



Resource Information on Pay Increase Initiative

- Last statewide salary increases was in 2008 (2.5% for certified educators applied to the state salary schedule; and 2.5% for state paid paraprofessionals, bus drivers, and cafeteria workers effective July 1, 2008). Higher education salary raises were delayed until January 1, 2009
- According to Senator Jack Hill's weekly newsletter "Notes from the Senate," June 15, 2015, "With 3.1% growth in May, Georgia's state revenues are building towards the end in June of an outstanding year in FY 2015, a year where the state appears poised to lead the Southeast in revenue growth. About all you can say about the performance of Georgia's economy in the 11 months so far of the 2015 fiscal year, is that revenue growth is nothing short of spectacular. So far this fiscal year, Georgia's revenues total \$17.2 billion with an increase over FY 2014 of \$1.09 billion. That's a fiscal year increase of 6.8% and leads every Southeastern state."

After 11 months of the FY2015 Fiscal Year, Georgia's revenues exceed the budget this year by some \$512.7 million. Funds received in excess of appropriations automatically flow into the RSR or Revenue Shortfall Reserve, Georgia's "rainy day fund." Looks like the total will go over \$1 billion for the first time since before the recession hit. At about 5% of previous year's revenues, a \$1 billion RSR would run the state around 20 days if some calamity hit. The statutory limit of the RSR is 15% or somewhere close to \$2 billion.

- Based on the 2014 NEA Rankings & Estimates, Georgia ranks 24th nationally at \$53,282 and has fallen \$3,997 behind the national rank of \$57,379. The nearest Georgia has come to the national ranking was in 2002 when the state ranked 15th and was just \$289 behind the national average of teacher salaries
- Former GAE President Ralph Noble stated in 2001 during the salary debate that "We must think of salaries in terms of competitiveness with other professions and not be content with national or regional averages."
- Too many educators have been denied competitive, professional pay for too long. Attracting and retaining qualified school staff—K-12 teachers, higher education faculty, and Education Support Professionals (ESPs)—requires salaries that are competitive with those in comparable professions
- Low teacher pay comes at a high cost for schools and kids, who lose good teachers to better-paying professions. Some 20 percent of new public school teachers leave the profession by the end of the first year, and almost half leave within five years. Pay-related turnover is especially high for minorities, males, and teachers under the age of 30.

- Having highly qualified teachers is essential to student success, but how can Georgia lure the brightest and best teachers if it continues to fall behind and not keep competitive in pay with other professions?
- ESPs keep school buildings and equipment functioning and students safe and healthy. As committed and caring members of a school community, they impact the lives of students every day. Yet their salaries are woefully low not even providing a living wage. Some school workers will tell you they're only working to get the health insurance benefit.
- Although Governor Nathan Deal talked about how his 2016 education budget included funds for teacher pay raises. Many educators and ESPs did not receive a raise. This was due in part to the fact that those monies were sent directly to the local school systems and not applied to the Annual Salary Schedule or earmarked for state school employees such as bus drivers and lunchroom workers. Local systems that did not have the necessary funding to provide raises for all school employees were reluctant to provide raises for some and not for others. That is why it is important that monies in the budget for educator pay raises be applied directly to the state salary schedule.
- The Governor's Education Reform Commission has a subcommittee on Teacher Recruitment, Retention & Compensation and this committee is looking at an entry level salary of \$40,000 in hopes that this would encourage college students to enter and continue in the teaching profession. Other compensation models as well are being proposed.
- GAE's priority on salary calls for protecting the current state salary schedule including educational attainment and experience (and that certified, public school Pre-K personnel be included on state salary schedule)