



Newton County BOE Legislative Priorities 2017

ADVOCATE FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Newton County School System's Board of Education supports the *Vision Project* as the vehicle to raise awareness, address issues, and enhance public education in the state of Georgia. www.visionforpubliced.org

LOCAL BOARD AUTHORITY

The board supports the authority of local boards of education to manage and control the operation of local public schools, opposing any legislation that attempts to override the constitutional authority of locally-elected boards to make educational decisions for their communities.

PROGRAM FUNDING

The State of Georgia has continued to decrease the amount of funds available for public education. The board supports ceasing state austerity reductions and restoring full funding to public education. Since 2003, austerity reductions have resulted in a loss of earned funds totaling approximately **\$108,504,554**.

The board opposes using public funds for private education in the form of vouchers, tax credits, and all other legislation that seeks to reduce state funding of public schools. The diverting of funds from public schools results in shortened calendars for students and staff, increased class sizes, a reduction in staff, and fewer material resources for our public schools.

The board supports the funding of the state's employee health benefits program so as to provide state employees with flexible plan options. Since **January 2011**, insurance costs have increased more than **359%** for classified (non-teaching) employees.

The board supports the continuation of full funding for the mid-term adjustment given to school districts experiencing student growth. The board further supports a fair and equitable state funding formula for public education.

POLICY AND IMPACT

The board supports requiring a clear, timely, and complete description of the potential impact of state education legislation on the fiscal budget, operations, and programs of local schools and school districts. **For education legislation that creates new mandates or programs** for school systems, delay implementation of such legislation for a minimum of one year thereby allowing school systems enough time to adjust budgets, implement programs, and reduce costs.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

The board urges Congress to eliminate unnecessary mandates and regulations on schools. The board also supports requiring a clear and complete description of the potential impact of education legislation on the fiscal budget, operations, and programs of local schools and school districts. The board also supports a fair and equitable distribution of federal funds that supports a well-rounded education, a comprehensive safe and healthy student program, and the effective use of technology.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The board supports a fair and equitable system of teacher and leader evaluation. When evaluations are used for merit pay, certificate renewal, and/or other personnel decisions, the board supports the use of valid and reliable growth measures for all educators. The board supports the flexibility provided in Senate Bill 364 which reduces the number of state-required assessments, the requirement of online testing, and allows for the development of a pilot model of assessment. The board supports the use of Iowa Assessments for pre and post-test measures in lieu of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments (in grades three-eight.)

The board supports a fair and consistent accountability system that utilizes a growth/progress model for student achievement using multiple measures for student and teacher performance. The accountability system must recognize the uniqueness of each school system (i.e. special populations, socioeconomics).

The board supports the stabilization of curricula. Constant changes in curriculum require additional training of staff, procurement of new resources, and create curricular gaps in students' learning. The board supports rigorous standards and assessments that can be compared nationally and internationally. The board supports additional support and professional development for mandated curricular changes as well as additional funding to support changes in learning resources required for mandated changes.

The board supports the advancement of technology for schools and students. Funding must be provided for instructional technology equipment, infrastructure, and individual student devices. Additionally, funding must be provided to support the integration of technology in every classroom.