



# Atlanta Board of Education 2022 Legislative Priorities

The Atlanta Board of Education advocates for the following priorities for legislative action in the 2022 session of the 156<sup>th</sup> Georgia General Assembly as well as for policy action by the Georgia State Board of Education and Department of Education. The Board also affirms guiding principles to assist our legislative representatives in responding to other issues that arise during the session.

## **1. Provide adequate, stable education funding**

- Appropriate to school systems adequate funding, including continued full funding of Quality Basic Education.
- Update the school funding formula to more accurately reflect the needs of Georgia’s public schools and students and address inequities across the Atlanta Public Schools district.
- Require local fiscal impact statements on all legislation creating new mandates or programs for school systems and all legislation impacting education funding.
- Delay the implementation of any legislation impacting funding or creating new mandates/programs to provide schools and districts with at least one (1) year to adjust budgets, reduce costs and implement.
- Oppose legislative proposals that would divert public school funds away from public schools.

## **2. Protect the Atlanta Public Schools property tax base to support quality instruction for all students**

- Promote the responsibility of all citizens for funding public schools, which provide a common good for our community.
- Support APS’s ability to raise funds to support educational equity among its schools.
- Support the passage of legislation that requires measured, incremental corrections of undervalued property assessments.
- Provide for closer state scrutiny of county tax assessment procedures and their impact on public school funding.
- Oppose legislation that would allow for the deannexation of the Buckhead community from the City of Atlanta

## **3. Maximize district autonomy and flexibility over fiscal management issues**

## **4. Prioritize early childhood education to provide aligned, quality programs to all students**

- Identify permanent, stable funding sources to expand Georgia prekindergarten to all

eligible four-year-olds

- Provide for weights in pre-kindergarten lotteries for educationally disadvantaged students, at the discretion of the program operator.
- Support birth-to-three programs that are aligned with Pre-k to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade literacy goals.
- Increase access to high-quality early childhood education opportunities for low-income families.
- Provide for a consistent, high-quality statewide evaluation system for pre-k and early childhood educators.
- Clear barriers to sharing data across public and private providers who serve children birth to 3 and to districts receiving data such as birth, income, and foster care records.

**5. Monitor recommendations of legislative study committees on issues relevant to K-12 education and the interests of school-aged children**

**6. Urge adoption of approach to education legislation that supports district move to autonomy and flexibility**

- Support legislative and state agency initiatives that strengthen the benefits of the charter system operating model for school districts.
- Advocate for the restoration of EIP flexibility previously granted to charter systems

**7. Strengthen the teacher pipeline and teacher quality by providing resources for recruitment and retention (i.e., certification flexibility, compensation, affordable benefits and reliable retirement)**

**8. Prioritize continuity and consistency throughout K-12 curriculum**

- Monitor legislative proposals for changes to state assessment requirements.
- Monitor state legislative and agency action on curriculum standards.

**9. Secure and monitor federal, state and local support of students, schools and families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic**

**10. Strategically support legislation addressing inequities across the City of Atlanta**

**11. Monitor the legislative reapportionment and redistricting process**

## **Guiding Principles**

### *Adequate Support for Schools and Teachers*

Effective teachers and leaders are the most critical factor in achieving the Atlanta Public Schools' mission to graduate students ready for college and career. The Atlanta Board of Education supports measures to attract, retain, and develop effective teachers and leaders. Additionally, in order to improve student performance, the Atlanta Board of Education supports an accountability system that ensures that all students are ready for college and careers.

Accountability should be balanced with appropriate support for schools and teachers and should be focused on student academic growth and graduation rates rather than on punitive actions toward schools, teachers and students. Accountability systems should also balance the need for timely data with the imperative to give teachers the maximum amount of instructional time for teaching and learning. Mandated assessments should be fewer and smarter, exemplifying the following principles: worth taking, high quality, time-limited, fair—and supportive of fairness—in equity in educational opportunity, fully transparent to students and parents, one of multiple measures, and tied to improved learning.

### *Strong Public School Options*

The Atlanta Board of Education believes in strong, high quality public school choices for families and opposes legislation and mandates that divert public resources to for-profit entities, private schools and home study. Providing strong choice options and investing in innovation requires that districts have stability in the policy framework to support quality planning. The Atlanta Board of Education requests that the General Assembly and the state limit unnecessary mid-stream changes to state initiatives.

### *Local Control & Flexibility*

The unique challenges of educating urban students require solutions tailored to the Atlanta context. The Atlanta Board of Education believes that the school district is in the best position to make decisions that affect our schools and communities such as resource allocation, the school calendar, curriculum development, the use of school facilities, and conditions of employment for personnel. The Atlanta Board of Education opposes actions that limit the constitutional authority and autonomy of local school boards and supports actions that provide flexibility in local decision-making. The board also opposes actions that limit the flexibility provided to Georgia charter systems and charter schools.