



BOARD OF EDUCATION

2021 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

STATE ISSUES

COVID-19

- Provide flexibility, waivers and funding as needed to support students, staff and families as public schools respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Provide local calendar flexibility to address pandemic-related learning loss.
 - Oppose measures that limit local innovation and decision-making in response to the pandemic.

School Nutrition

- Oppose/remove language in HB 159, *An Act to Make Various Changes to Education Laws, Part III*. Revise "Operating Balance Restrictions for School Nutrition Programs," that eliminates or restricts local school districts' ability to charge indirect costs for program administration for school nutrition.

K-3 Class-Size Reduction Mandate

- Repeal the K-3 class-size reduction-mandate (HB 1030 and HB 13) and restore flexibility in adjusting class sizes to meet local staffing needs and concerns.

Career and Technical Education

- Provide \$3 million to GCS to support the innovative Signature Career Academies launched in the fall of 2019.

Teacher and Principal Pipeline

- Address personnel shortages by removing the six-month wait period for state retirees and eliminating the health insurance penalty for state retirees.
- Increase teacher and principal pay to the national average within four years and provide incentives to recruit and retain personnel for difficult-to-fill positions.

- Provide more competitive pay scales for classified/non-certified school support employees.
- Provide annual pay increases for support staff
- Create student loan forgiveness program and other financial incentives to encourage top-performing high school and college graduates to pursue teaching as a profession, particularly in STEM subjects and hard-to-fill positions.

School Bus Driver Shortage

- Increase state pay scales for school bus drivers to competitive market rates for Commercial Driver Licenses (CDLs).
- Provide recruitment and retention bonuses for school bus drivers.
- Expand number of CDL training classes and/or seats available in each county.
- Offer CDL training classes and examinations (written and driving) 12 months per year.
- Allow GCS the opportunity to partner with Department of Transportation to provide more local CDL training and examinations for school bus drivers.
- Waive state CDL fees for new applicants who successfully complete all requirements and agree to serve as a school bus driver for a North Carolina public school district for at least three years.

Early Childhood

- Increase the number of NC Pre-K seats available to serve all eligible three- and four-year-old children and eliminate NC Pre-K waiting lists.

School Safety

- Increase funding to secure facilities, upgrade safety-related technologies,

- provide more training and add more safety- and security-related personnel.
- Increase allocations for school-based and community-based mental health personnel and services.
- Oppose arming teachers or other school personnel other than sworn law-enforcement personnel.
- Strengthen background checks and processes for all firearm purchases.
- Restrict access to automatic weapons, bump stocks and related equipment to on-duty military and law-enforcement personnel.

School Funding Formula and Tax-Free Status

- Provide a simplified, flexible and more streamlined approach to funding schools that increases state funding to public schools and that weights allocations based on poverty, disability, English language status and other student needs that impact learning.
- Oppose portability proposals and funding formula changes that leave too few dollars in schools with the highest concentrations of students living in poverty.
- Restore tax-free status to all local education agencies and traditional public schools.

Capital Needs

- Give Guilford County the opportunity to obtain an additional source of revenue with which to meet their public education needs by levying a local sales and use tax (one-quarter percent or one-half percent), approved by a majority of those voting in a referendum, only for GCS capital outlay purposes, as defined in G.S. 115C-426(f), and to retire any indebtedness incurred by the county for this purpose.

College Access

- Ensure all eligible high school graduates become productive citizens and contributing members of our economy by joining 21 other states in allowing undocumented students who graduate from local public high schools to pay in-state tuition at North Carolina public community colleges, colleges and universities.

Charter Schools

- Hold charter school management companies and operators to the same level of public transparency in reporting management and school salaries, budgets, expenses, contracts, and other public information as other public schools and school districts.
- Place cap on charter school growth in Guilford County.
- Oppose legislation that would give charter schools access to another local education agency's Fund 8 accounts, which include competitive grant awards and private, philanthropic donations that charters can apply for and already have access to.
- Oppose House Bill 335, *Timely Local Payments to Charter Schools*, as unnecessary, duplicative and punitive, particularly provisions to change the current enrollment verification process and to charge 5% and 8% "late" fees.

Lottery

- Change legislation to ensure that lottery funding supplements rather than supplants state revenue sources for PreK-12 public schools.
- Decrease the percentage of the lottery budget spent on marketing and administration and increase the percentage of lottery proceeds spent on PreK-12 public education.
- Ensure lottery funds allocated to county governments for K-12 facilities supplement rather than supplant county funding allocations for capital needs, including maintenance of existing facilities.

STATE AND FEDERAL ISSUE

- Mobilize resources of state and federal government to work with internet service providers and others to create a comprehensive and lasting state and national solution for affordable, universal broadband access.

FEDERAL ISSUES

- Provide ongoing funding for schools to address the pandemic's long-term impact on students' academic, social and emotional learning.
- Allow J1 international and bilingual teachers to travel to the United States and work in PreK-12 public schools in North Carolina and nationally.
- Fuel economic growth by providing low-interest bond dollars or other federal infrastructure funding for public school capital needs; prioritize funding by student poverty rates and concentration of poverty.
- Maintain categorical funding for Title I, Title II, Title III and Title IV based on high concentrations of poverty, disability and other student needs.
- Maintain public schools' ability to seek Medicaid reimbursement for IEP-required health and related services for students with disabilities.
- Oppose portability proposals and funding formula changes that leave too few dollars in schools with the highest concentrations of students living in poverty and other needs that impact learning.
- Oppose any dismantling of key protections and rights provided to students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Restore federal guidance letters on the Nondiscriminatory Administration of School Discipline dated January 8, 2014 and Overview of the Supportive School Discipline Initiative dated January 8, 2014 that were rescinded on December 21, 2018.
- Ensure that more students enter kindergarten ready to learn by expanding federally funded early childhood education programs for students who are considered economically disadvantaged.
- Streamline the pathway to citizenship for GCS and other recent public high school graduates who previously qualified for, or would qualify, for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals).
- Provide continued flexibility and support for school meals programs through Child Nutrition Reauthorization to allow for greater efficiency in program delivery.

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