

# Leaving

# Half Our



# Children

# Behind

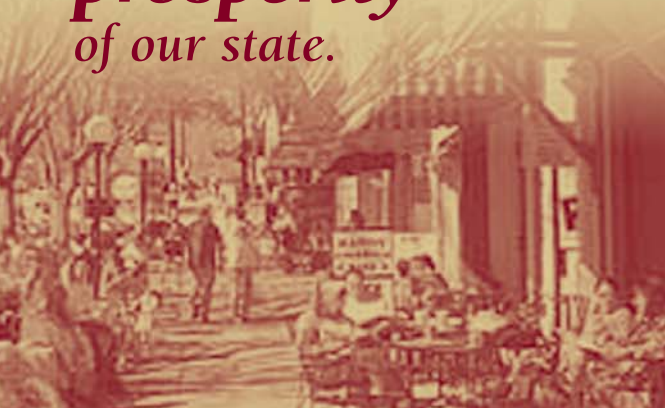
*The Untold Story of Education in Georgia*

Education across  
Georgia must  
**improve** for...



the  
**well-being**  
of our children  
and...

the  
**prosperity**  
of our state.



Our schools are not  
keeping up with the  
dramatic changes  
affecting Georgia.

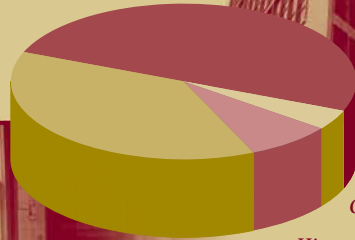
Today's Students:

White: 50%

Black: 38%

Other: 4%

Hispanic: 8%



Why do we settle  
for less, when  
our children  
need more?



# School Dropouts

## Georgia's Ugly Secret

*Only half of Georgia's students are graduating from high school with a regular diploma.*

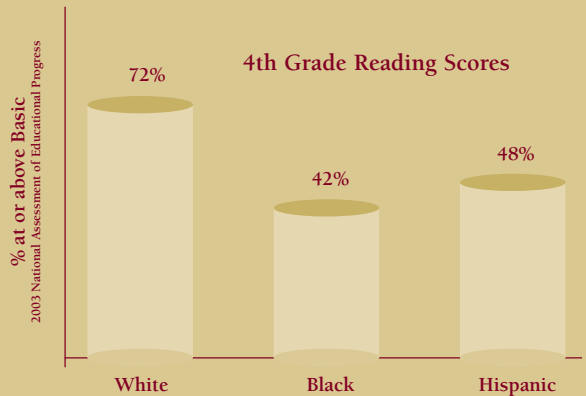
The number of Georgia students who received a regular diploma in 2004 was only 53% of the number who began the ninth grade four years earlier.<sup>1</sup>

Using flawed methods, the State says the graduation rate for Georgia in 2004 was 65%.<sup>2</sup>

- In rural areas, this percentage dropped to 60%.
- It fell even further to 58% in urban centers.
- For African-American students, the official rate was 57%.
- Among Hispanic students, it was only 50%.

*But the actual rates were even lower than the "official" rates!*

Georgia's graduation rate is one of the worst in the nation (ranked 49th in major reports) and reflects a huge achievement gap among student groups, which starts in the lower grades.



A young person in today's world needs at least a high-school diploma to succeed in a technology-driven workplace and perform the duties of a good citizen.

### *What is the impact on Georgia?*

#### **Harm to our economy**

Without an educated workforce, Georgia cannot be competitive in creating and attracting jobs.

#### **Poverty and welfare**

The vast majority of Georgia families on welfare are headed by parents who are drop-outs from high school.

#### **Crime and social problems**

At least three out of every four inmates in Georgia's prisons and jails did not graduate from high school.

1 Based on data compiled by the Georgia School Council Institute. Even this percentage is overstated, because more students are moving into Georgia than are leaving. Also, the number of students who will graduate in future years is balanced by a like number of graduates in 2004 who took more than four years to graduate.

2 Many students who do not graduate are omitted from the calculations simply because their status is unknown.

3 The State's funding formula is at least \$1.2 billion or 20% less than the minimum cost of the basic program defined by the State, but this program is still not enough to meet the actual needs.





# Georgia's Education Gap

## How Did It Happen?

*Many of our schools do not have...*

### Enough qualified teachers

Nearly one out of every five classes in math and science across Georgia are taught by teachers who do not have certificates in these fields.

### Enough textbooks and materials

Many schools in Georgia are spending less than \$10 per student for library materials each year. The State no longer funds instructional technology.

### Enough extra help

Large numbers of Georgia students are being retained without receiving the help they need for promotion to the next grade.

### Enough alternatives

State funding for alternative and non-traditional schools is arbitrarily limited to 2.5% of middle and high school students.

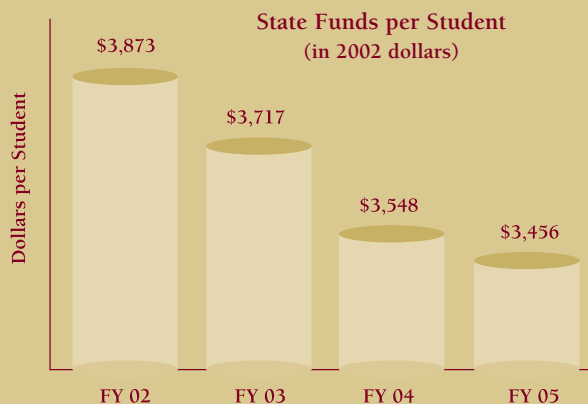
The State's funding formula falls far short of the amount needed to provide even the most basic program for Georgia's students.<sup>3</sup> Most school systems cannot make up the difference through local taxes.

# Improving the Opportunities

## What Can Be Done?

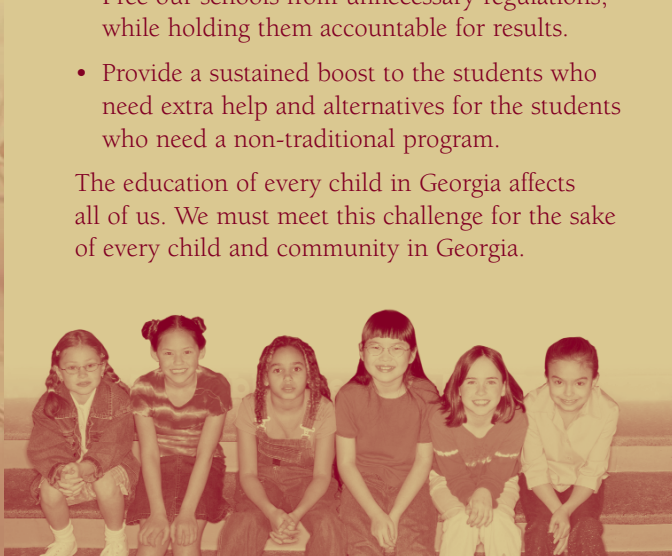
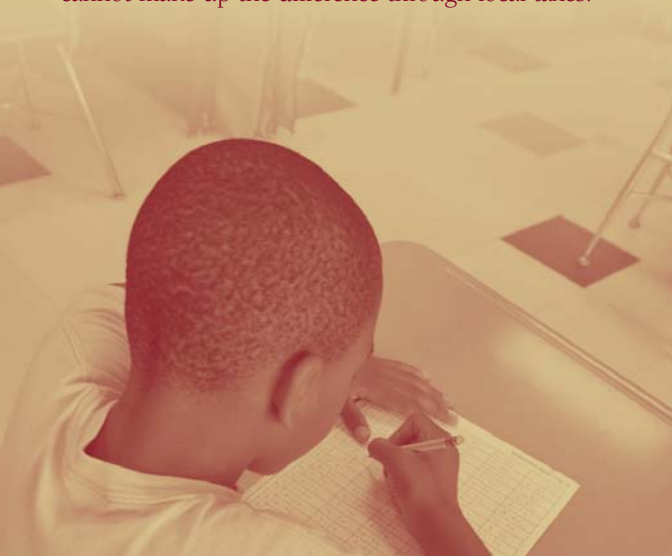
*Georgia must...*

- Provide enough support for an adequate program in every school, while encouraging local systems to go beyond the basic program.
- Increase State funding to a realistic level based on actual needs.
  - Update the Georgia tax code
  - End unjustified exemptions
  - Improve the mix of state and local taxes



- Enhance the teaching profession to attract and retain capable teachers.
- Free our schools from unnecessary regulations, while holding them accountable for results.
- Provide a sustained boost to the students who need extra help and alternatives for the students who need a non-traditional program.

The education of every child in Georgia affects all of us. We must meet this challenge for the sake of every child and community in Georgia.



# Next Steps

## What can I do?

### *Stand up for our children.*

- Urge your elected representatives to increase the State's investment in public education.
- Ask your school board to seek greater funding from the State.
- Support the schools in your community.
- Tell our teachers how much we appreciate what they do every day.
- Encourage local businesses to get involved.
- Spread the word about the importance of good schools for everyone.

## **Consortium for Adequate School Funding in Georgia**

The Consortium is a coalition of school systems, which was formed in 2001 to improve the educational opportunities for all of Georgia's students.

Dedicated teachers, involved parents, and a supportive community are essential, but adequate resources are also necessary for good schools.

The Consortium has asked the courts to decide whether the State is fulfilling its obligation under the Georgia Constitution to provide an adequate education for every student.

**Consortium for Adequate School Funding in Georgia**

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