



FY2023 Budget: Student-Centered, Equity-Focused, and Future-Driven

Focusing on Access and Opportunity for All Students, Early Literacy, School-Based Resources, and Compensation

Each year, Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) develops and adopts a budget for the next fiscal year beginning on July 1. This budget represents an investment plan for the school district, its students, employees, and the community as a whole. The proposed FY2023 Budget supports GCPS' strategic direction, aligning with the district's efforts, as part of the Learning 2025 network, to transform public education so that it is truly student-centered, equity-focused, and future driven. This budget provides a foundation for the district's forthcoming strategic plan—*The Blueprint for the Future*—which will ensure that each and every student is ready for success after graduation.

The FY2023 Superintendent's Recommended Budget:

The Recommended Budget calls for \$2.828 billion in the six funds that comprise the Total Budget. The proposed General Fund, which represents 70% of the Total Budget and funds the primary day-to-day operations of the school district, accounts for \$1.977 billion of the total. This represents a 3.1% increase in the General Fund that can be attributed to improvements in the areas of expanded access and opportunity for students, early literacy, school-based resources, and compensation.

Revenue Sources for FY2023:

GCPS will receive a net increase of \$31 million in state funding over the previous year due to the following:

- **\$31.0 million** for a \$2,000 salary increase allotted through the State Teacher Salary Schedule;
- **\$18.1 million** for projected student growth;
- **\$7.5 million** for the state-funded portion of teacher salary step increases (compensation for training and experience) and the additional certificated employees who will be enrolled in state health insurance plans;
- **\$1.3 million** due to an increase in the rate of the employer contribution to the Teachers Retirement System;
- **\$40.5 million** in additional state funding earnings due to elimination of austerity reductions;
- GCPS will receive **\$34.6 million** in Equalization Grant funding, a decrease of \$50 million from the previous year;
- The district will see a decrease of **\$1.2 million** in one-time state grants; and
- Offsetting state funding will be the school district's "Local Five-Mill Share," a required cost of participating in the state's Quality Basic Education (QBE) funding formula.

For FY2023, GCPS' five-mill share will be \$203 million, compared to \$186.8 million this year. That is a deduction increase of \$16.2 million.

In terms of local funding, the property tax digest is expected to grow by 5.1%, resulting in an increase of \$52.7 million in local property tax revenue. Title ad valorem taxes, real estate transfer taxes, intangible taxes, and investment earnings are expected to grow a combined \$25.2 million over FY2022.

The proposed budget does not recommend an increase in the property tax millage rate.



The FY2023 Budget serves as a critical first step in supporting the district's strategic direction, demonstrating GCPS' commitment to ensuring each and every child is ready for their future, not our past.

The Superintendent's Recommended Budget document is available on the school district's website at www.gcpsk12.org.

FY2023 Improvements:

In the area of improvements, the proposed FY2023 budget includes investments to expand access and opportunity for all students, accelerate early literacy, prioritize school-based resources, and increase compensation. These improvements include:

Access and Opportunity for All Students:

- Funding for 30 additional bus drivers to expand transportation options for choice programs in the district at a cost of \$1.4 million;
- Addition of 18 college and career specialists, expanding support to all high schools for a cost of \$1.8 million;
- Additional funding for program initiatives and personnel centered around whole learner support—a cost of \$4.0 million; and
- Funding to ensure 1:1 technology access for all students in grades 3–12, with take-home devices provided by the district—\$5.0 million.

Early Literacy:

- Funding for a full-year Pre-K Pilot of two classes at eight schools at a cost of \$3.6 million;
- Funding for a full-year pilot of reading instructional materials at 20–25 elementary schools for a cost of \$8.0 million; and
- Funding of \$3.0 million to support science of reading and structured literacy professional development for all K–3 teachers (approximately 2,200 educators).

School-Based Resources:

- The addition of 233 instructional and support positions required to accommodate the projected growth of 3,284 students and the opening of one new high school for a total cost of approximately \$20.7 million; and
- An additional 182 teaching positions to lower class size allotments at all school levels for a cost of \$17.3 million (includes ESOL teacher allotments and early learning support).

Compensation:

- A salary step increase for all eligible employees (approximately 95% of current teachers and 43% of classified employees are eligible);
- A \$2,000 increase for all employees paid on the teacher salary schedule;
- A minimum 4.0% cost-of-living increase for all employees not paid on the teacher schedule, with larger percentage increases in lower-compensated positions to achieve a minimum starting salary of \$13.50 per hour, moving toward a goal of \$15 per hour; and
- Funding the rate increase for the employer-paid portion of the Teachers Retirement System from 19.81% to 19.98%.



Message from the Superintendent:

FY2023 Budget— Aligning Financial Investments with Student-Centered Priorities

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) is in a season of transition as we complete the fiscal year 2023 (FY2023) budget process. During my Look, Listen, and Learn tour, I heard from many of you within our community about your priorities for our district. I appreciate the rich diversity that exists within the largest school district in Georgia and the 11th largest school district in the country. I also understand the desire to unify around our support of our children and our commitment to ensuring that each and every child is ready for their future and not our past. The FY2023 budget represents our first opportunity to align our financial investments with the student-centered priorities expressed by our staff, families, and community.

As part of the Learning 2025 network, GCPS is one of 125 demonstration districts seeking to redesign public education. GCPS will shift our culture to one that is whole learner focused, where each and every child is known by name, by face, by individual strength, and need. We will ensure that no learner is marginalized by creating school climates where students and staff feel valued and accepted no matter their race, gender, ethnicity, native language, disability, or religion. We know that our students live in a world where diversity is a fact—as evidenced by Gwinnett County’s status as one of the most diverse counties in the United States. Part of our efforts to be future-driven must include preparing our children to live and work with people who may be quite different from them. These intentional culture shifts will require that we align our resources to support this new reality.

Our budget investments will bolster the resources needed to support our shared vision of success for our students. We must deploy learning accelerators, like instructional technology that creates more individualized learning opportunities for students and other instructional materials that support teachers to fully align their lessons to the AKS. We will provide greater access to early learning for students to start school kindergarten-ready and quickly acquire foundational literacy skills through structured literacy and science of reading protocols. Of course, we need our community partners to support our children beyond the school walls and the instructional day, as well as a pipeline of talented, diverse educators who are equipped and professionally developed to facilitate the highest levels of learning within our classrooms.

We also will leverage our Learning 2025 work through a community-wide effort to create our shared vision for student

success—Portrait of a Graduate. The Portrait will become the “north star” for our new strategic plan, Blueprint for the Future. The Blueprint will define our strategic priorities in four areas: empathy, equity, effectiveness, and excellence. We know that empathy is key to our understanding of others and to creating a powerful sense of belonging in our GCPS culture. Empathy is a gateway to equity—ensuring that each and every child has what they need to reach their full potential. Effectiveness is our ability to achieve the results we desire. Equity and effectiveness form the bridge from empathy to excellence. Our district will demonstrate excellence in our work—that notable standard to which we should all aspire, behaviorally, academically, and operationally. Blueprint for the Future will define specific key performance indicators (KPIs) in all these areas with annual targets to measure our progress towards success.

In preparing the budget, we view every dollar of investment as if each bill featured one of the faces of our 180,000 children in GCPS. With this lens, the proposed FY2023 budget includes investments to increase teacher and staff compensation, prioritize school-based resources, accelerate early literacy, and expand student access and opportunity. The FY2023 budget will cultivate the seedbed for the initiatives that we are planting for the coming years. We will nurture and grow these investments towards a harvest where each and every child graduates from GCPS ready for success in whatever pathway they choose. We look forward to our Board’s feedback on the FY2023 budget proposal.

I am honored to serve our children, their families, and our community as part of Team GCPS.

Dr. Calvin J. Watts, Superintendent and CEO

