



theCAPITOL
 An update from GAE's
 Government Relations
 Division

Why Politics?

GAE's duty is to advocate for members and students, to enhance the education profession, and to advance public education.

Think about what that means...

Who makes the public policy decisions that affect teachers, principals,

guidance counselors, and education support professionals (ESPs)?

...The General Assembly?

...The State Board of Education?

...The local boards of education?

...The county commissions?

...The United States Congress?

Yes, you are right! By all of them.

What do they all have in common? The individuals who become members of Congress, the General Assembly or the State Board of Education do so via the political process—by election or appointment by the Governor in the case of the State Board.

If GAE is to fulfill our mission, we have to work through the political process to identify those individuals who support the goals of our association.

GAE's political action committee (FPE) is one of the vehicles the association

uses for direct political involvement. It is important for all members to realize how important it is for the association to be involved in politics and elections. This year's involvement will be organized around a four-point plan:

- Train members in political action;
- Organize voter registration drives throughout our state;
- Extend our outreach to family and friends;
- Keep the focus on public education as the key to a robust economy and a good quality of life for all Georgia's citizens

Advocacy for better schools, better learning environments for students, and better work environments for educators is important. GAE members recognize that importance and are committed to political involvement—not for partisan reasons, but because it's who we are.

1. **Revision:** A number of changes to rule GCC (formerly GBM) which advance the cause of short-term and long-term leave and including, but not limited to, workmen's comp issues when an educator is hurt of the job. Also, a doctor's note may be requested by administration after the educator has been absent five consecutive days (before this rule just said five days). A note will be required after nine consecutive days.
2. **New:** A new directed leave policy allows educators up to two days annually to attend workshops, conferences, or other professional association activities. Leave will not be charged against any other leave including personal or professional. Organizations may pay for your sub or your conference or workshop fees.
3. **New:** Provision that meetings held during lunch will not result in loss of lunch for participants in meetings. Preferably, meetings will not be scheduled during lunch.
4. **New:** Administrative transfers may be granted when harassment or retaliation toward the employee has been substantiated by a Human Resources investigation.
5. **New:** Employees currently on a PDP may now be eligible for transfer with the superintendent's authority and substantiating conditions (formerly not allowed to transfer).
6. **Revision:** Written annual evaluation shall be completed, signed, and provided to each certified employee prior to April 1 of each year.
7. Representation in disciplinary meetings.
8. **Revision:** Must notify participants in the PDP process to follow the NEW steps prior to putting an employee on a PDP. Punitive measures for those administrators who do not follow the steps.
9. **New:** Special Education Paraprofessionals may no longer be used as subs.
10. **New:** Only in an emergency may a teacher be asked to sub or cover in a class.
11. Extended day pay for all levels—elementary, middle, and high school.
12. **New:** Addition to contract that will provide that after July 1, all employees will be able to access the new salary schedule online at Cobb County's website.
13. **New:** All new teachers will now be paid for the three extra days of work.
14. **New:** Allow employee use of cell phones during non-instructional times.
15. **New:** Allow employee use of county email for personal use (limited).
16. **New:** Earrings permitted for both genders.
17. **New:** Job descriptions must be provided to each employee no later than the last day of pre-planning.
18. A number of changes were made to the policy GBMA/maternity and adoption leave.
19. **New:** PLU's may be granted by professional associations as long as they are approved by the Georgia Department of Education. PLU's may be earned by attending approved conferences, etc.
20. Changes to the policy GCE (formerly GBC) on the recruitment of personnel to the district which now directs the involvement of an active team of current certified personnel to contribute ideas to assist in recruiting.