

Georgia School Boards Association

2023-2024 Legislative Priorities

School Safety Funding

Safety for our students and employees is a continuous effort, but there is no annual categorical grant for the state to partner in these expenses. There are costs to maintain security systems; update them as needed; provide the statutorily required training for school administrators, teachers, and support staff including custodians and bus drivers on school violence prevention, school security, school threat assessment, mental health awareness, and school emergency planning best practices; and meet new challenges as they occur. GSBA encourages the Governor and General Assembly to establish an annual categorical grant for school safety.

Updating Transportation Funding

There has been a growing gap between state funding for pupil transportation and the actual costs for doing so. GSBA urges the Governor and General Assembly to review the transportation formula, update it as needed, and to fund it. In FY '21, school districts reported \$916,181,775 in expenditures for transportation. The state provided \$176,516,490 leaving a gap of over \$740 million dollars. Please note the state also provided \$52 million in bonds for school buses but that expenditure is reported in the capital budget which is separate from the figures above.

Expansion of Publicly Funded Private School Options

GSBA opposes the creation of any new program or any expansion of existing programs that directly or indirectly use public funds to pay private school tuition for students. GSBA urges the General Assembly to include accountability measures in all programs sending public funds to private entities including financial and policy transparency, performance evaluation measures, and consequences for poor performance.

Constitutional Authority of School Boards

GSBA urges the General Assembly to align legislative initiatives with state constitutional provisions regarding the control, management, and funding of public schools.