



## CHEROKEE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Kyla Cromer, Chair

Kelly Poole, Vice Chair

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## SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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# 2021 LEGISLATIVE PARTNERSHIP PRIORITIES

## LOCAL CONTROL & GOVERNANCE

- Ensure proposed legislative initiatives strengthen provisions for the local control and management of schools (including the ability for a School Board to set its own local school year calendar, select its own delivery model and scheduling of daily recess) . . . thereby empowering local School Boards to fulfill their Constitutional mandate and corresponding responsibility to involve their local constituency, develop locally-derived educational policy and oversee continued performance improvements among their students.
- Oppose any effort to eliminate limited sovereign and official immunity . . . thereby protecting K-12 public school districts from lawsuits over day-to-day school operations (e.g., grades, discipline, classroom placements, etc.).
- Eliminate State-mandated use of schools as public polling locations during regular school days . . . thereby increasing safety and security for students, staff and buildings.

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Consider providing equitable Broadband Internet access for all Georgia families by legislating and funding a multi-year implementation strategy.
- Provide high school graduates in Georgia with an alternative diploma option in the area of Career/Technical Preparation . . . thereby further ensuring students' workforce readiness skills and preparation for transitions directly into careers or secondary-level career educational opportunities.

## FUNDING

- Make public education in the State of Georgia a priority by ending State "austerity reductions" of the Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act and allocate to local school districts all funding earned under the statutorily required formula.
- Hold local school districts harmless in terms of formula funding of the FY22 Budget due to declining enrollment resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Consider reimbursement of extraordinary COVID-19 related expenditures such as PPE, cleaning supplies, additional custodial/staffing expenditures, etc.
- Consider modifications and update of the QBE formula to accurately reflect inflation, true costs of transportation; and, to include a funding weight for economically disadvantaged students, funding for safety and security and increased allocations for counselors, social workers, psychologists and nurses, including additional funding for critical Social Emotional Learning initiatives . . . thereby providing support for critically-needed student services functions.
- Continue to incorporate any teacher compensation increases into the State teacher salary schedule . . . thereby communicating the State's long-term commitment to providing competitive compensation for teachers and allowing local school districts to concentrate local revenues on offsetting State-required employer rate increases in health care premiums, local share of retirement plan contributions and locally-determined benefit plans (e.g., disability, life, dental, etc.).
- Oppose the continuation and/or expansion of existing programs that directly or indirectly use public funds to pay private school tuition for students or provide tax incentives for their parents . . . thereby ensuring a solid revenue base for state funding of public education, including tax incentive programs related to alternative educational delivery models due to COVID-19.
- Preserve investment in Georgia's Teacher's Retirement System (TRS) in order to ensure the longevity of the defined benefit plan.



## 2021 LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

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**State Senator, District 14**  
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# FACTS ON FUNDING PRESSURES

*(impacting funding availability for classroom instruction)*

## COVID-19

CCSD absorbed a \$23.3M austerity reduction in its FY21 Budget. If not held harmless, CCSD could see an additional shortfall of as much as \$9M over the next two budget cycles due to COVID-19 related temporary enrollment declines. Additionally, CCSD has expended approximately \$9M on extraordinary COVID-19 related needs this school year.

## STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

CCSD will receive \$2.2M in QBE funds for student transportation for FY21. The total budgeted cost for student transportation during this budget cycle is \$22.7M.

## EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT

The Teacher Retirement System of Georgia has increased the employer (CCSD) contribution rate from 14.27% (FY17) to an expected 19.81% in FY22. CCSD's annual payment to TRS on behalf of its employees for FY22 is expected to exceed \$51.4M (\$9.3M paid via local funds).

Due to the vision and commitment of Georgia leaders over the decades, TRS:

- Ranks in the top third of pension systems in the U.S., is actuarially sound, and has a proven record of sustainability.
- Provides a compelling recruitment and retention incentive for the education industry, supporting a life-long career path for high-quality teachers in Georgia schools.
- Positively impacts Georgia's economy and the economic success of our state, as pensions for over 128,000 TRS retirees are reinvested in local communities across the state each year.
- Affords a defined benefit plan as the last, best benefit for Georgia's dedicated teachers, who are diligently preparing the next generation of Georgia citizens.

As Georgia is recognized to be the #1 place to do business, it must also seek to be the #1 place to teach. Supporting TRS today ensures success for Georgia tomorrow.

## EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE

Beginning in FY08, the State's contribution for non-certified employee health insurance premiums was reduced and then eliminated by FY12 (from over \$500M statewide to \$0), requiring local school districts to fully absorb the additional costs since that time. CCSD's employer contribution toward the annual cost of providing health insurance for a non-certified employee has risen from \$2,000 in FY10 to \$11,340 in FY21 and continuing for FY22... this cost, nearing \$1,000 per month/per participating employee, represents a 467% increase.

CCSD's health insurance costs for non-certified employees are projected to be \$14.5M for FY20 far exceeding and almost doubling the \$7.5M cost in FY14. The extraordinary financial impact of continuing exorbitant employer contributions rates for State-mandated benefits without corresponding State funding continues to be of great concern. As such, CCSD continues to privatize custodial and grounds services and increase the use of part-time/temporary workers for non-certified staffing as cost-reduction measures.