Meet Our Virtual Specialists!

Grades 3rd-5th: Judie Beccaro  
FAYETTE COUNTY

My name is Judie Beccaro, and I am the K-5 Science Coach for Fayette County Schools. I am a graduate of the University of Georgia and earned my master’s degree in education from the University of West Georgia. I have taught special education, 1st, 4th and 5th grades. This is my 26th year in education.

My students inspired my love of science. I remember seeing how my students with special needs flourished in science, and this piqued my interest in science. To improve my teaching of science, I took classes and earned my science endorsement. One of the classes that I took as part of my endorsement program was a new class called, “STEM” (Yes, it was that long ago when a google search for STEM resulted in stem and leaf plot resources). Taking this class had a major influence on the rest of my career in education.

I started presenting at conferences and taking every opportunity I could to learn more about science and STEM. I also attended conferences, connected with others on social media, and collaborated with my colleagues. I was part of a group of amazing teachers and science leaders that helped revise the Georgia Performance Standards in Science. I worked on the development of the K-2 Georgia Standards of Excellence. I also serve as a Georgia Science Ambassador and have led many workshops on implementing 3-D Science in the elementary grades. I received a Coweta Distinguished STEM Educator Award and served on the member services committee for the American Chemical Society. In 2019, I was named the Georgia Elementary Science Teacher of the Year.

Collaborating with other teachers both at the elementary and secondary level, has had the greatest impact on how I teach. Twitter has provided me with the ability to connect with other teachers from all over the world. For the past six months, I have been collaborating with science teachers from all over the world. We have been learning and developing strategies to engage students in science practices during the pandemic. This collaboration has had a positive impact on how teachers in my district are approaching science instruction in the virtual and brick and mortar classroom. I am so excited to be a Virtual Specialist and to connect and collaborate with teachers across the state.
6th Grade: Arcelia Dalton
HALL COUNTY

My name is Arcelia Dalton. I have been teaching science since 2001. I have taught ESOL students, general education students, and gifted students. I have always had a love for math and science. When I was in college, I felt that my calling was to instill the love of math and science to young minds. My first teaching job was at an inner-city school teaching ESOL science. I loved it so much and decided that, although math was my first passion, that science was where I really wanted to teach. I wanted the students to learn, discover, and question the world around them. Teaching science gave me the opportunity to teach the students those things.

The first year I taught, I was the only ESOL science teacher. I did not have a mentor to guide me or help me teach my ESOL students science. There was not time to plan with another science teacher, so I was really left on my own. When I taught regular science in 8th grade, our school decided to do programs of choice, so I was the only 8th grade science teacher on my team. Again, no one to plan or compare ideas with. I then moved to Hall County where I now teach. I have been able to have common planning with other sixth grade science teachers. I have found great support. We have shared a plethora of ideas, and we have learned from each other. For these reasons, I believe that connecting with other science teachers is so important.

High School Biological Sciences: Stephanie Miles
CARROLL COUNTY

I am happily starting my 25th year as a science teacher. I have always loved science! I have taught Biology, Physical Science, Environmental Science, Earth Science, Physics, and AP Environmental Science. About 15 years ago I was inspired to begin teaching teachers. I have helped teachers become more comfortable teaching science for the last 14 years. I have been a part of GSTA as a District Director and participated in the writing of the GSE Environmental Science Standards. I have been an instructor and curriculum writer for the UWG IMPACT Program, Captain Planet Foundation, and several MSP and TQG programs. I am currently an instructor for the Georgia BioEd Program and the Georgia EMC SPARK Energy Education Program. I am a reader for AP Environmental Science Exam. I am also a Science Facilitator.

I have so many amazing memories of my teachers. It seems I have always wanted to be a teacher and pay forward all the great experiences my teachers gave me. I think there is so much power and strength when teachers work together. It is imperative that we share ideas, inspirations, and support.
K-2nd: Karen Garland
CHEROKEE COUNTY

I have been the K-5 Discovery Science Lab teacher at the Clark Creek Elementary STEM Academy since 2012. Previously, I was an environmental educator for more than 17 years with a nature center and statewide nonprofit, where I wrote science curricula and taught workshops across the state. I have received numerous awards for my work and am a former elementary representative for the Georgia Science Teachers Association. I have a B.S. in Biology from Kennesaw State University and a M.A.T. in Early Childhood Education from Reinhardt University. Currently, I serve as the chairperson for the Georgia Council of Outdoor Learning, teacher liaison on the Cherokee Farm to School Committee and am a Georgia Science Ambassador, Georgia Master Gardener, beekeeper, and backyard chicken farmer.

I LOVE learning! In fact, I love it so much that I wanted to encourage others to know this feeling…the exhilaration of the “ah-ha” moment. Fortunately, I can trace my passion for teaching science and gardening to my grandmother. She nurtured my connection to the land and instilled in me a desire to protect it for future generations to enjoy. My job is not only to facilitate, but to inspire students to feel the delight that comes from discovery. I firmly believe that it’s the supreme art of a teacher to awaken this joy. Excitement is contagious, especially when I see students going head over heels for a concept or idea, being completely enthralled in the moment, and their curiosity spilling over into their lives outside of school. Therefore, I strive to make lessons relevant by introducing phenomena that are applicable to their lives; using realia that moves beyond pictures; and providing opportunities that engage their senses and encourages them to think critically.

Teachers enjoy sharing ideas, strategies, or encouraging words to motivate, inspire, or reignite educator passion. Connecting with others provides a touchstone for the inexperienced ones, answering questions on protocol and lesson plans and translating school culture. Connecting provides an avenue to share our strengths, while we benefit from the involvement and advice of others. As I believe in the whole child, I also believe in the emotional well-being of my peers and helping them reconnect to their purpose, creating a teacher growth mindset, and building emotional resilience. Teaching can be exhausting and emotionally draining. Whether it’s a particularly challenging student or balancing work and home life (or both), stress is part of the job, and other teachers are invaluable sources of support. When teachers depend on one another for support, they develop relationships based on trust and empathy. We cheer for sports teams, for our children, personal accomplishments, or silly games. How about we cheer for each other and share with the world how amazing we are!
High School Physical Sciences: Owen Nix
EFFINGHAM COUNTY

Owen Nix has been a part of the Effingham County High School family for the past 7 years and has taught Physical Science, Chemistry and Physics. He grew up in Kennesaw, Georgia but now currently resides in Pooler, Georgia with his wife Lindsey, son Kowen and dog Magnesium. Owen began his pursuit of education at Georgia Southern University and earned a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry. He then returned to Southern for graduate school where he earned a Master of Arts in Teaching. Shortly after his masters, he completed course work to obtain his gifted certification to better serve gifted learners. In the 2018, he was selected as the Effingham County High School's Teacher of the Year. In 2019 he became a GADOE Science Ambassador. In addition to teaching physical science, physics, and chemistry, he is the head coach for the boys' lacrosse team which he founded in 2016. Coach Nix was inspired to become a science teacher by some of his own experiences in a science classroom in high school. He always remembers having science teachers who really encouraged learning outside the textbook or cookbook labs that other teachers lived by. Of course, his chemistry teacher was his favorite, and thus a love for chemistry was born followed shortly thereafter by physics. As an educator Nix believes it is so important to collaborate and create an environment where ideas on how best to reach students can flow. So many of us work so hard to find ways to help our students, but at the end of the day we are one person who needs the support of others to be able to succeed.

7th Grade: Abby Thurston
OCONEE COUNTY

Abby Thurston is a 7th and 8th grade science teacher at Malcom Bridge Middle School in Oconee County. Her teaching career began at Twin Rivers Middle School in Gwinnett, where she taught 6th-8th STEM connections. She holds three degrees from Piedmont College; a Bachelor of Arts in Middle Grades Education, a Master of Arts in Secondary Education- Science, and an Education Specialist in Curriculum and Instruction. She is currently in her 7th year of teaching, and serves as the Oconee County Schools’ Teacher of the Year.
8th Grade: Teris Dunn-Jaglowicz
HOUSTON COUNTY

Teris Dunn-Jaglowicz is a sixth year educator at Huntington Middle School in Houston County, Georgia. She was also a graduate of the Houston County School System. She is certified in middle grades science and math, and currently teaches 8th grade physical science. Mrs. Jaglowicz has a Bachelor of Arts in Middle Grades Education (2015) from Middle Georgia State University, a Master of Arts in Middle Grades Science (2018) from Georgia Southern University and is currently working on an Education Specialist in Curriculum and Instruction degree through Piedmont College as well as her Google teacher certification.

Mrs. Jaglowicz has taught in various classroom settings including co-teaching in special education and with an English language learning teacher. She has also served as a science PLC co-chairman and chairman for 8th grade science, previously a member of the STEM team at Huntington Middle School and has participated in summer curriculum writing. Mrs. Jaglowicz has extended her teaching experience beyond the classroom by volunteering as a NESA Virtual Science Fair Mentor for students in Saudia Arabia (2013 & 2014) and completed coursework to become a Georgia Youth Science and Technology STEM Scholar (2016).

Mrs. Jaglowicz was inspired to become a science teacher in 7th grade when she recalls having a teacher that believed in conducting hands-on activities and using real-world experiences to explain science. She was finally able to see how people encounter science on a daily basis, because she likes many others initially thought that science seemed as if it was made up. After seeing the real-world connection, she quickly changed her mind.

Mrs. Jaglowicz feels that it is important for teachers to connect, because everyone works better together, and by doing so it creates a better learning experience. It’s amazing to see other teachers’ perspectives, embrace new ideas, and she finds it to be more beneficial to connect and collaborate with others.