

SSWAG Executive Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Location: Virtual

Opening & Procedural Items

Cory Lowe, President, called the meeting to order at 9:03 am.

- **Noted attachments to the agenda referencing State SSW Data**
- **Current MSW Students' Interest in School Social Work (for reference to our pipeline)**

Erin Woodcock, Vice President - The Nominating Committee needs a VP nominee, and also a Nominating Committee Chair.

Mr. Lowe reiterated that we must have the Nominating Committee Chair at the State Conference.

Dr. Brown - Pinkney - How many district presidents would be willing to volunteer for Nominating Committee Chair?

Hanson Polk, District 1 President - would be open to a further conversation about the Nominating Committee Chair. Mr. Lowe advised that he would reach out to discuss further.

Dr. Booker, Treasurer's Report - Balance as of Sunday, January 11, 2026, was \$222, 199.34. Taxes filed for the year; filed our annual registration with the Secretary of State; payments for spring conference coming - now at \$400 rate until 2/1/26, early bird registration rate has ended. Refund policy - 50% for cancellations. No refunds for CEUs.

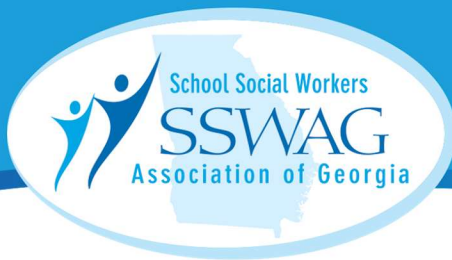
Fall Conference: \$5,575 total gross funds; \$4,582.19 net profit for Fall Conference

\$39, 397 total income to date

\$163, 495 projected income; Projected expenses - \$162,800, Current expenses - \$8,773.60

Dr. Booker presented a Budget Study and there was discussion covering the Legislative Budget for the upcoming year, and the possibility of increasing dues.

Mr. Lowe - noted Inseparable gave us a \$5,000 grant to support our cause and they have increased their grant to us to \$10,000 due to our closely aligned goals.



The minutes from the special session on November 4, 2025 were presented. Mr. Nicholas Hartley, District 9 President, made a motion to approve the minutes.

Ms. Tamisha Brothers-Brembry, District 4 President, seconded the motion to approve the minutes for the special session.

Motion was approved unanimously.

Executive Board Updates – District Reports

- D1 – Hanson Polk: Spring Meeting on March 6th, with CEUs. Wanting to launch a monthly roundtable and support within the District. Make a website in Canva for our executive board in District 1 to have paperwork, etc., located.

- D2 – Karen Menefee: not present. Tia reported that the District Meeting is 1/30 in Camilla.

- D3 – Dr. Bowles-Simmons: Tara presented for Dr. Bowles-Simmons at the Fall Meeting on November 7th in Harris County. Continuing to send our district updates.

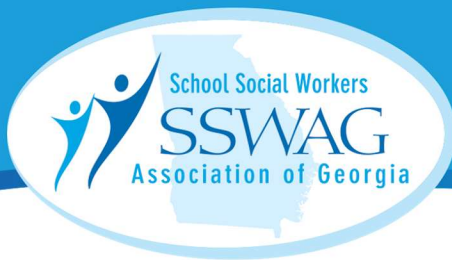
- D4 – Tamisha Brothers-Bembry: Continuing to send our emails from State President to members. Meeting scheduled for virtual meeting tomorrow but due to scheduling conflicts, will move meeting to the end of the month to have election prior to Spring Conference. Per her discussion with Dr. Chatelah Brown - Extending the Leads Program deadline to the end of January. Highlighted “Social Work Best Practice” at end of meetings to discuss/collaborate within the district to support each other. Interested in knowing which social work positions will be open next year (elsewhere) as some school closings within District 4 will affect employment. Retiree - Dr. Cynthia Turner will be retiring. Ms. Brothers-Bembry will not be seeking re-election. Noted some transition ideas for the incoming slate/board.

- D5 – Alaiya Shotwell: not present

- D6 – Ashley Harvell: Meeting in November; discussed personal improvement for helping families; Meeting at the end of January to collaborate on project. Concerned with the lack of responses.

-D5 - Alaiya Shotwell: Fall meeting on 10/31, speaker Marie Panini - Not Just Surviving, Thriving; positive feedback, 3 CEUs. SSWOTY of the Year for District 5 - Ms. Alaiya Shotwell. Continuing to focus on membership and participation.

- D7 – Mari Casole: Meeting on 2/2 in Calhoun; they will vote for new VP at that meeting. Hoping for CEUs - AI in SSW. SSWOTY for D7 - Kaitlyn Wilson with Rome City Schools.



- D8 – Haley Rojas: Currently planning Spring Conference to offer 2 hours of ethics CEUs.
- D9 – Nicholas Hartley: Meeting for 2/23 to have Barrow County Schools talk about post-vention since Appalachian incident. Speaker for Social Work and Sped – coordinating together. SSWOTY for D9 – Angela Gay of Clarke County.
- D10 – Tawanna Bruce – Not present

Committee Updates

-GaDoe Liaison- Dr. Oliver: Happy to offer technical assistance and guidance if needed for SB 123. Does include some changes and additions, currently drafting guidance required by SB 123. The model would implement a prevention structure using MTSS. Guidance required by June 2026. HB 268 – email sent, Student Advocacy Specialist is now eligible for reimbursement; not a grant position. Reimbursement is available only for districts that have a GMEA-approved Safety Plan. This is a lot of support for school social work. There was some discussion on specifics related to the Student Advocacy Specialist – funding and requirements.

Membership Chair – Ashley Dykes: Currently 424 active members; 405 full members, 1 affiliate, 15 retired, and 2 students. An additional 48 have paid but not completed forms. Emails to DPs to help people finish their forms. 41 who filled out a form but have not yet paid. Should be at 515 with all those included.

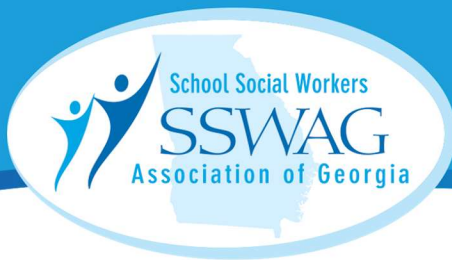
Legislative Chair – Melinda Carson: Bringing on an official new lobbyist – Georgia Capitol Solutions. Mr. Andy Lord is the principal lobbyist and is meeting with different representatives to advance SSW in the state. There was discussion on SSW Lobby Day at the Capital and SSW priorities.

GNETS – Zakiya Shareef-Givens: not present

Historian – Dr. Abifee Thomas: moved forward with the process of asking for nominations of Social Work Legends. Hoping that Districts are working to get some nominees rolling in for the committee to review for the spring conference award.

Journal/Research – Dr. Turner: not present

Fall Conference Chair – Sophie King: Fall Conference was a success; good profit. Feedback was positive for the sessions, and we will apply feedback to next year's conference. Shoutout to Penny for sending out the CEUs.



Spring Conference Chairs - Petrina Fowler/Dr. Rasha Portis: Ms. Fowler noted the rooms are all reserved at this time. Not an overflow hotel, but other hotels nearby (Hampton Inn). Registration is open and active on Eventbrite. Finalizing speakers at this time and ensuring the CEs are approved. Dr. Portis highlighted after hour activities - almost 400 registered for the conference.

Awards - Dr. Portis: SSWOTY Packets have been sent to the judges for review. Committee members: Crystal Wright, Laura Etheridge, Ellie Parker, Ashley Dykes, and Julie Hawkins. Discussion about pushing the date back to January 31st in the future so that applicants have adequate time to submit more robust applications. Need from DPs: designated or selected SSWOTY headshot and brief bio to include them in the program. Received nominations for Champion of SSW and the Elsie Nesbitt Award. May have a President Award. The cost of awards has increased from \$50 to \$64. Discussion on potential changes to SSWOTY role. Next steps: awards are being ordered/purchased.

Long Range Planning - Petrina Fowler & Heather Anderson: Moving along with 2027 - 80th year. Looking at several dates: March 14-17; March 16-19; March 21-24; March 23-26; March 28-31; and March 30-April 2, 2027. Trying to figure out which properties could accommodate us (400 attendees, approximately). Petrina and Heather to visit Savannah at the end of January to secure a contract and make a decision. Looking at venues for 2028 as well in the North Georgia Mountains, but issue with finding accommodations for the group size. Heather requested that anyone share potential venues.

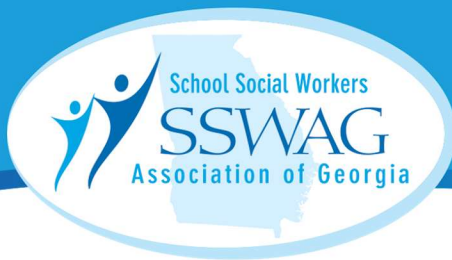
Mentor Chair - Gwenetta Sullivan-Echols: Mr. Lowe noted that Ms. Sullivan-Echols advised that we currently have 26 members signed up as mentees and 13 mentors.

Procedural Guidelines Chair - Alicia McClung: Reviewing Guidelines for possible updates. There was some discussion on updates to the procedural guidelines. Ms. McClung requested the President, Mr. Lowe to provide guidance on next steps to have any changes ready to present to the general membership body.

Mr. Lowe - in agreement to meet and discuss dues and other changes to procedural guidelines at a separate time.

Professional Development - Penny Maggioni: not present; Mr. Lowe noted that she is in the process of getting approval from NASW for CEUs.

Public Relations Chair - Amber Wade: not present



Retirement Chair - Ms. Ida Hafford-Brown: Recently joined the Retired Educator Association and hopes to attend the Spring meeting this year. Looking to secure resources for SSWAG. On December 5th, a canned food drive was held, supported by 15 school social workers. Planning to meet with retirees at the conference and secure regional commitment to support higher-need areas in the state.

University Liaison - Dr. Katina Cooper: not present

Event Sponsorship and Vendor Coordinator - Tia Williams: Working on vendor sponsorship. Sent emails to vendors yesterday and am receiving more responses. Current, fully paid vendor/sponsors: K-12 Solutions, Family Ties, Georgia State University, Hillside, Georgia Parent Support Network, and Foothills High School. Pending: NAMI, Georgia Park Credit Union, Georgia Youth Challenge, PAGE, PeachState Health Plan, and TRS. There was some discussion on GAE and PAGE's involvement for the conference.

Webmaster - Jarod Anderson: Needs to add 3 abstracts to the website for Dr. Turner. Please advise him if we become aware of anything that needs to be changed.

SSWKES - Dr. Brown-Pinkney: No updates at this time.

SSW LEAD Committee - Dr. Chatelah Brown: not present

YMAD Scholarship Committee - Dr. Snipes: not present

Ms. Hafford Brown: Meeting in 2 weeks (You Make A Difference Scholarship) to decide on the winner.

Mr. Lowe - noted that Ms. Carson added a google form to the chat for Advocacy Day at the Capital.

Ms. Shotwell made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Hartley seconded to close the meeting at 11:12am. Motion passed.