

Demond Means, Ed.D.
Superintendent



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

February 1, 2018

Dear State Representative,

The Clarke County School District Board of Education and I would like to thank you for your service to the citizens of the great state of Georgia. The role of a state representative is increasingly difficult. The development of a state budget is an arduous task due to the demands of various interest groups, limited revenue and state level infrastructure commitments. We are appreciative of both your efforts and thoughtful consideration of all stakeholders.

Recently, the Board of Education voted unanimously to endorse the enclosed 2018 legislative agenda. The agenda also represents concerns and issues I have as the chief executive charged with ensuring an equitable and quality educational experience for every student in the district. Your ability to address a portion of this agenda will enrich the educational experience for students in our school district and across the state. The issues are listed in order of priority for our school district.

At the core of our concerns is ensuring that the Quality Basic Education funding formula reflects the necessary inflationary index to educate children in today's environment. Now more than ever, there is a pressing need to close the structural deficit created annually when the state legislature does not account for an inflationary index. At a minimum, the district calls on the legislature to close the funding gap that resulted from the austerity cuts imposed several years ago.

The Clarke County School District strongly advocates for the funding of a universal pre-kindergarten program in Georgia. Research shows that a proactive strategy to close the academic achievement gap is to provide all students with a high-quality pre-kindergarten experience.

Thank you for your consideration and review of the legislative agenda. Please know that we stand enthusiastically prepared to collaborate with all legislators toward the development of legislation that will make the educational process more equitable for the children of Georgia.

Sincerely,

Dr. Demond A. Means
Superintendent of Schools
Clarke County School District

CC: Clarke County School District Board of Education
Clarke County Legislative Delegation
House Education Committee
Senate Education Committee

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**Clarke County School District
Resolution on the 2018 Legislative Agenda**

The Clarke County School District Board of Education adopted the following as its legislative priorities for the 2018 State Legislative Agenda:

I. Fully Fund the Q.B.E.

Adjust school district state funding to reflect the inflationary nature of educating children. This would include restoring what was lost by recent austerity cuts, indexing the QBE formula for inflation, and specifically addressing the financial costs of teaching students who have been historically marginalized. It would also include ending the funding of private schools with tax credits.

II. Pre-Kindergarten for All

Establish universal pre-kindergarten through a consistent, non-lottery state funding source for all children.

III. Promote Teacher Retention

Encourage legislation that will address the recruitment and retention of teachers. This would include an improved financial compensation package, a greater focus on beginning teacher mentoring, the preservation of teacher planning during the school day, an emphasis on smaller class sizes, greater resources for professional development, and loan forgiveness for those who choose to teach historically marginalized students.

IV. Support Economically Disadvantaged Communities

Reduce the student-teacher ratio in economically challenged school systems.

V. Expand the HOPE Scholarship

Expand the HOPE Scholarship to support historically marginalized students upon their admission into college, consistent with its original purpose.

VI. Generate More School-to-Career Pathways

Increase funding for Career, Technical and Agricultural Education in support of developing a stronger economic infrastructure in the state of Georgia.

VII. Liberty and Educational Opportunities for All Americans

Support the removal of barriers for immigrant children who were raised in Georgia and are seeking a post-secondary education. This would include removing the ban against these students entering the state's top-tier post-secondary institutions and eliminating the requirement that they pay out-of-state tuition.