
BY THE OWL

◆ Spring 2026



GVATA Board Members

LETTER FROM OUR GVATA PRESIDENT

Greetings Ag Ed Family!

As we move into the final stretch of the school year, I want to take a moment to say thank you. Each day, in classrooms, shops, greenhouses, labs, and livestock barns across our state, you are shaping the future of agricultural education in Georgia. Your dedication, long hours, and unwavering commitment to students do not go unnoticed.

Spring can feel especially demanding. Between CDE practices, banquets, award applications, end-of-pathway assessments, and everyday classroom instruction, it is easy to feel stretched thin. But I encourage you to stay the course. The finish line is in sight, and the impact you are making right now matters more than ever.

For many students, these final weeks are when confidence clicks, leadership skills sharpen, and lifelong passions are solidified. Your consistency, encouragement, and high expectations are helping them cross their own finish lines strong. As President of the Georgia Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association, I am incredibly proud of the work being done in agricultural education programs across our state. You are not only teaching standards and supervising SAE projects—you are building character, work ethic, and leadership capacity in young people who will feed, clothe, and lead our communities in the future.

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Looking ahead, the Georgia FFA State Convention is just around the corner. Convention is more than a trip or a reward; it is a powerful opportunity to broaden students' perspectives and deepen their commitment to FFA. For some students, this will be their first time seeing the full scope of what FFA offers beyond the local chapter. For others, it may be the spark that pushes them to run for office, compete in a new CDE, pursue an agriscience project, or step into a leadership role they never imagined for themselves.

I challenge you to use State Convention intentionally. Help students connect what they see on stage to the possibilities in their own lives. Encourage them to attend workshops, network with members from other chapters, and reflect on how they can grow as leaders back home. Sometimes, all it takes is one inspiring session, one new friend, or one moment of recognition to change a student's trajectory. For those of you who will be escorting students across the stage for awards, CONGRATULATIONS on a job well done! All those long hours, tired days, and busy weekends have paid off. There's nothing like watching the face of your student when their name is called on that stage!

Take time to celebrate them and YOURSELF!

As we close out this year, remember that your influence reaches far beyond lesson plans and practice schedules. You are mentors, role models, and advocates. You are creating environments where students feel seen, valued, and capable. That is the heart of agricultural education.

Thank you for your resilience, your professionalism, and your passion. Let's finish this year strong, celebrate our students' accomplishments, and head into State Convention ready to make an even broader impact. The work you are doing matters—and together, we are strengthening agricultural education across Georgia.

With sincere gratitude,



Allie Crockett
GVATA President

**98TH GEORGIA FFA
CONVENTION & EXPO
REMINDERS**

Registration

Opens 8:00 a.m. on Friday,
February 27 and closes April 1.

\$300 chapter fee.

After April 1, each chapter who
hasn't registered, will be
charged a \$100 late fee,
bringing their chapter fee to
\$400.

Career Show

Extended hours in 2026

11:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. on

Thursday, 4/23 and

8:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. on Friday,
4/24

Service Learning Projects

Offsite opportunities will
include renovations around
Macon Wednesday & Thursday,
onsite constructing bedframes
(Wednesday & Thursday) and
packing meals (Thursday &
Friday).

Concert

Friday, April 24

Will Moseley

Tickets available through chapter
registration website.

BOARD MEMBERS

President- Allie Crockett

Past President- Ruby

McCracken

President-Elect- Pete Bennett

Area 1 Director- Ashley Rivers

Area 2 Director- Tim Griffeth

Area 3 Director- Ryan Smith

Area 4 Director- Marcia

Watkins

Area 5 Director- Tracy

Champagne

Area 6 Director- Jarod Wayne

GACTE VP- Luz Morales

PRC Chair- Marcus Pollard

PRC Chair- Josh Whitworth

Executive Secretary- Catrina

Pollard

Treasurer-

**Georgia FFA Celebrates
Record-Breaking FFA Day
at the Capitol**

39 Chapters and 375

Attendees Gather in Atlanta
to Engage with State Leaders



NAAE CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

The December NAAE Conference was a meaningful and impactful experience for everyone involved.

Board members, award recipients, and agricultural educators from across Georgia gathered to advocate, participate in high-quality professional development, and collaborate on ideas to strengthen future conferences. The week served as a powerful reminder of the passion and commitment that continue to drive agricultural education forward.

Award Winners

Emily Courson- Region V Early Career Teacher Award Winner 2025

Eryn Holton- NAAE Teachers Turn the Key

GVATA- Exemplary State Association Winner



GVATA SUMMER CONFERENCE

Mark your calendars for the GVATA Summer Conference, happening July 12-15, 2026, at the Classic Center in Athens, GA.

300 N Thomas Street
Athens, GA 30601

Links: [Hotels](#) [Registration](#)
Professional Development Presenters Needed

Fill out the [interest form](#) by May 15th or contact Marcia Watkins at marciawatkins@lcboe.net if you have any questions.

AG TEACHER SPOTLIGHTS



Kaelynn Hankins
Area 1

Kaelynn Hankins is in her fourth year as an agricultural educator at Heritage Middle School. She earned her Bachelor's degree from ABAC and her Master's from Murray State. Her passion for agriculture started in high school thanks to her ag teacher, who sparked her interest the moment she stepped into the school barn and saw livestock.

As an FFA member, Kaelynn served as a chapter officer, competed in CDEs, attended leadership events, and earned her American FFA Degree—being one of the first two from her school to do so.

Now in the classroom, she loves giving students opportunities to try new things, build skills, and get involved in FFA. One of her favorite memories is attending SLC with her students and watching them grow as leaders.



Taylor Marble
Area 2

Winder-Barrow High School

I am in my fourth year of teaching agricultural education at Winder-Barrow High School. I earned both my Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Georgia and am currently pursuing my Ed.S. at Auburn University. I was actively involved in FFA at North Oconee High School, where I showed livestock and competed in CDEs including Poultry, Livestock, Extemporaneous Speaking, Prepared Public Speaking, and Creed Speaking. My experiences in FFA shaped my leadership skills and confidence, and overall I became an agricultural educator because I saw firsthand how impactful my ag teacher was in my own life. I hope to create that same lasting influence for my students.



Heather Cook
Area 3

Jackson High School
(Jackson, GA) 5th year teaching!

What is your favorite thing about teaching ag? My favorite thing about teaching agriculture is the opportunity to provide hands-on learning experiences and watch students grow in confidence and leadership. Whether it's in the classroom, the greenhouse, or through FFA activities, it's incredibly rewarding to see students discover their strengths, understand the importance of agriculture, and develop skills they will carry with them long after they leave school

AG TEACHER SPOTLIGHTS



Dr. Kendra Brophy
Area 4

Effingham County Middle School
12 Years in Agricultural Education, 18 years Science Education. I graduated from Kansas State University, Georgia Southern University, and Argosy University I am an agricultural educator because I believe it is critically important that students recognize the importance and impact of agriculture in their daily lives. Agricultural Education allows for reality based experiences for the students that allow them to relate and apply that knowledge to their lives.



Hannah Roberts
Area 5

Colquitt County High School
Current Year Teaching: 5
Education: ABAC (B.S. in Ag Education) and the University of Georgia (M.S. Ag Leadership, Education, and Communication)
Why an Ag Teacher?: Growing up on my family's Hereford cattle operation, I always knew I wanted to have a career in agriculture. Over time, I realized I could combine my love of working in agriculture with my desire to help and encourage others, so I ultimately decided to become an Ag teacher. In my current role, I not only get to expose students to the ins and outs of production agriculture, but I also get to help them grow and become better people along the way. This career field allows me to exercise my two greatest passions on a daily basis, and I am incredibly thankful for that.
Favorite Memory: One of my favorite memories took place at SLC in 2025. That year, the mud course took place on Tuesday as a leadership event. Since my first summer as an advisor, I have always completed the mud course. As we lined up outside of the first mud pit, I noticed I was surrounded by our smallest middle school and junior high girls. As we came to that first wall, I helped lift each of those girls up and over until I was the only one remaining. I stepped over to the rope to pull myself out, but they quickly shouted from the top, "No, Roberts, we're getting you over this wall!" With true strength, teamwork, and grit, they pulled me up and over that wall, and we proceeded to finish the mud course together.



Audrey Pickren
Area 6

Charlton County High School, 29th year teaching. I am an Agricultural Educator because I am passionate about the AFNR industry and it's importance to our health, economy, and security. My favorite thing about teaching agriculture is Seeing students' appreciation when they experience travel or FFA activities for the first time and their sense of pride in themselves when they grasp new topics or perform well at CDEs. My favorite memory is all of the funny incidents from class activities, livestock shows, and FFA trips. Teaching ag is a lot of things, but it is never boring.
