



## State Budget and Education Funding Explainer

→ The House has approved an updated state **2022-2023 budget**, which has been transmitted to the Senate, where it cleared the Senate Appropriations Committee Tuesday. At almost \$33 billion, it is the largest budget in the state's history.

\$851 million is added to this year's budget to account for a **67% increase** in the employer portion of the **State Health Benefit Plan**. **The employer contribution is increasing \$945 per educator to \$1,580.** Legislative leaders have said that employee premiums will not increase. School districts may have to come up with the money to pay for classified employees.

The budget also includes \$1 billion in one-time **income tax refunds** (\$250-\$500 per filer) and \$900 million in one-time **property tax refunds** (about \$500 per homeowner).

In his proposed budget, Gov. Brian Kemp included money for \$50,000 grants for **school safety programs** - the House increased it to \$60,000. The House also **eliminated \$25 million in funding for "learning loss"** that the governor had included in his budget. No details were ever provided as to how this funding would be used or what programs would be implemented. The House also decreased funding for the **dual enrollment**, reportedly because of a drop in enrollment. Kemp's plan to spend \$15 million in grants to **encourage and assist para-professionals in becoming certified teachers** was pared back to \$5 million by the House. The House also added \$1.25 million to provide the matching funds for school systems to implement **character education** programming.

→ Education-related budget items in the House budget may be found [here](#).

→ Meanwhile, the House Appropriations Committee and its subcommittees have begun hearings on Gov. Kemp's proposed **2023-2024** fiscal/school year budget. **GAE is working to increase the multiplier used in calculating pension benefits in the Public School Employees Retirement System (PRSERS) to the current maximum provided by state law.**

Next year's budget includes an additional **\$2,000 salary step schedule increase** for QBE-funded educators on the teachers' salary scale. There are no bonuses or pay increases in the governor's recommended budget for many ESP members, underscoring the need to establish a salary schedule for Education Support Professionals (ESPs).

→ Both budget fully fund the **Quality Basic Education (QBE)** formula for only the fourth time in the last 21 years. That is not to say that it provides even adequate funding for public education. Funding, for example, should be increased for school districts that serve a large number of students living in poverty, to reduce the massive student-to-social worker and student-to-school psychologist ratios, to raise educators' salaries, etc.