

2026 Legislative Wrap-Up

May 12, 2026





CITY SCHOOLS OF DECATUR

2026 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

LEARN. TEACH. LEAD.



1

**SAFETY &
SECURITY**

2

**MENTAL
HEALTH**

3

FUNDING

4

**LOCAL
AUTHORITY**

1

SAFETY & SECURITY

Priority: Continue to allocate funding for school safety in the state budget, making this a stable, ongoing priority

Priority: Require safe and secure firearm storage for all citizens

Priority: Allocate funding for monitoring installation, licensing, and maintenance of potential physical and cyber threats and continuous training for school administrators

Priority: Continue to allow local governments to operate and enforce school zone speed cameras.

2

MENTAL HEALTH

Priority: Continue to expand mental healthcare access, particularly for teens and young adults

Priority: Ensure the mental health and safety of all students, including those from historically marginalized populations

Priority: Increase funding for training for mental health professionals and expand student and staff access to services

Priority: Increase funding for school counselors for students in special education and gifted programs

Priority: Lower the student-to-school counselor ratio to 250:1 as recommended by ASCA.

3

FUNDING

Priority: Fully fund the QBE Formula

Priority: Modernize QBE to account for inflation and adequately fund public education

Priority: Increase funding for quality early learning programs

Priority: Increase funding for student transport, electric buses, and green infrastructure

Priority: Continue to increase funding for literacy and dyslexia programs

Priority: Reduce barriers to attracting/retaining talent; Provide funding to support increases in the employer portion of non-certified employee health benefits

4

LOCAL AUTHORITY

Priority: Maintain local authority over school governance and operations

Priority: Maintain local authority over educational and curriculum decisions, instructional resources, local revenue sources and local exemptions

Priority: Maintain local authority and flexibility in implementing legislative priorities

Priority: Maintain local authority to determine educational frameworks that promote positive outcomes for all students and staff

Priority: Urge local school districts to amplify student voice by adding a student representative to the boards of education

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1

SAFETY & SECURITY

Priority: Continue to allocate funding for school safety in the state budget, making this a stable, ongoing priority

Legislative Action: If signed by the governor, the final version of the FY 27 Budget allocates \$116 million for continued security grants to support local needs and student mental health support.

Priority: Continue to allow local governments to operate and enforce school zone speed cameras.

Legislative Action: HB 651 and HB 1161 about school zone speed cameras passed and are pending the governor's signature or veto.

2

MENTAL HEALTH

Priority: Continue to expand mental healthcare access, particularly for teens and young adults

Legislative Action: If signed by the governor, the final version of the FY27 Budget allows schools to engage part-time or full-time student advocacy specialists, as passed in HB 268 during the 2025 session.

Legislative Action: SB 589 requires student ID badges for grades 6-12 to include the 9-8-8 Suicide & Crisis Hotline. This bill is pending the governor's signature or veto.

3

FUNDING

Priority: Continue to increase funding for literacy and dyslexia programs

Legislative Action: HB 1193, the GA Early Literacy Act of 2026, has been signed by the governor. If signed, the FY27 Budget includes funding for literacy coaches for schools with grades K-3

Priority: Reduce barriers to attracting/retaining talent; Provide funding to support increases in the employer portion of non-certified employee health benefits

Legislative Action: If signed, the final version of the FY27 Budget increases the per-member-per-month employer health insurance contribution from \$1,885 to \$1,935.

4

LOCAL AUTHORITY

Priority: Maintain local authority over educational and curriculum decisions, instructional resources, local revenue sources and local exemptions

Legislative Action: If signed, SB 33, Property Tax Reform, removes the provision for government entities to opt out of the statewide floating homestead exemption passed in HB 581 in 2024

Priority: Urge local school districts to amplify student voice by adding a student representative to the boards of education

Legislative Action: HR 1668 urged local boards to include a student representative. The resolution did not reach final passage.

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2026 Signed Legislation



- **HB 328** Student Scholarship Organization Changes
- **HB 907** Amends Completion Special Schools Act, strengthens alternative education options
- **HB 1009** Extends existing state ban on personal devices to include high school
- **HB 1030** Math Matters Act, requires additional daily instruction and mandates advance math courses
- **HB 1107** Excellent Teacher Preparation Act, aims to strengthen teacher quality
- **HB 1118** Maternal Birth Leave Benefit, extends maternal birth leave time for eligible state and public school teachers
- **HB 1123** Requires public schools operating both Pre-K and after-school programs to make after-school accessible to all Pre-K students
- **HB 1193** Georgia Early Literacy Act, aims at improving K-3 reading proficiency
- **HB 1284** Authorizes school districts to award diplomas to terminally ill students
- **HB 1293** Updates and expands Dual Achievement Program

- **HB 1302** Education and Workforce Strategy Act
- **SB 33** Property Tax Reform
- **SB 148** Authorizes local school boards to offer hunting safety instruction for grades 6-12 and to pilot outdoor learning spaces; revises AED provisions for schools, removing requirement for involvement of licensed physician; increases number of sick days that public school staff can convert to personal days
- **SB 150** Expands the teacher return-to-work program, allowing retirees with at least 30 years of service to return to work
- **SB 523** Prohibits discrimination in K-12 and higher education and creates K-12 Statewide Title VI Coordinator
- **SB 383** Revisions to Local Child Fatality Review Committees
- **SB 556** DREAMS Scholarship and Revisions to HOPE GPA

* As of 5/11/26

2026 Legislation Pending Signature



- **HB 439** Homeowner Incentive Adjustment Programs
- **HB 651** School Zone Speed Cameras
- **HB 1161** School Zone Speed Cameras
- **HB 1164** District Financial Audit Requirements and Penalties
- **HB 1379** Foreign Funding Transparency and Accountability
- **HB 1409** Updates to Child Abuse Reporting
- **SB 179** Computer Science Graduation Requirement, GA Virtual School Fee Increase, Patriotic Youth Society Facility
- **SB 284** Roof Repairs and Low-Wealth Capital Outlay Grants
- **SB 369** Dropout Recovery Charter Schools, Nontraditional Education Programs and Services, Technology Costs, Virtual School Student Extracurricular Participation
- **SB 431** Foster Care Student Enrollment
- **SB 472** District Audit Requirements and Suspension of Board Members
- **SB 552** True Patriotism and Universal Student Access Act
- **SB 589** Pre-K Age to Start School, Kindergarten Redshirting, 9-8-8 Crisis Line
- **SB 625** Requires Referendum for CSD Bonds over \$20 Million

* As of 5/11/26



- **HB 1193** Georgia Early Literacy Act of 2026
 - Mandates “Science of Reading” Alignment
 - Creates State Literacy Coordinator & GA Literacy Task Force
 - Requires Local “Unified Literacy Plans” and Instructional Supports in Schools
 - Increased emphasis on early learning through
 - Earlier enrollment/funding
 - Readiness assessment prior to First Grade and related interventions
 - Revises Reading Screener Requirements and related State Data Reporting
 - Review of Educator Prep Programs to confirm Literacy training



- **SB 33** Property Tax Reform

A more robust, aggressive House measure was voted down by the Senate; an unrelated Senate bill was then stripped and replaced:

- The bill requires jurisdictions to cap home assessments at the rate of inflation;
- There is no opt out;
- A local referendum may be held to implement a Local Homestead Option Sales Tax, to make up for revenue lost, and, in theory, to reduce property taxes;
- Much like the FLOST in 382, the revenue generated by LHOST can be applied in the current taxable year; and
- Local education rainy day fund excess is now capped at 25% instead of 15%.

There had been hope of veto as there are constitutional questions pertaining to the origination clause. Governor's office has nevertheless announced that Kemp will sign the bill.



- **HB 651 School Zone Cameras**
- Establishes stricter guardrails on when and how cameras may be used, requires voter approval, and limits how revenues can be spent.
- Local governments must obtain voter approval before entering new contracts or renewing existing contracts.
- Ballot question is a **Yes/ No vote** authorizing camera use for **six years** and requires a simple majority to pass (**50% + 1**). If rejected, the jurisdiction must wait **three years** before resubmitting.
- Most provisions will take effect on **July 1, 2026**, if signed, which includes enforcement, penalties and guardrails. Referendums become effective on **July 1, 2027**.
- Fees collected from school zones cameras can be used for local law enforcement initiatives and public safety programs, no funds can be used for salaries of law enforcement personnel.

Questions?

