PRIORITIZE #1: Partner with K-12 public school districts by requiring any changes to the State’s education funding formula to fully restore “austerity budget cuts” or provide for the equivalent in new state revenue ... thereby empowering local School Boards to: address continued student population growth in Georgia; maintain a 180-day school calendar for students; reduce class sizes to State-funded maximums; and, replenish annual reserve fund balances. Locally-earned Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula funding was fully provided to local school districts by the Georgia General Assembly for 15 years with initial funding beginning in 1986-87 and continuing thereafter until 2002.

CCSD FACTS: Since 2002, $205.2M ($3.9M this year and $84M over the past five years) of statutorily-required QBE formula funding earned by CCSD has gone unfunded through austerity budget cuts ... all during a time when CCSD student enrollment increased by more than 53% (14,527 students).

PRIORITIZE #2: Partner with K-12 public school districts and their employees by addressing cost-prohibitive premiums and out-of-pocket expenses for participation in the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) ... thereby empowering local School Boards to provide competitive, affordable and responsible health and benefit packages to their employees. Develop a statewide strategy for State Health Benefit Plan cost containment ... rather than continuing to pass annual premium increases along to local school districts and their employees. State-level policy planning and budgeting, and the appropriation of necessary funding in this regard, are critically needed to address immediate and future healthcare needs of educators, non-certified staff and educational system retirees.

• Between FY2008 and FY2017, State appropriations for non-certified health insurance premiums have been systemically reduced and are slated for total elimination. Non-certified employees most often represent local school district’s’ lowest wage-earners and have been the most negatively impacted by the State’s recent actions in this regard.
• SHBP is currently projected to operate with an annual deficit of more than $55 Million in FY 2018, signifying probable continued premium increases under current policy and planning.
• Extraordinary employee health care costs (in the form of significantly higher premiums and out-of-pocket expenses for deductibles, annual maximums, reduced credits and co-insurance expenses) continue to erode the quality and competitiveness of the overall compensation package developed by local school districts for its employees.

CCSD FACTS: While CCSD had approximately 350 fewer non-certified employees participating in SHBP in FY2016 compared to FY2009, employer contributions increased over $7M (from $3.6 to $10.7M) during that same time period.

CCSD has been forced to privatize custodial and grounds services and increase the use of part-time/temporary workers for non-certified staffing as cost-reduction measures. The annual cost of providing health insurance for a non-certified employee has risen from $2,000 in 2010 to $9,000 in 2016 ... a $7,000, or 450% increase! And with an additional $100 per employee per month increase effective Jan 2017, the cost of providing health insurance for a non-certified employee will increase to $846.20 per month and more than $10,000 per year.

CCSD benefit costs for non-certified employees are projected to be $11.7M for 2016-17; up from $10.7M in 2015-16; $8.2M in 2014-15 and $7.5M in 2013-14. Local school systems cannot continue to absorb these extraordinary costs.
PRIORITY #3: Partner with K-12 public school districts by ensuring proposed legislative initiatives strengthen provisions for the local control and management of schools . . . thereby empowering local School Boards to fulfill their Constitutional authority and responsibility to involve their local constituency, develop locally-derived educational policy and oversee continued performance improvements among their students.

CCSD FACTS: CCSD and its highly-respected School Board has garnered multiple State and National awards relative to student achievement gains and innovative educational programs. Through a model of determining a visionary Mission Statement, a prioritized listing of Major System Priorities and collaborative, governance-based policies, the CCSD School Board has a transparent and proven ability to guide its schools in exemplary teaching and learning.

PRIORITY #4: Partner with K-12 public school districts by developing statutory provisions to further insure workforce readiness skills and preparation by high school graduates for transitions directly into careers or secondary-level career educational opportunities by providing students in Georgia with an alternative diploma option in the area of Technical/Career Preparation.

PRIORITY #5: Partner with K-12 public school districts by implementing statutory provisions designed to address continued erosion of the State’s tax base through exemptions from the sales and use tax, income tax and other State taxes.

PRIORITY #6: Partner with K-12 public school districts by opposing the continuation and/or expansion of existing programs that directly or indirectly use public funds to pay private school tuition for students or provide tax incentives for their parents.

PRIORITY #7: Partner with K-12 public school districts by insuring timely, state and local access to all federal funding allocations.

CHEROKEE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Kyla Cromer, Chair  
Patsy Jordan, Vice Chair  
Mike Chapman  
John Harmon  
Clark Menard  
Kelly Poole  
Robert Rechsteiner

Dr. Brian V. Hightower  
Superintendent of Schools

Cherokee County School District  
PO Box 769  
Canton, GA 30169  
770.479.1871  
http://cherokeek12.net/

2017 CHEROKEE COUNTY LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

State Representative, District 20  
Michael Caldwell  
3044 Lexington Avenue  
Woodstock, GA 30189  
michael@caldwellforhouse.com

State Representative, District 46  
John Carson  
3605 Sandy Plains Rd Suite 240-123  
Marietta, GA 30006  
john.carson@house.ga.gov

State Representative, District 21  
Scot Turner  
508 Blue Ridge Terrace  
Canton, GA 30114  
scot.turner@house.ga.gov

State Representative, District 21  
Bruce Thompson  
25 Hawks Branch Lane  
White, GA 30184  
brucethompsonforsenate@gmail.com

State Representative, District 22  
Wes Cantrell  
1044 Meadow Brook Drive  
Woodstock, GA 30188  
wes@cantrellforhouse.com

State Senator, District 21  
Brandon Beach  
303-B Coverdell Legis. Office Bldg  
Atlanta, GA 30334  
Brandon@beachforsenate.com

State Representative, District 23  
Mandi Ballinger  
P.O. Box 5123  
Canton, GA 30114  
mandiballinger23@gmail.com

State Senator, District 56  
John Albers  
530 Junction Pt  
Roswell, GA 30075-3007  
john@votealbers.com