Agenda Request Form

Meeting Date	Agenda Item Number
November 21, 2019	I-1

Title

2020 Legislative Partnership Priorities

Requested Action

School Board Consideration of Superintendent's Recommendation for Approval of 2020 Legislative Partnership Priorities

Summary Explanation and Background

Based upon discussion, feedback and input during the October 17, 2019 School Board meeting, the Superintendent recommends the attached 2020 Legislative Partnership Priorities for the School Board's consideration and approval.

Priority Area

Organizational and Operational Effectiveness

Financial Impact

N/A

Exhibits: (List)

2020 Legislative Partnership Priorities

Source of Additional Information

Dr. Brian V. Hightower, Superintendent of Schools	770.479.1871
Mike McGowan, Chief of Staff	770.479.1871

DRAFT

2020 CCSD 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 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

- Provide high school graduates in Georgia with flexible diploma requirement options regarding Career/Technical Pathways . . . thereby further ensuring students' workforce readiness skills and preparation for transitions directly into careers or secondary-level career educational opportunities.
- Support student assessment platforms which maximize flexibility and require no more testing than mandated under federal provisions.

FUNDING

- 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 . . . thereby providing support for critically-needed student services functions.
- Oppose proposals which would allow for the utilization of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funds for maintenance and operations expenditures . . . which would result in serious financial and human capital inequities amongst local school districts.
- 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.
- Preserve investment in Georgia's Teacher's Retirement System (TRS) in order to ensure the longevity of the defined benefit plan.

Cherokee County School District

DR. BRIAN V. HIGHTOWER
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

CHEROKEE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
KYLA CROMER, CHAIR
KELLY POOLE, VICE CHAIR
SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:
MIKE CHAPMAN, JOHN HARMON,
PATSY JORDAN, CLARK MENARD &
ROBERT RECHSTEINER

DRAFT

FACTS ON FUNDING PRESSURES

impacting funding availability for classroom instruction

EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT

The Teacher Retirement System of Georgia has increased the employer (CCSD) contribution rate from 14.27% (FY17) to an expected 19.06% in FY21. CCSD's annual payment to TRS on behalf of its employees for FY20 is expected to exceed $43.6M ($7.9M paid via local funds). Due to the vision and commitment of Georgia leaders over the decades, the TRS system:

- 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.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

CCSD will receive $2.2M in QBE funds for student transportation for FY20. The total budgeted cost for student transportation during this budget cycle is $22.7M.

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 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 FY19 and continuing for FY20... this cost, nearing $1,000 per month/per participating employee, represents a 467% increase in just eight years.

CCSD's health insurance costs for non-certified employees are projected to be $14.4M 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 was forced to privatize custodial and grounds services and increase the use of part-time/temporary workers for non-certified staffing as cost-reduction measures.

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