

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. Such legislation is a direct affront to the Constitutional powers given to local boards of education. 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.

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 social issues that impact school climate and instruction.

Questions regarding the 2020 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.

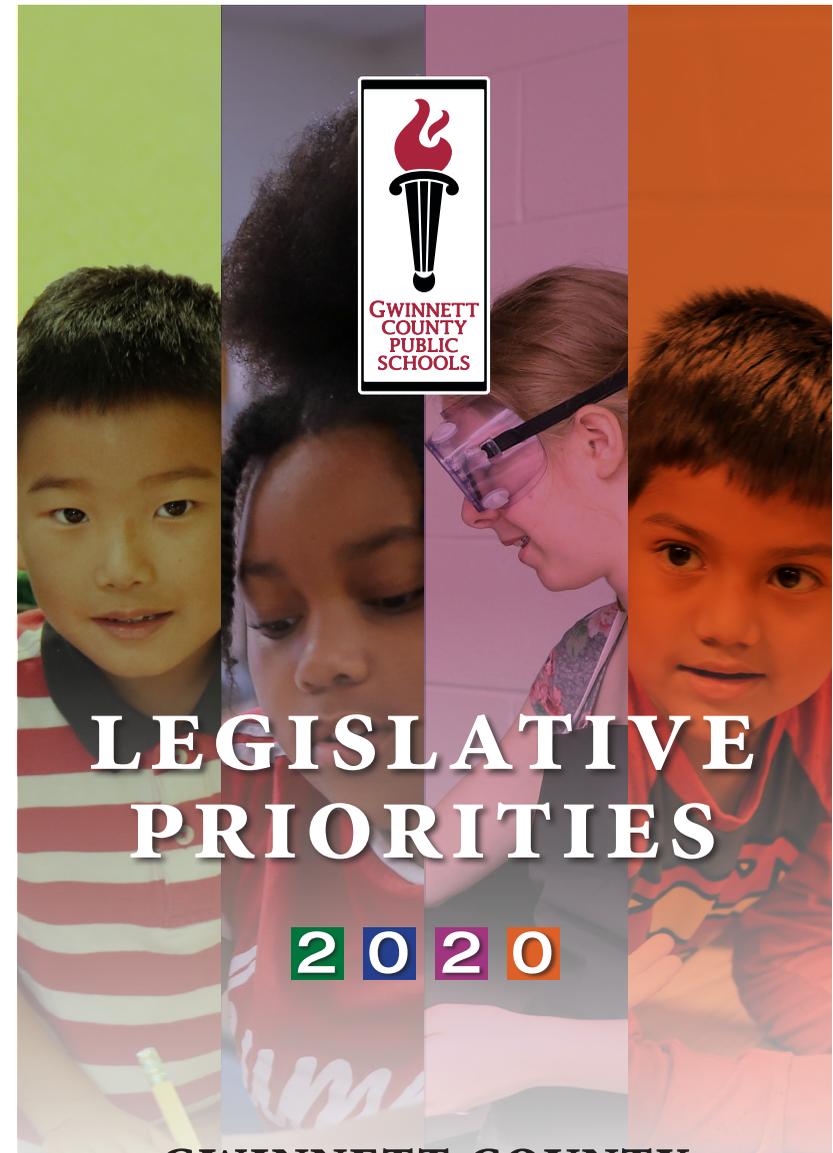
STRATEGIC GOALS

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

2020

GWINNETT COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Dr. Mary Kay Murphy
*2019 Chairman,
District III*

Carole C. Boyce
District I

Steven B. Knudsen
District II

Louise Radloff
*2019 Vice Chairman,
District V*

Everton Blair, Jr.
District IV

J. Alvin Wilbanks
CEO/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 **2020 Legislative Priorities** are organized into four categories. The Board asks the Gwinnett County Legislative Delegation to support the Legislative Priorities in the 2020 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 in 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 — If a new funding formula for Georgia is considered in the 2020 session, GCPS urges legislators to adopt a formula that meets the following criteria:

- The funding formula is quantitative, student enrollment-based, adequate, and equitable.
- The Equalization Grant remains a component of the formula and continues to be fully funded.
- The new funding formula generates no fewer dollars than does the current formula.
- Capital outlay continues to be funded at the maximum levels.

Safety and Security — GCPS urges the State to continue allotting additional funds, and allow a local school system flexibility in expending these funds, to meet the system’s safety and security needs. Specifically, we request funding through the formula or through grants such as the \$69 million in one-time School Safety Grants funded in FY2019. For its part, Gwinnett County Public Schools employs 96 school resource officers and funds a Safety and Security Department budget of \$10 million for FY2020.

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 was \$67 million in FY2019 and increases every year.

Early Learning — Preparing children to enter school ready to learn is a critical need in Georgia. 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 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 FY2020 Gwinnett County Public Schools will receive \$5.8 million in State transportation funding through the current formula. The district’s budget for State-mandated services is almost \$91 million, meaning the State will contribute only 6.4% toward GCPS’ transportation costs.

Retirement — GCPS urges the General Assembly to sustain the current Teachers Retirement System of Georgia, recognizing that it is a compelling incentive for recruiting and retaining quality educators.

FISCAL AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES

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

- Ensure continuation of the Governor’s School Leadership Academy, funded through the First Priority Act
- Support the recruitment and retention of mathematics and science teachers by maintaining the funding for endorsement supplements for teachers in these critical-need areas
- Provide funding to hire and train school counselors so students will have greater access to services that address academic preparation, college and post-secondary planning, and career readiness
- Support the recommendations of the “Vision for Public Education in Georgia” project
- 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, and technology 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.