Two Georgia Southern alumnae named top assistant principals in Georgia

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Two Eagle Educators have been named the top assistant principals of middle and high schools across the state by the Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals (GASSP), which annually recognizes outstanding assistant principals from secondary schools.

Tammy Jacobs (‘01,’05) is the assistant principal at South Effingham High School (SEHS) where she has served in administration for 11 years. Jacobs, who completed a bachelor’s in secondary mathematics education and a master’s in educational leadership from Georgia Southern University, began her career as a classroom math teacher, which she taught for over five years. After shadowing her mentor, who served as an assistant principal, Jacobs felt ready to tackle the job responsibilities and earned a position as assistant principal and testing coordinator at SEHS in 2007. In 2013, her role as assistant principal shifted to a focus on instructional supervision.

"I love helping people," said Jacobs. "I love providing opportunities to see our students, faculty and staff grow as individuals. I enjoy being a problem solver. There are so many situations that come up at our school, and I like making decisions that make our school better."

To top it all off, Jacobs says that her school and community come together as one.

"We are a team," she said. "We call ourselves the Mustang Family."

Jacobs was named both the GASSP High School Assistant Principal of the Year and the 2019 GASSP Assistant Principal of the Year to represent the state of Georgia in the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Assistant Principal of the Year awards.

"This award is even more confirmation that the work I put into SEHS has paid off," she said. "I feel that Georgia Southern equipped me with an educational tool belt that benefits me even to this day. I am proud to be an Eagle."

Fellow Eagle Educator and GASSP Middle School Assistant Principal of the Year award recipient Elizabeth Bennett, Ed.D. (‘05,’11) serves as the assistant principal and athletic director at Richmond Hill Middle School (RHMS).

Bennett earned a bachelor’s in English literature from Ashland University and began working at Armstrong State University (ASU) in 2003 as an instructor and assistant basketball coach while earning a master’s in secondary education from ASU. She joined Richmond Hill High School (RHHS) in 2007 as a language arts teacher and head basketball coach, where she continued to serve for the next five years.

Bennett continued her education and earned an Ed.S. Teaching and Learning from Georgia Southern and a doctoral of education from Valdosta State University.

With now 12 years of experience at Bryan County Schools, Bennett says when she “landed” at RHHS, the connection was immediate.

"I loved the students, the school, the atmosphere of teaching and the ability to relate to kids on a level I did not know possible," she said.

Transitioning to administration was not part of Bennett’s original plan. After being named both RHHS and Bryan County Schools Teacher of the Year in 2012, she had a mentor who encouraged her to pursue a new challenge in administration utilizing her unique skill set of curriculum and athletic knowledge. In 2013, Bennett earned the position of assistant principal and athletic director at RHMS.
“I miss teaching and coaching every single day, but my new role allows me new challenges and rewards,” Bennett said. “I am not an assistant principal at Richmond Hill Middle School because I hope to climb in my career, because I wanted a pay raise, or because I wanted to be out of the classroom. I am the assistant principal because I want to serve students through serving teachers.”

GASSP selects both a middle level and high school Assistant Principal of the Year to recognize those who have succeeded in providing high quality in learning experiences for students as well as demonstrating exemplary contributions to the profession. Criteria for the award include personal experience, collaborative leadership, curriculum instruction and assessment.

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