

Legislative Priorities

Georgia Department of Education • 2021

State School Superintendent Richard Woods and the Georgia Department of Education recognize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students, schools, and families, and have focused on compassion over compliance during this time. Our 2021 Legislative Priorities - guided by our [Roadmap to Reimagining K-12 Education Georgia](#) - reflect both the current needs to be addressed and the potential opportunities available to ensure success for our students now and in the years to come.

Expanding Opportunities for Students

We are committed to providing a well-rounded education for every student and addressing the academic and non-academic factors that have an impact on student achievement.

PRIORITY: Support the creation of multiple diploma pathways, providing a tailored high school experience to match the passion, potential, and postsecondary pursuits of every student (**Reimagine 3**).

PRIORITY: Provide access to a 21st century classroom by recognizing the need for affordable and quality high-speed internet access as a basic utility for all Georgia families (**Reimagine 8B**).

PRIORITY: Provide funding for a GaDOE Military Family Liaison position (**Reimagine 1**).

Elevating the Teaching Profession & Strengthening the Teacher Pipeline

Teachers are the drivers of all educational success. We promote efforts to protect and prioritize funding for teacher salaries and benefits so we can recruit and retain the best teachers, thus ensuring all Georgia students have access to highly effective teachers.

PRIORITY: Pursue robust Teacher Pipeline legislation, including the removal of certification loss as a punishment for developing teachers, and the establishment of a pilot to design an evaluation system built on professional progression with embedded supports for educators (**Reimagine 10A**).

PRIORITY: Promote changes to allow districts to utilize retired educators full time to fill high-need teaching positions (**Reimagine 10D**).

Funding Public Education

We believe in prioritizing additional revenue to fully fund public education, including the full funding of the Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula.

PRIORITY: Additional one-time funding for school districts to off-set temporary student enrollment declines due to the COVID-19 pandemic (**Reimagine 7**).

PRIORITY: Provide additional funding for transportation costs for school districts (**Reimagine 7B**).

PRIORITY: Provide additional funding for school counselors to assist in the counseling and guidance of the whole child (including student mental health needs), funding for a GaDOE School Social Worker position, and funding for a GaDOE School Nurse position to better support school districts (**Reimagine 7E**).

PRIORITY: Expand the allowable use of SPLOST funds to include instructional software, subscriptions, and other resources (**Reimagine 8F**).

Federal Priority – Reduce High-stakes Testing

Pass legislative resolution that supports changing the *Every Student Succeeds Act* to only require grade-band testing (Elementary School, Middle School, and High School) rather than high-stakes testing in grades 3-12 each year.

