



Supportive Learning Environments

The Big Bet for 2033

Supporting whole-child and whole-community approaches that ensure students, educators, and families feel safe, healthy, engaged, supported, and challenged.

Why This Big Bet?

To thrive as learners, students must feel safe in school and empowered in their learning environment, and they must believe that adults in the school building care about their success. While state systems could reinforce effective strategies, the primary challenge is creating a climate that propels student success. A conducive climate requires culture change and a focus on cultivating leadership — in schools, in communities, and among students.

Benefits of Culture Change

- **Reinforcing two norms:** the state’s whole-child strategy emphasizes high instructional expectations for all students and safe and supportive learning environments for students and teachers.
- **Focus on non-academic factors:** the whole-child/whole-school approach raises awareness about the working conditions and non-academic obstacles that stymie student and educator success.
- **Empowerment:** the whole-child strategy also promotes deeper engagement between all school stakeholders to improve culture and climate. However, before meaningful engagement can take place, school leaders need to empower students, educators, parents, and community leaders by redefining their roles in achieving success.

Power Strategies State Leaders Should Prioritize

<i>Safe and Healthy</i>	<i>Engaged</i>	<i>Supported and Challenged</i>
Promotion of local school culture and climate initiatives that address the physical, academic, social, and emotional needs of school stakeholders.	Developing and implementing strategies that enable students and educators greater input and agency over the learning process.	Creation of a state framework that expands access to and assures quality of afterschool and summer learning opportunities.
Ensuring expanded access to wraparound supports delivered within schools and by referral to community partners.		Committing to increased access to early college and work-based learning opportunities for all students.

How Can State Leaders Get Involved

The EdQuest Georgia Coalition recommends:

- The Georgia Department of Education provide guidance on how to blend federal and local funds to create and expand wraparound services.
- GaDOE and the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency revise Georgia's School Safety Plan Template so that district leaders narrate how efforts related to positive behavioral interventions and supports, school climate initiatives, and expanded mental health services serve as preventative school safety strategies.
- The General Assembly study the feasibility of funding wraparound services and afterschool and summer learning opportunities within the existing K-12 finance system.

Three Ways Practitioners Can Support the Big Bet

Learn from Current Initiatives

State and community advocates should use the research findings and lessons learned from the Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time (BOOST) grant and school-based health center programs to propose a framework of technical assistance and support for local providers, especially after one-time federal funds lapse.

Support the Design, Execution, and Evaluation of Local Strategies

The pandemic illustrated the need for school and communities to provide wraparound services, especially for vulnerable populations – unhoused children, foster youth, and children living in poverty. While state and federal programs support these students, district and community leaders would benefit from technical assistance related to designing, executing, and funding collaborative initiatives. State agencies tasked with delivering education, public health, and social services should offer unified and targeted technical support.

Raise Visibility of Opportunities Resulting from the Georgia Mental Health Parity Act

State and community advocates should develop a statewide communications campaign to inform school and district leaders about how the Georgia Mental Health Parity Act (HB 1013) supports a unified school and community response to delivering physical and mental health services to students.

