

BOARD OF EDUCATION

2022 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



The Guilford County Board of Education advocates for the following priorities for legislative action for the remainder of the 2021-2022 session of the North Carolina General Assembly as well as for policy action by the North Carolina Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction as well as the federal government. The Board also affirms guiding principles to assist our legislative delegation in responding to other issues that may arise during the session.

Provide adequate and equitable education funding

- Fully fund the Leandro Plan to fulfill the state's constitutional obligation to provide a sound, basic education for all children.
- Provide a simplified, flexible funding formula that provides equitable, sufficient support to students from low-income families, students learning English, and students with disabilities, and that provides systems with flexibility in how and when students receive services.
- Allow the citizens of Guilford County to choose to levy a local sales and use tax to meet our capital outlay needs for public schools.
- Continue to provide support to Guilford County Schools' innovative Signature Career Academies launched in the fall of 2019, including an additional \$1m in the FY22/FY23 biennial budget to fulfill the full requested amount (\$3m).
- Support direct funding of charter schools rather than using Guilford County Schools as a passthrough, which places undue administrative burden on the district.
- Ensure that the NC Education Lottery complies with the spirit of the law, to supplement rather than supplant state and local funding for Pre-K-12 public schools and maximize the percentage of the lottery budget allocated to public schools.
- Provide funding and low-cost financing support for facilities and technology infrastructure, particularly to districts with concentrations of poverty.
- Provide adequate funding for school districts to fully transition from diesel school buses to electric school buses.

Support talent pipeline and retention efforts

- Increase teacher and principal pay to the national average; according to a 2021 study by the National Education Association, NC ranks 33rd in the nation.
- Offer incentives to recruit and retain effective employees for difficult-to-fill positions, including incentives to encourage top-performing high school and college graduates to pursue teaching as a profession, particularly in STEM subjects and other critical teaching fields.
- Provide competitive compensation and funding for professional development for classified/non-certified school support personnel.
- Pay school bus drivers competitively for Commercial Driver Licenses (CDLs) and continue to improve districts' ability to attract, train, and retain qualified drivers.

Keep schools safe by promoting evidence-based school safety policies

- Support comprehensive school safety and security programming, including facility improvements, updated technology, and training.
- Increase allocations to match the state's recommended ratios for school-based and community-based counselors, social workers, and psychologists.
- Limit policies that promote out-of-school suspension, and support restorative practices and other evidence-based responses to end the school-to-prison pipeline.
- Oppose arming teachers or other school personnel other than sworn law enforcement officers.
- Continue to provide flexibility to transition to remote learning in emergency situations currently available in G.S. §115C-84.3.

Provide access to aligned, quality programs from Pre-K through postsecondary education for all students

- Support birth-to-three programs that are aligned with Pre-k to 3rd grade literacy goals and increase access for low-income families.
- Increase the number of Pre-K seats available to serve all eligible three- and four-year-old children and eliminate Pre-K waiting lists.
- Provide undocumented students with affordable access to public postsecondary institutions and streamlined pathways to citizenship.

FEDERAL

- Extend the U.S. Department of Agriculture's statutory waiver for flexibility in national school meal program requirements including free meals for all.
- Urge the U.S. Department of Commerce to address the significant undercount of racial and ethnic minority communities in the 2020 Census and ensure that annual updates to the Census's Small Area and Income Poverty Estimates which are used to distribute Title I funding do not continue to shortchange diverse communities moving forward.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Adequate Support for Schools and Teachers

Effective teachers and leaders are the most critical factor in achieving the Guilford County Schools' mission to graduate as responsible citizens prepared to succeed in higher education and in the career of their choice. The Guilford County Board of Education supports measures to develop effective teachers and leaders and that respect their professional expertise. Additionally, in order to improve student performance, the Board 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.

Strong Public School Options

The Guilford County Board of Education believes in high-quality public school choices for families and opposes

legislation and mandates that divert public resources away from the public schools with the highest concentrations of students living in poverty. Providing strong choice options and investing in innovation requires that districts have stability in the policy framework and flexibility to support quality planning and promising practices.

Local Control & Flexibility

The unique challenges of educating students from urban, suburban, and rural communities requires solutions tailored to the local context. The Guilford County 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 Board opposes actions that limit the constitutional authority and autonomy of local school boards and supports actions that provide flexibility in local decision-making.

Board of Education

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