

# **GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



## **2013 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM**

### **Gwinnett County Board of Education:**

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2012 Chairman  
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District IV**

**J. Alvin Wilbanks  
CEO/Superintendent**



## Gwinnett County Public Schools 2013 Legislative Program

### **Core Beliefs of the Gwinnett County Board of Education**

Our core business is teaching and learning.

All children can learn at or above grade level.

All children should reach their learning potential.

The school effect is important and has a profound impact on every child's life.

A quality instructional program requires a rigorous curriculum, effective teaching, and ongoing assessment.

All children should be taught in a safe and secure learning environment.

### **Vision**

Gwinnett County Public Schools will become a system of world-class schools where students acquire the knowledge and skills to be successful as they continue their education at the postsecondary level and/or enter the workforce.

### **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.
- Meet the continuing and changing demand for essential information through 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.

## Gwinnett County Public Schools Funding

Understanding the realities of the current economic times and the budget constraints that are being felt at the local, state, and national levels, the Board commits to continue its responsible stewardship of funds provided to support teaching and learning. However, the continuous reduction in funding, through the loss of local and/or state dollars, is jeopardizing our ability to provide students the quality and effective education our community demands and expects, maintain a sound financial position, and retain a AAA bond rating. No legislation should be passed that would erode existing revenue sources at the state or local level.

### Appropriations

Fully fund the QBE state funding formula as set forth in state statute, to include equalization funding, thus protecting the K-12 education appropriation from further austerity reductions. Since FY2003, austerity cuts to the QBE funding formula have resulted in a loss of state revenue for Gwinnett County Public Schools of \$632.4 million.

#### State QBE Formula Funding Lost

Fiscal Year	Funding Lost
2003	\$10.7 million
2004	\$22.9 million
2005	\$27.6 million
2006	\$27.0 million
2007	\$15.5 million
2008	\$13.4 million
2009	\$47.4 million*
2010	\$132.7 million**
2011	\$107.9 million***
2012	\$113.9 million
<b>2013</b>	<b><u>\$113.4 million</u></b>
<b>Total Loss</b>	<b>\$632.4 million</b>

Notes:

\*\*\* For FY11, the State used Federal Stabilization funds of \$12,397,558 to offset a portion of the austerity reduction. The net austerity reduction will be \$95,509,018.

\*\* For FY10, the State used Federal Stabilization funds of \$60,851,349 to offset a portion of the austerity reduction. The net austerity reduction was \$71,886,294.

\* For FY09, the State used Federal Stabilization funds of \$15,171,612 to offset a portion of the austerity reduction.

### **Restructuring of Public School Funding Formula**

- Gwinnett County Public Schools encourages members of the General Assembly to continue supporting our current student-driven formula, which meets the educational needs of students and the expectations of local communities.
- The General Assembly should thoroughly review the recommendations of the State Education Finance Study Commission and support only those recommendations that meet the following criteria:
  1. Fully fund the QBE formula in accordance with statute by eliminating the austerity cuts.
  2. No elimination of any program funding currently in the QBE formula without a mandatory “redirection” of those funds to another program area within the formula and a funding “hold harmless” for individual school districts that might be negatively affected by such a change.
  3. No “simplification” of the current QBE formula without a funding “hold harmless” for individual school districts that might be negatively affected by such a change.
  4. Enhancements to the QBE formula that better reflect the current instructional, student support and technology models for student success.
- The Equalization Grant should continue to be part of the state's public school funding framework and the current formula should be fully funded.

## **Gwinnett County Public Schools Governance**

**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 management and control that each school system can meet the educational needs and expectations of the community. We urge your commitment 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.**

### **Maintain Local Control of Public Education**

Local boards should retain their authority in the following areas:

#### **Local Revenue Sources**

Local boards of education should not be restricted by legislation from levying local ad valorem taxes to ensure funding for the quality K-12 educational programs their citizens expect. Any change in the tax code that would adversely affect the ability of local boards of education to generate local revenue should be opposed.

#### **Charter Schools**

Gwinnett County Public Schools supports charter schools as authorized in the Charter Schools Act of 1998. Rules and guidance that go beyond the intent of the current charter school law should be repealed. GCPS supports holding charter schools accountable to the same level of academic achievement and financial stewardship expected of all public schools. Furthermore, the funding allocated to charter schools (i.e., state special schools or locally approved charter schools) should be no more or no less favorable than the allocation provided by statute to public schools.

#### **Curriculum/Discipline**

Decisions relating to curriculum and student discipline should be left to local boards of education.

#### **Calendar**

Establishment of the annual school-year calendar, including starting and ending dates, and the establishment of the instructional day should rest solely with local boards of education.

# Gwinnett County Public Schools Governance

## Fiscal and School Improvement Initiatives

### **Tax Reform**

Support calling for a Constitutional amendment to allow local school districts the flexibility to use a portion of the revenue generated from the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) for the operation of schools.

### **Tax Exemptions**

Support a comprehensive annual review of sales tax and state tax exemptions, in order to eliminate any financial and budgetary impact on local educational agencies.

### **Race to the Top**

Support the school improvement initiatives outlined in Race to the Top: 1) Standards and Assessment, 2) Great Teachers and Leaders, 3) Longitudinal Data Systems to Support Instruction, 4) Turnaround Lowest Achieving Schools.

### **Vision for Public Education in Georgia**

Gwinnett County Public Schools urges the Georgia General Assembly to refrain from adopting legislation that is in conflict with the recommendations in the "Vision for Public Education in Georgia."

### **Health Benefits Costs**

Support a comprehensive review of the escalating health benefits cost impacting both employers and employees covered by the State Health Benefit Plan, in order to control the financial and budgetary impact on local educational agencies and their employees.

## **Gwinnett County Public Schools Continuing Positions**

### **Maintain a Safe and Secure Environment for Teaching and Learning**

The safety and security of students at school is a priority. Federal, State, and local agencies need to provide school districts with the resources to maintain a safe and secure environment for students in order to support current policies and procedures.

### **Resist Efforts to Provide Contracts for Classified Employees**

Local systems should not be required to provide contracts of employment for classified employees. Emphasis should be put on enhancing the benefits provided for classified employees.

### **Oppose Vouchers and/or Tuition Tax Credits**

Legislation that allocates public funds for private schools or home study programs through voucher or tuition tax credits or scholarships should be opposed. No verifiable, objective research exists that correlates vouchers or tuition tax credits with improved academic achievement. Furthermore, vouchers or tuition tax credits erode public education funding, thereby limiting the programs and services available for students who attend public schools.

### **Require Impact Statement for Any New Legislation**

Establish a mandatory, minimum 12-month waiting period prior to the implementation of any new state education legislation. In addition, require a clear and complete description of the potential fiscal, operational, and programmatic impact of the legislation on local schools and school districts.

### **Support Flexibility for Local School Systems**

Continue supporting legislation that provides local educational agencies options to implement flexibility in order to increase student achievement and operational effectiveness.

### **Fund Capital Outlay at Maximum Levels**

Fund capital outlay at the 100% funding level for both Regular Entitlement and Exceptional Growth.

**Shortfalls in State Funding K-12  
FY2013**

<b>Requests</b>	<b>Gwinnett's Total Cost</b>	<b>State Funds</b>	<b>Gwinnett's Funds</b>	<b>State Percentage</b>	<b>Local Percentage</b>
<b>Maintenance and Operations</b>	<b>\$90,860,000 ['13]</b>	<b>\$49,008,000 ['13]</b>	<b>\$41,852,000 ['13]</b>	<b>53.94% ['13]</b>	<b>46.06% ['13]</b>
	\$93,591,000 ['12]	\$49,008,000 ['12]	\$44,583,000 ['12]	52.36% ['12]	47.64% ['12]
	\$88,802,000 ['11]	\$48,553,000 ['11]	\$40,249,000 ['11]	54.68% ['11]	45.32% ['11]
	\$85,191,000 ['10]	\$48,155,000 ['10]	\$37,036,000 ['10]	56.53% ['10]	43.47% ['10]
	\$83,390,000 ['09]	\$47,691,000 ['09]	\$35,699,000 ['09]	57.19% ['09]	42.81% ['09]
<b>Instructional Materials, Supplies and Textbooks</b>	<b>\$17,895,000 ['13]</b>	<b>\$14,158,000 ['13]</b>	<b>\$3,737,000 ['13]</b>	<b>79.12% ['13]</b>	<b>20.88% ['13]</b>
	\$17,662,000 ['12]	\$14,158,000 ['12]	\$3,504,000 ['12]	80.16% ['12]	19.84% ['12]
	\$16,059,000 ['11]	\$13,963,000 ['11]	\$2,096,000 ['11]	86.95% ['11]	13.05% ['11]
	\$17,688,000 ['10]	\$13,756,000 ['10]	\$3,932,000 ['10]	77.77% ['10]	22.23% ['10]
	\$21,057,000 ['09]	\$13,647,000 ['09]	\$7,410,000 ['09]	64.81% ['09]	35.19% ['09]
<b>Training and Experience Lag</b>	<b>\$7,200,000 ['13]</b>		<b>\$7,200,000 ['13]</b>		<b>100.00% ['13]</b>
	\$7,500,000 ['12]		\$7,500,000 ['12]	<b>0.0</b>	100.00% ['12]
	\$7,200,000 ['11]		\$7,200,000 ['11]	<b>0.0</b>	100.00% ['11]
	\$6,900,000 ['10]		\$6,900,000 ['10]	<b>0.0</b>	100.00% ['10]
	\$6,600,000 ['09]		\$6,600,000 ['09]	<b>0.0</b>	100.00% ['09]
<b>Sick and Personal Leave</b>	<b>\$10,918,000 ['13]</b>	<b>\$1,615,000 ['13]</b>	<b>\$9,303,000 ['13]</b>	<b>14.79% ['13]</b>	<b>85.21% ['13]</b>
	\$10,918,000 ['12]	\$1,615,000 ['12]	\$9,303,000 ['12]	14.79% ['12]	85.21% ['12]
	\$10,910,000 ['11]	\$1,592,000 ['11]	\$9,318,000 ['11]	14.59% ['11]	85.41% ['11]
	\$13,812,000 ['10]	\$1,569,000 ['10]	\$12,243,000 ['10]	11.36% ['10]	88.64% ['10]
	\$14,272,000 ['09]	\$1,551,000 ['09]	\$12,721,000 ['09]	10.87% ['09]	89.13% ['09]
<b>Transportation (State-mandated services only, estimated)</b>	<b>\$61,745,000 ['13]</b>	<b>\$5,142,000 ['13]</b>	<b>\$56,603,000 ['12]</b>	<b>8.33% ['13]</b>	<b>91.67% ['13]</b>
	\$61,707,000 ['12]	\$5,206,000 ['12]	\$56,501,000 ['12]	8.44% ['12]	91.56% ['12]
	\$60,970,000 ['11]	\$5,419,000 ['11]	\$55,551,000 ['11]	8.89% ['11]	91.11% ['11]
	\$60,169,000 ['10]	\$5,677,000 ['10]	\$54,492,000 ['10]	9.44% ['10]	90.56% ['10]
	\$63,135,000 ['09]	\$6,849,000 ['09]	\$56,286,000 ['09]	10.85% ['09]	89.15% ['09]
<b>Gwinnett Retirement System</b>	<b>\$19,959,000 ['13]</b>		<b>\$19,959,000 ['13]</b>		<b>100.00% ['13]</b>
	\$39,393,000 ['12]		\$39,393,000 ['12]	<b>0.0</b>	100.00% ['12]
	\$40,184,000 ['11]		\$40,184,000 ['11]	<b>0.0</b>	100.00% ['11]
	\$41,754,000 ['10]		\$41,754,000 ['10]	<b>0.0</b>	100.00% ['10]
	\$52,456,000 ['09]		\$52,456,000 ['09]	<b>0.0</b>	100.00% ['09]
<b>Austerity Reduction (See notes 1-3)</b>	<b>\$113,357,000 ['13]</b>		<b>\$113,357,000 ['13]</b>		<b>100.00% ['13]</b>
	\$113,870,000 ['12]		\$113,870,000 ['12]	<b>0.0</b>	100.00% ['12]
	\$107,907,000 ['11]		\$107,907,000 ['11]	<b>0.0</b>	100.00% ['11]
	\$132,738,000 ['10]		\$132,738,000 ['10]	<b>0.0</b>	100.00% ['10]
	\$47,374,000 ['09]		\$47,374,000 ['09]	<b>0.0</b>	100.00% ['09]

**Notes:**

- 1) For FY11, the State used Stabilization funds of \$12,397,558 to offset a portion of the austerity reduction. The net austerity reduction was \$95,509,018.
- 2) For FY10, the State used Federal Stabilization funds of \$60,851,349 to offset a portion of the austerity reduction. The net austerity reduction was \$71,886,294.
- 3) For FY09, the State used Federal Stabilization funds of \$15,171,612 to offset a portion of the austerity reduction. The net austerity reduction was \$32,202,827.

Prior years' figures are based on actual costs. Current year figures reflect FY2013 budget projections.