

A Roadmap to *Reimagining*

K-12 Education

Developed by the
Georgia Department of Education



GaDOE.org/ReimagineK12



Forging a *New Vision*

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Georgia's students, families, and educators have risen to meet this unprecedented moment.

Millions of meals have been prepared and delivered. Millions of lessons have been taught virtually. Millions of phone calls, texts, and FaceTimes have occurred. Millions of extra hours have been logged, and millions of small gestures of dedication, sacrifice, and compassion continue to add up to show the best of who we are as Georgians.

Overnight, Georgia's public schools transformed longstanding educational structures, forever changing how we prepare and deliver school meals, how we conduct bus routes, how we ensure the safety of our students in and out of school buildings, how we implement and leverage technology, how we counsel and console our students, and how we engage with our communities. In these uncertain times, one thing has been certain: educators' unwavering commitment to meeting the needs of Georgia's 1.7 million students.

Of course, we are all eager to go back to "normal" -- to return to a time when handshakes and hugs fill our hallways and classrooms.

But there is a "normal" that we should not and cannot go back to -- a "normal" of data points determining destiny, scores oversimplifying a student's worth, and blame and shame serving as the drivers of education reform. It's my hope that our collective efforts to choose compassion

over compliance during this pandemic have underscored for all of us what is truly important.

We cannot return to the status quo of over-testing and hyper-accountability. We must reimagine what our education system can and must become. Building on a moment that showed the best of who we are as Georgians, and on the work of the past several years, now is the time to cast a clear vision of what our education system can be -- and how our children's futures can unfold.



*State Superintendent
Richard Woods*

This document lays out that vision, outlining our goals for the years and months ahead. We will work to ensure access to a well-rounded education for every child, create multiple diploma pathways, continue the reduction of high-stakes testing, develop an accountability system that lifts up -- rather than labels -- our schools, modernize the state's K-12 funding formula, and much more.

These are not small tasks -- but our students deserve nothing less than our full efforts. I hope you will join us in reimagining the future of Georgia's public schools.

Richard Woods



1

Ensure access to a well-rounded education for every child in every part of our state.



- A.** Set the expectation that every child in every part of the state has access to a well-rounded education – CTAE classes, computer science, fine arts, world language, physical education, gifted education, recess and play, STEM/STEAM, and Georgia-grown school meals.
- B.** Protect opportunities for a well-rounded education despite budgetary challenges.
- C.** Provide ‘opportunity grants’ for schools to support expanded opportunities and shore up non-academic supports.
- D.** Establish hubs within schools to coordinate nutritional, physical, mental, and community resources and services to support the whole child.

2

Adopt a student-level, rather than grade-level, approach to teaching and learning.

- A.** Move beyond standalone and stagnant academic standards.
- B.** Create learning progressions, identify competencies, and prioritize key concepts/skills for every content area.
- C.** Develop clear, personalized paths to proficiency that truly support mastery and meet students where they are, empowering them to control their own learning.
- D.** Eliminate grade-level barriers that prop up arbitrary achievement gaps and maintain the artificial ceiling on success.
- E.** Blend K-2 standards across disciplines to support foundational skills and concepts.

Match the *Passion,*
potential, and post-secondary
pursuits of every student.



3 Create multiple diploma pathways.

- A.** Support students whether they plan to attend a college or university, go straight into the workforce, or serve in the military.
- B.** Provide a tailored high school experience, with core and elective options to match the passion, potential, and postsecondary pursuits of every student.

4 Ensure every high school student graduates with a jumpstart on post-secondary success.

- A.** Ensure every student graduates having gained AP, IB, or dual enrollment credit or an industry credential; or having completed a pathway, AP, IB, or dual enrollment course, or Work-based Learning/apprenticeship experience.

5 Continue the reduction of high-stakes testing while enhancing formative tools.

- A.** Advocate for the amendment of federal law to adopt grade-band testing (testing only in 3rd, 5th, 8th, and once in high school – lowering the total number of federally required tests to less than a dozen) to provide consistent performance benchmarks.
- B.** Provide formative tools during the “off years” that are flexible, not high-stakes, and truly inform teaching and learning.
- C.** Give teachers more instructional time during “off years” to remediate or accelerate learning for all students.

6

Develop an accountability system that aligns to the unique priorities of local communities and lifts up our schools.

- A. Use a core set of indicators for all schools and districts.
- B. Provide a menu of unique metrics that school districts can adopt to meet the needs and priorities of their communities.
- C. Provide a dashboard of data and stories to showcase the challenges and opportunities of every school, instead of an oversimplified number or letter that is the sum total of a school's achievement.

7

Modernize the state's K-12 funding formula.

- A. Adjust level of funding with the rising costs of resources, supplies, and personnel.
- B. Enhance transportation funding.
- C. Recognize poverty.
- D. Protect funding for rural and low-wealth schools.
- E. Update to fund non-academic supports (i.e. school nurses, counselors, social workers, school psychologists, wraparound services, etc.) and Education Support Professionals (ESPs).

8

Define and provide access to a 21st century classroom for every teacher and student – whether it is at home or in the school building.

- A. Achieve statewide 1:1 device availability for all students and teachers.
- B. Recognize affordable high-speed internet access as a basic utility for all Georgia families.
- C. Increase bandwidth to schools, especially in rural areas.
- D. Recognize quality internet service as a basic utility with affordable access to all families and support 'last mile' connectivity efforts.
- E. Outfit classrooms and media centers using a new "21st century standard" of learning.
- F. Expand the allowable use of SPLOST funds to include instructional software, subscriptions, and other resources.
- G. Train teachers on technology tools and effective virtual instructional models.



- H. Provide high-quality, Georgia-aligned instructional resources that are interactive and interoperable across all learning platforms used by Georgia’s schools.
- I. Enhance access to real-time, actionable data to support teaching and learning.
- J. Deliver a statewide learning management system (LMS), professional learning communities (PLCs), personalized professional development, and mentor supports for new teachers.
- K. Develop a statewide “gig” teaching model that allows retired educators, non-traditional teachers, and classroom teachers to provide virtual mentoring, tutoring, and additional courses across the state.

9 Commit that flexibility should be a given, not granted.

- A. Give every school district maximum flexibility from state mandates, and build a system that ensures flexibility is used to elevate instructional quality, create new instructional models, foster innovation, and take strategic risks.
- B. Align state accountability systems seamlessly to federal accountability metrics.
- C. Evaluate flexibility waivers for school districts that do not meet federal accountability metrics.
- D. Align improvement efforts by consolidating performance contract terms/targets, action plans, needs assessments, and MOUs.

10 Reinvent the teacher evaluation system and elevate the teaching profession.

- A. Create a new model that values and elevates educators, instead of devaluing and labeling them.
- B. Provide clear, personalized paths with supports, expectations, and opportunities every step of the way for teachers to grow as professionals – from beginning teacher to teacher leader.
- C. Develop multiple pathways for those who have a calling to teach to enter the teaching profession and streamline certification requirements.
- D. Strengthen the teacher pipeline. Expand grow-your-own efforts and create a system that supports paraprofessionals becoming teachers and graduates coming back and teaching for their home district. Allow retired teachers to come back and teach in high-needs fields and areas.
- E. Give teachers a greater voice in policy decisions and discussions by appointing the Georgia Teacher of the Year as an ex-officio member of the State Board of Education.
- F. Continue to increase pay for teachers and protect benefits.



Create a new model that

Values and Elevates

our educators.





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Educating Georgia's Future