



2008 Legislative Agenda

Governor Sonny Perdue

EDUCATED

- **Create the Very Important Parent (VIP) Recruiter program for at-risk elementary, middle and high schools:** \$14,250,000 in FY 2009 in order to strengthen the greatest factor in a student's success – engaged parents.
- **Continue funding for the Graduation Coach program:** \$14,452,408 in additional funds to continue the program in middle and high schools. This program began in FY 2007 as an innovative way to increase the high school graduation rate. The graduation coaches identify students who are at risk of dropping out of school and develop strategies and interventions to help these students graduate from high school. In the 2006-2007 school year, graduation coaches were instrumental in decreasing the number of dropouts by over 2200 students.
- **Recognize a 1.09 percent increase in enrollment growth, bringing the total number of full time equivalent (FTE) students funded for FY 2009 to 1,625,306:** \$75,733,394. **The Governor also recommends increasing funding to recognize the increased training and experience of Georgia's teachers:** \$135,036,855.
- **Expand funding for \$100 classroom gift cards:** \$260,226 to provide all full-time classroom teachers and media specialists with a gift card to purchase classroom/library supplies. More than 119,430 teachers and media specialists used these cards to purchase instructional materials in FY 2008.
- **Allocate over \$65 million dollars in the amended 08 budget to fund two priority needs for schools – transportation and technology:** \$25 million dollars is allocated to purchase 557 new school buses. Over \$40 million dollars will go to all schools across the state to upgrade their technology capabilities. This technology funding will enable schools to increase student achievement and provide transparency to parents and others. This will also enable schools to utilize new online resources like the Georgia Department of Education's Online Assessment System and online SAT prep.
- **Increase access to college by helping students plan, apply, and pay for college:** \$500,000 in FY 2009 to continue GAcollge411 marketing efforts to educate students, parents, counselors and graduation coaches about the resources available through GAcollge411.
- **Ensure that quality Pre-Kindergarten is available to all interested students:** \$6,425,206 in lottery funds was added in FY 2009 to fund enrollment growth thereby increasing the total number of slots in the Pre-Kindergarten program to 79,000.
- **Recognize the importance of private colleges and universities and ensure Georgia students have access to higher education:** an increase in Tuition Equalization Grants (TEG) in FY 2009 from \$1,100 to \$1,200 per award to assist Georgia students attending private colleges and universities.
- **Provide funds for capital outlay construction in local school systems:** \$295,635,000 in bonds in FY 2009.
- **Increase funding for books and materials for public libraries:** \$1,000,000 in FY 2009.



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GROWING

Water:

- **Ensuring that implementation of the Statewide Water Plan will be fully funded:** Using \$11.1M in existing federal and other resources from GEFA and EPD, the Governor will fully fund both the resource assessments and regional planning components of the water plan.
- **Provide \$120M to ensure that local governments and water authorities have access to, GEFA provided, low interest loans for water infrastructure and reservoir development:**
 - \$40,000,000 in cash in AFY08 and \$30,000,000 in bonds in FY09 for reservoirs and water system improvements throughout Georgia
 - \$42,000,000 in bonds to fund statewide water and sewer infrastructure loans for local communities through the Georgia Fund program
 - \$2,400,000 in bonds to provide the state match for the federal Clean Water State Revolving Fund for water and sewer infrastructure loans for local communities
 - \$5,600,000 in bonds to provide the state match for the federal Drinking Water State Revolving Fund for water and sewer infrastructure loans for local communities
 - \$500,000 for upgrades to 20 dams on small reservoirs that have the potential to serve as municipal water supply reservoirs. These upgrades will ensure that the dams comply with the Safe Dams Act, a prerequisite for the dams to be utilized for local water supply.
- **Partner with the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District to ensure that they will be able to update their regional water plan for projected needs through 2035:** \$300,000 to assist with mandated updates for water plans that will help ensure that Georgia has ample quantity and sufficient quality of water available for its citizens. The full cost of the update is \$1.2M. The state will be providing 25% of the cost.

Transportation:

- **\$50,000,000 in total funds for the State Transportation Infrastructure Bank (STIB), to be housed at the State Road and Tollway Authority:** The State Transportation Infrastructure Bank is intended as a financial tool (a revolving loan fund and other financial assistance) for local governments to accelerate infrastructure projects to meet their economic development needs for roads, bridges, transit, rail and airports.
- **Fund implementation of a freight logistics strategy:** \$500,000 in the 2009 budget to grow Georgia's logistics industry, spawn economic development, improve freight mobility, and guide future strategic investment in the state's transportation infrastructure.
- **Expand Georgia's commute alternatives as a means of reducing traffic congestion and ensuring air quality:** \$13,300,000 in FY 09 bonds for GRTA to purchase 28 clean-fuel buses for route expansion and service improvements and \$4,700,000 in bonds for right-of-way acquisition and construction of a park and ride lot for the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority's Xpress program. Between FY 2006 and FY 2007, Xpress ridership grew significantly, increasing from 754,350 to 1,154,116.
- **Continue funding for congestion relief and economic development through the Governor's Fast Forward Program:** \$230,000,000 in motor-fuel funded bonds for the Governor's Fast Forward program with the goal of promoting short and long-term congestion relief, spurring economic development, adding capacity to Georgia's highways, and improving the efficiency of the existing highway network.



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- **Add the highest level of funding for local roads since FY 1999:** \$156,872,671 in FY 08A in total motor fuel funds for local roads—Local Assistance Road Program, State Fund Construction – Off System, and State Fund Construction – Most Needed.
- **\$131,204,202 in total motor fuel funds for local roads for FY`09:** (Local Assistance Road Program, State Fund Construction – Off System, and State Fund Construction – Most Needed). This is the second highest level of funding since FY 99.
- **Decrease traffic congestion by rapidly clearing accidents from Atlanta interstates:** Enable GRTA to use \$300k to create the Georgia Towing and Recovery Incentive Program (TRIP)—a towing incentive program to pay heavy duty towing companies to remove large commercial vehicles from accident scenes in metro Atlanta in 90 minutes, less than half the time it currently takes. This is expected to cut congestion that is caused by accidents by more than 50 percent and reduce secondary traffic accidents by around 15 percent.

Economic Development:

- **\$52,000,000 in total funds, including \$17,000,000 in bonds, to deepen the Savannah Harbor navigation channel from its current depth of 42 feet up to a depth of 48 feet:** The Savannah Harbor expansion project will enable the Georgia Ports Authority to accommodate growing volumes of cargo, decrease transportation costs, increase productivity, and capitalize on the opportunities connected with international trade.
- **Create the Georgia Research Alliance venture capital initiative:** add \$5M to \$5M of existing funds to create the GRA venture capital fund that will be attached to ATDC under the Board of Regents. This fund will help technology that is developed in our research universities become commercialized. In exchange for investing in these companies, Georgia will receive equity in the company. The \$10M of state dollars will be matched by \$30M of private dollars to create a total of \$40M venture capital fund.
- **Promote Georgia as an internationally known Bioscience hub:** \$375,000 to fund the state of Georgia sponsorship of BIO 2009, the global event for biotechnology, with an anticipated attendance of more than 20,000.
- **Renovate and repair State Farmers' Markets:** \$1,125,000 in bonds. There are fifteen State Farmers' Markets which form the network for sales of fruits and vegetables throughout Georgia and the Southeast. These facilities maintain a viable market for Georgia farmers and farm products in the communities where they are located. State Farmers' Markets are responsible for more than \$1 billion in sales each year.
- **Continue to enhance, revitalize and protect Georgia's crown jewel:** \$25,000,000 in bonds to fund design and construction of public infrastructure improvements on Jekyll Island. It is the only barrier island on the Georgia Coast with significant diverse natural areas that is publicly owned, accessible by automobile, and has lodging and dining opportunities.

Other:

- **Ensure quality growth along Georgia's coast:** \$275,000 to implement the Coastal Comprehensive Plan in six coastal counties and expand it to inland counties. This plan was developed by DCA with stakeholder involvement at the direction of an EO signed by the Gov in 2005.
- **Assist homeless in achieving housing stability:** contingent on an equal match from non-State of Georgia sources, provide an additional \$1,500,000 to the State Housing Trust Fund to fund Housing Support Specialists to assist the homeless in achieving housing stability through support services tailored to their needs.



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SAFE

- **Increase the size of the Georgia State Patrol by establishing a Regional Officer Trooper Cadet Program and provide additional trooper schools:**
 - ✓ Provide \$8,921,486 for an additional 3 trooper schools, the 85th in January 2008, the 86th in July 2008 and 87th for January 2009; graduating a total of 205 new troopers.
 - ✓ Adding an additional school at the mid-point during the year (previously only one trooper school a year) will allow the Georgia State Patrol to recruit and train more candidates.
 - ✓ Provide an additional \$2,368,994 in personal services to the Georgia State Patrol for the statewide implementation of the Regional Officer Trooper Cadet Program (ROTC).
 - ✓ ROTC Program will allow the Georgia State Patrol to recruit regionally and conduct year round hiring to begin training candidates between trooper schools.
 - ✓ Candidates within the program will be hired as cadets while awaiting the start of trooper school and serve as radio operators and administrative support for each post.
 - ✓ ROTC Program will provide each new trooper school with 50 candidates.
- **Establish the mobile data system for the Georgia State Patrol to provide for greater efficiency in traffic enforcement and create safer highways for Georgia residents:**
 - ✓ Provide \$1.9 million to establish a mobile data system for the Georgia State Patrol.
 - ✓ The mobile data system will consolidate 46 communication centers into 10 regional centers.
 - ✓ Provide laptops and GPS systems for each road trooper allowing troopers to process traffic tickets electronically ending the causes of error of hand-written tickets and lessen processing time for local court clerks.
 - ✓ Will provide great efficiency in traffic and speed enforcement with the ability to use real time traffic data to plot patrol areas, creating a safer driving environment for Georgia residents.
 - ✓ Streamlining administrative processes with new mobile data technology will alleviate the need for high volumes of paperwork processing; allow Georgia state troopers to spend more time on the road patrolling Georgia's highways.
 - ✓ Using data to develop patrol areas, troopers will be able to better protect and slow down Georgia's roadways by focusing efforts on areas which are the most dangerous with speeding, accidents, and crash fatalities.
- **Establish the Identity Theft Unit within the GBI to combat identity theft and related crime and protect Georgia's citizens from falling victim to personal identity theft:** \$1,067,298 for eight investigative positions within the GBI to combat identity theft statewide including investigation, local law enforcement training, public education, and victim support.
- **Continue Prison Expansion to ensure that beds are available for strong enforcement of the law:** \$3,741,814 for operating funds of 1,216 beds across 5 state prisons and \$7,844,295 for 768 fast track beds at 3 state prisons.
- **Expand the Probation Options Management Act statewide to ensure swift and certain sanctions for probation violators to reduce court time and manage jail backlog:** \$1,928,174 to add 43 hearing officers and utilize the 6 existing hearing officers to serve the 49 statewide judicial circuits.



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HEALTHY

- **Strengthen the state's trauma system:** \$53 million is included in Amended FY 2008 to the State Trauma Commission to reimburse physicians, EMS providers and trauma hospitals for uncompensated care.
- **Incentivize small businesses to partner with employees to provide low cost health insurance:** \$17 million for the Health Insurance Partnership.
- **Increase hospital Medicaid reimbursement rates:** \$34.7 million in FY 09.
 - Update the maximum allowable reimbursement to 88.5% of the 2007 Resource Based Relative Value Scale (RBRVS), as specified by Medicare for the Atlanta area, for providers of the following services: Physician, Physician Assistant, Nurse Midwife, Advanced Nurse Practitioners, Podiatry, Oral Maxillofacial Surgery, Children's Intervention Services, Children's Intervention School Services, Psychological Services, Dialysis Professional Services, Vision, and Family Planning
 - Increase cost coverage for inpatient hospital services from 95.1% to 98.6% of cost for designated trauma hospitals Levels I through III, and increase cost coverage from 90.1% to 92.6% of cost for all other hospitals
 - Update outpatient hospital reimbursement to a facility-wide Cost-to-Charge ratio to determine cost, and pay 100% of cost for designated trauma hospitals Levels I through III, and 95% of cost for all other hospitals for outpatient services; increase the cap on outpatient services based on increases in inpatient hospital reimbursement; and, increase the triage fee for non-emergency use of the Emergency Room from \$50 to \$60
 - Increase the cap for home health services to \$90 and pay the lesser of the cap or 100% of cost, according to FY 2006 cost reports
 - Increase Healthcheck reimbursement rate by 2.5%
 - Provide coverage for digital mammography services
 - Increase codes for global maternity delivery rates by 2.5%
- **Maintain adequate health coverage for children:** \$16 million in Amended FY 2008 and \$17 million in FY 2009 to provide state funds to match federal funds under PeachCare.
- **Improve state mental health hospital operations:** The Amended FY 2008 budget includes \$15 million, supplemented by \$21 million in new funds in FY 2009 to improve care in our state hospitals.
- **Improve compensation to nursing homes:** \$17.6 million in FY 09 to more appropriately reimburse for capital expenditures incurred to upgrade Georgia nursing homes.
- **\$6.2 million in funds for increased Mental Retardation and Development Disability waiver slots:** This adds an additional 500 waiver slots in FY 2009.
- **Provide \$9.25M in tobacco settlement funding to increase access to primary health care in rural Georgia:** Through the development of regional systems of care, these funds will facilitate the economic development and the creation of sustainable non-traditional, regional health care delivery systems that are financially viable and designed to meet the needs of the citizens within its regions.



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BEST MANAGED

Land Conservation:

- **Continue to invest in conserving Georgia's critical and essential watersheds and wildlife habitats:** \$30,000,000 to acquire lands for preservation and protection of large tracts of property within the Georgia Land Conservation Program.
- **Increase quantity and quality of property permanently protected and preserved:** adding \$182,620 for two conservation foresters to the Forestry Commission to assist landowners in navigating the application process associated with land conservation easement donations.

Hazardous Waste/Solid Waste:

- **Continue to protect Georgia's natural resources:** \$6,300,000 to increase funding for the Hazardous Waste Trust Fund from \$7,600,000 to \$13,900,000 to reimburse local governments that have cleaned up leaking landfills.
- **Continuing the states focus on litter prevention and eradication as well as increasing recycling rates:** fully funding the Solid Waste Trust Fund.

Other:

- **Increase customer service:** funded the 1-800-GEORGIA call center (\$800K) and the tools to enable Georgians access to state contact information (\$550K).
- **Fund an additional \$10 million of homeowners tax relief:** increased the HTRG (Homeowners Tax Relief Grant) to reflect a 1.84% growth rate.
- **Investigate wildfires:** \$131,000 to reestablish the wildfire arson unit allowing the Forestry Commission to more aggressively pursue arsons and other state burn law violations, resulting in a reduction in fires and property loss.
- **Fight wildfires:** \$2,500,000 in bonds to replace firefighting equipment so that rangers can continue to respond to fires in a timely and effective manner.

State Pay Raises:

\$254 million to provide for the following:

Teachers will remain the highest paid in the Southeast:

- Provide a 2.5% increase for k-12 teachers and faculty of the university system and DTAE effective September 1, 2008 in addition to the 3% salary increase that more than half of the teachers will earn due to progression on the teacher salary schedule.

The State will continue to focus on building a strong workforce:

- Provide for general salary increase of 2.5% for employees of the Executive and Legislative Branches effective January 1, 2009.
- Provide for 1% of state personal services funds to be used for performance incentives.
- Provide for supplemental salary adjustments for employees paid less than 85% of market as of January 1, 2009 in identified critical job classifications
- Provide for special adjustments to selected job classes to address turnover and recruitment issues as identified by the State Personnel Administration