



BOARD OF EDUCATION

2023-24

STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Last fall, Guilford County Schools launched *Better Together*, a series of community conversations to inform the district's new strategic direction. GCS leaders have hosted 150 town halls and meetings and engaged thousands of stakeholders, including parents, students, teachers, staff, operational staff, bus drivers, faith-based leaders, business and nonprofit representatives, families with multilingual learners and exceptional students, among others.

Our Guilford County community has highlighted the following focus areas: recruit, retain and reward top talent, accelerate learning, foster healthy and safe schools and prepare students for the world. Therefore, in alignment with our community, the Guilford County Board of Education advocates for the following legislative actions:

Recruit, Retain and Reward Top Talent

- **Provide a substantial increase in state-funded base pay for teachers to reach the national average**, helping attract and retain teachers and address teacher shortages.
- **Increase allotments to support fair and competitive wages for classified staff**, including teacher assistants, custodians, treasurers, bus drivers, school nutrition staff, administrative staff, etc., helping attract and retain essential staff and address staff shortages.
- Provide funding for recruitment and retention bonuses for teachers and staff, especially for hard-to-fill positions.

Accelerate Learning

- **Provide \$3.1 million in the 2023-2025 biennium budget to sustain a high-dosage tutoring program.** Using time-limited federal relief funds, GCS tutored 5,251 students for a total of 66,910 hours in over 109,000 sessions during the 2021-2022 school year. In the 2022-2023 school year, GCS has already tutored 7,979 students for a total of 71,516 hours in over 137,209 sessions (year-to-date).
- **Provide \$3.3 million in the 2023-2025 biennium budget to sustain learning hubs for high school students.** Using time-limited federal relief funds, GCS created learning hubs to address learning loss. High school students who attended learning

hubs during the 2021-2022 school year graduated at a higher rate (96.3% vs. 90.4%) than those who did not attend the learning hubs. During the 2021-2022 school year, 5,901 students attended learning hubs at one of the 15 comprehensive high schools. In the 2022-2023 school year, 5,418 students have attended a learning hub (year-to-date).

- **Increase the number of Pre-K seats available to serve all eligible three- and four-year-old children and count NC Pre-K students for ADM purposes in determining salary schedule placement for principals overseeing these programs.** There are nearly 600 Pre-K-eligible students in Guilford County. A recent study by the Economic Policy Institute found infant care in North Carolina costs \$2,125 (28.9%) more per year than in-state tuition for four-year public college.
- **Assist school districts in reducing the wait time in identifying 2-5 year old children suspected of having a disability by allotting additional staff and space to meet with families in a more efficient and timely manner.** Extend the continuum of services for these students, once identified, to include more seats in Pre-K classes, specialized separate class settings, and part-time Pre-K programming.
- **Provide local calendar flexibility to address pandemic-related learning loss.**



Foster Healthy and Safe Schools

- **Increase allocations to match recommended ratios for school psychologists.** GCS' current school psychologist ratio is one school psychologist per 1,416 students. The recommended ratio by the National Association of School Psychologists is one school psychologist per 500 students.
- **Increase allocations to match recommended ratios for school social workers.** GCS' current school social worker ratio is one social worker per 819 students. The recommended ratio by the National Association of Social Workers is one school social worker per 250 students.
- **Increase allocations to match recommended ratios for school counselors.** GCS' current school counselor ratio is one school counselor per 302 students. The recommended ratio by the American School Counselor Association is one school counselor **per 250 students.**
- **Support comprehensive school safety and security programming,** including facility improvements, updated technology, and training.
- **Provide adequate funding for school districts to fully transition from diesel school buses to electric school buses,** reducing exposure to harmful emissions like PM and NOX for nearly 43,000 students and staff who ride a school bus in Guilford County.



Prepare Students for the World

- **Provide \$2.5 million for our career and technology education programs/signature academies** to expand enrollment from 550 to 2,500 high school students, purchase industry-standard equipment and technology, and provide career exploration opportunities for middle and elementary school students. Signature academies include one academy of manufacturing and engineering, two academies of computer and information science, one academy of transportation, distribution and logistics, and one academy of biomedical technology.
- **Provide undocumented students who graduated from a North Carolina high school an in-state tuition rate** to attend two-year and four-year public higher education institutions, helping address staff shortages in critical fields.

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Stay Connected



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