



# Adequate and Equitable Funding

## The Big Bet for 2033

Creating and funding a Birth-to-Work Funding Blueprint that closes opportunity and resource gaps and prepares all Georgians for kindergarten, high school, and post-secondary and workforce options.

## Why This Big Bet?

The Blueprint would identify the supports, policy changes, and investments needed to increase educational excellence, accelerate opportunity, and secure Georgia’s economic future. The framework would provide greater assurances that students can reach their full potential, regardless of the non-academic factors that stifle their success.

## Benefits of a Comprehensive Funding Blueprint

- **Coherence:** The statewide finance model would increase the continuity of services by focusing on student and community needs, rather than the funding source.
- **Alignment:** The blueprint would ensure that leaders are accountable to fostering greater alignment between funding priorities and community and workforce needs. If misalignment exists, then leaders should adjust investments and strategies to meet needs.
- **Outcomes-focused:** The reasoning for implementing a funding blueprint is to increase educational success and economic well-being. To that end, a comprehensive framework promotes systems and structures that support these goals.

## Power Strategies State Leaders Should Prioritize

Early Care and Learning	PreK-12 Education	Post-Secondary Education
<p>Allocation of new resources to provide high-quality school readiness programs for infants and toddlers.</p>	<p>Revision of the Quality Basic Education formula to address the effects of poverty on educational outcomes and emerging district needs, such as transportation, counseling, school safety, and physical and mental health supports.</p>	<p>Redesign of financial aid strategies to ensure programs are student-centered, goal-driven, timely and flexible, and available to all students, regardless of the chosen post-secondary pathway.</p> <p>Reform post-secondary institutional finance models to ensure programs and strategies align with student, community, and workforce needs.</p>

## How Can State Leaders Get Involved

### The EdQuest Georgia Coalition recommends:

- State agency leaders develop a statewide framework that describes the state investments necessary to create a comprehensive early education and health program for children aged zero to five.
- The Georgia General Assembly commission a study to evaluate how much it costs to provide an excellent education to all Georgians. The cost study could contribute to the revision of the K-12 funding formula to address current gaps.
- The Georgia Assembly create a comprehensive statewide need-based financial aid program that builds upon recent efforts to fund grants for students with unmet need close to completing their credentials.

## Four Ways Practitioners Can Support the Big Bet

### Determine the Fiscal Impact of Current and Prospective Initiatives

State and community advocates should propose formal processes for the General Assembly and state agencies to evaluate the fiscal and programmatic impact of strategies, while also ensuring that funding decisions align with state education and workforce goals.

### Conduct Study to Recommend Framework for Funding Post-Secondary Education

Georgia's leaders have funded post-secondary institutions based in part on enrollment and square footage. The input-centered approach worked when the state was expanding access to opportunity, but a new funding strategy should encourage Georgians to enroll in post-secondary programs and complete credentials aligned with community and state workforce needs. Education and community leaders should conduct research on how to fund post-secondary institutions based on a combination of inputs (i.e., enrollment) and outputs (e.g., persistence, overall completion rates, graduation rates for underserved populations).

### Maintain Expanded Access to Childcare Subsidies

The Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) used federal pandemic-relief funds to provide tuition relief to families who qualified for the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program. The agency, in collaboration with the General Assembly, should consider how to continue providing subsidies to defray the high cost of childcare for low-income families.

### Explore How to Fund K-12 School Counseling and Wraparound Services

State leaders should provide additional funding to lower the school counselor-to-student ratio to 250:1. Increasing state funding could result in more equitable access to proactive career and academic counseling and physical and mental health supports.

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) has provided technical assistance to local school leaders as they adopt wraparound services – academic, health, and social supports that address barriers to student success. While many districts use federal funds to deliver wraparound services, dedicated state funding could expand access to these critical services.