

GOVERNANCE/LOCAL CONTROL

Gwinnett County Public Schools opposes any legislation that usurps the authority of the Gwinnett County Board of Education to govern our public schools. It is through the local board's governance and control that a school system is able to meet the educational needs and expectations of the community in an equitable manner.

Therefore, GCPS urges the General Assembly to protect and reaffirm the Constitutional authority of the duly elected Gwinnett County Board of Education to provide educational services at the local level through its system of public schools. To that end, legislators are asked to:

- Maintain local school board control over such things as instructional resources, local revenue sources, student discipline, curriculum, school-year calendar, etc.
- Sustain Title 20 flexibility for Strategic Waivers School Systems
- Support the implementation of innovative assessment options at the local, State, and/or federal levels
- Ensure sovereign immunity of local boards of education
- Allow local school systems operational control over redistricting to develop new School Board District boundaries and social issues that impact school climate and instruction.

Questions regarding the 2022 Legislative Priorities may be directed to:

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VISION

Gwinnett County Public Schools will become a system of world-class schools where students acquire the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and careers.

MISSION

The mission of Gwinnett County Public Schools is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Gwinnett County Public Schools will...

- Ensure a world-class education for all students by focusing on teaching and learning the Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) curriculum.
- Ensure a safe, secure, and orderly environment for all.
- Optimize student achievement through responsible stewardship of its financial resources and the proactive pursuit of all resources necessary to meet current and future demands.
- Recruit, employ, develop, and retain a workforce that achieves the mission and goals of the organization.
- Support instructional and operational needs with technological systems and processes that support effective performance and desired results.
- Provide and manage the system's facilities and operations in an exemplary manner as determined by programmatic needs and best management practices.
- Apply continuous quality improvement strategies and principles as the way the organization does business.



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LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

2022

GWINNETT COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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District III

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District I*

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Superintendent

The Gwinnett County Board of Education annually adopts Legislative Priorities that support the vision, mission, goals, and strategic direction of Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS). The **2022 Legislative Priorities** are organized into four categories. The Board asks the Gwinnett County Legislative Delegation to support the Legislative Priorities in the 2022 session of the Georgia General Assembly, and ensure that no legislation is introduced that would impede the Board’s ability to govern the school system.

FUNDING

The Gwinnett County Board of Education will continue its responsible stewardship of funds provided to support teaching and learning. Any reduction of funding, through the loss of local and/or state dollars jeopardizes our ability to provide students the quality and effective education our community demands and expects, and challenges us to maintain a sound financial position and our AAA bond ratings.

State Funding Formula — GCPS urges the General Assembly to:

- Hold school districts harmless in terms of formula funding if enrollment has declined as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Eliminate the “amended formula adjustment” presently included in the Quality Basic Education (QBE) funding formula and has been in the formula earnings for 18 of the past 20 years.
- Continue fully funding the Equalization Grant under the current formula (provides financial assistance to school systems ranking below the statewide average of per pupil tax wealth, O.C.G.A 20-2-165).
- Increase the level of funding (salaries and benefits) in the QBE formula for classified employees (bus drivers, paraprofessionals, nurses, social workers, etc.)
 - This will enable school districts the ability to address the critical staffing shortage of employees in these areas.
 - The formula does not provide funding for health insurance for classified employees. This cost for GCPS will be \$64 million.
- Consider a full review and or modernization of the QBE funding formula
- For the FY2023 budget, fully fund the capital outlay.

Health Insurance — GCPS supports a comprehensive review of the State’s health benefit plan and urges the General Assembly to consider

all possible solutions and cost-saving measures. For example, the State currently provides no funding for classified employees who elect health insurance coverage. This cost for GCPS will be \$65.3 million in FY2022.

Early Learning — Preparing children to enter school ready to learn is a critical need in Georgia. Evidence shows that the early learning need is even greater among economically disadvantaged students, and high-quality early learning programs can permanently change the trajectory of these students. Lottery funding supports Pre-K programs for a limited number of students, but more early learning opportunities are needed. GCPS urges the State to review the research on the impact of early learning programs, especially in economically disadvantaged communities, and provide the fiscal resources needed to implement effective programs and practices.

Transportation — GCPS urges the General Assembly to fund pupil transportation at a level that eliminates the gap between State-allotted funding and the actual costs to local districts. In FY2022 Gwinnett County Public Schools will receive \$5.8 million in State transportation funding through the current formula. The district’s budget will be \$93 million, meaning the State will contribute only 6.24% toward GCPS’ transportation costs. Additionally, GCPS supports legislation that strengthens any and all safety measures.

Retirement — GCPS urges the General Assembly to sustain the current Teachers Retirement System of Georgia, and to support legislation that would allow classroom teachers to return to full employment without impacting their TRS benefits, recognizing that these would be compelling incentives for recruiting and retaining quality educators.

FISCAL AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

GCPS urges the General Assembly to sustain the improvements made in these areas:

- Increase funding and coordination of wrap-around services, including funding to hire and train school-based social workers, counselors, community advocates, and school nurses; and support community-based student and family resources that address academic preparation, college and post-secondary planning, career readiness, social-emotional support, and whole student well-being.
- Expand funding for APEX school mental health services.

CONTINUING POSITIONS

GCPS urges the Legislature to support the following long-standing positions of the Gwinnett County Board of Education:

- Encourage legislation that promotes a safe and secure learning environment through a focus on facilities, staffing, students, parents, technology, and broadband connectivity as means to maximize school safety
- Resist efforts to provide contracts for classified employees
- Protect public education funding by opposing vouchers and/or tuition tax credits
- Require impact statements for any new legislation before enactment.