



SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
DR. MARK SCOTT

BOARD MEMBERS

FRED WILSON, VICE CHAIRMAN
HELEN HUGHES
DR. RICK UNRUH

DR. MARIANNE MELNICK, CHAIRMAN

SKIP DAWKINS
HOKE MORROW
BRYAN UPSHAW

HCBOE 2015 Legislative Priorities

1. Funding

Of all the issues that impact education, **funding** is the most critical. To maintain the quality of education our students deserve, cuts in state funding have to be absorbed by our reserves and overcome by reduced expenditures. Local funds are severely strained not only by state cuts, but also by increasing costs, placing an even greater burden on local taxpayers. For example, classified employees' benefits are paid entirely with local funds; since November 2010, healthcare premiums have skyrocketed and the Board's portion has increased 366 percent or \$5,202 per employee. Any additional state cuts will continue to further deplete reserves to precarious levels. The HCBOE requests that legislation that has a negative fiscal impact on public education not be supported.

2. Support for Public Education, Not Tax-Funded Vouchers

The HCBOE is opposed to vouchers, tuition tax credits, or scholarships which would divert K-12 public school funding to private schools or home study. Reallocating tax dollars into private schools would weaken - not improve - public education.

3. Support of Common Core Georgia Performance Standards

Please support Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS), which are rigorous standards for English language arts and mathematics for grades K-12. CCGPS provide consistent and clear goals to help students succeed in college and the workforce regardless of where they live in the U.S, which is especially important for our military and other mobile families. Our district has developed curriculum and resources in support of the CCGPS and wants the opportunity to continue implementing these standards without facing yet another change in standards. Please give CCGPS a chance to succeed.

4. Local Control and Flexibility

Our Board supports the continuation of local control and flexibility versus allowing the state to control educational programs through targeted funding allocations and rules. Arbitrary rules on expenditures inhibit best practices in budgeting based on student achievement needs. We urge the Georgia General Assembly to resist attempts to pass statutes that limit the constitutional authority of school boards.

5. Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) Education

Our schools are infusing Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) into our classrooms. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the 10 fastest growing occupations are all STEM careers, and 65% of students in today's classrooms will work in jobs that are not yet created! Home to Robins Air Force Base, we are proud to partner with Robins to grow our own future engineers and computer scientists. On a global scale, the U.S. must nurture and provide STEM professionals to strengthen our competitive edge and to fuel our own economy. Please advocate for STEM education at every opportunity.

Support of these important issues would be greatly appreciated. By working together, we can achieve a common goal of making Georgia's public schools the best possible. Thank you for considering these concerns.