



## **Task Force Develops 2022 PAGE Legislative Priorities: Educators & PAGE Staff Advocate Using Member-Developed State Priorities**

Educators representing each of Georgia's 14 congressional districts, in addition to the PAGE Board of Directors, convene annually to develop PAGE's legislative priorities. Volunteer members of the PAGE Legislative Task Force serve two-year terms and work in a number of education roles in their respective communities. This group of policy and politically-minded educators tracks the work of the Georgia General Assembly throughout the year and shapes PAGE advocacy efforts by communicating student and educator concerns to PAGE staff, who draft the annual legislative priorities.

In September 2021, the Task Force convened in Atlanta. PAGE legislative staff provided Task Force members with an update on the state legislature and emerging state-level education policy issues under the purview of the legislative branch. Members identified top legislative issues impacting their school communities, and PAGE's 2022 legislative priorities began to take shape.

These educator-identified issues became the 2022 PAGE Legislative Priorities, which before becoming final, were provided to the entire PAGE membership for feedback. After member comment closed, the priorities were edited, finalized, and distributed to many groups: PAGE members, state legislators, executive branch staff, state agencies, education partners, and state media. PAGE legislative staff identified independent research and survey data supporting the PAGE priorities, and the team uses this supporting information and the Task-Force-developed 2022 Legislative Priorities to chart PAGE advocacy under the Gold Dome.

Educators across Georgia also share the PAGE priorities with their House and Senate members, advocating for policies which improve conditions for educators and students by pairing the PAGE priorities with personal reports underscoring how education policy challenges and proposed solutions impact local school communities.

The PAGE Legislative Task Force is essential to PAGE advocacy efforts. To inquire about serving on the PAGE Legislative Task Force, contact PAGE Legislative Affairs Specialist Josh Stephens at [jstephens@pageinc.org](mailto:jstephens@pageinc.org).



# 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.