

PRESS RELEASE

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STAR OF COASTAL GEORGIA HIRES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Townsend Brings Extensive Leadership Experience to Role

Brunswick, GA, August 1, 2023 – Rick Townsend, a St. Simons Island resident, educator, and small-business owner who last November was elected as the Georgia State Representative for House District 179, has been named Executive Director of STAR of Coastal Georgia, the Glynn County based non-profit organization that specializes in teaching job-readiness, computer literacy, and life-skills for adults of all ages.

Townsend succeeds Dr. Markisha Butler, who accepted a position with the United States Dept. of Labor.

Townsend is a member of the Brunswick-Golden Isles Chamber of Commerce and earlier formed Rick Townsend & Associates, which likewise has focused on assisting schools, organizations, career academies, and technical colleges on workforce development. Emphasis has been on soft-skills training for students, securing grants, fostering professional development, and coaching.

Townsend's career in education has spanned three decades and has included 10 years as CEO of the Golden Isles College & Career Academy. He has worked as a teacher, coach, principal, and superintendent, on behalf of all ages, pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade, in both rural and urban settings, aiding the economically disadvantaged as well as students from wealthier sectors throughout Georgia.

Townsend holds degrees from Reinhard College and from the University of Georgia. He completed requirements for a Doctor of Education in School Improvement, certified by the University of West Georgia.

Townsend currently serves on the Education, Natural Resources, and Special Rules Committee in the GA State House. He was also selected this summer to serve on a study committee regarding technical education and the workforce.

He is a past member of professional organizations that include: Georgia Association of Education Leaders, Georgia School Superintendents Association, as well as the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Townsend was selected for the Georgia Leadership Academy's Institute for New Leaders, and for a two-year executive-level session with the Superintendents Professional Development Program.

Included in his experiences has been service with the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement and the Georgia School Superintendents Association Human Resources Institute. He was inducted in the Phi Delta Kappa educational honor society and in 2018 represented Glynn County in Leadership Southeast Georgia.

Townsend has either served, as a member or volunteer, with Kiwanis (he organized Kiwanis Read Across GA Day), Rotary, Lions Club, Boy Scouts, United Way, and Morningstar. He is Past Chair of Membership for GA Kiwanis and is a past member of the Kiwanis International Committee for Club Excellence, USA 2, as well as Lt. Gov. for District 4.

As State Representative for District 179, Townsend's constituencies span Brunswick, Blythe Island, St. Simons Island, and Sea Island.

Townsend and his wife Emily, a retired elementary school teacher, have three daughters: Haley, Emily, and Molly.