The Georgia
VISION
PROJECT
for Public Education

Our vision is that public education in Georgia will provide all children an equitable and excellent education that prepares them for college, career, and life.

Why Act and Why Now?

- ☑ To build trust and support for public education

- ☑ To ensure meaningful engagement of communities with their public schools

- ☑ To create a single vision to change the education culture in our state

- ☑ To provide a rewarding educational experience for all of Georgia's students

- ☑ To ensure our students are competitive in a global economy

- ☑ To increase significantly the high school graduation rate

- ☑ To ensure appropriate curricula for a new generation of learners

- ☑ To make learning more rigorous, more relevant, and more real

- ☑ To be more responsive to students' individual needs

Early Learning and Student Success

"The first five years of life are critical to a child's lifelong development. Young children's earliest experiences and environments set the stage for future development and success in school and life."

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

• Responsibility for children's readiness lies not with the children, but with the adults who care for them and the systems that support them.

• Child development occurs across equally important and interrelated domains - physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language development, and cognition and general knowledge

• The family plays the most important role in a young child's life.

• The first five years of life are a critical development period.
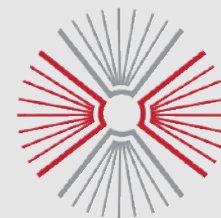
IMMEDIATE STEPS

• Create early learning partnerships in every county in the state.

• Create public/private partnerships in local communities.

• Develop a statewide awareness and engagement initiative on early learning.

Characteristics of School Readiness

Children's readiness for school encompasses their

• curiosity and enthusiasm for learning,

• physical and mental health status,

• ability to communicate effectively,

• capacity to regulate emotions,

• ability to adjust to the kindergarten classroom environment, and

• ability to cooperate with their teachers and peers

LONG RANGE STEPS

• Provide opportunities for all children ages 0-5 to participate in high quality learning experiences.

• Align developmental and academic standards for children ages birth through age 8

• Provide adequate funding to support programs for young children.

Teaching and Learning

"The future of education in Georgia will demand curricula, assessments, and instruction that reflect advances in technology, the exponential growth of knowledge, and the type of student that has emerged from a culture of instant gratification and constant stimulation."

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

• High levels of learning are attainable for all students.

• People learn differently and at different rates.

• Motivated and engaged learners derive more from their learning than do passive learners.

• Students are more successful when they have a measure of ownership in their learning.

• High quality, job-embedded professional development for teachers and leaders supports the teaching-learning process.

• The quality of teaching and leadership makes a significant impact on student learning.

• A strong curriculum is broad, balanced, continually improved, rooted in the real world, and based on a common set of learning expectations.

• A system of balanced assessments is an integral component of effective teaching.

• Clear, high, and attainable learning expectations are essential for student success.

• The integration of technology into educational practices is essential for student engagement.

"There are no silver bullets when it comes to good teaching, only thoughtful decisions and hard work."

IMMEDIATE STEPS

• Ensure that teachers have the opportunity to work and plan together, implement best practices, and are provided support for their on-going learning.

• Ensure that teachers use a variety of technologies to teach and measure what students know and can do.

• Ensure that teachers teach challenging lessons that are flexible enough to meet individual needs and interests.

• Ensure that teachers use varied measures to determine what students know and can do.

LONG RANGE STEPS

• Promote continuous improvement in curricula, instruction and assessment for all Georgia's students.

Human and Organizational Capital
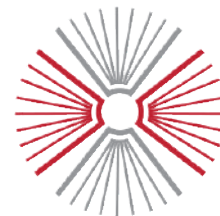
"No matter how modern the facility, how savvy the technology, or how abundant the teaching supplies, the expertise of the teachers and leaders has the greatest impact on the quality and extent of student learning."

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

• Effective teaching enhances student learning.

• Selection and preparation of teacher candidates and ongoing support of teachers affect the quality of teaching.

• Compensation is an essential element in recruiting high-quality teachers.

• Effective feedback and support through ongoing performance evaluation are essential to retaining high-quality teachers.

• Motivation is a major determinant of performance.

• Organizational structures and processes at the school and district levels affect learning.

IMMEDIATE STEPS

• Identify and recruit the most talented candidates into teacher preparation programs.

• Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs.

• Collaborate with Colleges of Education, the PSC and the GA DOE to develop comprehensive strategies to find, grow and keep the most talented educators.

• Evaluate the effectiveness of pilot and established teacher and leader compensation programs.

• Organize personnel, distribute leadership and implement processes that maximize student learning.

LONG RANGE STEPS

• Provide college scholarships for talented teacher candidates in exchange for commitment to teach in high need public schools.

• Develop comprehensive, equitable educator evaluation processes.

Governance, Leadership and Accountability

"At each of the levels – federal, state, and local – various governing entities have the authority to enhance educational programs that schools and school districts provide, or they can create conditions that preclude the delivery of an adequate education to every child."

FEDERAL

STATE

LOCAL

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

• Effective educational governance requires a strategic vision.

• Children and society benefit from effective educational governance.

• Public education is an essential factor in a democratic society, in quality of life and in economic development.

• Good governance requires effective leaders operating with integrity, ethical behavior, and good intent.

• People are accountable for their actions and outcomes.

• Relevant and accurate information is essential for good decisions.

IMMEDIATE STEPS

• Develop and implement at the local school district level an accountability system (i.e., a strategic plan) based on local district educational goals that are aligned with state educational goals and state accountability system, and which include clearly defined measures of school district, school and student success.

• Change and streamline the process by which local school districts obtain flexibility from state mandates so it is based on school and district performance expectations outlined in the district's strategic improvement plan and takes into account the needs, resources, and characteristics of the local community.

• Establish and maintain high performance organizations through development of local school district governance and leadership teams.

LONG RANGE STEPS

• Pursue all local and state options to provide for the equitable, effective and efficient delivery of instruction to all students in Georgia regardless of where they reside.

• Streamline and align the agencies with jurisdiction over components of the education enterprise and to whom local school districts of the state must answer.

• Provide for the appointment of the state superintendent of schools by an elected state board of education, which would be elected by congressional district in a non-partisan election.

• Provide for non-partisan election of all local board of education members.

Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy

"All organizations have a culture and a climate. A proactive approach to making them both as positive as possible will provide Georgia's educational system the greatest opportunity to achieve a high level of organizational efficacy."

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

• Safety, order, and respect are necessary conditions for teaching and learning to occur.

• Highly reliable organizations are consistent in holding high expectations for all members.

• Trust, collegiality, and teamwork strengthen collective efforts.

• Organizational culture is an important determinant of climate and is a distinguishing factor between effective and ineffective schools and districts.

• Effective leadership is crucial to creating organizational climates that are conducive to learning.

• A healthy culture is devoid of blame and fosters engagement of all stakeholders in finding solutions to challenges.

• Organizational change and improvement occur only when individuals within organizations make needed changes.

• Innovation and purposeful change in organizations are necessary to achieve sustainable competitiveness.

• High-performing organizations recognize, appreciate, and address cultural differences; strength can be derived from the rich diversity of our public schools.

IMMEDIATE STEPS

• Develop safe, orderly, supportive learning environments built on respect and encouragement where all individuals believe they can make a positive difference.

• Make each school and school system an inviting place to be for students, parents, staff and the larger community.

• Determine stakeholder perceptions of schools and school districts.

• Develop school and district cultures that are sensitive and responsive to the cultural, racial, ethnic and socio-economic make-up of the communities they serve.

• Get to know and be willing to truly listen to the students in our schools.

"While the work of all schools and school districts is very similar, most have a sense that certain characteristics and traits make their schools and school districts unique, or at least different, from others."

LONG RANGE STEPS

• Establish each school as the center or hub of the community in which it exists.

• Develop a culture and climate that foster innovation and responsible risk-taking.

Teaching and Learning Resources

Guiding Principles

• Learning is a function of accessibility to information and the ability to make judgments about the quality of information.

• Learning is enhanced when the learning environment is flexible and adaptable.

• Technology enhances engagement in the learning process.

• Relevant and accurate information is essential for good decisions.

• People need a combination of real and virtual places for learning and sharing.

Immediate Steps

• Evaluate and utilize the most effective instructional models and learning supports (i.e. digital, blended, competency, virtual, etc.) implemented by school districts.

• Ensure full integration of current technology and training into the classroom.

• Continue to develop and maintain a comprehensive data system for monitoring student progress (Pre-K–12) and making decisions to improve educational practice.

Long Range Steps

• Develop partnerships with business, industries, public agencies and the community to promote shared use of services and facilities.

Financial Resources

Guiding Principles

• An appropriate system for financing public education is one that ensures equitable access to a high-quality public education for all children.

• Citizen commitment to support taxation for public schools is enhanced when citizens embrace public education as an essential factor in economic development, a democratic society, and quality of life, and are convinced that financial resources are being spent wisely.

• Ongoing evaluation of expenditure effectiveness increases the likelihood of securing public support for taxation.

• A fair, balanced, and equitable tax structure has the potential of generating sufficient revenue to ensure adequate educational funding.

• Expenditures for high-quality educational programs pay dividends by enhancing the well-being of communities and the state.

• The best funding mechanism is one that is based on a well-crafted strategic plan for maximizing student learning.

Immediate Steps

• Convene a commission to develop a new funding formula for public education that will provide the most optimal partnership between the state and local school districts in sharing the responsibility for financial support of public education, while ensuring that disparity in local fiscal capacity does not impede the implementation of The Georgia Vision Project recommendations in all Georgia districts.

• Identify in both state and local school district budgets sufficient fiscal resources for implementing both a comprehensive data system and an evaluation system that uses data to measure and improve effectiveness in meeting objectives for enhanced student learning.

• Initiate an ongoing process at the local school district level for systematically evaluating all expenditures to enable the development and adoption of budgets that are focused on district strategies for maximizing student learning.

• Provide a high level of flexibility to local school districts in decision-making authority about the most effective strategies for the expenditure of funds to enable all students to be successful in school, coupled with appropriate methods for evaluating school and district success and for implementing positive state interventions where they are found to be needed.

Long Range Steps

• Comprehensively review the state tax structure and identify ways that it can be strengthened to provide stable and sustainable funding for public education.

• Implement a cohesive and stable mechanism for the financial support of early learning programs and services for children ages 0 to 5 at a level that prepares all of Georgia's youngest citizens for success in their subsequent school years.

• Provide an ongoing level of state financial support for public education which, when combined with local revenue available to boards of education, makes the attainment of our vision for public education in Georgia a reality.

The Georgia VISION PROJECT
for Public Education

The Time is Now

The work is important, transformational, and urgent. The time for communicating a clear, compelling and collective vision for our public schools is NOW. Our students deserve no less.

Learn Go to **gavisionproject.org** to learn more about the work of The Georgia Vision Project.

Discuss Use The Vision Project's key issues, guiding principles, promising practices and recommendations as a framework for community engagement and staff professional development. Share your successes with your community and your elected public officials.

Act Align local strategic improvement plans at district and school levels with The Vision Project recommendations. Develop a local vision for public education that is aligned with The Georgia Vision Project framework. Use The Georgia Vision Project's *Spark* marketing campaign toolkit to promote your successes in your schools.

The Georgia School Boards Association and the Georgia School Superintendents Association formed a venture to create a comprehensive and coherent vision for public education in Georgia. Since that time over 50 organizations and businesses have joined them to communicate and promote that vision. This document provides a brief overview of the Vision and summaries of the guiding principles and recommendations within seven critical educational system components.

gavisionproject.org