

Powerless? Or Powerful?

How You Can Use Your Vote to Save Public Education in Georgia.

It's YOUR Choice.

In 1978, Vaclav Havel wrote an essay that literally rocked his world. *The Power of the Powerless* attacked the Soviet regime that controlled Czechoslovakia and challenged each one of his countrymen to take a stand. When the powerless stood together, he urged, they reclaimed their lost power.



For his beliefs, Havel was called a dissident and a rebel. Government leaders tossed him into jail repeatedly. It would have been easy—and understandable—for him to back down, to choose silence over persecution. After all, he was just one man taking on an entire government.

He never yielded though. When the walls tumbled down and Czechoslovakia was finally free, independent, and democratic, it was Havel, a former poet and playwright with a prison record, who was chosen to head the country as president.

Why? He had never backed down from what he believed. He chose to see power in those who believed they had no power. In doing so, he taught others to recognize that power, too. He saw in his people the power to bring an empire to its knees and to build a country with vision, hope, respect, and freedom out of the wreckage.

Georgia is no Czechoslovakia. Yet there is much we can learn from its example. We are at a significant crossroads this moment in time. We are facing issues that threaten our future as a state. Over the last eight years, the state's K-12 education budget has been stripped of \$8 billion dollars. Educators from Dade County to Camden County have faced cuts, furloughs, job loss, dwindling resources, and more. Class sizes are rising. Morale is dropping.

Quite frankly, it's depressing out there. It's easy to feel like there is nothing we can do to change things. There are many of us out there right now who feel absolutely powerless.

**We are far from powerless.
We are powerful.**

Just so we're clear: You are not devoid of strength or resources. You have the opportunity to change the reality for public education in Georgia. You have a voice. You have a vote. You have power. We need to realize that. After all, our students are depending on us to find our voices and to use our votes to rock this world—for the better.

Use your vote to advocate for the more than 110,000 educators in Georgia. We're championing the needs of the 1.7 million children in Georgia's nearly 2,500 public schools. By doing so, we're helping to build a stronger future for the people in Georgia.

Election time is coming. Use your vote to send a powerful statement that you believe in public education and that your students deserve to be a priority. To help you harness your power, the Georgia Association of Educators has prepared a list of the candidates recommended by GAE's Fund for Public Education.

**Power=the ability to act
or produce an effect.**