot to learn the map of the U.S., then coded the robot to find points of latitude and longitude on the map. This fun geography exercise focused on supporting Georgia Standards of Excellence for the grade level while teaching coding, robotics, and familiarity with the location of different states and regions within the U.S.



Ms. Jennifer Godbout
Paulding County Schools, P.B. Ritch Middle School
“School Culture Product Creation”

Students were challenged to use the RMS Design Process to create a product that would accurately reflect the school’s culture. They applied real-world knowledge to create an end product that was relevant and meaningful to them. The showcased results reflected the school’s culture by encouraging students to use their voice and choice.



Ms. Elizabeth Walker
Paulding County Schools, Irma C. Austin Middle School
“Field Trip to Space”

Students utilized the engineering design process and considerable math skills to investigate and build critical items they would need for space travel to another planet. This exercise involved wide thinking about all the items a person or team would require for inter-planetary travel. Students had to imagine and design spacesuits, spaceships, and suitcases containing all the essential items travelers would take to sustain themselves on the journey. The highly creative exercise had students thinking beyond boundaries and involved using multiple STEM skills.

FY 2020 & FY 2021
Georgia STEM Scholar Award
Recipients (Thomas County)

Left to right:

Dr. Scott Sweeting, Mr. Adam Starr, State Superintendent Richard Woods, Ms. Betsy Green, Mr. William Hanna, Ms. Tammy Sharpe, Dr. Lisa Williams, Ms. Tammy Nowell, Ms. Karen Rowland, Ms. Erin Rehberg, and Mr. Charles Evans



Mr. William Hanna
Thomas County Schools, Thomas County Middle School
“Arduino Pinball Machine”

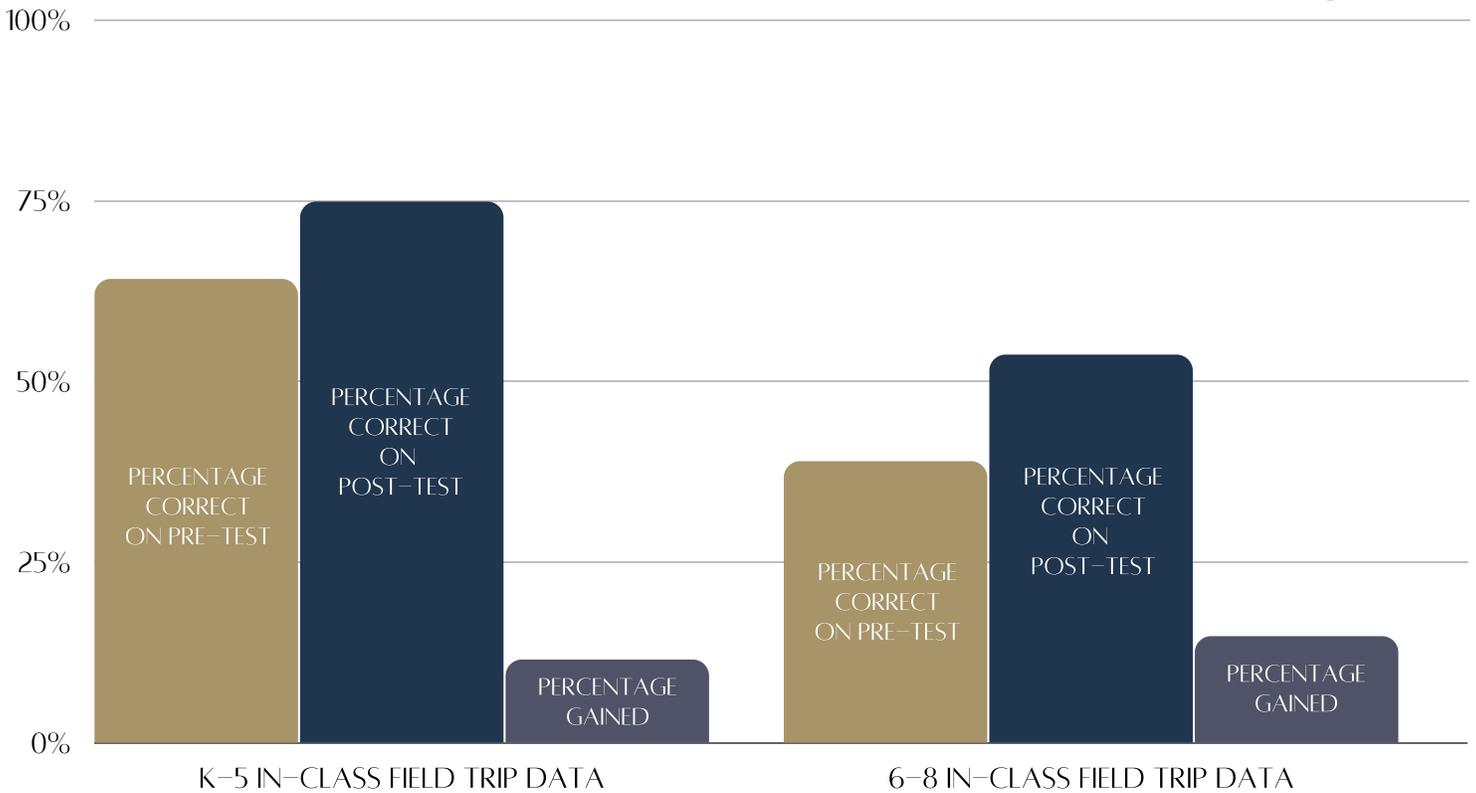
Students elected to build a pinball machine and divided constructing its various parts into different teams. All used physical science concepts like circuitry, light, energy conservation, force, and gravity to assemble their respective parts. They are currently building a pinball prototype using 3D printing. Students loved the lesson!

LEARNING STEM VIRTUALLY

GYSTC continued to provide quality programs for students and teachers across the state of Georgia during the pandemic by quickly transitioning traditional in-class field trips to virtual field trips. This transition allowed us to keep students engaged in learning STEM. As with any program, we desire to provide quality instruction which results in higher student achievement. During this unusual time, all students participating did not take the pre/post-test; some took only the pretest, while some took neither. The students taking the post-test did take the pretest. *(The data chart below shows a sample of a random assortment of 2,859 K-5 students and 1,664 6-8 students participating in various field trips with pre-test and post-test data.)*



A GYSTC Virtual In-Class Field Trip



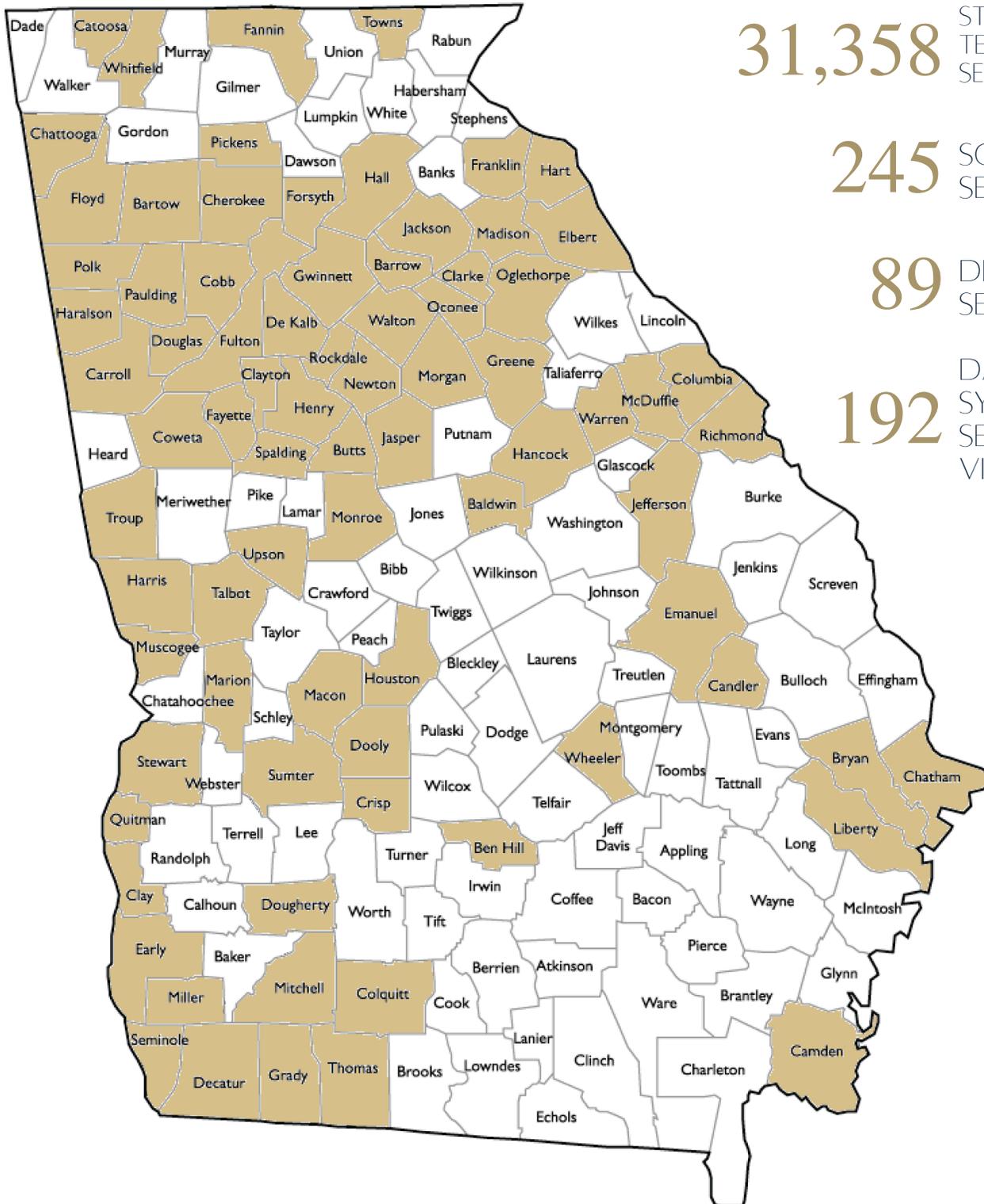
23,965 STUDENTS SERVED

51 SCHOOL DISTRICTS SERVED

PROGRAM AND SERVICE IMPACT

(JULY 1, 2020 – JUNE 30, 2021)

Consistently, GYSTC strategies have been to implement its mission through Professional Learning Workshops, STEM Teacher Academies, STEM Discovery Camps, In-Class Field Trips, Family STEM Events, and Afterschool Activities.



31,358 STUDENTS & TEACHERS SERVED

245 SCHOOLS SERVED

89 DISTRICTS SERVED

192 DAYS IN WHICH SYSTEMS WERE SERVED VIRTUALLY

PROGRAM DISTRIBUTION

(JULY 1, 2020 – JUNE 30, 2021)

During the FY 2021 school year, GYSTC program distribution percentage for teachers was 9.5%. Because of the pandemic, GYSTC was limited only to online services. GYSTC was able to reach more students virtually, and therefore our student program distribution was 90.5% .

STUDENT PROGRAMS

90.5%



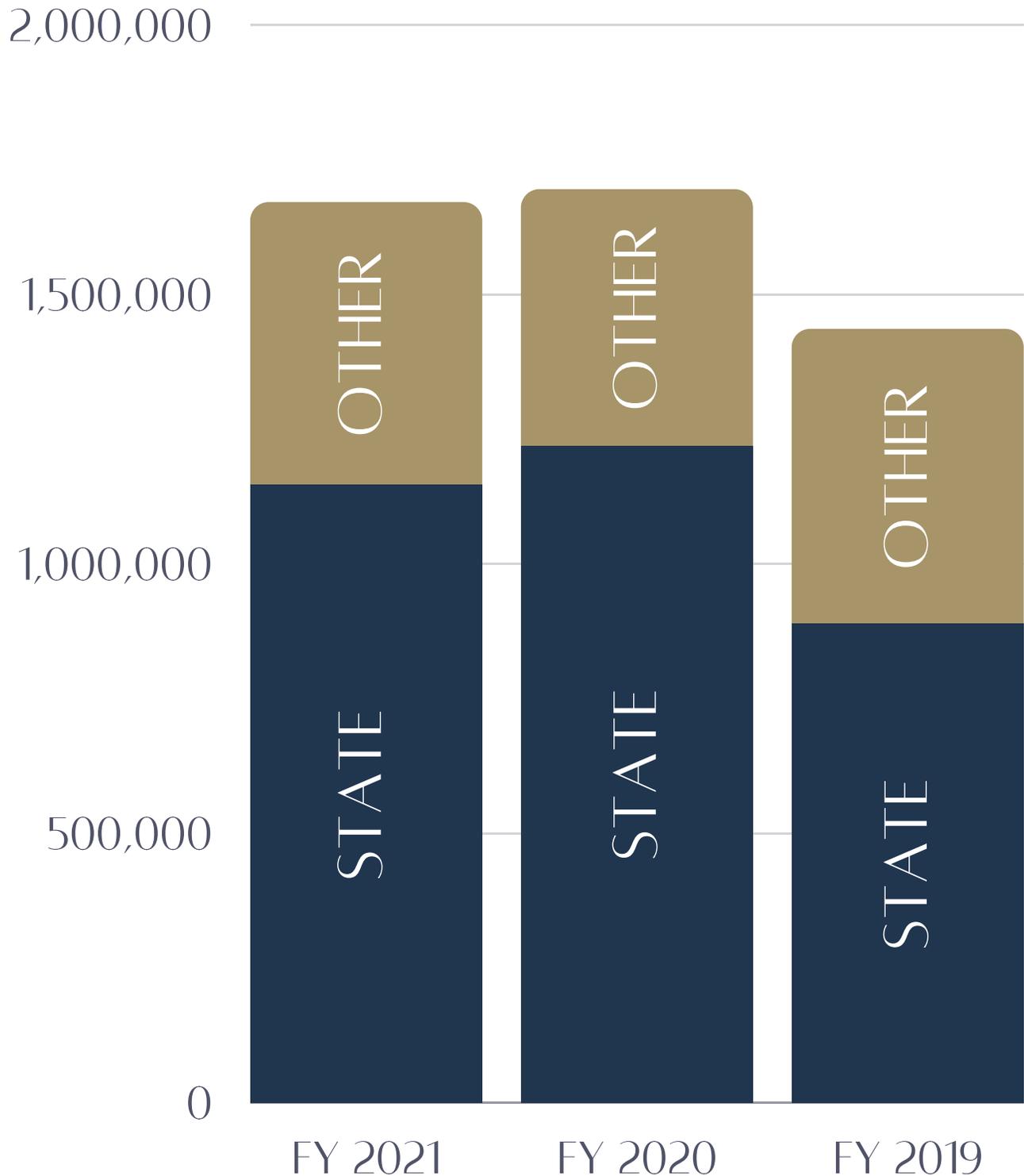
TEACHER PROGRAMS

9.5%

FUNDING SOURCES

(JULY 1, 2020 – JUNE 30, 2021)

GYSTC operates efficiently. More than 80% of its functional budget is used for programs and instructional support. GYSTC operating funds come from state and other funds such as private and program income.



GYSTC WELCOMES KATHLEEN ATKINS

AS NEW STATE BOARD CHAIR

The **GYSTC** board elected a new chairperson at its June meeting. **Kathleen Atkins**, a six-year veteran of the board, will lead a largely new cohort of members who were also named at the meeting. **Ms. Atkins** succeeds **Mr. Don Barbour** who stepped down after serving a six-year term.

Ms. Atkins serves as a Program Manager for **Lockheed Martin**, a longtime supporter of **GYSTC**. An engineer by profession, **Ms. Atkins** expressed great enthusiasm about her new role as board chair and looks forward to continuing the legacy of introducing careers in STEM to new populations of Georgia students. "As an engineer myself, of course, I'm a little biased toward encouraging interest in that direction," she said. "It's been a great career choice that's afforded me many opportunities to stretch and grow and assist in cutting-edge technology at the highest levels."

Ms. Atkins is a champion of **GYSTC** educators and the novel ways they approach teaching STEM. "I'm a real cheerleader for our teachers and the wonderful work they do encouraging the youngest students to explore and learn about the wonders of science," she said. In 2018, **Lockheed** hosted a tour of its facility and a welcoming reception for the opening of **GYSTC's STEM Teacher Academy**, a popular program designed around boosting elementary and middle school teachers' abilities in that area and doing so in a collegial atmosphere where teachers share and exchange teaching paradigms and lessons that work. **Ms. Atkins** said, "The STEM Teacher Academy is the kind of program **Lockheed** loves to support. Although we've contributed many dollars to **GYSTC's** overall programming over its history, we feel that the Academy helps students and teachers at once," she concluded.

Ms. Atkins is also enthusiastic about working with new board members and a new Executive Director. "I can't say enough good things about the great leadership of outgoing **Executive Director Betsy Green**. She's done a good job, along with our past board members, of guiding **GYSTC** through some rough patches. But they've left us in excellent shape and strongly positioned for an exciting future. I'm ready for the challenge to make that future a reality." she said.

Congratulations **Kathleen Atkins!** **GYSTC** welcomes you aboard!



State Board Chair
Ms. Kathleen Atkins



Ms. Kathleen Atkins and
Mr. Don Barbour

GYSTC WELCOMES

NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: AMANDA BUICE

Enormous capability joins critical opportunity - may be the best introduction to **Amanda Buice** as **GYSTC's** new Executive Director. It is hard to imagine a background and credentials more aptly suited for the position than her own. **Ms. Buice's** resume reveals an extensive history in science education having most recently developed, managed, and monitored multiple grants and programs under the auspices of the Georgia Department of Education (DOE). Her expansive experience as an educator, administrator, grant writer, and liaison between DOE and school districts, community groups, and other education-focused entities is more than impressive. Of special note and relevance to GYSTC is her knowledge of DOE standards and practices for school compliance with expected outcomes at each grade level.

No stranger to **GYSTC**, **Ms. Buice** has served the organization as a former board member, Director of Programs and Curriculum, and Regional Coordinator. With this deep knowledge of our systems and functions, there will be no need for a lengthy orientation. Clearly, she is poised for success and is both friend and advocate for **GYSTC** and its mission.

Ms. Buice is a person of gentle humor and wide insights and opinions about science education for young learners. When asked what she sees on the horizon for this population, she said, "Go lower! Pre-school is not too early to introduce basic exposure to STEM. Today's children are remarkably receptive and incredibly smart. Even toddlers have become 'device oriented' in terms of their playthings, many of which are actually powered by computers. Kids' natural curiosity propels them to want to know how and why things work. We need to take advantage of that and put them on pathways to science as early as possible."

It's apparent **Amanda Buice** is both ready and able to lead with vigor and craft exciting new ideas for **GYSTC**. Congratulations **Madam Director**. **GYSTC** is looking forward to working with you!



New GYSTC Executive Director
Ms. Amanda Buice



Ms. Amanda Buice,
Ms. Rhonda Toon, and
Dr. Aaron Buice

DEDICATION, INSPIRATION, REALIZATION: FIVE WHO GENEROUSLY SERVED

Five **GYSTC** luminaries are passing the torch to a new generation of leaders. Combined, their years of service to **GYSTC** well exceed 100. They have served with drive, foresight, commitment, and an acute understanding of the imperatives necessary to fulfill the **GYSTC** mission to elevate science education and make it accessible to young students and their teachers throughout Georgia. While working cooperatively as board and staff to deliver on the mission, each of these key influencers in their respective fields carved out individual areas of focus and deep wells of professional and personal resources covering business and industry, state and local governance, education, non-profit development and management, law, science, and rich and varied life experience. They shared generously! To **GYSTC**'s benefit, their enormous contributions have positioned our organization to continue its good work on solid ground.

Surely the vital legacies that today enable **GYSTC** to enjoy a reputation for solid capabilities, quality teacher training, innovative science curricula, providing K-8 students opportunities to tap the resources of our state's major universities, expanding the **GYSTC** footprint to wider, underserved communities – surely these *major* achievements are noteworthy beyond measure. But there are greater, more profound and soul-stirring legacies these five pioneers leave us. They are living examples of *vision* and perseverance. These intangible qualities enabled **GYSTC** to survive when times were lean – when the national economic crisis in the first decade of this century evaporated state funding and in turn, the **GYSTC** operating budget decreased to near zero. During other periods, multiple Centers closed; Regional Coordinator positions remained unfilled. The outlook for **GYSTC** was grim. With **GYSTC** board members and staff's commitment, the vision and perseverance prevailed! It was their deep commitment, far-sightedness, and can-do attitude that dug **GYSTC** out of an organizational morass. Their guidance, encouragement, and endless boosterism of the **GYSTC** mission to all who would listen began and has sustained the rebuild to higher heights.

Perhaps it is their cumulative life experience that gave them the individual and collective wisdom to endure and prevail; or perhaps it is the mettle of strong character and commitment to promises made. Whatever the reasons, **GYSTC** and thousands of children experiencing new horizons of learning are the beneficiaries of their tenacity and exceptionalism.

We are ever grateful for their quantity of achievement and quality of leadership, but especially for the steady hands that so ably guided this science ship called **GYSTC**.

Thank You!

DON BARBOUR



Immediate Past Chair
Mr. Don Barbour



Rep. Matthew Gambill and
Mr. Don Barbour

Retiring **GYSTC Board Chair Don Barbour** served in that capacity since 2019, following a six-year stint as the board's **Vice-Chair** under the leadership of past board chair, **Tanya Blalock**. During his tenure, **GYSTC** experienced times flush and fallow, but thanks to **Mr. Barbour**, major organizational support was consistently provided by **AT&T**, where he served as **Regional Director of External Affairs for AT&T Georgia** and held responsibility for the corporation's governmental affairs for all of Northwest Georgia and North Fulton, a 24 county region. In that capacity, he served as the company representative for all business, civic, community, cultural, education, economic development, and governmental activities within the region. His pivotal position allowed him a wide overview of the non-profit landscape in Georgia's most populous regions and the needs of many organizations that, like **GYSTC**, depend on corporate support to meet their goals.

Over the years, and thanks to **Mr. Barbour's** leadership, **AT&T** has been a true friend and important corporate partner to **GYSTC**. Their generosity in the form of numerous gifts and grants has enabled many innovative STEM projects to flourish under the **GYSTC** banner. As one of the nation's premier providers of telecommunications and broadband services, the technical expertise and resources they contributed are invaluable.

On a personal level, **Don Barbour's** outgoing demeanor and personal charisma are legendary. Never one to meet a stranger, his generosity of spirit, enthusiasm, and willingness to work around obstacles to find creative solutions are hallmarks of true leadership. As he serves as immediate past chair on the **GYSTC** board, he leaves a lasting impression of effective leadership. Big shoes to fill! Thank you so much for your service!

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson



DON CARGILL

Mr. Don Cargill sees no reason why **GYSTC** should not exceed expectations. From the earliest days of its existence, the **GYSTC** founders and their ever-growing body of supporters perceived **GYSTC's** purpose as the starting point of a production pipeline for well-prepared, science-oriented, technically educated workers to fill Georgia's ongoing workforce needs. And it has been that. Georgia's high school and college graduates, well versed in STEM, are staying in place post-graduation. They are finding well-paying jobs in leading Georgia industries like agribusiness, timber, television and film production, and cyber and technology enterprises of all kinds. They are filling existing jobs in old and new businesses. And for most, that's enough. But not **Don Cargill**.

Mr. Cargill is a **GYSTC** co-founder and one of the early visionaries who surveyed the landscape of possibilities and saw *more*. While others were content to cultivate a love of science in elementary children in hopes that they would retain that interest and become better workers for Georgia jobs, **Mr. Cargill** envisioned a different kind of STEM student – one who would be groomed to *imagine, innovate, and create new jobs and industries* in Georgia.

"I never like to think of our brilliant kids as robotic machines whose future work will lack imagination and leave them vulnerable to replacement by automation," he said. "At **GYSTC**, we have an opportunity to train them to think creatively and independently about structuring new and *better* ways to do things and maybe create new industries in the process."

For one who has spent 32 years institution-building this great organization, **Mr. Cargill's** vision remains bright and laser-focused on innovation and future possibilities. If he had a motto, it might be, "Don't hesitate, Innovate!" Thanks for dreaming **BIG Don Cargill!**



Mr. Don Cargill
Co-Founder of GYSTC



Mr. Don Cargill and
Ms. Kay Marshall



"Every day we are born fresh. What matters is what we do with the day."

- Buddhist Proverb

BETSY GREEN



GYSTC Outgoing
Executive Director
Ms. Betsy Green



Past State Board Chair
Ms. Tonya Blalock
and Ms. Betsy Green

Like the other departing luminaries, **Ms. Betsy Green** is a long-time member of the **GYSTC** family. A gifted administrator, **Ms. Green** served as **Development Officer** for **GYSTC** before assuming the role of **Executive Director** in 2012. Three words that best describe her executive tenure might be, *inspired, informed,* and *accomplished*. **Ms. Green** is deeply inspired by the **GYSTC** mission, its humble beginnings, and its wide potential for continued growth.

As a veteran witness to **GYSTC's** history, structure, highs and lows, she has been a keen observer of what's best, what's good, and what needs improvement across the vast landscape of 14 regional centers she supervised around Georgia. She has stayed *informed* about all kinds of issues, particularly those at the state government level that might impact funding. No stranger to the General Assembly, **Ms. Green** realized early on the benefits of developing cordial relationships with legislators and she has enjoyed many. She has been a careful steward of **GYSTC's** budget by seeking and receiving grants large and small to maximize programming. A wearer of many hats, **Ms. Green** stays *informed* about issues that may impact the organization at every level and has made it her priority to ensure that children in school districts with the fewest resources remain squarely in the learning loop.

She has *accomplished* much in the area of professional development for teachers by answering their call for more and better training in current STEM trends via **GYSTC's STEM Teacher Academy**. Teachers have responded by churning out an array of novel, award-winning, and imaginative science curricula for their students.

Betsy Green has earned a reputation for getting things *done*! A virtual whirlwind of activity, she believes in personal contact with staff and families that has kept her on the road visiting, learning, observing, and congratulating the many communities **GYSTC** serves. Never one to meet a stranger, at least half of her success has been the result of an infectious good nature and the glow of personal warmth and genuine interest she exudes. **Ms. Green's** innate leadership abilities have been ably demonstrated and exercised over the last near-decade. **GYSTC** has been highly favored to have her at the helm!

H. BOYD PETTIT, III

Mr. H. Boyd Pettit, III is one of the early visionaries who gave **GYSTC** its start and cemented its place as a leader in STEM education for the youngest learners. **Mr. Pettit's** relationship with **GYSTC** reaches back 30 years when he, along with the late co-founders **Beverly Golden** and **Jim Thompson** joined **Don Cargill** (another retiring board member) and a few others in conceptualizing the need for more focused science education for K-8 children and their teachers. In 1989, STEM was barely a concept, let alone a notable acronym. It was indeed prescient for the **GYSTC** founders to foresee that in coming years science would birth new technologies that would change every aspect of life.

A career attorney employed by local school boards, **Mr. Pettit** was no stranger to the challenges school systems face in identifying sufficient resources to ensure children receive quality education. But **GYSTC** would need *more*. The founders wanted to ensure that Georgia elementary *teachers* would also be equipped with the latest and best training to deliver cutting-edge instruction to Georgia students. The new **GYSTC** board thought there was every reason to expect the state of Georgia would be happy to fund such a project. **Mr. Pettit** had a more realistic view. He knew that every legislator in the General Assembly was besieged with funding requests. He also knew that without an ask, one will never receive. **Boyd Pettit, III** created a niche for himself as **GYSTC's** first (and best) cheerleader at the state capitol. His consistent, persistent lobbying efforts have yielded impressive results.

Mr. Pettit's advocacy established **GYSTC's** name and needs firmly in the minds of lawmakers as an essential recipient of annual state funding. And while he rarely got every dollar requested, it was almost always enough to see **GYSTC** through.

Boyd Pettit, III is a powerhouse of quiet persuasiveness. His soft approach and modest bearing belie a steely resolve to defend and provide for those missions closest to his heart. Luckily, **GYSTC** has been one of them. **Mr. Pettit**, your contributions have been immeasurable!



Mr. H. Boyd Pettit, III



Mr. Jim Sheahan,
Mr. H. Boyd Pettit, III,
and Mr. Antonio Figueras

JIM SHEAHAN



Rep. Matthew Gambill and
Mr. Jim Sheahan



Mr. Jim Sheahan and
wife Mrs. Ann Sheahan

One cannot help but wonder what happy confluence of fates brought together the early **GYSTC** pioneers. In 1989, **Jim Sheahan**, one of those founding architects, was working with Siemen's Corporation in marketing, public relations, and government lobbying. Siemen's, an international technology giant, was intrigued by the idea of helping fund a start-up nonprofit focused on education and science - a mission not unlike their own. So **Mr. Sheahan** became a member of **GYSTC's** first board and began the long journey of committed organization building. He brought with him a steady stream of corporate funding from Siemen's and facilitated contributions from numerous other companies, all of whom became invested in the **GYSTC** mission. It was a journey that began with **Mr. Sheahan** but will not end with his retirement from the board.

A dynamic but soft-spoken advocate for maintaining the line when it comes to holding fast to the original intent of **GYSTC's** founding, **Mr. Sheahan** sees more and more expansion into new communities, particularly in urban areas of the state, as the only change needed. "During my years of participation on the board, we were mainly preoccupied with stability," he said. "We had so many rough patches, some of them *really* rough, that made us question whether we would survive, there was little energy to think about growth. We were simply trying to hold on to what we had. We were down to bare bones in funding and our Centers and staff numbers were low," he continued. "Thank goodness we've been on solid ground now for quite a while."

Like the other founders and long-time observers of the **GYSTC** success story, **Jim Sheahan** agrees it was the unique combination of people and the inevitability of a great vision whose time to be realized had arrived, that together, overcame the hard times. Like the others too, although retiring, he won't be far away. "it was a pleasure to work with **Betsy Green**, and I'm really enthusiastic to see the great things **Amanda Buice** will do with her excellent background in science," he said.

In our view, it's that unique blend of character and personalities at the helm that is the *real* secret to **GYSTC's** longevity. So glad **Jim Sheahan** was on our team!

CONTINUING THE LEGACY:

GYSTC OPENS A NEW CHAPTER IN LEADERSHIP

As GYSTC enters its 32nd year, we have earned a solid reputation for specialized and effective science education on a dual-track. Our equal emphasis on STEM training for students and teachers is unique in Georgia's elementary education communities. Our K-8 learners form a critical age group whose receptivity to STEM and its many applications are at a peak. Similarly, our talented teacher corps is consistently responsive and grateful for the myriad of continuing education and STEM professional development training opportunities GYSTC offers annually.

Fortunately, thanks to the tireless work of the many past and present staff, board members, and supporters highlighted in this report, GYSTC's human and financial infrastructure is strong. As the 2021-2022 academic year begins, we welcome a new cohort of board members and a new Executive Director to build upon the solid foundation that's been laid.

But despite our stable posture, looming challenges will confront us in the coming year. Our new leadership will contend with the continued reality of COVID-19, its devastating variants and its profound impact on all aspects of life. Our children, their physical, emotional, and mental health are being heavily affected and education communities as a whole, remain at the very center of concern.

The uncertainty of where and how children will learn in the immediate future remains problematic. Moreover, since the pandemic's onset, it is estimated that over 15,000 K-12 Georgia children have simply disappeared from the education pipeline. Where are they? How will we retrieve them, and how will time and lessons lost be recovered?

These are big questions that will require strategic and thoughtful solutions. We are confident that our new leadership team has the experience, talent, and motivation to win the battle for our children's future. Please join us in welcoming them aboard!



JESSE FENTON, MHA

Jesse holds a Business Administration Degree from Savannah State University. Jesse currently provides direct operational leadership for the Otolaryngology (Ear, Nose, and Throat) Specialty for the Georgia region of Kaiser Permanente. Nationally, Kaiser Permanente serves more than 12.2 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia and operates 39 hospitals and more than 680 medical office buildings. As Georgia's largest non-profit health plan, Kaiser Permanente has 375,000 members in 28 counties in metro Atlanta. Jesse brings an extensive background in healthcare operations within Academic Medical Centers, Not-for-Profit healthcare systems, and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC'S) across the nation.

ASHLEY GROOME

Ashley holds a B.A. in Journalism and Political Science from the University of Georgia and a J.D. from Georgia State University's School of Law. She is the Director of U.S. State Government Affairs for Johnson and Johnson, covering Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida. Ashley is responsible for the Company's engagement and communication with state and local government officials, and leads state legislative and regulatory initiatives impacting products, therapies, and health solutions across the entire Johnson & Johnson enterprise.



Prior to joining Johnson & Johnson, Ashley spent nearly 13 years working in corporate consulting and lobbying in the state of Georgia, most recently holding the position of Director of Interoffice Collaboration and Client Growth for McGuireWoods Consulting.



LUMINITA DANIELA NEACSU, MD

Dr. Neacsu is a Board-Certified MD by the American Board of Internal Medicine. She completed her residency in Internal Medicine at Englewood Hospital and Medical Center, affiliated with the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. In 2016, Dr. Neacsu owns her practice in Atlanta, Medical Creations Integrative Medicine, Group. She also collaborates with the local hospitals and teaches wellness workshops, most recently at Emory.

MEREDITH M. WEAVER

Meredith is the Principal of Melvin Weaver Consulting providing government affairs consulting and public relations to a wide range of clients. Previously, she served as Director of Georgia Legislative and Regulatory Affairs for Alltel Communications now Verizon in a multi-state region. In total, Meredith has been in the lobbying arena for 27 years.

Meredith serves on the Georgia Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and their Government Affairs Council. She has been involved with the Georgia Economic Developers Association, the American Legislative Exchange Council, and Leadership Georgia.

Meredith has a B.A. in Political Science from Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia. She has been a volunteer with the American Red Cross, Chastain Horse Park Therapeutic Riding Program, Junior League of Atlanta, and the Boys & Girls Club of Atlanta. She grew up in Gainesville, Georgia and resides in Atlanta with her son, John.



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“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

- Nelson Mandela



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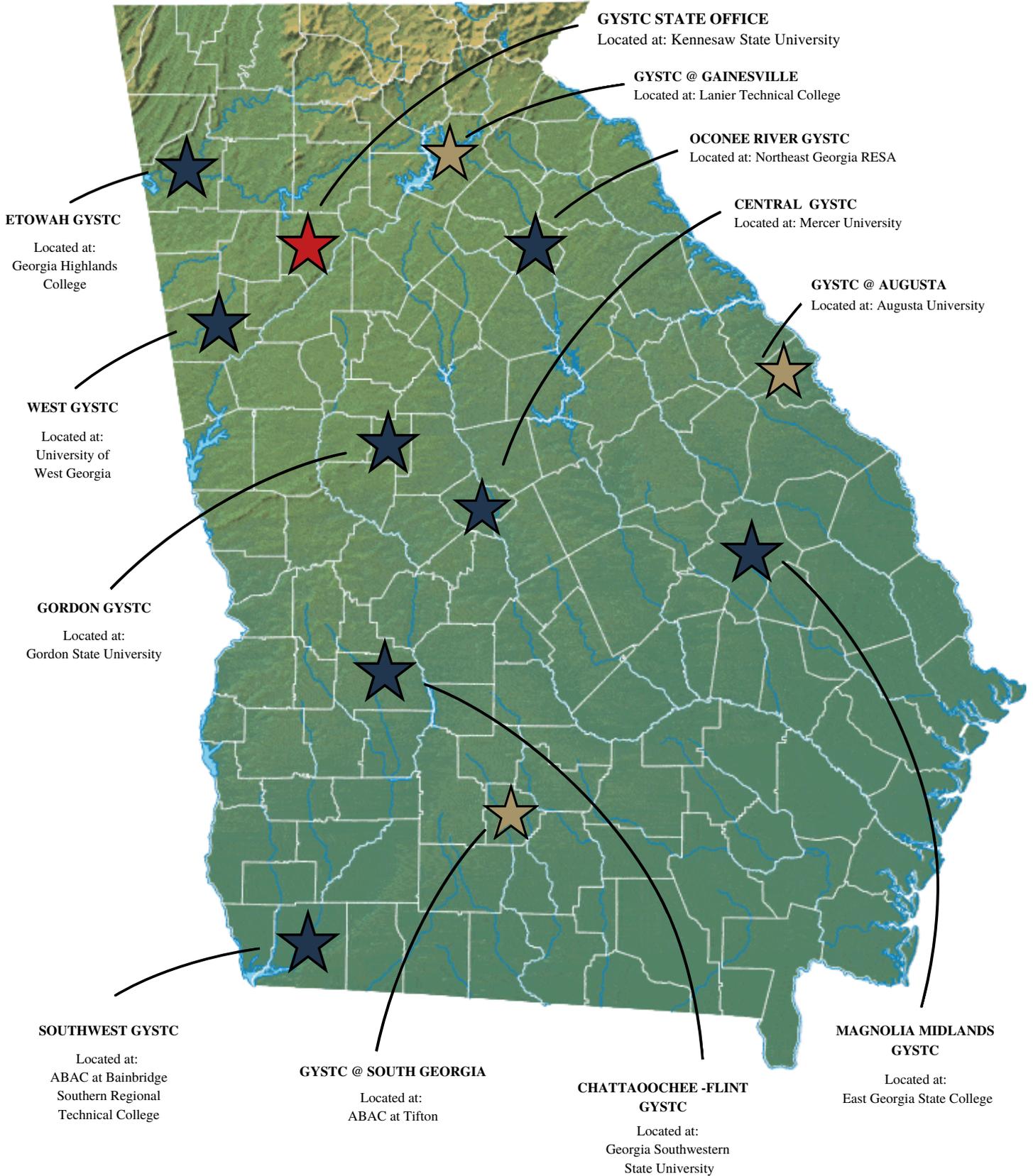
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