

GWINNETT
COUNTY
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

Dear Legislators,

For the 2026 legislative session, Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) wishes to provide you with key information and specific requests in order to bring about operational and financial efficiencies that provides opportunities for greater success for our students.

As you review this packet you will find contextual information for GCPS in **Section One**.

- GCPS Board of Education Core Beliefs and Commitments
- Wealth Index of GCPS that includes Free and Reduced Lunch Percentages, Equalization Grant data, and the average cost to educate a student in GCPS in comparison to other Metro Atlanta School Districts
- Title 1 Schools in GCPS
- List of current GCPS School Innovations – **Schools of Choice**
- GCPS Pre-K Program Information
- GCPS Dual Language Immersion Program and Participating Schools (DLI)
- College and Career Performance Index: Closing Gaps Variability
- Georgia Promise Scholarship – Eligible Schools List

Also, in this packet you will see specific requests where we ask for legislative support for the Board's Legislative Priorities as well as some additional legislative positions. These are set out in **Section Two**.

- GCPS Board of Education 2026 Legislative Priorities
- Charter School Petitions
- Open Records Request
- Discipline Tribunal Notices
- Virtual Attendance at Board meetings
- Georgia Promise Scholarship Revisions
- HB 268 School Safety Bill Clean Up
- Tax Anticipation Notes Provisions
- 'Redshirting' for Enrollment

If you see something in the Board's 2026 Legislative Priorities or additional legislative positions that captures your interest and that you would like to partner with us in drafting legislation, please reach out to our Board of Education at myschoolboard@gcpsk12.org or contact David Goldie david.goldie@gcpsk12.org or 470-585-2462.

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Section One

Contextual Information for GCPS Legislative Priorities and Positions

Gwinnett County Board of Education
Core Beliefs and Commitments

Gwinnett County Public Schools is committed to fostering a learning environment where each and every student thrives. Guided by our core beliefs, we shape our practices to ensure that all learners feel valued, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential in a global society. Sustained through our commitments, our district community — students, teachers, educational support professionals, and community members — will be integral contributors to a network of world-class schools that develops and nurtures rigorous, relevant, and engaging learning opportunities. In all of our endeavors, we will prioritize opportunity, access, and ongoing quality improvement.

Our Core Beliefs

- **Students are the Center of Every Decision** – Every policy, practice, and initiative is designed with students' best interests in mind, ensuring they are supported academically, socially, and emotionally.
- **Equity Benefits All** – Ensuring resources and access for all acknowledges the strength in our diversity and drives positive outcomes for our students, families, and, ultimately, our community.
- **Lifelong Learning Is Essential** – Learning never stops. We encourage curiosity, adaptability, and continuous growth within our district community.
- **Learning Should Reflect and Respect Every Student** – We embrace uniqueness in all its forms, ensuring that teaching and learning honor each student's background, voice, and strengths.
- **Excellence Is for Everyone** – We hold high expectations for all, recognizing that excellence is not exclusive, but an achievable goal for every learner.
- **Belonging Builds Strong Schools and Strong Communities** – We foster an environment where every member of our district community feels a deep sense of connection and purpose through authentic engagement.
- **Collaboration Drives Our Success** - We empower our district community to contribute to decision-making and school improvement through transparent processes.

Our Commitments

- **Provide World-Class Learning for Global Readiness** – Through culturally-relevant instruction, we will create an educational environment that nurtures creativity, critical thinking, and individualized learning experiences to help students navigate and lead in an interconnected world.
- **Make Data-Driven Decisions** – We will use evidence-based practices and disaggregated student data to inform instruction, enhance student outcomes, close gaps, and remove barriers to continually improve our learning community.
- **Promote Opportunity and Agency** – We will strive to provide each and every student with the resources, support, and opportunities they need to succeed.
- **Foster a Safe, Supportive, and Inclusive Environment** – We will prioritize the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of our students and staff, ensuring a space of belonging where everyone feels safe, respected, and valued.
- **Cultivate a Culture of Excellence** – We will celebrate high achievement and continuous improvement, supporting our district community in reaching their highest potential while addressing factors that limit access to excellence.

GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Gwinnett County Public Schools: Wealth Index & Fiscal Responsibility

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
System Name	Per FTE total Expenditure	FTE Reported on 2025 QBE Allotment	K-12 % Free and Reduced Lunch	Wealth per Student Rank	Dollars per Weighted FTE	Recalculated Equalization Earnings
Atlanta Public Schools	$ 27,420	49,515	74.20%	6	$ 670,520	$ -
City Schools of Decatur	$ 19,866	5,302	14.29%	108	$ 164,262	$ 58,310,458.00
DeKalb County	$ 18,848	93,513	79.36%	24	$ 317,232	$ -
Marietta City	$ 18,520	9,108	62.50%	18	$ 356,586	$ -
Fulton County	$ 17,279	86,863	50.91%	11	$ 440,239	$ -
Cobb County	$ 15,919	109,011	51.74%	27	$ 306,400	$ -
Rockdale County	$ 15,612	15,298	93.21%	60	$ 222,548	$ 3,201,364.00
Clayton County	$ 15,277	51,724	*	29	$ 303,851	$ -
Buford City	$ 14,303	6,129	35.33%	17	$ 386,582	$ -
Gwinnett County	**$ 13,976**	**192,811**	**61.78%**	**72**	**$ 202,985**	**$ 108,866,954.00**
Douglas County	$ 13,442	25,849	71.19%	73	$ 201,558	$ 13,707,630.00
Forsyth County	$ 13,177	55,313	20.24%	31	$ 295,678	$ -
* indicates Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) percentage is either greater than 95% or less than 5%.						

Column Numbers Explained

(1) GCPS remains one of the most fiscally responsible school districts in the metro RESA, doing more with less, as evident by the per pupil expenditure amount for FY25 of **$13,976 (calculated by GADOE).**

(2) GCPS is the largest public school district in Georgia with a 2025 reported FTE of **192,811 (reported by GADOE).** FTE differs from student count by incorporating components of student class scheduling.

(3) GCPS has a free and reduced lunch percentage of **61.78% (calculated by GADOE).** GCPS reviews the application and compare the household size to the household income levels on the Income Eligibility Guidelines received from USDA. Eligibility status is then determined. GCPS also receives a Direct Certification file every month from the Georgia department of Education. Any student on that list is directly certified for free or reduced-price meals based on the information in the DC file.

The district's free and reduced lunch percentage may differ from the county's percentage as we are measuring the number of students in poverty against the number of enrolled students. The county is measuring all people in poverty, regardless of age, against the entire county population. It is two completely different sets of data. We only factor enrolled students (PK-12) in our calculations, which is only a segment of the county population.

(4), (5), & (6) Districts with lower property values have less ability to raise money through local property taxes. Equalization Grant Funding helps reduce funding gaps between wealthy and less wealthy school districts so all Georgia students can have similar educational opportunities. GCPS remains in the bottom 60% of districts in the "Wealth Per Student" calculation used to allocate State Equalization grant funds**. In FY25, GCPS ranked 72nd of 180 Georgia school districts in this calculation (calculated by GADOE, 1 = most wealthy per student).**

Title I Schools in GCPS

Federal requirements for a school to be designated as Title I under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

• **Use of Federally Approved Poverty Measures:**

Districts must determine school poverty levels using measures such as Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL), direct certification (SNAP/TANF), or Census-based data.

• **Rank and Serve Requirement:**

Districts must rank schools by poverty within each grade span and allocate Title I funds starting with the highest-poverty schools.

• **Meeting Federal Poverty Thresholds:**

Schools generally qualify when at least **35–40%** of students are identified as low-income.

• **Program Implementation Requirements:**

Title I schools must operate either a **schoolwide program** (≥40% poverty) or a **targeted assistance program**, both of which must follow federally mandated components such as needs assessments, evidence-based strategies, and parent/family engagement.

Our district uses **free and reduced-price lunch status** to identify and rank schools for Title I funding. Schools are ranked **by grade span** (elementary, middle, and high), and funding is allocated beginning with the highest-poverty schools within each span.

GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FEDERAL PROGRAMS

DEPARTMENT OF FEDERAL & SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Division of School Improvement and Operations

Dr. Tereka Williams
Executive Director, Federal Programs

TITLE I SCHOOLS BY LEVEL
SY26

Elementary Schools			Middle Schools	High Schools	Special Entity Schools
Alcova ES	Graves ES	North Metro	Berkmar MS	Berkmar HS	GIVE East
Alford ES	Harris ES	Norton ES	Creekland MS	Central Gwinnett HS	GIVE West
Anderson-Livsey ES	Hopkins ES	Partee ES	Dacula MS	Discovery HS	ITC
Annistown ES	Jackson ES	Peachtree ES	Duluth MS	Duluth HS	
Arcado ES	Jenkins ES	Pharr ES	Grace Snell MS	McClure HS	
Baggett ES	Kanoheda ES	Rockbridge ES	Jordan MS	Meadowcreek HS	
Baldwin ES	Knight ES	Rock Springs ES	Lilburn MS	Norcross HS	
Beaver Ridge ES	Lawrenceville ES	Rosebud ES	Moore MS	Paul Duke STEM HS	
Benefield ES	Lilburn ES	Shiloh ES	Northbrook MS	Shiloh HS	
Bethesda ES	Lovin ES	Simonton ES	Radloff MS	South Gwinnett HS	
Britt ES	Magill ES	Stripling ES	Richards MS		
Cedar Hill ES	McKendree ES	Sycamore ES	Shiloh MS		
Centerville ES	Meadowcreek ES	Taylor ES	Snellville MS		
Chesney ES	Minor ES	Trip ES	Summerour MS		
Corley ES	Mountain Park ES	Winn Holt ES	Sweetwater MS		
Dacula ES	Nesbit ES	Woodward Mill ES			
Devereux Academy	New Life Academy				
Ferguson ES	Norcross ES				

Schools of Choice

Gwinnett County Public Schools embraces the power of student choice, offering more than 100 choice schools and programs across all 20 feeder clusters, including the charter school New Life Academy of Excellence. We provide diverse educational options aligned with the Board of Education's mission and vision, ensuring world-class learning that prepares every student for success in college and careers. Our commitment to excellence drives measurable progress against local, national, and global standards. Please see the list below for details on all district-endorsed choice programs and schools.

GCPS is committed to expanding choice opportunities for every student and welcomes partnerships to help achieve this goal. If you or your organization are interested in collaborating to create additional opportunities for students, please contact Dr. Emily Coady, Director of Program Development and Improvement, at 678-301-7120.

New Life Academy of Excellence

- Locally approved K–8 charter school serving Gwinnett County since 2006
- Offers innovative programs in international business, Mandarin Chinese, and entrepreneurship for families seeking unique educational opportunities
- Approximately 670 students enrolled

Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology

- GSMST is a specialized charter high school focused on rigorous STEM education, offering advanced coursework in mathematics, science, and technology
- Students engage in project-based learning, research opportunities, and real-world experiences through internships and partnerships with industry and higher education
- The district hosts an annual lottery for rising 9th graders who have applied to enroll
- Nationally ranked by US News and World Report and the Washington Post
- Approximately 1270 students enrolled

SOTA (School of the Arts)

- Students take core academic classes while pursuing expanded fine arts courses, arts-related internships, and pre-professional work experiences
- Opportunities include performing arts, visual arts, and arts technology studies

- Admission is based on an audition in the student's chosen area of artistic skill
- Approximately 200 students enrolled

Paul Duke STEM High School

- Paul Duke STEM High School offers a project-based learning environment focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, integrating real-world applications into core academics
- Students have access to advanced technology, collaborative workspaces, and opportunities for internships and industry partnerships to prepare for college and STEM careers
- Approximately 1470 students enrolled

McClure Health Science High School

- McClure Health Science High School offers a specialized curriculum focused on health sciences, preparing students for careers in healthcare through rigorous academics and hands-on learning
- Students gain real-world experience through partnerships with medical professionals, internships, and opportunities to earn industry-recognized certifications
- Approximately 1200 students enrolled

Maxwell High School of Technology

- Maxwell offers career-focused programs that provide hands-on training in technical fields such as automotive, healthcare, culinary arts, and information technology
- Students gain real-world experience, earn industry-recognized certifications, and develop skills that prepare them for immediate employment or further education in their chosen career pathway
- Approximately 1200 students enrolled

Grayson Technical Program

- Grayson offers high school students hands-on, career-focused training in fields such as cybersecurity, culinary arts, digital media, and veterinary science
- Students gain real-world experience, earn industry-recognized certifications, and develop skills that prepare them for college, careers, and technical professions
- Approximately 550 students enrolled

Phoenix High School

- Alternative learning environment designed to help students earn their high school diploma through flexible scheduling, personalized instruction, and supportive resources
- Students can choose to enroll at either the main campus or the campus at Sugarloaf Mills
- Approximately 750 students enrolled

GIVE Center

- Serving 6-12 grade students, GIVE provides an alternative education setting for students required more personalized learning
- The program focuses on individualized instruction and support to meet graduation requirements
- Students can be enrolled at either GIVE Center East or GIVE Center West
- Approximately 820 students enrolled

Gwinnett Online Campus

- Gwinnett Online Campus is a full-time online school option for grades K–12, offering flexible, personalized learning through a rigorous digital curriculum.
- Students benefit from virtual instruction combined with opportunities for face-to-face support, ensuring academic success and preparation for college and careers.
- Approximately 2400 students enrolled

Cohort-Based Choice Programs

International Baccalaureate

- The IB program emphasizes critical thinking, intercultural understanding, and holistic education.
- IB programs:
    - Norcross High School
    - Shiloh High School
    - Shiloh Middle School

- Peachtree Elementary School
- Pinckneyville Middle School
- Summerour Middle School

3DE by Junior Achievement

- 3DE integrates real-world case methodology into core curriculum to make learning more relevant and engaging.
- Through partnerships with businesses and community organizations, students develop critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills that prepare them for college and career success.
- 3DE programs:
  - Norcross High School
  - South Gwinnett High School
  - Parkview High School

SUMMIT Mountain View High School

- Four-year STEM/PBL/Leadership cohort offering hands-on, cross-curricular, innovative learning experiences at Mountain View High School
- Interdisciplinary instruction by embedding Engineering into Language Arts, Math, and Science

CHARGEnorth

- STEM-based program at North Gwinnett High School
- Project-based learning embedded in humanities, engineering, science, and research
- The district hosts an annual lottery for rising 9th graders who have applied to enroll

Career Academies

- These small learning community academies are designed to create personalized educational experiences, preparing students for high-demand, high-skill, and high-wage careers

- Students learn language arts, math, science, and social studies in the context of a career pathway theme
- **Academies:**
    - Berkmar High School
        - Construction
        - Film and Digital Arts
    - Central Gwinnett High School
        - STEM
    - Discovery High School
        - Global and Life Skills
        - Fine Arts
        - STEM
    - Meadowcreek High School
        - International Business
        - Public Service and Leadership
        - STEM
    - South Gwinnett High School
        - Business Entrepreneurship and Hospitality
        - Health and Human Services
        - Public Service Law and Media
        - STEM
    - Shiloh High School
        - Business, Arts, and Marketing
        - STEM
        - Wellness, Health, and Education

Early Learning

Play 2 Learn

- Play 2 Learn is a program for children ages birth to 5 and their parents or caregivers that encourages learning through play.
- P2L is offered in 84 schools including all elementary schools.

Play 2 Learn On the Go

- Play 2 Learn On the Go is a mobile version of the school-based Play 2 Learn program providing high-quality early learning to families who cannot access the program at their local school due to transportation hardships.

Pre-Kindergarten

- We provide high-quality early learning experiences to four-year-old children to prepare them for kindergarten. developing foundational skills in language, literacy, math, and social-emotional growth through age-appropriate, play-based instruction.
- The district hosts an annual lottery for families who have applied to enroll.
- Schools with Pre-K programs:
    - Anderson-Livsey Elementary
    - Beaver Ridge Elementary
    - Benefield Elementary
    - Hopkins Elementary
    - Lawrenceville Elementary
    - McKendree Elementary
    - Nesbit Elementary
    - Norton Elementary
- The district has two GA Lottery Funded Pre-K classes at Maxwell High School providing an opportunity for high school students in the ECE pathway to have real life experiences with early childhood students and providing a high-quality early learning opportunity for four-year-olds.

Gwinnett County Public Schools: Pre-K Program/Initiative

GENERAL INFORMATION:

The GCPS Pre-K program is designed to prepare students for successful entry into kindergarten the following school year. Grounded in a play-based curriculum, the program builds foundational academic skills, social-emotional competencies, and positive approaches to learning. The overarching goal is to ensure equitable access to high-quality Pre-K experiences so that children enter kindergarten ready to learn, thrive, and succeed in school and life.

- GCPS operates a total of **18** Pre-K classes, which includes 16 district-developed and district-funded classrooms and 2 GA Lottery funded classrooms.
- GCPS Pre-K is currently available in **eight** elementary schools across all five School Board districts:
    - Anderson-Livsey ES (District IV)
    - Beaver Ridge ES (District V)
    - Benefield ES (District II)
    - Hopkins ES (District V)
    - Lawrenceville ES (District I)
    - McKendree ES (District III)
    - Nesbit ES (District IV)
    - Norton ES (District I)
- Each school houses two general education classes, with one co-taught classroom at Benefield ES. Each classroom is staffed with one certified teacher and one paraprofessional, with an additional special education teacher assigned to Benefield to support the co-taught model.
- Class sizes are capped at 16 students per classroom.
- In addition, two GA Lottery-Funded Pre-K classrooms operate at Maxwell High School and serve as lab classrooms for high school students in the Early Childhood Education CTAE pathway.
- ***Program Cost (Salaries and Materials):*** $3,150,00.00

SUCCESSES:
GCPS Pre-K continues to demonstrate strong, measurable outcomes in kindergarten readiness and early academic development:

- **Higher Kindergarten Readiness:**
  At the end of the Pre-K year, more GCPS Pre-K students were kindergarten-ready, as measured by the Kindergarten Readiness Entry Profile (KREP).
    - 73% of GCPS Pre-K students were ready for kindergarten compared to 31% of non-GCPS Pre-K peers at the same school sites.
    - The average readiness score for GCPS Pre-K students was 77.6%, compared to 55.8% for students who did not attend GCPS Pre-K.

- **Higher Levels of Engagement:**
  Kindergarten teachers consistently rated GCPS Pre-K graduates as demonstrating higher engagement across instructional settings—including direct instruction, whole-group learning, centers, cooperative interaction, small-group work, and guided play—than students who did not participate in GCPS Pre-K.

- **Stronger Academic Performance:**
  GCPS Pre-K students consistently outperform peers on iReady assessments, including phonological awareness, phonics, high-frequency words, vocabulary, comprehension, algebraic thinking, measurement and data, and geometry.

GOAL:
Increase kindergarten readiness by expanding access to high-quality Pre-K in GCPS. The district aims to add 360 additional seats (20 classrooms) in underserved and high-need areas. This expansion includes integrating students with disabilities into a co-taught model, ensuring that all children with IEPs requiring a full-day teacher can be supported within a high-quality school environment.

WHY:
Each and every child deserves to enter kindergarten ready to thrive. Only 51% of children entered kindergarten this year with the knowledge and skills ready to access the curriculum without costly interventions. This means that over 5,500 children entered unprepared. By contrast, 73% of students entering kindergarten from our GCPS Pre-K program were ready. Data shows consistency in performance across student groups including multilingual learners and students receiving free or reduced-price lunch. While kindergarten readiness occurs as the result of high-quality investments, birth through age 5 with 90% of the foundational brain formed by age 5, the Pre-K year is a critical year of learning and an on ramp into kindergarten. In Gwinnett,

there is approximately a 3,000-seat gap between the supply of licensed full day programs for 4 yr olds and the number of children. This equates to a need for an additional 150 classrooms across the county.

BUDGETARY NEEDS:

Primary Objective: Establishment of a Sustained State Block Grant Funding Model

The district secures ongoing, dedicated state block grant funding designed to sustain and expand highly effective early learning programs within GCPS. This recurring funding stream supports initiatives grounded in research-based practices that improve kindergarten readiness, reduce opportunity gaps, and strengthen long-term academic outcomes. Block grant funds would be strategically braided with existing local resources to expand high-quality Pre-K access in underserved and historically marginalized communities across the district. With predictable and stable financial support, GCPS would be able to increase the number of Pre-K classrooms, enhance early learning environments, strengthen wraparound services, and ensure equitable access to early childhood education for all eligible families. Ultimately, this funding model would allow GCPS to build a comprehensive, sustainable early learning system that meets community demand and advances district goals for early learning and school readiness. The corresponding cost for sustaining and expanding the current GCPS Pre-K program would be ***$7,207,048*** for staff and materials.

Cost Breakdown:

	Original GCPS Cost	**State Reimbursement**	**Cost to GCPS**
Teacher Salary/Benefits (36)	$4,385,664	$4,385,664	$0
Para Salary/Benefits (36)	$2,181,384	$2,181,384	$0
Materials	$640,000	$640,000	$0
Total	$7,207,048	$7,207,048	$0

Contingent Objective: Acquisition of DECAL Grant Funding for Pre-K Program Expansion

GCPS secures additional grant funding through the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) to support the expansion of GA Lottery Funded Pre-K classrooms within the district. This funding would increase the number of Pre-K slots available to families, allowing GCPS to serve a greater proportion of four-year-olds, particularly in high-need areas where access remains limited. Expanded DECAL funding would offset operational costs, including

staffing, instructional resources, and compliance with state quality standards, enabling GCPS to maintain program fidelity while scaling capacity. Through this targeted grant support, the district aims to strengthen early learning pathways, increase kindergarten readiness rates, and ensure that more children enter school equipped with the foundational cognitive, social-emotional, and early literacy skills necessary for long-term success. The Department of Early Care and Learning GA Lottery Pre-K grant for 20 classes would provide approximately ***$3,200,000*** in funding to offset the cost of the additional 20 Pre-K classrooms. GCPS would supplement the teacher and paraprofessional salaries to be commiserate with the GCPS salary schedules in the amount of $1,080,400.

Cost Breakdown with Grant Funding

Year 1:

	Original GCPS Cost	**State Reimbursement**	**Cost to GCPS**
Teacher Salary/Benefits (20)	$2,436,480	$1,973,160	$463,320
Para Salary/Benefits (20)	$1,211,880	$637,140	$574,740
Setup Cost / Materials	$600,000	$600,000	$0
Total	$4,248,360	$3,210,300	**$1,038,060**

Ongoing:

	Original GCPS Cost	**State Reimbursement**	**Cost to GCPS**
Ongoing	$40,000	$370,153	**$+330,153**

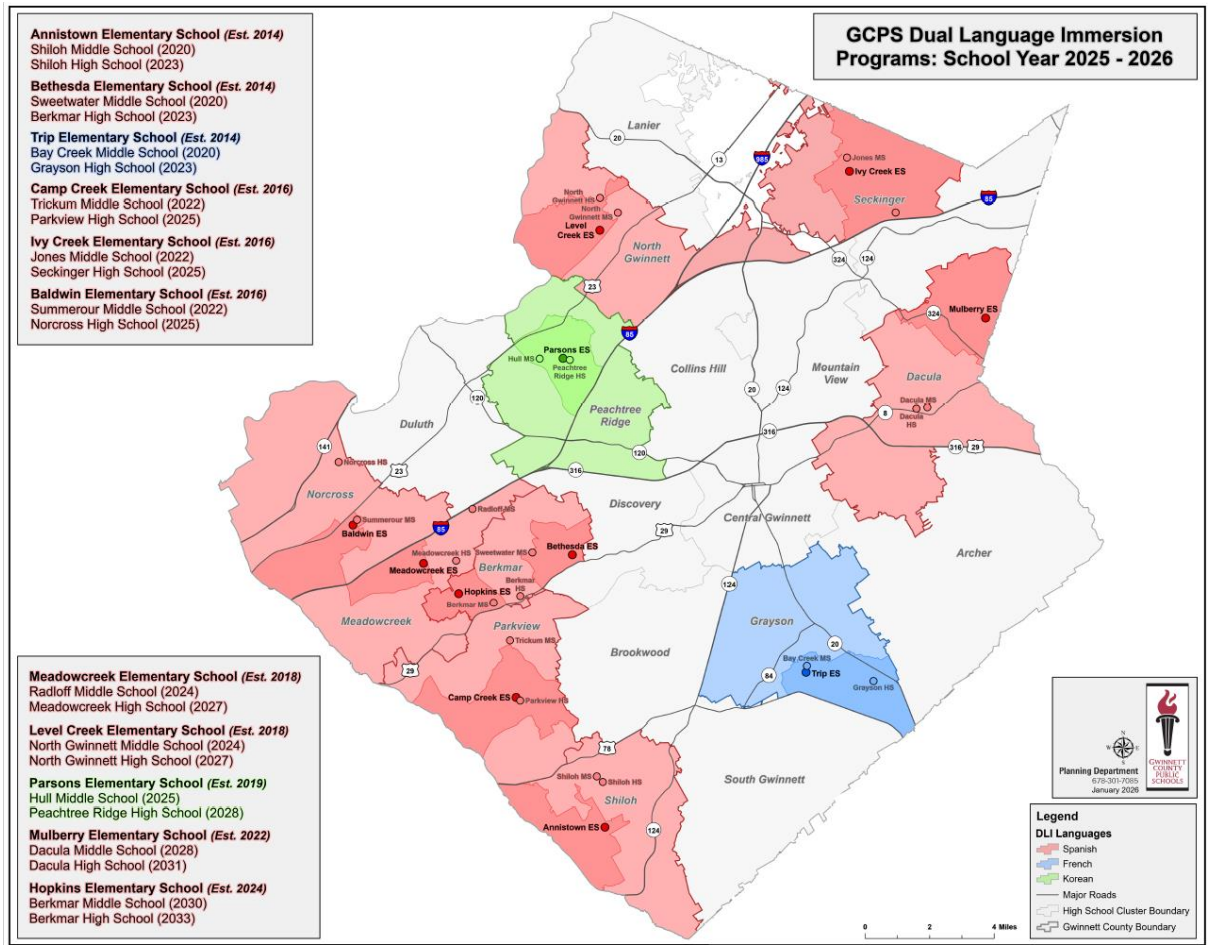
Dual Language Immersion (DLI) in GCPS

History of DLI in GCPS

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) began Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programming in 2014 with three elementary schools and two languages: Spanish and French. Since then, the program has expanded into more schools and a third language, Korean, has been added. Students who began in elementary school now continue in the program through middle and high school. The map below shows the locations of the schools that currently have DLI programs or are expected to have DLI programs in a few years, the language offered, and the year in which the program began or is expected to begin in that school.

The major objectives of the DLI program are to:

- Advance oral proficiency and/or mastery of two languages.
- Develop biliteracy – ability to read and write in two languages.
- Foster cross-cultural communication, understanding, and appreciation.



DLI Program Structure

Elementary School. GCPS employs an effective research-based method of language learning in its elementary school DLI programs, commonly referred to as a 50:50 model in which two teachers work collaboratively to support students with language learning in their core classes, Math, and Science. Students spend half of their day learning English Language Arts and Social Studies in English from one teacher and the other half of their day learning Math and Science from the other teacher in the partner language.

Middle School. Students can continue their language learning in elective courses focused on instruction in grammar, sentence structure, and syntax in the partner language for one to two class periods per day. Middle school continuation of DLI is geared to pivot students from language immersion in Math/Science to more precise language learning that can prepare them for high school level language learning. DLI students who continue DLI in middle school are placed in a separate elective class from non-DLI language learning students.

High School. DLI students who continue language learning in high school are mixed with non-DLI language learning students based on their proficiency level, at which point they can focus on possibly receiving AP and college credit for their language proficiency to support them in future careers and connections.

One-way and two-way programs in GCPS

One-way program: DLI programs in which most students speak the same language fluently.

Two-way program: DLI programs that have fairly equal proportions of primarily English-speaking students and students fluent in the target language.

For analyses, GCPS classifies programs in which ML students compose at least 30% of the student population as *two-way*. By this definition about half of the programs in GCPS are one-way, including the French and Korean programs. All two-way programs in GCPS have Spanish as the target language.

What impact has DLI had on its students?

In July 2024, GCPS conducted an internal evaluation of its DLI program. Teachers and administrators expressed the ways in which DLI has benefitted students academically. A larger proportion of DLI students scored Proficient/Distinguished on 3rd – 5th grade Milestones assessments than their non-DLI counterparts at schools with a DLI program as well as the

proportion of all GCPS elementary students who scored Proficient or Distinguished on the same exams.

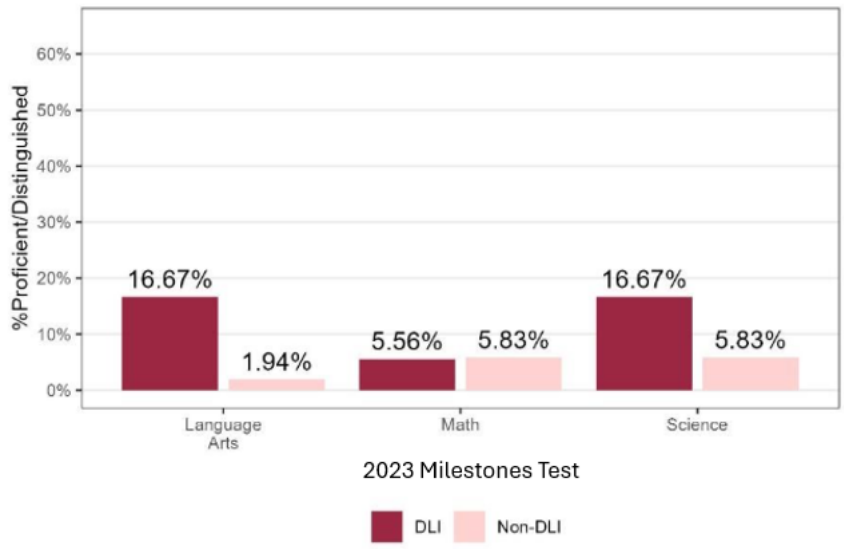
In addition to test outcomes, teachers describe seeing growth in their students' language acquisition as well as in their comprehension of the subject matter. Students described the ways in which the DLI program has provided them with transferable skills beyond the DLI classroom. Principals describe the close connections formed among DLI cohorts and their families.

There were some differences found between students in one-way and two-way programs. While both had overall positive effects, the benefits were on average greater in two-way programs.

GCPS DLI and non-DLI Multilingual Learner Milestones Performance in GCPS

The chart below shows the performance on the 2023 Milestones exams of 5th graders in DLI schools that had a program since 2018. Figure 1 shows the percent of 5th grade ML students who scored proficient or distinguished on Language Arts, Math, and Science in the DLI program (red) and not in the DLI program (pink). The ML students in the DLI ESOL delivery model outperformed the ML students receiving other ESOL delivery models in Language Arts and Science. In Math, the results were similar between the two groups.

Figure 1: %Proficient or Distinguished on 2023 Milestones Tests
5th Grade Multilingual Learners at DLI Schools



Research Support for DLI as an ESOL Delivery Model & Continued ML Support

GCPS continues to explore the efficacy of DLI as an ESOL delivery model as DLI has one of the strongest research foundations among delivery models for multilingual learners (MLs). Below are some key findings from the research literature as well as from analyses within GCPS.

- Collier & Thomas (2004) draws on twenty years of program evaluation work conducted across 23 school districts—large and small—in 15 states representing urban, suburban, and rural communities nationwide. They remain consistently impressed by the effectiveness of this model finding that it is the only model that fully closes the gap for multilingual learners.
- Lindholm-Leary's (2020) comprehensive review of 30–40 years of research highlights consistent benefits of two-way DLI across language proficiency, academic achievement, and social-emotional learning, emphasizing that models beginning with a 90:10 target-to-English distribution and moving toward 50:50 produce the highest bilingual proficiency, provided programs maintain high implementation quality.
- Steele et al. (2017) presents strong positive effects of DLI on English literacy with no significant effects—positive or negative—on science or mathematics achievement.
- WestEd (2024) adds that well-designed educator training and strong fidelity of implementation are essential to realizing the program's benefits.
- Steele et al. (2024) found that Utah's two-way DLI programs produced positive effects across multiple academic subjects, whereas one-way programs showed null effects—an important distinction for policy decisions. Notably, multilingual learners whose home language matched the program's partner language experienced the greatest gains, demonstrating the added value of linguistically aligned models.
- Additional research evidence (Umansky & Reardon, 2014; Valentino & Reardon, 2015), shows that multilingual learners in DLI or other bilingual learning programs may initially reach English proficient designation more slowly but ultimately surpass their peers in academic performance, contradicting misconceptions that DLI and other bilingual programs delay English development.
- In its DLI program evaluation report, GCPS found that the ML students in the DLI ESOL delivery model outperformed the ML students receiving other ESOL delivery models in Language Arts and Science. In Math, their performance was similar. An additional finding was that students in DLI classrooms outperformed their non-DLI peers across all academic areas explored (Gwinnett County Public Schools, 2024).
- Consistent with national research, GCPS data (West et al., 2025, *slide 34*) also show that students who reach a level of English proficiency allowing them to exit ML services tend to outperform peers who were never classified as MLs—further underscoring that strong bilingual foundations support, rather than hinder, long-term academic success.

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CCRPI: Closing Gaps Variability

Closing Gaps is a required component of the **CCRPI** score and represents **15% of elementary and middle school scores** and **10% of high school scores** under **HB 1122**. These CCRPI scores are then used to identify schools in the **lowest 25th percentile statewide** for the **SB 233 Promise School List**.

Because Closing Gaps targets reset each year based on current student performance, the scores can fluctuate significantly. For example:

- In **GCPS**, the **2024 elementary Closing Gaps score was 94.7**, generating higher targets for 2025.
- In **2025**, many student groups did not meet these higher targets, resulting in lower scores.
- For **2026**, the targets will adjust downward, making higher performance classifications more likely again.

Pandemic-related data disruptions masked this pattern until 2025 results were released. The variability is occurring statewide:

- **Georgia's elementary Closing Gaps score dropped from 100 (2024) to 75 (2025).**
- In **Metro RESA**, several districts—Cobb, Dekalb, Rockdale, and Buford—saw elementary declines of **24–56 points**.
- Middle school scores dropped **19–30 points** in Cobb and Marietta City.
- Conversely, **Gwinnett's middle school score improved by 15 points**, and the **state improved by 18 points**.
- High school CCRPI statewide fell from **81.7 (2024)** to **71.3 (2025)**, with district declines of **16–32 points**, while Fulton posted a **15-point increase**.

Because **Closing Gaps accounts for 10–15%** of the CCRPI single score used in HB 1122 and SB 233, this variability has meaningful consequences for school identification and accountability.

Article from the Georgia Department of Education's Accountability Newsletter, July 2025: Understanding Closing Gaps Calculations: Why Year-to-Year Comparisons Can Feel Misleading

As schools dig deeper into their CCRPI data and strive to understand how well they are serving all student groups (i.e., subgroups), one recurring question arises: *Why are Closing Gaps targets*

calculated by adding points to the previous grade level's scores, effectively measuring different students each year?

This is a valid concern, especially when we observe fluctuations in results from year to year. Take the example of 6th grade: last year's students scored a perfect 100 points in Closing Gaps, earning 7 out of 7 flags. However, projections for FY2025 reveal a significantly different picture, with current grade 6 subgroups unlikely to meet the targets, despite instruction remaining strong. Why such a dramatic shift?

Here's the key: **Georgia's Closing Gaps model under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is designed to measure school-level improvement, not the performance of individual student cohorts.** It utilizes a target structure where each student group is expected to either maintain or improve high performance annually. Targets are set based on a 3% reduction in the gap between a baseline and 90%, a framework intended to ensure equity by encouraging greater progress in student groups that are further behind.

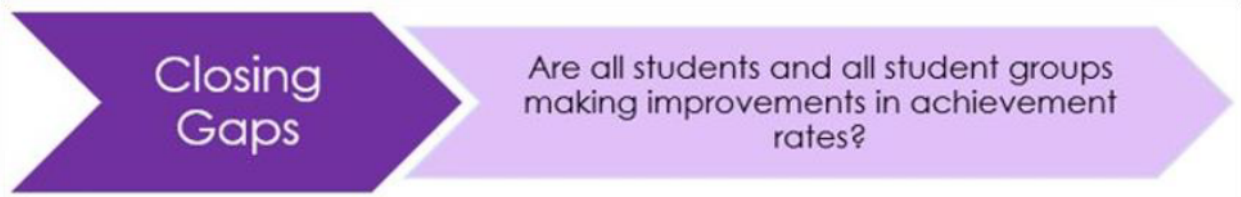
Using a cohort-based model, which tracks the same students over time, might seem more intuitive. However, that method brings significant drawbacks:

- **High student mobility** would result in data loss and instability.
- **Elementary and middle school testing structures** (with subjects like science and social studies tested only once) would prevent consistent tracking.
- **Subgroup sizes might shrink** below the minimum reporting threshold or *N* size, especially in smaller schools.

Ultimately, the current model keeps the focus where it's intended: on **the effectiveness of school-wide instructional programs**. While projections and yearly swings can be frustrating, they are part of a broader goal to encourage continuous, long-term improvement across all student groups, not just one high- or low-performing cohort.

In short, Closing Gaps is not just about whether this year's group outperforms last year's. It is about whether your **school** is steadily moving the needle for ***all*** its learners. That's what those flags are meant to reflect – even if the path isn't always linear.

Source: https://login.community.gadoe.org/newsletters/assessment-accountability/accountability-newsletter-summer-2025



- This component is based on CCRPI **improvement targets** for academic achievement, which are represented by improvement flags.
- Economically Disadvantaged (ED), English Learner (EL), and Students with Disabilities (SWD) student groups can earn **1.5 points** when a target is met. This incentivizes greater improvement among these historically underperforming student groups.
- Target Calculation is based on 2022 baseline data:
  - [3% x (**90** – baseline $_{2022}$)] + prior year score = target
- This component sets the expectation that **all students and all student groups** continue to **make improvements** and, once a certain threshold is attained, sustain high levels of achievement.
- It provides an opportunity for schools to demonstrate the **progress they are making to improve student performance.**

GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Closing Gaps

Are all students and all student groups making improvements in achievement rates?

	2023		2024*		2025	
	GCPS	**State**	**GCPS**	**State**	**GCPS**	**State**
Elementary	58.6	**66.7**	94.7	**100**	73.3	**75.0**
Middle	41.3	**52.5**	68.3	68.3	83.8	**86.3**
High	43.8	**67.5**	68.3	**81.7**	65.0	**71.3**

Closing Gaps scores use two years of data.

2024 scores do not include math scores, so should be compared with caution.

Bold indicates a higher score GCPS or the state.

GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Closing Gaps

Are all students and all student groups making improvements in achievement rates?

2024 GCPS Elementary
94.7

	English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science
ALL STUDENTS			
AMERICAN INDIAN / ALASKAN NATIVE			
ASIAN / PACIFIC ISLANDER			
BLACK			
HISPANIC			
MULTI-RACIAL			
WHITE			
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED			
ENGLISH LEARNERS			
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY			

2025 GCPS Elementary
73.3

	English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science
ALL STUDENTS			
AMERICAN INDIAN / ALASKAN NATIVE			
ASIAN / PACIFIC ISLANDER			
BLACK			
HISPANIC			
MULTI-RACIAL			
WHITE			
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED			
ENGLISH LEARNERS			
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY			

= 0 points; did not make progress

= .5 points; did not meet improvement target

= 1 point; met improvement target

= 1.5 points; ED/EL/SWD student group met improvement target

5 yellow = 2.5
15 green = 15
3 green* = 4.5
Total = 22.0
Score = 22/30 = 73.3

GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Closing Gaps: Elementary English Language Arts

Student Group	2023 Target	2023 Score	2024 Target	2024 Score	2025 Target	2025 Score	2026 Target*
ALL Students	71.06	70.80	71.39	72.23	72.82	69.61	NA
American Indian/Alaskan Native	86.12	58.73	58.85	62.51	62.63	65.22	NA
Asian/Pacific Islander	90.00	96.48	90.00	98.53	90.00	96.68	NA
Black	66.58	67.09	67.81	69.38	70.10	66.56	NA
Hispanic	54.03	52.55	53.66	53.16	54.27	51.53	NA
Multi-Racial	81.96	81.21	81.46	84.07	84.32	79.03	NA
White	90.00	90.74	90.00	92.78	90.00	90.62	NA
Students With Disability	37.73	36.70	38.32	38.15	39.77	37.28	NA
Economically Disadvantaged	57.35	56.79	57.80	60.61	61.62	57.83	NA
English Learners	54.69	53.55	54.64	53.68	54.77	51.99	NA

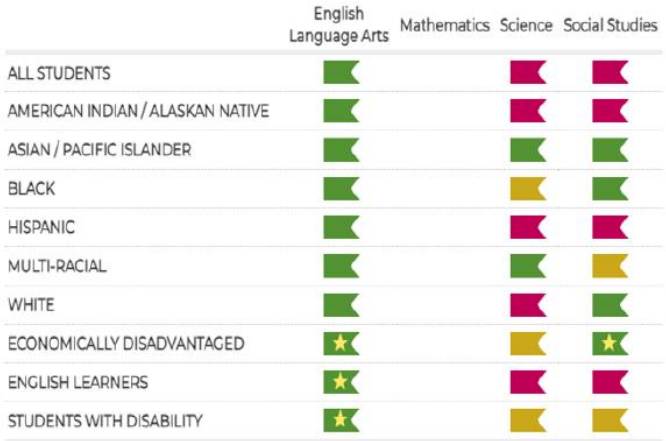
*Due to the new ELA Milestones Assessment, Closing Gaps will not be calculated for 2026, just as math was not calculated in 2024 due to the new assessment.

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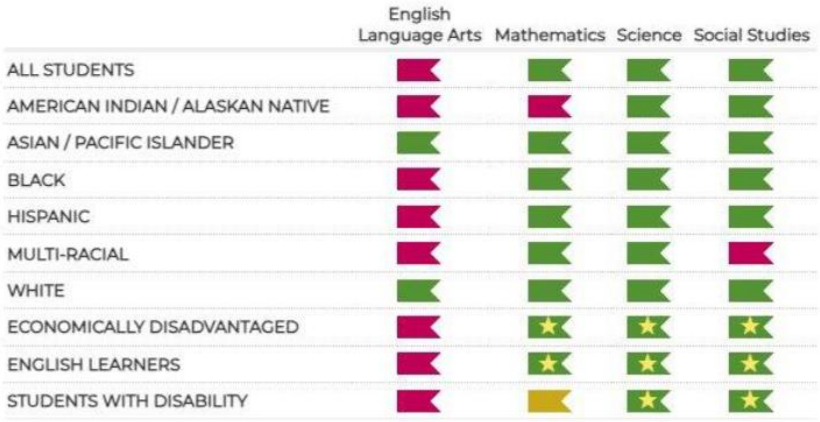
Closing Gaps

Are all students and all student groups making improvements in achievement rates?

2024 GCPS Middle School 68.3



2025 GCPS Middle School 83.8



= 0 points; did not make progress

= .5 points; did not meet improvement target

= 1 point; met improvement target

= 1.5 points; ED/EL/SWD student group met improvement target

GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Closing Gaps

Are all students and all student groups making improvements in achievement rates?

2024 GCPS High School
68.3

	AMERICAN LITERATURE	ALGEBRA: CONCEPTS AND CONNECTIONS	BIOLOGY	U.S. HISTORY
ALL STUDENTS				
AMERICAN INDIAN / ALASKAN NATIVE				
ASIAN / PACIFIC ISLANDER				
BLACK				
HISPANIC				
MULTI-RACIAL				
WHITE				
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED				
ENGLISH LEARNERS				
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY				

2025 GCPS High School
65.0

	AMERICAN LITERATURE	ALGEBRA: CONCEPTS AND CONNECTIONS	BIOLOGY	U.S. HISTORY
ALL STUDENTS				
AMERICAN INDIAN / ALASKAN NATIVE				
ASIAN / PACIFIC ISLANDER				
BLACK				
HISPANIC				
MULTI-RACIAL				
WHITE				
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED				
ENGLISH LEARNERS				
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY				

= 0 points; did not make progress

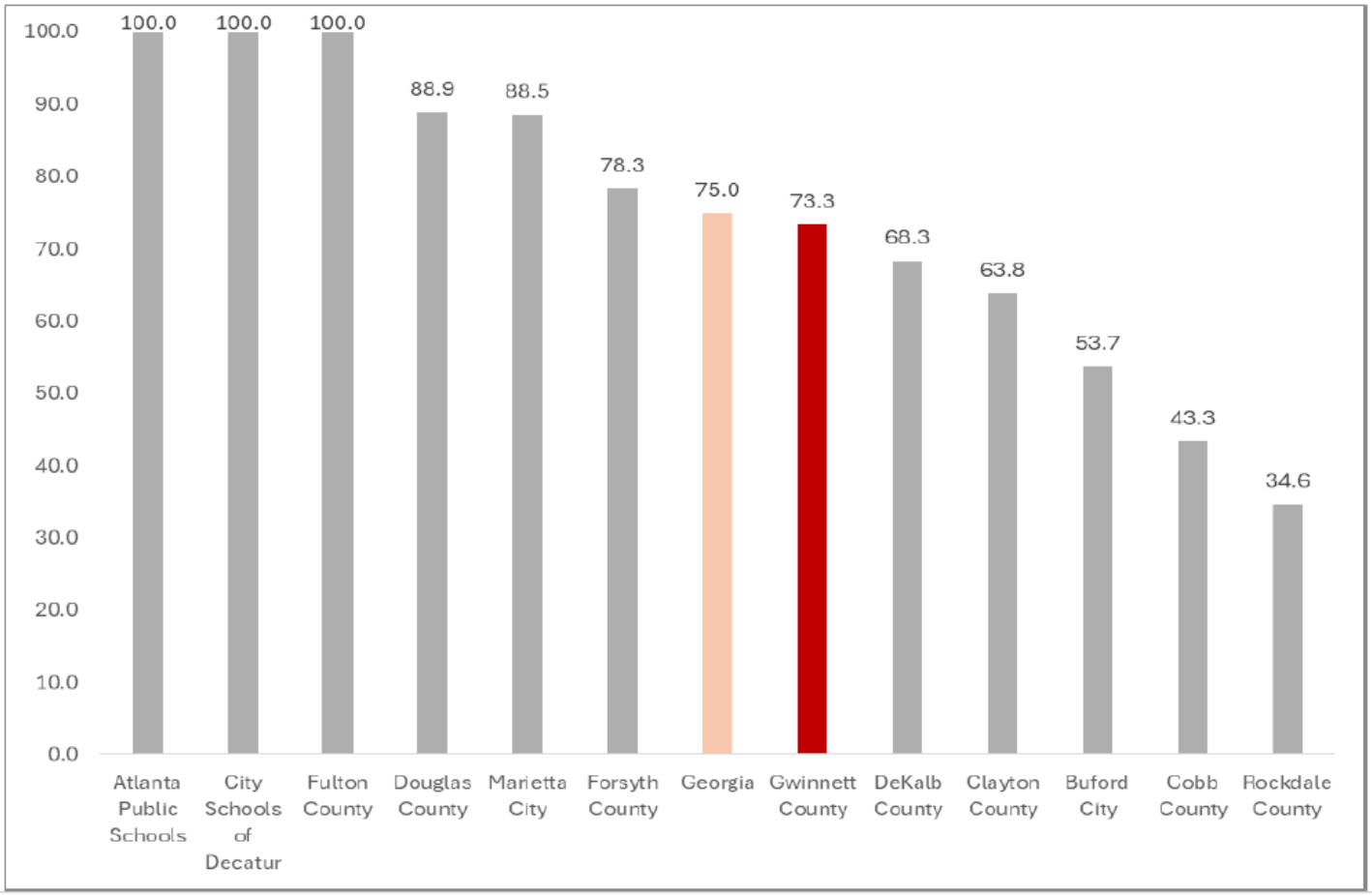
= .5 points; did not meet improvement target

= 1 point; met improvement target

= 1.5 points; ED/EL/SWD student group met improvement target

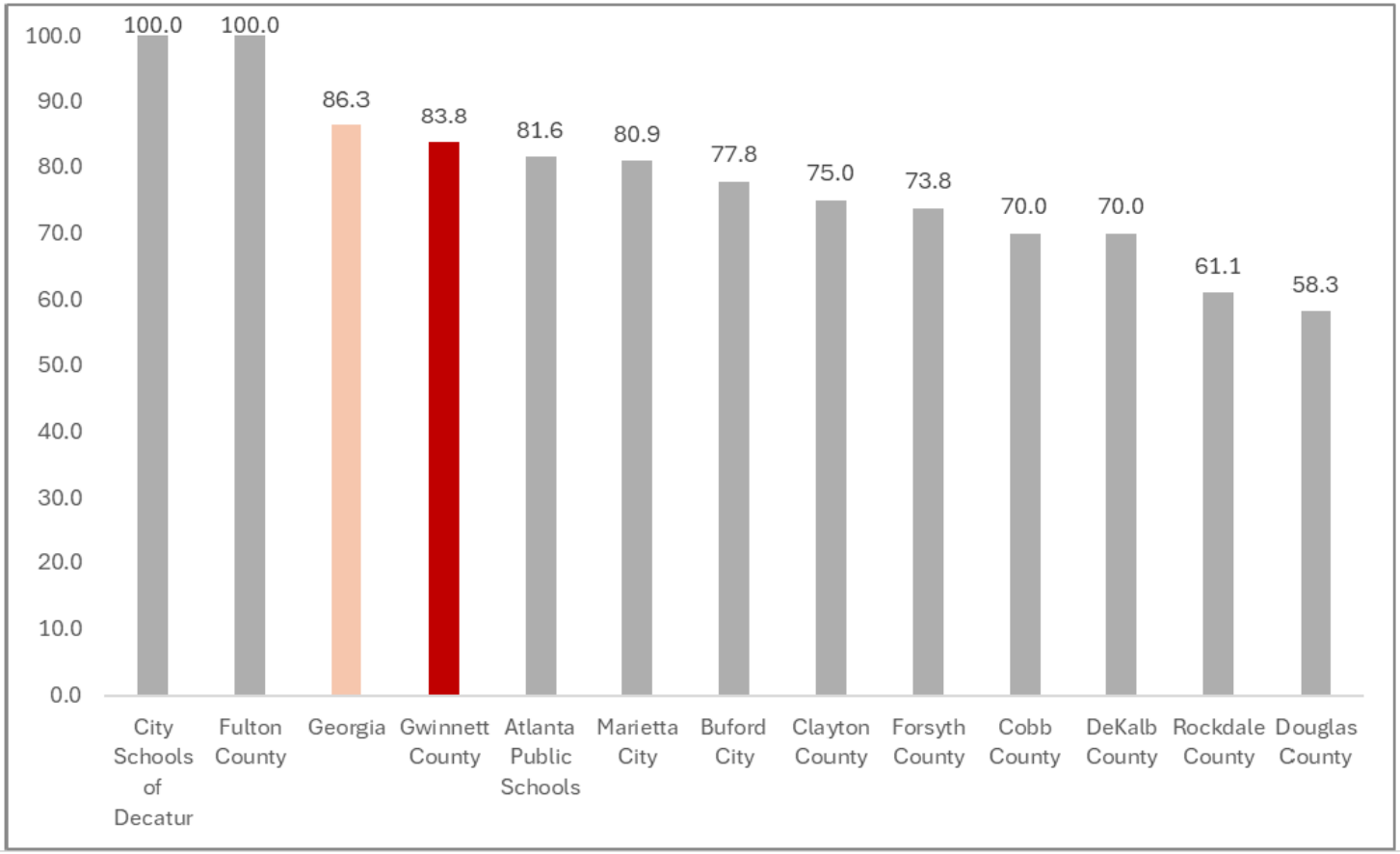
GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Closing Gaps: Elementary Metro RESA Comparison



GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

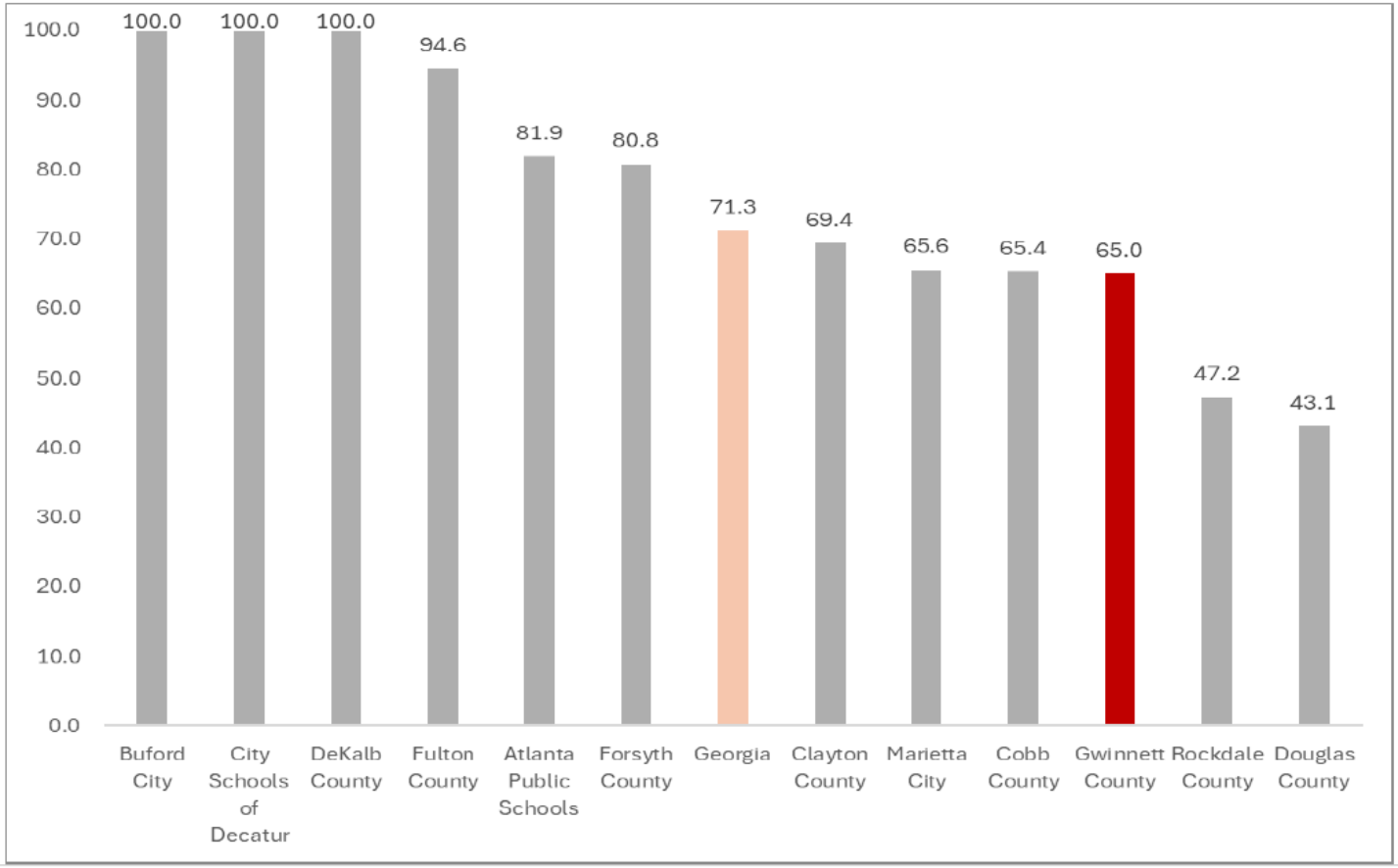
Closing Gaps: Middle School Metro RESA Comparison



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Closing Gaps: High School Metro RESA Comparison



GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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2025 SB 233 Promise School List

The Georgia 2025 Promise Scholarship Public School List was published on December 22, 2025. These are schools in the lowest 25 percentile in the state based on a two-year (2024 and 2025) average of CCRPI single scores, as calculated by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA).

Two-year CCRPI single-score averages at or below 67.5 represent the lowest 25% of schools for 2025, up from a cutoff of 66.2 in 2024. This statewide improvement raises the threshold for inclusion, making it more difficult for schools to exit the lowest-performing category even as performance increases.

There are 15 Gwinnett Schools on the list of 506 schools.

School Name	**Board District**
Lawrenceville Elementary School	District I
Simonton Elementary School	District II
International Transition Center	District II
Moore Middle School	District II
South Gwinnett High School	District IV
Berkmar High School	District IV
Nesbit Elementary School	District IV
Baldwin Elementary	District V
Norcross Elementary School	District V
Radloff Middle School	District V
Rockbridge Elementary School	District V
Stripling Elementary School	District V
Hopkins Elementary School	District V
Meadowcreek Elementary School	District V
Meadowcreek High School	District V

Section Two

Requests for Support on GCPS Board of Education Legislative Priorities and Positions for the 2026 Session

GCPS 2026 Proactive Legislation Program

The GCPS Board of Education, Interim Superintendent, and staff shall proactively collaborate with members of the Gwinnett Delegation, appropriate legislative committees and leadership in both chambers to promote the '*legislative priorities and additional legislative positions'* as outlined below during the 2026 legislative session.

1. GCPS Board of Education Legislative Priorities

Academics

- Support requests to promote and encourage higher levels of teachers with English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) certification
- Recognize Dual Language programs as an ESOL support for secondary education
- Support appropriate levels of special education professional development aligned to the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Early Literacy

- Increase state grant funds to offset substantial district costs with early learning/Pre-K programs
- Provide adequate funding to provide literacy coaches and professional learning to all schools
- Appropriate sufficient funding to provide for professional development and certification in the science of reading for early learning teachers

Access and Opportunity

- Substantially increase the state portion of school district transportation costs to enable greater student access to extra-curricular activities, sports, and credit recovery opportunities
- Continue to develop and expand pathways to career technical education programs as part of a comprehensive workforce development program
- Request investments in college/university preparation programs, financial aid supports, and scholarships

Safety and Wellbeing

- Create QBE weights that address the significant needs of students living in poverty, students with disabilities, and multilingual learners

- Provide the investment in personnel to enable the safety and security of students, teachers, and educational support professionals
- Provide the necessary mental health supports, to include mentoring programs, that may be utilized to promote safe and secure school sites
- Support districts in offsetting the increasing costs of the employer portion of non-certified employees, and school board member health insurance
- Introduce legislation to require the safe storage of firearms and promotes gun safety training as protections against any child's unsupervised access to lethal weapons
- Increase salaries of K–12 public school employees to promote the recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff

2. Additional Legislative Positions

a. Charter School Petitions

Rationale: Senate Bill 82 Local Charter School Authorization and Support Act of 2025 passed with the following provision…

Senate Bill 82: If a local board of a local school system with enrollment of over 60,000 students denies **three or more local charter petitions** and the petition is **subsequently approved** by the State Charter Schools Commission within the same term of the local school systems strategic waiver contract such local system shall not be eligible or authorized to renew its strategic waiver **for up to three years** following the expiration of its current contract OR until the State Board of Education determines that the local school system has demonstrated its commitment to increasing student performance and encouraging innovation through high quality local charter petition authorization.

GCPS Context:

GCPS denied a charter petition last summer, which was subsequently approved by the State Charter Schools Commission (SCSC). The action by the commission provided GCPS with our 'first strike' during our current strategic waiver contract. GCPS employed a rigorous committee process and rubric in denying the charter petition and provided very detailed feedback to the commission as to the rationale for the denial. The SCSC does not have a rubric or published criteria that school districts could have used to assess any charter petitions. Our ask is that there are…

i. No strikes against districts unless/until SCSC rubric for charter applications is publicly available.

ii. No strikes if a state approved charter, subsequent to local district denial, closes within 2/3 years of approval.

b. Open Records Requests

Rationale: Open records requests are requests from any individual or organization who wish to obtain copies of documents that are open and available to them. Any individual or organization can place an open records request with no charge for the first quarter hour of service. Constituents are provided an estimated cost, within three days, for records requests in excess of the first quarter hour. However, constituents are now submitting multiple, smaller requests to avoid paying service fees. For example, one constituent submitted 147 Open records requests in one month. This places an undue burden on the open records officer as multiple requests require the same process steps to be completed for every request. This is an inefficient use of the officer's time and also results in delays to other open records requests. GCPS suggest legislation that…

i. Places a limit on # of free 15-minute requests by a group or individual within a given time period.

ii. The requester to be identified.

Exemplar of change in statute

§ 50-18-71. Inspection and copies of public records; request procedures; fees and charges

(a)(1) All public records shall be open for personal inspection and copying, except those which by order of a court of this state or by law are specifically exempted from disclosure. Records shall be maintained by agencies to the extent and in the manner required by Article 5 of this chapter.

(2)(A) All requests to inspect or copy public records under this article shall be made upon a custodian and identify the person, firm, corporation, or other entity making the request.

(c)(1) An agency may impose a reasonable charge for the search, retrieval, redaction, and production or copying costs for the production of records pursuant to this article. An agency shall utilize the most economical means reasonably calculated to identify and produce responsive, non excluded documents. Where fees for certified copies or other copies or records are specifically authorized or otherwise prescribed by law, such specific fee shall apply when certified copies or other records to which a specific fee may apply are sought. In all other instances, the charge for the search, retrieval, or redaction of records shall not exceed the prorated hourly salary of the lowest paid full-time employee who, in the reasonable discretion of the custodian of the records, has the necessary skill and training to perform the request; provided, however, that no charge

shall be made for the first quarter hour for the first request submitted to an agency by each requester within a seven (7) day period.

c. Discipline Tribunal Notices

Rationale: Currently communications regarding discipline tribunal require certified USPS mail. Due to the unreliability of USPS, some tribunals have needed a continuance as parties have not received notification, or delays are incurred due to notifications arriving on the day of, or just before, a tribunal which does not permit parties to adequately prepare. GCPS is seeking an update/expansion of communication methods to provide for a more effective and efficient process.

Exemplar of statute changes: Delivery of the Charge Letter

(b) A disciplinary officer, panel, or tribunal of school officials appointed as required by Code Section 20-2-753 shall, in addition to any other requirements imposed by rules and regulations which may have been promulgated pursuant to Code Section 20-2-752, ensure that:

(1) All parties are afforded an opportunity for a hearing after reasonable notice served personally~~,~~ ~~or~~ by mail, by statutory overnight delivery, by electronic mail to the most current email address on file for the parent or guardian, or via electronically filing the document with the school district's web based portal for which the parent or guardian is a registered user accompanied by an email notification to the most current email address on file for the parent or guardian. This notice shall be given to all parties and to the parent or guardian of the student or students involved and shall include a statement of the time, place, and nature of the hearing; a short and plain statement of the matters asserted; and a statement as to the right of all parties to present evidence and to be represented by legal counsel. Where a student is represented by an attorney the notice requirement may be satisfied by delivering a copy to the attorney;

O.C.G.A. § 20-2-754

Appeals to the Local Board of Education

(d) The local board of education shall review the record and shall render a decision in writing. The decision shall be based solely on the record and shall be given to all parties ~~within ten days, excluding weekends and public and legal holidays provided for in Code Section 1-4-1, from the date the local board of education receives the notice of appeal~~ no later than the day following the next regularly scheduled meeting of the local board of education occurring more than five (5) calendar days after receipt of the appeal. The board may take any action it determines appropriate, and any decision of the board shall be final. All parties shall have the right to be represented by legal counsel at any such appeal and during all subsequent proceedings.

d. Virtual Attendance at Board Meetings

Rationale: As the Board has adopted a meeting cadence of two separate meetings per month, instead of the current two meetings on one day, they may wish to request an amendment to the state statute to increase the number of teleconference participations allowable from two to four as well as expanding this flexibility to any committees of the Board.

Exemplar of statute changes: O.C.G.A. 50-14-1. Section (g)(3) states that…

(3) On any other occasion of the meeting of an agency or committee thereof, and so long as a quorum is present in person, a member may participate by teleconference if necessary due to reasons of health or absence from the jurisdiction so long as the other requirements of this chapter are met. Absent emergency conditions or the written opinion of a physician or other health professional that reasons of health prevent a member's physical presence, no member shall participate by teleconference pursuant to this subsection more than ~~twice~~ four in one calendar year.

Add this language to section (H)(1) of O.C.G.A. 50-14-1

(G) Committees of the members of a local board of education or committees created by a local board of education.

e. Georgia Promise Scholarship Revisions

Rationale: Line 354 of SB 233 states that a student is eligible for the scholarship if.. *(3) The student resides in the attendance zone of a public school that is included on the list of public schools provided for in Code Section 20-2B-29;*

The intention of the law was that a student had to be enrolled in a school that was on the GOSA list. The Student Finance Commission read the law to broadly include *any* students living in the attendance zone of a school on the list. For example – if a student attends a very highly successful high school but lives in the attendance zone of a school on the GOSA list, that student would be eligible for the scholarship.

The proposal is to clarify that section of the law so that a student is actually enrolled at a school on the list.

- Recommended action – we petition legislators to refine this wording as follows "The student is enrolled in the resides in the attendance zone of a public school that is included on the list of public schools provided…"

The law also provides, in lines 402 thru 409, that a student shall continue to receive scholarship funds even a school is removed from the GOSA list unless they return to public school, graduates from high school, or reaches the age of 20 (21 for special education students).

The proposal is to remove that provision so that a student does not receive the scholarship once the qualifying school drops of the list.

- We recommend the following changes to the current law provision "A participating student shall continue to be eligible to receive account funds until the student returns to a public school, graduates from high school, the public-school drops of the list for two consecutive years, or reaches the age of 20 years, or for special education students, reaches the age of 21 years…."

f. House Bill 268 - School Safety - Representative Persinger

GCPS strongly supported the provisions in this school safety bill that passed during the 2025 session. GCPS staff worked closely with Representative Persinger as the bill was being drafted. There were a couple of operational issues that arose as a result of the implementation of this bill. These concerns are shared by several other school districts and are highlighted below.

Timelines for transfer of student records: The timeframes for the flow of student records between schools, agencies, and parents across multiple code areas differ in the amount of time and differ on the types of days. This has created some confusion across the state as HB268 is implemented. Recommendation is to move all the relevant timeframes to a standard of "Five School Business Days"

Withdrawal to Limit Education: There are inconsistencies in various requirements associated with managing processes for student's not attending school. These inconsistences make it challenging for districts to be in compliance when number of days absent and differing district actions are required in light of these absences e.g. HB 268 requires districts to refer students to DFACS if a student does not attend for 30 days, SBOE Rule requires students to be withdrawn after 10 consecutive absences.

g. Tax Anticipation Note (TAN)

Georgia Constitution: Article IX, Section V, Paragraph V — Revenue Anticipation Obligations

> "The governing authority of any county, municipality, or other political subdivision of this state may incur debt by obtaining temporary loans in anticipation of the collection of taxes for the current year, and may issue tax anticipation notes to provide funds to meet current expenses, under such terms and conditions as may be provided by law; but the aggregate amount of such loans, including the interest thereon, shall not exceed 75 percent of the total gross income from taxes collected in the preceding year. All such loans shall be payable on or before December 31 of the calendar year in which they are made, and no such loan may be renewed or extended."

The TAN process….

- Local governments in Georgia can borrow money short-term to cover cash-flow needs before taxes come in.
- They do this by issuing Tax Anticipation Notes (TANs).
- The maximum amount they can borrow is 75% of last year's total tax collections.
- **All TANs must be fully paid off by December 31 of the same year.**
- No rollovers or renewals are allowed — they must be repaid within the year.

The concern: Any delays in the issuance of property tax bills can result in school district revenues from those taxes being delayed until late in the Fall of any given year. School districts may draw on reserves to continue with operational costs but if reserves are low they may need a TAN until enough revenues from property taxes are collected to avoid any issues.

The challenge: the repayment of the TAN is December 31st of the year the short-term loan is taken out. So a district may need a loan to cover shortfall in revenues in say November but have to repay the loan by the end of the next month.

The request: A change to the Georgia Constitution to allow school districts to repay any TAN at the end of the fiscal year (i.e. June 30th) in which the TAN originated rather than the end of the calendar year. This would allow enough flexibility for district to safely navigate any extended delays or shortfall in property tax revenue collections.

h. Redshirting

Redshirting (a term borrowed from college athletics) refers to delaying a child's entry into a grade level even though they are age-eligible, usually to give them extra time to grow socially, emotionally, or academically.

In early childhood education, redshirting most often involves holding back a 5- or 6-year-old from starting kindergarten, but it can also occur when a child is of 1st-grade age and parents request that the child repeat or enter kindergarten instead of moving on**.**

Enrollment in GCPS (As posted on the district website)

Eligibility Requirements for Enrollment in Gwinnett County Public Schools
Georgia state law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-150) sets specific guidelines for school enrollment:

- "…all children and youth who have attained the age of 5 years by September 1st shall be eligible for enrollment in the appropriate general education programs authorized in this part…"
    - Gwinnett County Public Schools provides the general determination that all children and youth that have attained the age of 5 years by September 1st are appropriately placed in kindergarten. (Policy & Procedure JBA).
    - Gwinnett County Public Schools provides the general determination that all children and youth that have attained the age of 6 years by September 1st are appropriately placed in 1st grade. (Policy & Procedure JBA).
- Parents may request a determination of appropriate placement through the Student Support Team (SST) process by contacting the school principal.

Moving from Another State or Country
If your family recently moved to Georgia, your child may still qualify for enrollment if:

- You lived in another state or country for the two years just before moving, and
- Your child was legally enrolled in an accredited public or state-recognized kindergarten or first grade there.
- In these cases, children who turn 5 (for kindergarten) or 6 (for first grade) by December 31 may enroll in Georgia.

No Other Exceptions
State law does not allow exceptions for:

- Private school students in Georgia
- Early entry based on testing or readiness
- Students who were not previously enrolled in an eligible program

Local school boards and superintendents cannot waive these age requirements as an exception to the state law.

From GCPS Board Policy JBA – Eligibility for Enrollment and Admissions

> "It is the intent of the Board that students entering Gwinnett County Public Schools meet the criteria for enrollment and admissions established by state law.
> The Superintendent shall have the responsibility for developing and implementing procedures to ensure that students entering Gwinnett County Public Schools meet enrollment and admissions criteria."

From GCPS Board Procedure JBA – Eligibility for Enrollment and Admissions

> GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR ENROLLMENT AND ADMISSIONS

Gwinnett County Public Schools (district) serves students who are eligible to attend the District's schools. Georgia law (O.C.G.A. 20-2-690.1) requires any person, whether or not a parent or legal guardian, who has "control or charge of any child between their sixth and sixteenth birthdays," to enroll and send the child to a public school, private school, or home study program.

I. REQUIREMENTS FOR ENROLLMENT AND ADMISSIONS TO GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

The following enrollment and admissions criteria shall apply for all students entering Gwinnett County Public Schools (K-12).

A. AGE ELIGIBILITY FOR ENROLLMENT :
1. Mandatory attendance age for enrollment is age 6. All children, including students who are homeless in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, who have attained the age of 5 years by September 1 shall be eligible to enroll in kindergarten. Those who have attained the age of 6 by September 1 shall be eligible for first grade. Every parent, guardian, or other person residing in Georgia having control or charge of any child or children between their sixth and sixteenth birthdays is required to enroll and send such child or children in their care to a public or private school or provide a home study program for these children which meets requirements set forth in law. If a student is enrolled prior to age 6 in a kindergarten program and attends for 20 days, then the child is subject to provisions of compulsory school attendance. Students are eligible to attend school unless they attain the age of 20 by September 1, even if they dropped out and returned. Students can continue enrollment if not 21 before September 1, if no lapse of one or more quarters occurs. Once a student receives a high school diploma or equivalent, they are not eligible for enrollment in school. Students who have received a high school diploma or equivalent from a country outside the U.S. are not eligible to enroll.

Proof of age documentation should be obtained from the parent or guardian upon initial student enrollment and from new enrollees who have never attended or have previously withdrawn from GCPS.

Official documentation of proof of age shall be retained by the school as part of the student record.

The following documents shall be accepted as evidence of proof of age and must show the individuals date of birth:

- A certified copy of a birth certificate
- A certified hospital issued birth record or birth certificate
- A military ID
- A valid driver's license
- A passport

- An adoption record
- A religious record signed by an authorized religious official
- An official school transcript
- An affidavit of age sworn to by the enrolling parent, guardian or other person accompanied by a certificate of age signed by a licensed practicing physician which state that the physician has examined the child and believe that the age as stated in the affidavit is substantially correct.

2. The provisions of the State's mandatory attendance law shall apply to a child between his or her sixth and sixteenth birthdays who has been assigned to attend an alternative public school program established by the Board. This provision shall apply regardless of whether such child has been suspended or expelled from another public school by that local board of education or its delegate, and to the parent, guardian, or other person residing in this state who has control or charge of such child.

3. A child who was a legal resident of one or more states or countries for a period of two years immediately prior to moving to Georgia and who was legally enrolled in a public kindergarten or first grade accredited by a state or regional association or the equivalent thereof, shall be eligible for enrollment in the appropriate general or special education program if such child will attain the age of five for kindergarten or six for first grade by December 31 and is otherwise qualified.

4. Special education students, including students who are homeless in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, are eligible for enrollment in appropriate education programs, as identified by the student's IEP team until they receive a regular high school diploma or until the student reaches 22 years of age.

There is a possibility that legislation may be introduced that conflicts with current Board Policy and Procedure on enrollment in the early years. The section below provides the districts concerns on any legislation that conflicts with current Board Policy and Procedure and/or introduces mandates such as a readiness screener for 1st grade students and the potential of parents overriding any decisions made by the Board and/or district.

Overview

Legislation is likely to be introduced that significantly impacts operational, fiscal, and logistical challenges for local districts and the State Board of Education (SBOE). The following feedback outlines key concerns, implications, and questions that need to be addressed before adoption and implementation of any such bill.

Summary of Key Concerns

- Compressed timeline for implementation.
- Significant fiscal and staffing challenges.
- Undermining of assessment and data-based placement decisions.
- Increased risk of students aging out before graduation.
- Operational strain on rural districts.
- Potential unintended consequences in athletics.

1. Timeline Concerns

Issue: Any legislation should consider the extensive work from the SBOE and/or local districts within a short timeframe if it is to be implemented in the 2026-2027 school year.

Impact: Compressed timelines increase the risk of incomplete planning, rushed implementation, and execution errors.

2. 1st Grade Readiness Instrument

Key Questions:

- Will legislation require a 1st-grade readiness instrument?
- A statewide instrument does not exist, so who will develop it, and what is the timeline for creation and vetting?
- What are the implications for local school staff administering these tests?
- How quickly will schools receive results to make timely placement decisions?

Impact: The state of Georgia does not currently have an identified 1st-grade readiness instrument, which will require the SBOE to identify an assessment and for districts to budget for the cost – all within four months. Districts are entering budget season.

3. Resource Allocation

Fiscal and Human Resources: Developing and administering readiness assessments will require substantial investment.

Risk: If parents can override assessment results and make the final decision, the resources spent (fiscal and time) on creating and implementing these assessments will be wasted, raising concerns about fiscal responsibility for local school districts and the SBOE.

4. Parent Decision-Making

Concern: Parents advocating for kindergarten placement due to late birthdays may disregard assessment outcomes.

Implication: This undermines the purpose of readiness assessments and creates inconsistencies in placement decisions across local schools, districts, and the state.

5. Precedent for Future Challenges

Concern: Allowing parental override may set a precedent for challenging future retention decisions in grades 3–8.

Impact: This legislation could weaken data-based placement policies and procedures (including using Georgia Milestone data) across the state.

6. Age Progression and Graduation Risks

Current SBOE Rule: Students are eligible to attend school unless they attain the age of 20 by September 1.

Implications: Delaying Kindergarten entry by one year results in graduation at age 19, depending on birthdate (see Age/**Grade Progression with Birthdate Windows**). Delaying Kindergarten entry by two years results in graduation at age 20, depending on birthdates.

Retention in later grades could cause students to age out before completing high school. Students will need to maintain a perfect school career and avoid retention in later grades to prevent "aging out" of school.

Additional Considerations: Impact on overage students in Kindergarten classrooms and potential social-emotional challenges for those who are 5 by September 1.

7. Staffing and Class Size

- **Challenges:** Increased demand for Kindergarten teachers, depending on annual parental demand, including a need to reassign teachers between Kindergarten and 1st grade annually based on parental demand.
- **Constraints:** State class size requirements and FTE funding limitations (Kindergarten funding is lower because it is not mandated, which will require local districts to subsidize).
- **Question:** Will districts be allowed to set a deadline for parents to make placement decisions to aid staffing and planning?

8. Rural District Implications

- **Concern:** Rural districts may face greater challenges in staffing and resource allocation.
- **Impact:** Could exacerbate inequities between rural and urban districts.

9. Athletic Implications

- **Risk:** Potential for early "greyshirting" in athletics, which violates GHSA guidelines.
- **Impact:** Local recreational leagues and travel teams may face complications with age verification, leading to mismatched grade-level participation.

Age / Grade Progression with Birthdate Windows

Cohort A — Starts Kindergarten at Age 5

Birthdate Range: Sept 2, 2020 – Sept 1, 2021

Grade	Age on Sept 1	Typical Age During Year
K	5	5–6
1	6	6–7
2	7	7–8
3	8	8–9
4	9	9–10
5	10	10–11
6	11	11–12
7	12	12–13
8	13	13–14
9	14	14–15
10	15	15–16
11	16	16–17
12	17	17–18

Cohort B — Starts Kindergarten at Age 6

Birthdate Range: Sept 2, 2019 – Sept 1, 2020

Grade	Age on Sept 1	Typical Age During Year
K	6	6–7
1	7	7–8
2	8	8–9
3	9	9–10
4	10	10–11
5	11	11–12
6	12	12–13
7	13	13–14
8	14	14–15
9	15	15–16
10	16	16–17
11	17	17–18
12	18	18–19

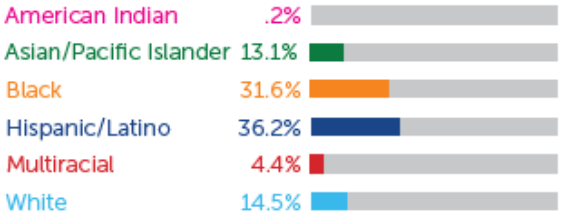
GCPS By the Numbers

178,986 Students

Enrollment as of October 2025

Our students come from **183** countries and speak **114** different languages. (May 2024)

Racial/Ethnic Distribution (October 2025)



13,604 graduates in the Class of 2025

- The graduation rate of **85.4%** is the highest in a decade, for the second consecutive year.
- **78%** had plans to continue their education
- Offered more than **$220.2 million** in academic, athletic, and military scholarships

22 schools offer Dual Language Immersion.

19 nationally certified Career and Technical Education programs across career areas.

School Nutrition
30.3 million meals served in 2024–25

$3.4 billion budget in FY2026

On average, the cost of educating one child in GCPS is **$15,090** per year. The direct costs of instruction account for 81% of that amount.

Our 142 Schools

- **81** Elementary Schools
- **29** Middle Schools
- **24** High Schools
- **7** Specialty Schools
- **1** Charter School

Student Services (October 2025)

Gifted Education	19.1%
Special Education	14.6%
English Learners	26.7%
Economically Disadvantaged	61.8%

Transportation

GCPS is the **third largest** transporter of students in the **country**.

GCPS is the largest employer in Gwinnett County and 4th largest in metro Atlanta.

The district has earned recognition as a top employer for women by *Forbes* magazine.

Shortfalls in State Funding

The QBE formula does not fully fund many mandates.

FY2026	School Bus Transportation	Safety & Security	Classified Health Ins.	Sick Leave	Special Education*	Pre-K**
GCPS Total Cost	$172,848,000	$26,003,000	$140,151,000	$21,225,000	$513,067,000	$77,217,000
State Funds	$39,474,000	$10,000,000	$0	$2,131,000	$285,166,000	$9,708,000
State %	**22.84%**	**38.46%**	**0%**	**10.04%**	**55.58%**	**12.57%**

*GCPS receives Federal funding of $34.3M for Special Education.
**Pre-K Program: Preschool Disability Services – state grant program. No funding for Pre-K through QBE formula.