

# 2022 PAGE Legislative Priorities



*Legislators and educators should work together to support Georgia's 1.7 million public school students and the teachers and other school personnel who serve them. Ongoing discussions and collaboration to identify shared concerns and develop thoughtful responses that address student, parent, educator, and community needs will enhance the critical services already provided by public schools.*

## **Boost Student Success in Georgia Public Schools**

*Provide strategic investments that address students' core academic needs:*

- Ensure every student has access to high-quality instruction in every setting by investing in technology and connectivity.
- Minimize learning disruptions by allowing retired educators to return to the classroom full-time and increase state funding for substitute teachers to attract high-quality candidates.
- Provide funds for public schools' core operations by eliminating the \$383 million austerity cut in the Fiscal Year 2021 budget.
- Strengthen the workforce competitiveness of the education sector by fulfilling the \$2,000 pay raise promised to Georgia's eligible state-funded school employees.
- Support student and educator mental health by funding school counselors for all students.
- Prevent additional disruption for public school students and taxpayers by not expanding private school vouchers, and adding needed academic accountability and fiscal transparency to the state's existing two private school voucher programs.

## **Strengthen Georgia's Professional Educator Workforce**

*Support a strong professional educator workforce by bolstering recruitment and retention efforts for public schools:*

- Enable teachers to focus on delivering effective instruction by ensuring adequate paraprofessionals, bus drivers, school nutrition workers, social workers, and other core support staff are available to serve students.
- Help new teachers succeed and remain in the classroom by developing a system of supports and incentives including a comprehensive mentoring program.
- Encourage teachers to continue serving students in the classroom by maintaining robust legislative support for the Georgia Teachers Retirement System and recognize its potential to retain mid-career and late-career educators.