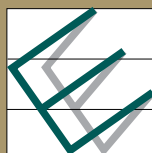




# How Georgia Students Benefit from the Georgia Council on Economic Education



**Georgia Council on  
Economic Education**

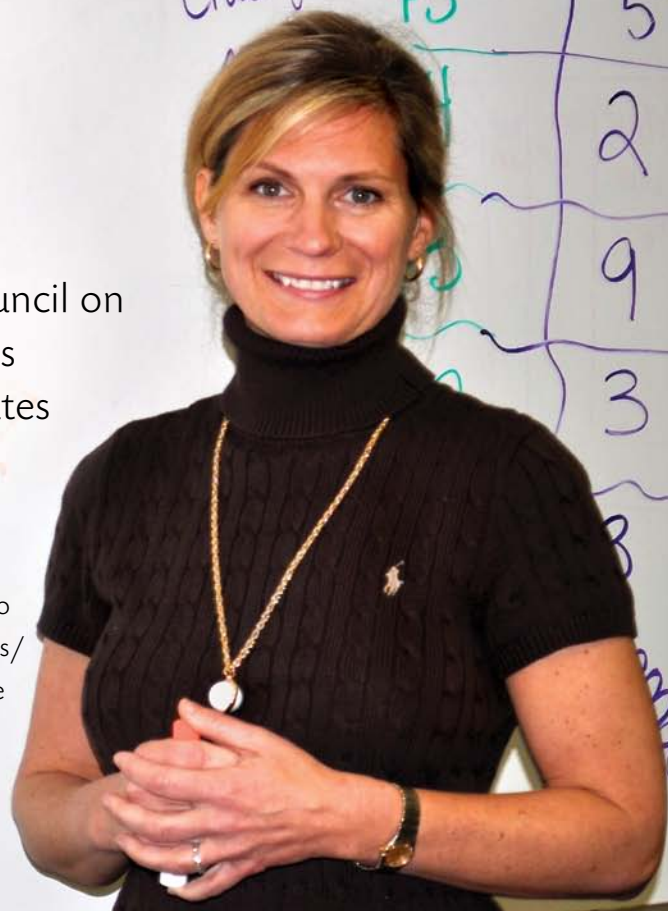
# Does the Georgia Council Make a Difference? Absolutely.

As teacher participation in Georgia Council on Economic Education (GCEE) workshops increased, so did the student passing rates on the high-stakes, End-of-Course Test for economics – by nearly 30 percent.

Georgia is one of 21 states that require high school students to take and pass a course in the Principles of Economics/Business/Free Enterprise, a requirement mandated by the Georgia State Board of Education in 1976. In 2004, the state added a requirement that all Georgia high school students take the End-of-Course-Test (EOCT) in economics, which now counts as 20 percent of the course grade.

When the first EOCT was administered in 2004, the majority of Georgia students failed the economics test, with only 44 percent passing.

**But thanks to teacher training provided by the Georgia Council on Economic Education, scores have steadily improved.** In anticipation of the EOCT in 2004, the Georgia Council on Economic Education developed a two-day workshop for high school economics teachers to provide teaching strategies specific to the required economics course. From that point on, the number of teachers attending workshops increased dramatically. And so did test scores.



YEAR	PASS RATE	RANK
2004	44%	8th
2005	59 %	6th
2006	62 %	5th
2007	67 %	4th
2008	68 %	3rd
2009	68 %	3rd
2010	73%	3rd

In 2004, the percentage of students passing the economics EOCT ranked at the bottom of the eight subject areas tested. In 2011, 72 percent of students passed, ranking economics third, just behind the two literature tests.

# Moving the Needle:

## How GCEE workshops for teachers drive higher performance by students

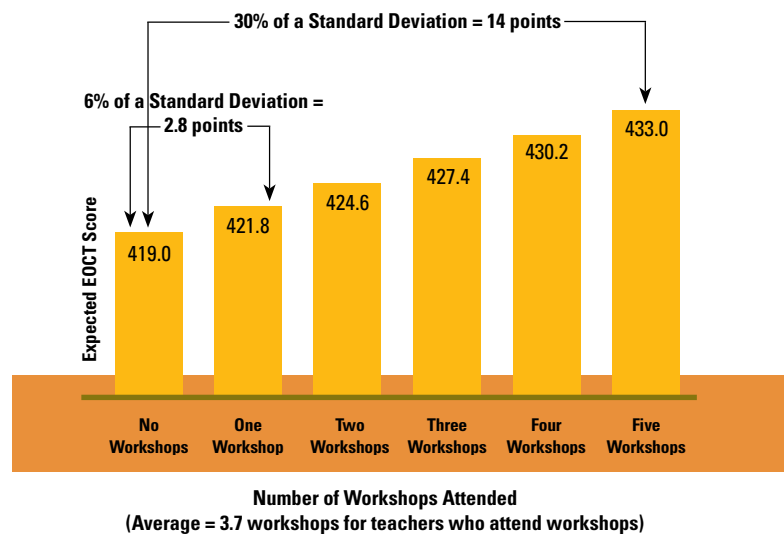
We knew test scores had increased, and we had anecdotal evidence that our teacher training was succeeding. But we wanted to quantify the impact GCEE workshops were having in Georgia's classrooms.

University researchers – led by Dr. John Swinton, Director of the Center for Economic Education at Georgia College and State University – were given access to the EOCT scores in economics by the Georgia Department of Education. The research team, working in cooperation with the Georgia Council's Research Committee, examined approximately 60,000 test scores each year for three years, making the cumulative total about 180,000 unique observations.

Overall, the findings are strikingly positive. Dr. Swinton and his team found that **students of teachers who attended GCEE workshops performed statistically significantly higher on the EOCT than students whose teachers had never attended a GCEE workshop.** In fact, the more workshops a teacher attended, the better his/her students performed on the EOCT.

Teachers who take GCEE workshops attend, on average, 3.7 workshops. When the researchers compared teachers who attended any workshop to those who didn't attend a workshop at all, they found the average test score of students of teachers attending increased. Each additional workshop attended resulted in student performance improving by incremental amounts. For example, based on the average 2008 economics EOCT score (above), a student who had a teacher who had attended any five different GCEE workshops **would expect to score 14 points higher than a student of a teacher who hadn't attended any GCEE workshops.**

### Cumulative Effect of Workshop Attendance Using 2008 Test Scores



# The Georgia Council on Economic Education: Staying true to its mission since 1972

Not all teachers who teach economics are prepared for the job. Because the state-required economics course is usually taught within the social studies curriculum, a teacher with a traditional social studies certificate can be assigned to teach the class without having taken any economics courses in college.

That's where GCEE comes in.

Since our founding in 1972, we have stayed true to our mission: **to help teachers teach economics in the public and independent schools of Georgia.** We do this by conducting workshops, creating and disseminating instructional materials and delivering special programs like the Stock Market Game™, usually at no cost to the teacher or the school system. Over the last three years, GCEE has conducted 445 workshops for 9,378 teachers.

## Research Methodology

The advent of universal student testing in Georgia provided a unique opportunity to measure the effectiveness of GCEE workshops. Thanks to cooperation from the Georgia Department of Education (GDOE) and funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Excellence in Economic Education grant program administered by the Council for Economic Education in New York, researchers measured the impact of GCEE programming in terms of changes in student test scores on the state-mandated economics EOCT.

The team looked at test scores over a three-year period. The test data were scrubbed for privacy in order to protect the identity of the individual teachers and students.

"Having access to an administrative data set gave GCEE and the research team a unique opportunity to look at student success," Dr. Swinton says. "This was based on a strong relationship with the Georgia

Department of Education, demonstrating that they trust us with their data."

Researchers also had access to GCEE's comprehensive database that tracks teacher participation in workshops, allowing the researchers to conduct the impact analysis.

## The Research Team

Christopher Clark, Ph.D., Georgia College and State University  
Thomas W. DeBerry, Ph.D., Freed-Hardeman University  
Benjamin Scafidi, Ph.D., Georgia College and State University  
John R. Swinton, Ph.D., Georgia College and State University  
Howard C. Woodard, Ph.D., Georgia College and State University

To see a list of published studies on this topic, please consult the bibliography on the back page.

**"Having access to an administrative data set gave GCEE and the research team a unique opportunity to look at student success."**

*– John R. Swinton,  
Ph.D., Georgia College  
and State University*



## Educators Agree: Attending GCEE workshops is a valuable experience



**Alvin Wilbanks, CEO and Superintendent,  
Gwinnett County Public Schools**

Economic understanding is critical in today's world. We have to prepare our students to understand economic concepts in order to make good economic decisions when they assume their role as consumers in our global society.

The Georgia Council on Economic Education has been instrumental in assisting Gwinnett County achieve top student performance in economics. The vast majority of our social studies teachers have attended GCEE workshops. As a result, our economic test scores have improved dramatically. I am so grateful for the ongoing programs, materials, and support that the Council provides. Their work benefits our teachers, and more importantly, helps to ensure the economic education of the next generation.



**Candy Lowe, Instructional Director for Social Studies,  
Chatham County Schools**

My first meeting with the Georgia Council on Economic Education in 1998 led to more than a decade of the finest, most productive, useful, and applicable teacher workshops ever afforded to Savannah's teachers. Teacher workshop evaluations consistently validate this affirmation, exclaiming that "this

was the best workshop I ever attended with classroom-ready materials!" The GCEE team is to be commended for their expertise and diligent work in serving the teachers in our state.



**Craig Ellis, Teacher,  
Oglethorpe County Schools**

When I started teaching high school economics, I was given the teachers' edition of the textbook and a few workbooks and sent out to educate my students in economics. Luckily I found GCEE and have since attended over 10 workshops. With each workshop, I get new instructional materials, new ideas,

and I also get the chance to talk to and learn from other economics teachers from around the state – I get more and more tools to help my students learn economics. The most beneficial GCEE workshop that I attended was the two-day teaching high school economics workshop. This workshop completely changed me as a teacher. I now continually find ways to get students actively involved in the classroom to where they enjoy being there and enjoy learning. I am truly grateful that I discovered the Georgia Council on Economic Education.

# **We are making a difference. With your help, we can do even more.**

Georgia Council workshops have an impact on instruction – and most are offered at no financial cost. Visit [www.gcee.org](http://www.gcee.org) to see a complete schedule of upcoming workshops or to request specific programs for your teachers.

The Georgia Council on Economic Education is funded exclusively from the generosity of individuals, businesses, and foundations. And we know how to maximize our resources in the most cost-effective way. For example, an average teacher workshop costs the Council approximately \$2,500 to teach 25 teachers, or \$100 per teacher. A middle or high school teacher teaches 200 students in a year – so a workshop costs about 50 cents per student. That is the power of the multiplier effect.

Please make a gift to continue strengthening economics education in our state. Contact the Georgia Council at 404-413-7820 or pledge online at [www.gcee.org/give](http://www.gcee.org/give).

## **Georgia Council Staff**

Dr. David Martin, Executive Director

Dr. Glen Blankenship, Associate Director and Chief Program Officer

Mike Raymer, Program Manager

## **Bibliography**

More on the impact of workshops from the Georgia Council on Economic Education can be found in these published studies:

Swinton, J.R., DeBerry, T., Scafidi, B., and Woodard, H.C. (2007). "The Impact of Financial Education Workshops for Teachers on Students' Economics Achievement," *The Journal of Consumer Education* 27: 63-77.

Swinton, J.R., DeBerry, T., Scafidi, B., and Woodard, H.C. (2010). "Does In-Service Professional Learning for High School Economics Teachers Improve Student Achievement?" *Education Economics* 18:4, 395-405.

Swinton, J.R., Scafidi, B., and Woodard, H.C. "The Impact of the *Teaching High School Economics* Workshop for Teachers on Student Achievement." (forthcoming) *Eastern Economic Journal*.

Swinton, J.R., Scafidi, B. "Technology in the Aid of Delivering Economic Content to Teachers: Virtual Economics v. 3." *Center for the Economics of Education Policy Studies* working paper.

## **Georgia Council on Economic Education**

P.O. Box 1619 • Atlanta, Georgia 30301-1619

404-413-7820; 877-PLAY-SMG (toll-free) • 404-413-7827 fax

[www.gcee.org](http://www.gcee.org)