

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.

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
- Maintain through FY2022 all waivers granted to local education agencies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as provided by State Board of Education rules.
- 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 2021 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.

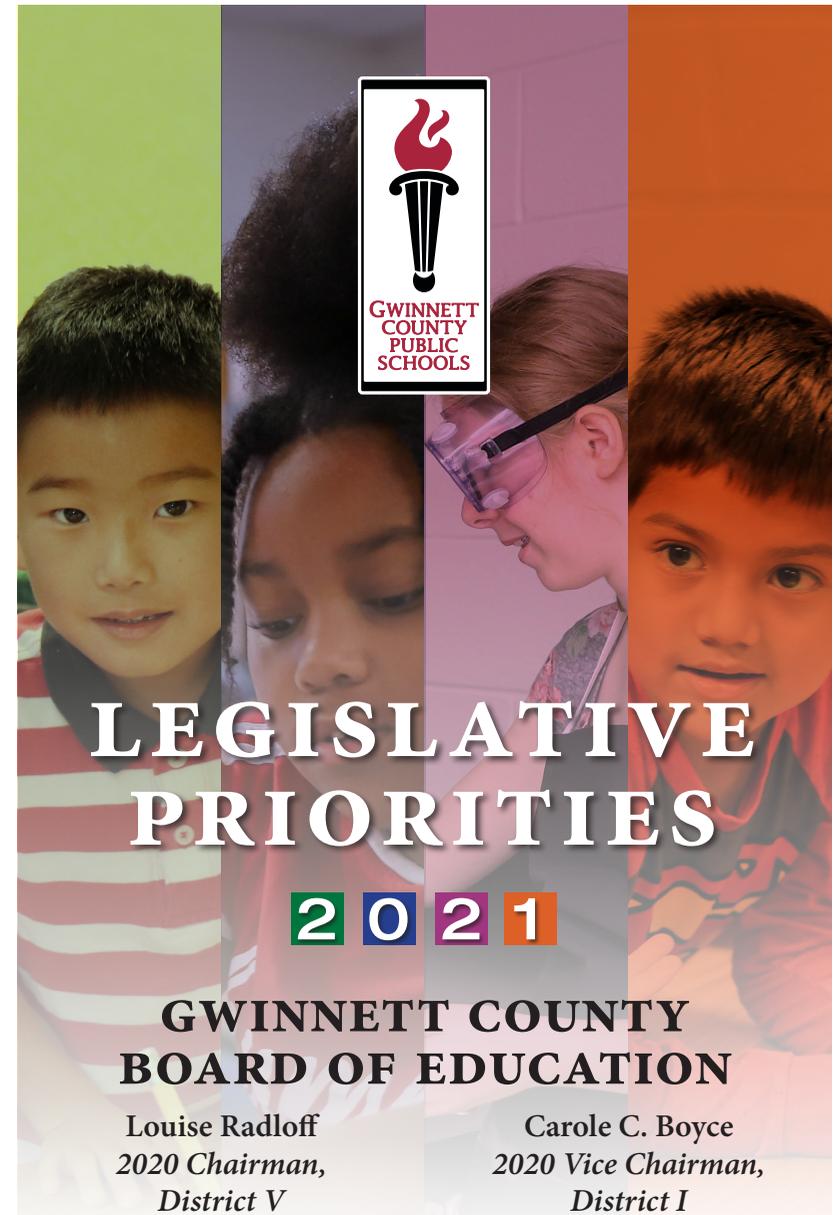
STRATEGIC GOALS

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

2021

GWINNETT COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Louise Radloff
2020 Chairman,
District V

Carole C. Boyce
2020 Vice Chairman,
District I

Steven B. Knudsen
District II

Everton Blair, Jr.
District IV

Dr. Mary Kay Murphy
District III

J. Alvin Wilbanks
CEO/Superintendent

Karen Watkins
District I
(effective Jan. 2021)

Dr. Tarece Johnson
District V
(effective Jan. 2021)

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 **2021 Legislative Priorities** are organized into four categories. The Board asks the Gwinnett County Legislative Delegation to support the Legislative Priorities in the 2021 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 — GCPS urges the General Assembly to:

- When amending the FY2021 budget at mid-term, hold school districts harmless in terms of formula funding if enrollment has declined as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- When amending the FY2021 budget and developing the FY2022 budget, provide funding to support the increased needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic (costs associated with virtual learning, PPE, student services, and personnel).
- For the FY2022 budget, fully fund the Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula and oppose any “amended formula adjustment” that would result in decreased funding for K-12 public education. In FY2021, the 10% amended formula adjustment meant a loss in state funding of \$100 million for Gwinnett County Public Schools.
- For the FY2022 budget, continue fully funding Equalization Grant under 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).

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 FY2021.

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 FY2021 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.

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:

- Support continued funding for the Governor’s School Leadership Academy
- 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 and social workers so students will have greater access to services that address academic preparation, college and post-secondary planning, career readiness, and social-emotional support
- 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.