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[Georgia Southern to offer online Master of Arts in Teaching in Fall 2020](#)

January 14, 2020

Students seeking to complete an online Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in the middle grades or secondary education concentrations at Georgia Southern University will be able to begin in Fall 2020.

The MAT is a graduate degree for aspiring teachers who hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and leads to initial teaching certification. The Georgia Southern College of Education (COE) now offers five fully online MAT concentrations including elementary education, health and physical education, middle grades education, secondary education, and special education. Nationally accredited and approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, these programs are recognized through reciprocity in many states across the country.

"The MAT degree is often sought after by those that are already working professionally," said Deborah Thomas, Ph.D., associate dean for curriculum, instruction and initial educator preparation in the COE. "An online platform for this master's degree helps to alleviate an obstacle that many current professionals may have to making a career change into the classroom or for those already working provisionally in the classroom to earn their certification."

Coursework for the MAT is often completed in two years and includes field experience in Georgia classrooms. Within the middle grades program, candidates can select from concentrations in language arts, science, social studies or mathematics. Students seeking to complete a master's in secondary education are given the option to focus on biology, chemistry, economics, English, history, geography, mathematics, physics or political science.

Program admission deadlines for both the middle grades and secondary concentrations of the MAT degree are July 1 and do not require the Graduate Record Examinations or the Miller Analogies Test.

For more information, visit coe.GeorgiaSouthern.edu/mat, or contact the COE Graduate Academic Services Center at 912-478-1447.

Posted in [Degree Programs](#)

Partnership with SCCPSS to provide paid residency opportunities for select Georgia Southern teacher candidates

January 14, 2020



Exceptional teacher candidates studying in Georgia Southern University's College of Education (COE) will soon have the opportunity to apply for a paid residency program with Savannah-Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS) starting as early as Fall 2020.

With nearly 3,000 teachers in the Chatham County's public school system, SCCPSS hires 400 new teachers per year on average. The opportunity to bring in highly qualified teacher candidates during their final year of an initial educator preparation program will help to fill positions needed by the county while also building relationships with the teacher candidates for possible retention in the school district.

"Two teacher candidates will be hired as resident teachers to fill two vacant teacher positions," said Deborah Thomas, Ph.D., associate dean for curriculum, instruction and initial educator preparation. "Each will be paid \$19,000 for the year and receive all the benefits of a regular teacher. A classroom educator who has demonstrated exemplary performance in teaching and in mentoring other teachers will step out of the classroom to be a full-time mentor to the two teacher residents. The mentor teacher will support the teacher residents in learning district and school policies and procedures, co-teach with them in their classrooms, observe them teaching and provide feedback, as well as provide ongoing mentoring and support throughout the year."

The teacher residents and mentors will also receive support from a Georgia Southern faculty member. As resident teachers in the school, the program participants will participate in the SCCPSS new teacher induction program, providing them an additional layer of guidance. While completing their residency, teacher candidates will finish all program courses and requirements for Georgia teacher certification.

"It's a win-win for all involved," Thomas said. "The teacher residents will receive a salary and benefits for work they would have to do anyway with no compensation. The mentor teachers are able to move into a teacher-leader role and have a direct impact on the professional development of new teachers. SCCPSS and the COE are able to strengthen their partnership and collaboration to develop a pipeline of exceptional teachers for the district."

Successful teacher candidates and SCCPSS classroom teachers who apply for the program will be selected by a team jointly representing SCCPSS and COE.

“SCCPSS is excited to be working alongside Georgia Southern University on the Paid Residency Initiative,” said Heather Bilton, Ed.D., director of human resources at SCCPSS. “We have been watching residency programs around the country and have been impressed at the quality of the teacher candidates and the support given to new teachers. We know our partnership will have a positive impact on students and the teaching profession.”

The goal is to begin a paid residency pilot program in the fall with a small number of Georgia Southern teacher candidates. Opportunities will eventually be available for birth-to-kindergarten, elementary and middle, and secondary education teacher candidates.

“Often our students say that they get their best practice and experience in the field,” Thomas noted. “This will only enhance the hands-on clinical practice of students who have shown exceptional academic and classroom practice prior to their final year of study.”

Posted in [Community Outreach & Partnership](#), [Degree Programs](#)

Tags: [Deborah Thomas](#), [Heather Bilton](#), [Teachers](#)

[Lending resources for STEM and social studies classrooms in Southeast Georgia](#)

January 14, 2020



Fossil activity available through the School Outreach Program

On average, teachers across the United States spend approximately \$479 on classroom supplies each year according to a study by the National Center of Education Statistics released in May 2018. The Institute for Interdisciplinary STEM Education (i²STEM^e) at Georgia Southern University is helping reduce this burden for teachers in Southeast Georgia with the School Outreach Program, a lending membership program that provides STEM and social studies materials for K-12 classrooms.

i²STEM^e, housed in the University's College of Education, serves as an outreach center for the University, regional educators and the broader community. The School Outreach Program provides STEM and social studies supplies, including consumable and non-consumable materials, equipment and teaching aids to member teachers, schools and districts. Members can request items and materials that will be delivered to and picked up from their school location. Annual membership for the School Outreach can be purchased by entire school districts, individual schools or individual teachers.

"For many teachers, this is an opportunity to access equipment they do not traditionally have in elementary, middle and high school science and social studies classrooms," said i²STEM^e coordinator Kania Greer, Ed.D. "We lend equipment such as lasers, microscopes, fossil sets, spectrometers, electrostatic generator, Native American artifacts, games and more. In addition, providing classroom consumables ensures that districts with fewer resources can provide hands-on, engaging activities for their students."

With a simple request, teachers are able to focus on lesson plans and instruction delivery as well as test activities and materials before investing funds for school materials.

"Because we know teachers know how to best work with their population, we do not provide a set curriculum," said Greer. "Instead, we have developed guides with suggested activities and ideas that teachers can build from. We work individually with teachers to determine their lesson or instructional goals and provide recommendations for material and activities that could assist them in best achieving their efforts."

For current Georgia Southern teacher candidates working in classrooms during their field practice, the supplies and materials can be requested at no charge.

"We want to ensure that our students have the resources they need to be successful in their field experiences," Greer said. "Providing these materials can help ease the fear student teachers may have of providing engaging activities for their students while also showing them innovative ways to teach the fundamental lessons."

The Bryan County School System is a district member of the i²STEM^e School Outreach Program and Vivian Huntoon, a fifth grade teacher at McAllister Elementary School, explained that the program materials aligned with state standards and have enhanced classroom instruction.

"The i²STEM^e School Outreach Program offered through Georgia Southern has been the best resource that I have access to," Huntoon said. "Being able to access materials for an entire class that are otherwise too pricey or too difficult to procure is extremely beneficial. In particular, students really enjoyed the sound kits, fossils and rocks, and micro-slide scopes. It is the ability for students



Social studies activity available through the School Outreach Program

to explore using these materials either individually or in groups that make instruction so valuable and engaging.”

“Another benefit of the program is having the students become aware of and respectful of others’ property,” she added. “When materials come in, students are taught how to care for and handle things that don’t belong to them. I look forward to continuing this partnership with Georgia Southern University.”

To inquire about membership information, please contact the i²STEM^e administration at stem@georgiasouthern.edu or call (912) 478-8650. A full list of lending inventory for the program members can be found by visiting <https://coe.georgiasouthern.edu/stem/institute-outreach/stem-school-outreach/>

Posted in [Community Outreach & Partnership](#)

Tags: [i2STEMe](#), [Kania Greer](#)

[A holistic approach to addressing trauma in schools](#)

January 14, 2020

Three Georgia Southern COE professors are working together to better prepare teachers for trauma seen in students

Georgia Southern University College of Education professors surveyed school professionals in Georgia to determine next steps for implementing trauma informed practices in schools.

Regina Rahimi, Ed.D., professor of middle grades and secondary education; Delores Liston, Ph.D., professor of curriculum studies; and Ameer Adkins, Ph.D., professor and department chair of middle grades and secondary education, agree that a lack of mental health professionals and support in schools coupled with elevated levels of trauma children are experiencing has fueled their passion for making a change.

Trauma informed practice provides structure or framework that helps adults to understand, recognize and respond to the effects of various forms of trauma that youth may be experiencing.

“Research demonstrates to us that experience of trauma in youth is ubiquitous,” said Adkins. “If you look at a room of 20 people, you can safely assume that most of them, upwards of 60% of them, experienced trauma in their youth. As adults, they may or may not have had help mitigating that trauma. When they are children, we should assume that they don’t have help mitigating the effects of that trauma and that their lives will be better if they get some help. So trauma informed practice, whether you are in social work, mental health services or an educator, says start with the assumption that you may have youth who are living with trauma, and asks what can you do to create a soothing, peaceful, functioning environment for them.”

Tactics could be as simple as giving the student a sense of control through allowing choices, evoking stability and routine, or providing a safe, predictable environment. Other examples include room lighting, providing quiet spaces and de-escalation tactics such as breathing exercises.

The COE team worked together to disseminate a survey to educators in the state of Georgia, receiving nearly 800 responses. The results indicated that teachers are generally aware of trauma amongst their students, but their typical response is to refer them to the counselor. While a great resource, many schools are understaffed in mental health professionals, meaning that the students may not receive immediate care.

“There is a woeful need for more mental health care, more counselors and more adults in general that can speak to these issues,” said Rahimi. “This is what has led to the passion we have for this project. Where there is an absence of counselors, we need to help teachers understand the consequences of trauma and some of the social and emotional needs of students.”

“We are not trying to turn teachers into counselors,” added Liston. “We want to equip teachers with tools to identify students who are facing these difficulties as well as recognize that certain behaviors or patterns could, in fact, be indicators of trauma. Then, we can help them understand tactics to not compound the problem.”

Utilizing data from their research, Rahimi, Liston and Adkins are working to create a professional learning network that captures national research and engagement and brings it down to a local level. The team plans to utilize a central website along with various social media platforms to share and connect individuals with resources and information about trauma in students.

“Based on the survey alone, there is a real interest and a real need in Georgia schools,” said Rahimi. “We want to extend this beyond teachers so that we can create a network where we tap into the expertise outside of schools and collaborate to sustain trauma informed practices in the community.”

“Long term, ultimate goals would include communities beyond education—mental health, criminal justice, recreational,” added Adkins. “Trauma informed practices should be adopted in all areas that serve youth.”

The mitigation of stress and trauma will, ultimately, place youth in a better position for future life outcomes as adults. “Think of this in terms of safer schools and ultimately a safer society,” said Liston. “There is a sea of fear that today that exists in schools that creates a vicarious trauma. We should always be thinking through making safer spaces and de-escalating that trauma.”

Want to join the conversation about trauma informed practices? Contact ? to become a part of the professional learning network contact Rahimi, lead investigator, at rrahimi@georgiasouthern.edu.

Posted in [Community Outreach & Partnership](#), [Faculty Highlights](#)

Tags: [Amee Adkins](#), [Delores Liston](#), [Regina Rahimi](#)