



# Fund Georgia's Future

## Opportunity Weight

### The Problem:



In the Making the Grade 2021 state education rankings, Georgia was given a grade of D for funding level by the Education Law Center. This grade was based upon the amount Georgia spends on public education compared to other states, adjusted for regional cost differences.



One key ingredient missing from Georgia's education funding is additional funding for students living in poverty. Georgia is one of only six states that do not have this provision.



In the 2020 Quality Counts report from Education Week, Georgia ranked 49th out of all states and the District of Columbia based on the difference between how low-income students perform on state tests compared to their higher-income peers.

**Georgia's schools are held back by the lack of investment in students living in poverty**

### The Solution:

Former Governor Deal's Education Reform Commission recognized a link between a student's family income and their ability to succeed in education and proposed a weight in the funding formula to support "economically-disadvantaged" students. Currently, Georgia offers relatively small amounts of funding for students that fall behind their grade level--this money is often insufficient, restricted by regulations and/or caps, and it addresses disparities after they appear rather than preventing them. Additional money in the funding formula specifically for students living in poverty would help improve outcomes for these children and would improve the entire state's education system.

**Create a weight in the Quality Basic Education formula to provide additional funding for each child directly certified for free lunch**

### The Cost:

There are more than 550,000 children students directly certified for free lunch (receiving SNAP or TANF, homeless, unaccompanied youth, foster or migrant children). At a weight of 0.25 (25 percent of the base amount of funding) in the Quality Basic Education formula, an opportunity weight would provide approximately an additional \$401.5 million for Georgia's children living in poverty.