

Walton PTSA E-blast Questions and Answers

1. Do you know how the state of Georgia distributes education funding?

The state of Georgia uses a formula, called the Quality Basic Education (QBE), to provide funding for schools.

2. Do you know what is the QBE?

The QBE (Quality Basic Education) formula has 7 steps. They are as follows:

1. Count the students at each school for each education program. 2. Apply T&E (Training and Experience) factor. 3. Multiply the number of students counted in each QBE program x the per student revenue amount x T&E factor. 4. The state then adds additional funding for Indirect Costs (maintenance, school/central admin, media & professional development). 5. The State deducts the Local Fair Share Tax (LFS). 6. The State deducts austerity cuts from each district's earnings. 7. The State adds funding for State categorical grants (transportation and nursing).

3. Do you know when the QBE was last updated?

The QBE was created in 1985. There have been minor updates since then including small teacher salary increases, but textbooks, transportation costs, etc. are still calculated at 1985 rates. Seven Blue Ribbon commissions have studied the formula and some have made minor changes such as changing the ratio of counselors to students and adding school nurse funding but the basic formula has not been changed..

4. Do you know how much the state of Georgia has cut education funding since 2003?

The Cumulative statewide QBE cut from 2003 through 2014 is \$7, 662,644,092. The cumulative QBE cut for Cobb County for this same period is \$491,296,767.

5. Do you know how much the state of Georgia has cut funding per student between 2002 and 2014?

State funding per student declined on average 15.3 percent in inflation-adjusted dollars between fiscal year 2002 and 2014.

6. Do you know how much the state of Georgia has cut funding per Cobb County student over this same period?

State funding per student in Cobb County declined 16.9 percent over this period.

7. Do you know how many teachers Walton High School has lost since 2008?

Walton High School has lost 21 teachers since 2008. In addition, we have lost .5 counselors and 2 custodians.

8. Do you know how many more students are in a freshman language arts class in 2013 vs. 2008?

The average class size in 2008 for a writing class was 21 students. The average class size for that same class in 2013 is 30 students.

9. Do you know the impact a larger class size can have on a student?

Students do not get to spend as much time with a teacher if there are too many students in a class. In addition, students do not get an opportunity to have as many class discussions, writing assignments and detailed feedback from teachers. The cumulative

effect of the reduced interaction can be significant over a short period of time, but can be catastrophic over a student's K-12 education.

10. Do you know the changes in instruction the teachers have had to make to accommodate a larger class size?

Teachers have had to reduce writing assignments because they do not have the time to properly grade the papers. In addition, science labs have had to be cut because it is simply not safe to conduct some of the experiments in a crowded classroom. Because the classrooms are crowded, interactive discussions have to be limited to classrooms where there is room for students to move.

11. Who are the people that make the decisions which impact the content and quality of education?

A. School Board Members:

1. Scott Sweeney (Walton, Dickerson, Dodgen, Mount Bethel, Sope Creek, Timber Ridge) - ssweeney.boardmember@cobbk12.org
2. David Banks (East Side) – dbanks.boardmember@cobbk12.org

B. Department of Education

C. State Board of Education – Sixth Congressional District, Barbara Hampton, bahampton@doe.k12.ga.us, 404-657-7410

12. What's it like to talk to an elected official when you call his/her office about an issue?

It is easy! Elected officials are real people and are eager to talk to you, their constituent. When communicating, you should identify yourself, be brief and very specific. Make the

conversation personal and tell them why the issues matter to you. You should always be civil, positive and courteous. Provide contact information and present your position honestly and thoughtfully. Thank them for their time and consideration. Be bold! Be informed! Be engaged!

13. How easy is it to fix the education budget?

The education budget is very complicated and will not be easy to fix. While the education budget makes up the majority of the state's funding, it is still not at an adequate level to provide schools with the resources necessary to give students the best possible education. We need parents to contact the decision makers to let them know you care about education funding and will support their efforts to increase it.

14. What steps can you take to get involved?

1. Spread the word about the education-funding crisis.
2. Contact your school board member, as well as your state representative and senator, and ask them to tell you how they are going to effectively fund education. Let them know how you feel about the austerity cuts and how the increased class sizes and reduced funding & services have adversely impacted your child.

State Representative – Matt Dollar (R-45) – matt.dollar@house.ga.gov, 404-656-0254

State Senator – Judson Hill (R-32) – judson@judsonhill.com.

3. Support your school's Foundation. They have the ability to reduce class size at your school.
4. Support your child's teachers and thank them for all they do.
5. Attend the FACE It Cobb meeting on 12/12/13. The meeting is from 8-9:30 am at the InfoMart (1582 Terrell Mill Rd SE, Marietta, GA 30067).
6. Attend a follow-up meeting on 1/9/14 at 7 pm at Walton HS. We will be discussing our action plan as the new legislative session will begin on 1/13/14.

