

BOARD OF EDUCATION

2025-26
STATE LEGISLATIVE
PRIORITIES



Our Guilford County community has highlighted the following focus areas to guide our work – accelerate learning; recruit, retain and reward top talent, strengthen health, wellness and safety in schools; and prepare students for the world. Therefore, in alignment with our students’ needs and our community’s voices, the Guilford County Board of Education advocates for the following legislative actions:

Accelerate Learning



- **Provide \$5 million in the 2026-2028 biennium budget to sustain a high-dosage tutoring program at scale.** Using time-limited federal relief funds, GCS tutored 11,641 students for a total of 161,599 hours in over 305,000 sessions during the 2022-23 school year. In the 2023-24 school year, 17,348 students were tutored for a total of 250,493 sessions and over 486,000 hours of tutoring.
- **Provide \$3.3 million in the 2023-2025 biennium budget to sustain learning hubs for high school students and expand them to all middle schools.** Using time-limited federal relief funds, GCS created learning hubs to address learning loss. During the 2022-23 school year, 7,817 students attended a learning hub (a 33% increase). During the 2023-24 school year, the learning hubs expanded to include two middle schools. Simultaneously, the number of students was scaled back due to the sunset of ESSER funding, with a total of 5,580 students attending a learning hub (a 29% decline). For the third year in a row in 2023-24, high school students who attended learning hubs graduated at a higher rate (96.7% vs. 89.4%) than those who did not attend the learning hubs. Additionally, and also for the third year in a row, students attending learning hubs more frequently saw significantly higher average daily attendance in school.
- **Increase the number of Pre-K seats** available to serve all three and four-year-olds, addressing the current waitlist of 577 students.
- **Assist school districts in reducing the wait time** by identifying two to five-year-old children suspected of having a disability by allotting additional staff and space to meet with families in a more efficient and timely manner. Extend the continuum of services for these students, once identified, to include more seats in Pre-K classes, specialized separate class settings, and part-time Pre-K programming.

- **Count NC Pre-K students for Average Daily Membership (ADM) purposes.** Funding allocations are based on ADM, the average number of students present on a typical school day. The GCS expenditure for Pre-K students for FY 2024 ranged between \$10M-\$12M.
- **Provide local calendar flexibility to address pandemic-related learning loss, weather-related disruptions, and align semester completion with winter break,** enabling more effective assessment timing, reducing learning gaps, and maximizing instructional continuity throughout the academic year. This will allow districts to synchronize high school and community college semester schedules to support dual-enrollment students, eliminating the burden of managing misaligned academic calendars and preventing situations where weather-related school closures force students to miss critical end-of-semester examinations across institutions.

Recruit, Retain and Reward Top Talent



- **Provide a substantial increase in state-funded base pay for teachers** to reach the national average and help attract and retain teachers and address teacher shortages.
- **Invest in higher wages for classified staff** so the district can support frontline workers, including teacher assistants, custodians, treasurers, bus drivers, school nutrition staff, administrative staff, etc., as we work to meet state standards and increase student achievement at scale.
- **Provide funding for recruitment and retention bonuses** for teachers and staff, especially for hard-to-fill positions.
- **Include Guilford County in the State's Teacher Supplement Assistance Allotment** so GCS can continue to train the workforce needed.

Strengthen Health, Wellness & Safety in Schools



- **Increase allocations to match recommended ratios for school psychologists.** The recommended ratio by the National Association of School Psychologists is one school psychologist per 500 students. The GCS actual ratio is one school psychologist per 1,375 students.
- **Increase allocations to match recommended ratios for school social workers.** The recommended ratio by the National Association of Social Workers is one school social worker per 250 students. The GCS actual ratio is one school social worker per 754 students.
- **Increase allocations to match recommended ratios for school counselors.** The recommended ratio by the American School Counselor Association is one school counselor per 250 students. The GCS actual ratio is one school counselor per 305 students.
- **Support comprehensive school safety and security programming, including facility improvements, updated technology, and training.** Provide \$2 million to continue the lease for the use of Evolv security scanners at every school in Guilford County.
- **Provide adequate funding for school districts to fully transition from diesel school buses to electric school buses,** reducing exposure to harmful emissions like particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) for nearly 30,000 students and staff who ride a school bus in Guilford County.
- **Provide all students in Guilford County with school meals at no cost to their families.**

Prepare Students for the World



- **Provide all students who graduate from a North Carolina high school with an in-state tuition rate to attend two-year and four-year public higher education institutions** to equip students with skills that contribute to the economy. By providing affordable college access, these students are more likely to graduate and enter high demand fields to help address workforce shortages.
- Provide \$2.5 million for our career and technical education (CTE) programs/signature career academies (SCA) to expand enrollment from 550 to 2,500 high school students, purchase industry-standard equipment and technology, and provide career exploration opportunities for middle and elementary school students. Signature career academies are offered in the following areas, one academy of manufacturing and engineering, two academies of computer and information science, one academy of transportation, distribution, and logistics, and one academy of biomedical technology. The funding will support GCS opening a sixth Signature Career Academy (SCA) in Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering at Southeast Guilford High School, in partnership with Toyota and other major partners. Over \$2.2M dollars have been raised for this new SCA at Southeast High.

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