

2018 Legislative Priorities



State and local bonds to address capital and infrastructure needs now and in the future

- A pending \$1.9B state bond bill (House Bill 866/Senate Bill 542) and ballot initiative will bring \$37M to Guilford County for immediate construction while we chart a long term investment plan for school facilities.
- The Joint Facilities and Boundary Study undertaken by the County Commissioners and the Board of Education will inform the strategic plan for facilities and the next local bond initiative.

Background: The General Assembly has typically passed a bond referendum for education about every 10 years, but this stopped about 20 years ago. Bond initiatives must be approved by the General Assembly and then are placed on a state-wide ballot to face voter approval. If passed in this year's short session, the bipartisan \$1.9B bond initiative will be on the state-wide ballot this November. The initiative will not cause any increase in taxes. Interest rates are low and the bond is within the debt capacity the state has already established. If not passed this year by the General Assembly, it is unlikely there would be an opportunity to pass one again until 2020 since there are no state-wide races in 2019.

What it means for Guilford County: A \$37M investment in our local schools will not only help provide the facilities students need but will also drive economic activity and provide jobs. Because our County Commissioners and Board of Education are already working on the framework for a longer term capital investment plan, the timing for this is right. The recent tornado provided a dramatic example of why investment in our school buildings matters.

To learn more go to: ncschoolbond.com

Take Immediate Action:

- Call, email or write a letter to your NC house representative and senator to encourage them to work to pass the bond bill in the short session so we can put the money to work in our community. Find your legislator by going to: www.ncleg.net/representation/whorepresentsme.aspx
- Talk to your friends, neighbors and co-workers and encourage them to also contact their legislator.
- Write an editorial and send it to the *News and Record*, *High Point Enterprise* and/or *Carolina Peacemaker*.



Targeted investments in Career and Technical Education to:

- develop a pilot P-TECH high school;
- implement new integrated career pathways at the high school level and;
- expand hands-on career exploration in middle schools.

Background: A major goal of the GCS Strategic Plan 2020, is increasing the number of students who complete career pathways. A priority strategy is to develop two Pathways in Technology (P-TECH) Early College High Schools. P-TECH schools map out the skills that employers most need and weave those skills into class curriculums and experiential learning. Students often earn an Associate's degree as well as a high school diploma, and graduate with the skills and knowledge needed to enter the workforce or continue on with their education. GCS is seeking a \$250,000-\$300,000 planning grant from the legislature to work with the chambers of commerce and the business community to map out a plan to implement pilot programs in two high schools in the 2019-2020 school year.

What it means for Guilford County: Job creation nationally is growing rapidly in STEM-related fields, cyber safety and security, advanced manufacturing and health care. Many of these jobs pay middle class wages, right out of high school or community college. Guilford County must provide a ready workforce if we want to thrive economically. Investing in CTE initiatives helps attract high-growth industries that spur strong, sustainable economic growth.

To learn more: <http://www.ptech.org/>

Take Action: We are coordinating outreach to our state legislative delegation and the county commissioners to discuss the planning grant. Stay tuned for updates and a call for broader action and advocacy. In the meantime, take time to learn more about how P-TECH high schools are making a difference in other communities.



Regulatory reform and flexibility to modernize for the 21st century

- Local leaders can develop solutions that work in our community when afforded the same regulatory relief and flexibility provided charter schools, home schoolers, and private schools.

Background: One-size-fits-all decisions often have unintended consequences. An example is the new principal pay plan enacted last year by the General Assembly that increased funding for principal pay, but linked rates of pay exclusively to the size of school a principal leads and academic growth scores. We must ensure the new state mandated principal pay scale works to build and attract great principals. Under the new plan, some experienced, high-performing principals faced dramatic pay cuts. They might be leading a smaller but high-performing school or they might be strategically working in a low-performing school with a goal to increase achievement over several years. Given this, legislators attached a “hold harmless” provision to the initiative that protected principals from pay cuts. The provision expires June 30th of this year. The legislature needs to extend the “hold harmless” provision for at least a year.

What it means for Guilford County: Leadership matters. Principals are front line executives making hundreds of critical decisions each day. Without the “hold harmless” provision, we will lose experienced, effective principals to neighboring states. We can’t afford that kind of talent drain. Extending the “hold harmless” provision is smart and practical.

To learn more: <https://www.ncforum.org/concerns-voiced-about-general-assemblys-new-principal-pay-plan/>

Take immediate action:

- Call, email or write your legislator and ask them to work to extend the “hold harmless” provision with regard to principal pay. To identify your legislator, go to <https://www.ncleg.net/representation/whorepresentsme.aspx>
- Talk to your friends, neighbors and co-workers and encourage them to also contact their legislator.
- Write a letter to the editor and submit it to the *News and Record*, *High Point Enterprise* and/or *Carolina Peacemaker*.



Robust state and county investments in GCS operations to achieve strategic goals:

Increase: Reading Achievement Math Achievement Career Pathway Completion
Operational Efficiency Schools Exceeding Academic Growth Goals

Decrease: Achievement Gap

Background: The 2018-2019 budget proposal to the County Commissioners requests:

- **\$209,663,821 in Operating** (a \$10.5 million increase in funding over this current year)
- **\$14,400,000 in Capital** (a \$7.5 million increase over this current year).
- The proposal, with its \$10.5M requested increase, actually covers more than \$17M in new strategic investments on the operating side, but GCS has identified \$6.5M in savings and cuts to offset some of those new investments.
 - Savings include cuts in central office positions and eliminating several extended day and year programs.
- The proposal includes \$9.1M in salary and benefits cost increases to locally funded teachers which includes:
 - funds required by law to pay locally funded teachers at the same rate the state pays;
 - mandated standard increases in health insurance and projected retirement benefits;
 - \$3.1M to increase the local supplement we pay educators on top of the state rate to stay competitive.
 - Currently, Guilford County is ranked 9th in NC on local supplements, behind Wake County, Chapel Hill, Charlotte-Meck, Durham, Orange, Buncombe, Chatham and Johnston Counties.
- The budget includes \$3.4 M to invest in turning around our 10 lowest performing schools, providing incentives and bonuses to educators and principals that achieve ambitious academic growth goals.
- The budget includes \$4.9M to ensure schools are more secure by addressing door maintenance and upfits, electronic access control, and alarms and buzzer systems. It also includes \$500K in equipment and systems for a crisis command center.

What it means to Guilford County: Funding for our schools and economic development are inextricably linked. The National Bureau of Economic Research found that if all students in the US could achieve basic mastery as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the US GDP would increase by \$32 trillion or 14.6%. Research has also shown that communities with high-performing schools have higher levels of economic growth and development, lower rates of incarceration and better health. Businesses are attracted to locales that have highly-rated schools and well-educated, well-trained workforces.

The 2018-2019 budget proposed by Guilford County Schools recommends practical, sustainable approaches to address pressing challenges. It reflects the work that district leaders have done to make tough but appropriate choices that are crucial to ensuring students are prepared and that we are making the most of public resources. The County has made significant increased investments in public schools over the last several years. It is time to accelerate further investment in our public schools and continue to work together to ensure strong economic growth and prosperity for Guilford County.

- **To learn more:** <https://www.gcsnc.com/Page/45326>
- **Take immediate action:**
 - Call, email or write your county commissioner to encourage support for the budget. To find out the name of your county commissioner go to: <http://www.myguilford.com/boc/find-your-commissioner/>
 - Attend the Guilford County Commissioner public hearing on the budget on June 7th as a show of support.
 - Attend the June 21st County Commissioner meeting where they will vote on the budget.
 - Talk to your friends, neighbors and co-workers and encourage them to also contact their commissioner and to join you at the meetings.
 - Write an editorial in support and submit it to the *News and Record*, *High Point Enterprise* and/or the *Carolina Peacemaker*.

