



# Atlanta Board of Education 2015 Legislative Priorities

The Atlanta Board of Education advocates for the following priorities for legislative action in the 2015 session of the 153<sup>rd</sup> Georgia General Assembly. The board also affirms guiding principles to assist our legislative representatives in responding to other issues that arise during the session.

## **1. Prioritize early childhood education to provide aligned, quality programs to all students**

- Identify permanent, stable funding sources to expand Georgia prekindergarten to all eligible four-year-olds.
- Support birth-to-three programs that are aligned with Pre-k to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade literacy goals, such as the Atlanta Public Schools-Sheltering Arms partnership at Dunbar ES.
- Provide for monitoring of instructional standards for early care centers and early childhood programs to ensure that Georgia children are ready for prekindergarten and kindergarten.

## **2. Provide adequate, stable education funding**

- Appropriate to school systems all locally earned funding under the Quality Basic Education Act (QBE) formula.
- Require local fiscal impact statements on all legislation creating new mandates or programs for school systems and all legislation impacting education funding such as tax exemptions.
- Delay the implementation of any legislation impacting funding or creating new mandates/programs to provide schools and districts with at least one (1) year to adjust budgets, reduce costs and implement.

## **3. Ensure that student data may be used for educational purposes only**

- Protect the privacy and security of student data by prohibiting the use of student data, particularly data held by third-party vendors, from being used for advertising, commercial or other purposes.

## **4. Eliminate “zero tolerance” laws and laws that dictate mandatory consequences to give districts flexibility in handling student disciplinary matters**

- Support Atlanta Public Schools' efforts to reduce disparities in disciplinary consequences for students of color and students with disabilities and to address concerns about the "school-to-prison pipeline."

#### **5. Support the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS)**

- Continue implementing rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards to prepare Georgia students for college and careers.
- Provide authentic assessments aligned with Georgia CCGPS and other states' assessments to provide a clear picture of how students are performing compared with their peers.
- Support professional development for teachers and school leaders in CCGPS implementation.

### **Guiding Principles**

#### *Adequate Support for Schools and Teachers*

Effective teachers and leaders are the most critical factor in achieving the Atlanta Public Schools' mission to graduate students ready for college and career. The Atlanta Board of Education supports measures to attract, retain, and develop effective teachers and leaders. Additionally, in order to improve student performance, the Atlanta Board of Education supports an accountability system that ensures that all students are ready for college and careers. Accountability should be balanced with appropriate support for schools and teachers and should be focused on student academic growth and graduation rates rather than on punitive actions toward schools, teachers and students.

#### *Strong Public School Options*

The Atlanta Board of Education believes in strong, high quality public school choices for families and opposes legislation and mandates that divert public resources to for-profit entities, private schools and home study.

#### *Local Control & Flexibility*

The unique challenges of educating urban students require solutions tailored to the Atlanta context. The Atlanta Board of Education believes that the school district is in the best position to make decisions that affect our schools and communities such as resource allocation, the school calendar, curriculum development, the use of school facilities, and conditions of employment for personnel. The Atlanta Board of Education opposes actions that limit the constitutional authority and autonomy of local school boards and supports actions that provide flexibility in local decision-making.