



# 2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION SUMMARY

PAGE LEGISLATIVE TEAM  
JULY 2025

# PAGE LEGISLATIVE TEAM



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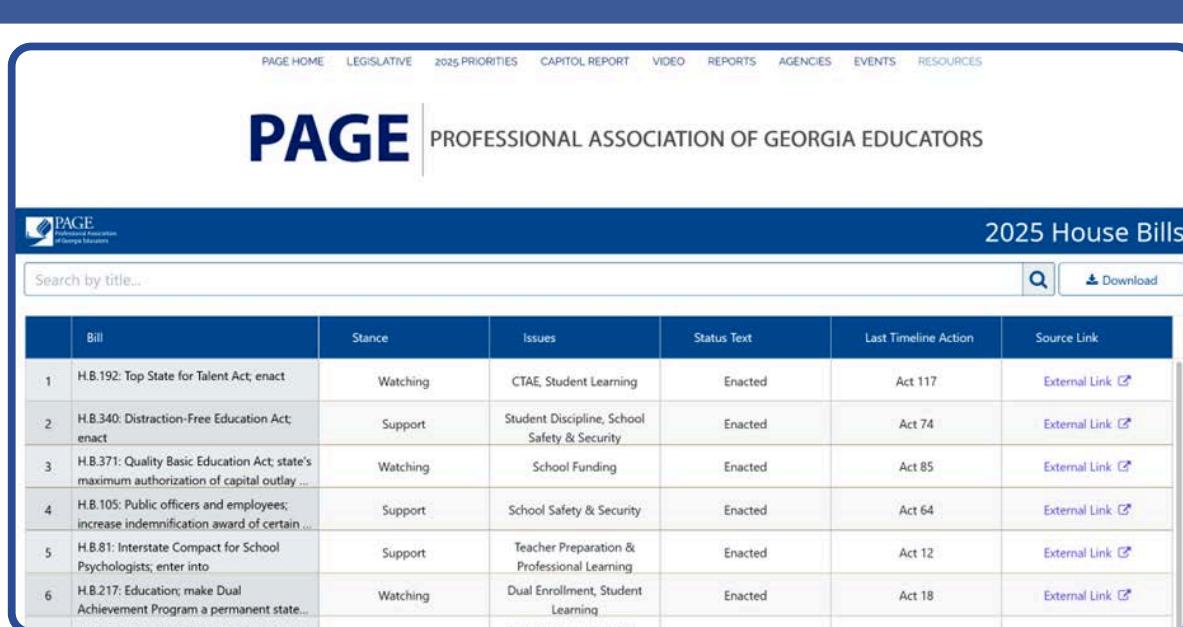
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# SESSION OVERVIEW

The 2025 legislative session yielded multiple wins for public education, including new state financial investments in literacy, mental health, and targeted support to economically disadvantaged students. The General Assembly passed PAGE-supported legislation bolstering educator benefits and addressed many educational challenges with bills to strengthen school safety and student literacy.

Gov. Brian P. Kemp signed legislation sent by the House and Senate to his desk throughout the 40-day signing period following the legislative session's conclusion. Bills became effective July 1, 2025, unless the legislation specifies another date. As 2025 is the first of Georgia's two-year legislative biennium, bills that did not pass this session remain eligible to pass in 2026.

This report provides an overview of the state K-12 education budget, highlights education-related legislation that passed the General Assembly, and identifies notable bills that did not pass. Voting records for all legislation are available by following the highlighted links to bill summary pages on the Georgia General Assembly website. For ease of review, PAGE has also created a [\*\*bill tracker spreadsheet\*\*](#) which links to approved 2025 bills.



The screenshot shows the PAGE website with a search bar for '2025 House Bills'. The results table lists six bills, each with a title, stance, issues, status text, last timeline action, and a source link. The bills include H.B.192, H.B.340, H.B.371, H.B.105, H.B.81, and H.B.217.

	Bill	Stance	Issues	Status Text	Last Timeline Action	Source Link
1	H.B.192: Top State for Talent Act; enact.	Watching	CTAE, Student Learning	Enacted	Act 117	<a href="#">External Link</a>
2	H.B.340: Distraction-Free Education Act; enact	Support	Student Discipline, School Safety & Security	Enacted	Act 74	<a href="#">External Link</a>
3	H.B.371: Quality Basic Education Act; state's maximum authorization of capital outlay ...	Watching	School Funding	Enacted	Act 85	<a href="#">External Link</a>
4	H.B.105: Public officers and employees; increase indemnification award of certain ...	Support	School Safety & Security	Enacted	Act 64	<a href="#">External Link</a>
5	H.B.81: Interstate Compact for School Psychologists; enter into	Support	Teacher Preparation & Professional Learning	Enacted	Act 12	<a href="#">External Link</a>
6	H.B.217: Education; make Dual Achievement Program a permanent state...	Watching	Dual Enrollment, Student Learning	Enacted	Act 18	<a href="#">External Link</a>

[\*\*Click Here to See Full Bill Tracker\*\*](#)

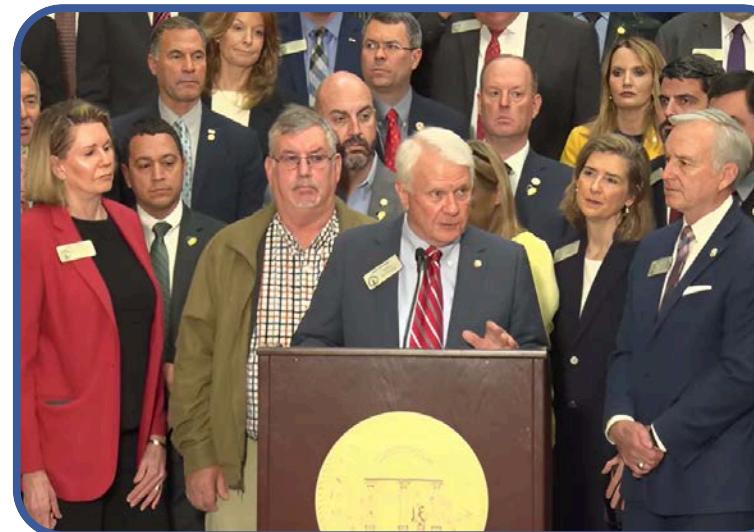
# APALACHEE HIGH SCHOOL TRAGEDY RESPONSE

In response to the Sept. 4, 2024, Georgia high school shooting which took the lives of two students and two educators, lawmakers proposed multiple school safety and security bills. Bipartisan support and backing by House Speaker Jon Burns (R-Newington) propelled **HB 268**, sponsored by Rep. Holt Persinger (R-Winder), who represents the community in which the shooting occurred. Persinger's lengthy bill emerged as the session's headline school safety legislation.

## HB 268: Student Record Sharing

HB 268 includes guidelines for sharing student records among schools, law enforcement, and state agencies. Within five "school business" days, schools must release student education records upon request to authorized parties, including parents, guardians, and receiving schools. Parents seeking school enrollment for their child are required to disclose to the receiving school if their child has a history of:

- Being adjudicated guilty of a Class A or Class B designated felony
- Currently serving a suspension or expulsion
- Being subject to a pending disciplinary hearing
- Being reported for criminal behavior under Georgia law



House Speaker Jon Burns holds school safety press conference

School districts must immediately provide requested electronic copies of former students' complete education records to parents or within three "school business" days if the request is made off-hours. Districts may not deny parents the ability to review their student's education records.



Rep. Holt Persinger,  
HB 268 Sponsor

Students transferring into a new school may be provisionally enrolled for up to 10 school days while awaiting record transfer. Courts may intervene if parents withhold required student records.

HB 268 creates a dispute resolution process if student records are wrongfully withheld, with RESAs serving as mediators. Each RESA must appoint a student affairs officer to oversee data sharing and disputes within their territory.

The legislation creates the position of chief privacy officer at GaDOE. The agency is tasked with creating and publishing guidance outlining:

- Federal and state laws related to student education record privacy
- How schools and agencies must handle, store, and share student data
- When student records can or must be disclosed to law enforcement, schools, and other agencies
- Clear procedures for record transfers to ensure timely and lawful sharing of student information

GaDOE will establish model agreements between school districts and law enforcement agencies to specify which information is available to law enforcement in compliance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).



Rep. Persinger Presents HB 268 in  
Committee

## HB 268: Behavioral Health Support

HB 268 requires that school safety plans be updated by Jan. 1, 2027, to address the behavioral health needs of students and staff. Safety plans must include a behavioral threat assessment management (BTAM) plan to identify, assess, and mitigate school safety threats. The Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA) is tasked with helping school districts establish BTAMs.

Based on the number of students enrolled in school districts, HB 268 calls for reimbursement of school districts for up to three qualified student advocacy specialists. Funding for these specialists is included in the FY 2026 budget. These specialists are tasked with identifying appropriate behavioral health interventions for students with mental health concerns.



PAGE Testifies in Support of HB 268



Rep. Persinger Presents HB 268  
on House Floor

Additional behavioral health supports in HB 268 include:

- Mandatory implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) and Response to Intervention (RTI) programs in elementary and middle schools rated as "high needs" (schools receiving 1-star or 2-star ratings)
- At least one hour of annual evidence-based suicide and violence prevention training for students in grades 6 through 12, and 95% of all school personnel must also receive yearly training on youth violence and suicide prevention
- Creation of student-led youth violence prevention clubs for suicide and violence prevention awareness

## HB 268: Senate Additions

As the 2025 session progressed, the following bills, which reflected Senate school safety priorities, were incorporated into HB 268:

- **“Ricky and Alyssa’s Law”:** by Sen. Jason Anavitarte (R-Dallas), requires school districts to implement a mobile panic alert system, such as Centegix, that connects directly with emergency services. Districts must procure detailed digital mapping of each public and private school in their district and provide the maps on paper and in digital format. The requirements of the bill do not pertain to private schools. In addition to being included in HB 268, [\*\*SB 17\*\*](#) was also approved as a separate bill.
- **Threats Against Schools:** provisions by Sen. Greg Dolezal (R-Cumming) create new crimes, including terroristic threats and acts against schools. Offenses related to the latter would be moved from Juvenile Court to Superior Court. Dolezal’s provisions also require information sharing between courts, state agencies, and public schools when children are subject to electronic monitoring or other restrictions. Public school site threat assessments are required to be conducted by law enforcement or GEMA-certified individuals. School safety plan requirements are revised to emphasize stakeholder input and coordination with local law enforcement.
- **Transferring Student Records:** Sen. Clint Dixon (R-Gwinnett) authored a requirement mandating that academic and disciplinary records of transferring students be provided within five days.



PAGE Addresses HB 268  
Senate Subcommittee

## HB 268: Other Highlights

- **Extended Student Absence:** If a student misses 30 or more consecutive school days and their parent fails to notify the school of their school withdrawal or intent to homeschool, the school will report the matter to the student affairs officer of their local RESA and the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS).
- **Family Reunification:** Districts must adopt a family reunification plan in coordination with local law enforcement if schools close or are evacuated.
- **Student Reporting Apps:** Districts must create anonymous reporting programs and train students and parents to use them. The programs must be monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Districts with reporting apps that meet these requirements are not required to develop a new app.
- **GEMA Emergency Alert System:** GEMA will create an emergency alert response system for districts and schools to communicate immediately with local law enforcement about threats on school campuses.
- **Law Enforcement Reporting When Students are in Custody:** Law enforcement agencies must communicate with school districts anytime students are taken into custody.



Gov. Brian Kemp Signs HB 268 into Law



Gov. Kemp with Rep. Persinger

# CELL PHONES IN K-8 CLASSROOMS



PAGE and Other Supporters of HB 340

**HB 340**, by Rep. Scott Hilton (R-Peachtree Corners), prohibits student use of cell phones or personal portable electronic devices from bell to bell during the school day in grades K-8 beginning July 1, 2026. By Jan 1, 2026, districts must develop policies outlining how students will store phones, establish clear emergency communication plans with parents or guardians, and create a progressive discipline system for students found in violation of the policy. Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), Section 504 plans, or other medical plans requiring the use of devices will be permitted access.

## STUDENT ABSENTEEISM

**SB 123**, by Sen. John F. Kennedy (R-Macon), requires school districts to reinstitute school climate committees. Chief superior court judges will lead the committees, which must meet twice yearly. Committees must update attendance protocols for each district by June 1, 2026. Each district must annually submit a report on absenteeism to the legislature and make the report publicly available. School districts with absenteeism rates of more than 10 percent must also create attendance review teams to determine the cause of high absenteeism. Schools within the district with absenteeism rates of 15 percent or more must have their own attendance review teams.

**SR 217**, also by Sen. Kennedy, creates the Senate Study Committee on Combating Chronic Absenteeism in Schools.

**HR 711**, by Rep. Chris Erwin (R-Homer), creates the House Study Committee on Student Attendance in Pre-K-12 Education.

# EDUCATOR BENEFITS

**HB 235**, by Rep. Rick Townsend (R-Brunswick), allows public school and public postsecondary employees to take up to 30 days of leave for organ donation and up to seven days for bone marrow donation. This leave would not count against annual or sick leave balances and would count as service when calculating retirement benefits. Employees must furnish a physician's note at least seven days before taking either form of leave. Organ donor and bone marrow leave benefits would not be waivable by districts as part of their flexibility contracts.



Rep. Rick Townsend,  
HB 235 Sponsor



HB 235 Signed into  
Law by Gov. Kemp  
who Shakes the  
Hand of the  
Educator who  
Inspired the Bill

**HB 37**, sponsored by Rep. Rob Leverett (R-Elberton), directs local school districts to notify employees whether Social Security taxes will be withheld from their pay. It also requires notification of employee eligibility for other pension or retirement plans. Notification must occur at least once every five years and at or near the time of employee separation from a school district. The bill was amended late in the session to include a provision allowing school boards that offer health and dental plans to members also to offer coverage to members' families.

**HB 105**, by Rep. Will Wade (R-Dahlonega), increases the state indemnification fund for public school employees from \$75,000 to \$150,000 for educators killed in the line of service.

**SB 20**, sponsored by Sen. Kay Kirkpatrick (R-Marietta), makes spouses and children of public school teachers and employees killed or permanently disabled in the line of duty eligible for education grants. The Georgia Student Finance Authority would manage these funds.

# EDUCATOR WORKFORCE



Sen. Billy Hickman  
Speaks at PDOCH

Before the start of the 2025 Legislative Session, the Senate Education & Youth and Higher Education Committees held multiple meetings to study issues in the educator workforce pipeline. The product of these meetings was [\*\*SR 237\*\*](#) by Sen. Billy Hickman (R-Statesboro). The resolution calls upon the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC), in collaboration with several other state agencies and educator associations, such as PAGE, to provide the governor and the General Assembly with recommendations to strengthen the K-12 educator workforce by the end of 2025.

These recommendations are to focus on various subjects, such as exploring ways to compensate student teachers, examining teacher and leader retention strategies such as mentorship and professional development, and encouraging innovative programs to help people enter the K-12 and early education professions.

## Coming Soon: The 2025 Educator Workforce Report

Thank you to all the educators who took part in our 2025 workforce survey. The results will be released in the upcoming weeks.



# LITERACY

**HB 307**, by Rep. Bethany Ballard (R-Warner Robins), explicitly states that three-cueing reading instruction does not constitute the primary means of literacy instruction and is not considered high-quality instructional material. Aspects of three-cueing may still be used in supplemental materials. Three-cueing is defined as any model for teaching students to read based on “meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues.” The legislation repeals a provision regarding Reading Recovery, revises dyslexia definitions, and sets up a three-year cycle to review state-approved literacy screeners. HB 307 directs the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) to annually publish a dyslexia informational handbook and develop training programs for teachers on the science of reading. It also extends the sunset date for the Georgia Council on Literacy.



Rep. Bethany Ballard  
Meets with PAGE members

**SB 93**, by Sen. RaShaun Kemp (D-Atlanta), tasks the GaPSC with adopting rules that require criteria for educator preparation programs exclusively align with the science of reading and other evidence-based standards.



PAGE Supporting Literacy Through its  
Work with Georgia Reads

# SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

**HB 81**, sponsored by Rep. Bethany Ballard (R-Warner Robins), seeks to enter Georgia into the Interstate Compact for School Psychologists, allowing qualified school psychologists from other states participating in the compact to obtain licensure in Georgia without satisfying duplicative licensing requirements. The compact will go into effect once seven states have joined.



Rep. Ballard with PAGE and Georgia Association of School Psychologists Advocates



Gov. Kemp  
Signs HB 81  
into Law

**Georgia is making progress towards providing more school mental health professionals, but there is still room for improvement.**

	Georgia's Funding Ratios	Recommended Best Practice Funding Ratios	PAGE Requested Funding Ratios
<b>School Counselors</b>	1:450	1:250	<b>1:400</b>
<b>School Social Workers</b>	1: 2,475	1:250	<b>1:2,475<sup>4</sup></b>
<b>School Psychologists</b>	1: 2,475	1:500	<b>1:2,420<sup>5</sup></b>

[Click the graph to learn more](#)

# PRIVATE SCHOOL VOUCHER INCOME VERIFICATION

HB 217, by Rep. Soo Hong (R-Lawrenceville), included a late-session addition authorizing the Education Savings Authority, the entity overseeing the Georgia Promise Scholarship voucher program, to submit income information on voucher applicants to the Department of Revenue for income verification purposes. The bill also extends the sunset date for the Dual Achievement Program to 2031. It updates language relating to an anti-nepotism clause in school board election regulations by making the exception to this clause apply based on current system enrollment instead of the enrollment count in 2009.

## TRANSGENDER STUDENT ATHLETES

SB 1, the "Fair and Safe Athletic Opportunities Act" by Sen. Greg Dolezal (R-Cumming), prohibits males from competing in female-only school sports and prohibits females from competing in male-only sports, with several exceptions. The legislation stipulates that a student's sex can be observed or clinically verified at or before birth. It bans self-identification as a form of verifying student sex. Schools can use medical records or "other standard school medical procedures" to verify or confirm, though the bill prohibits confirming sex through visual inspection.

## CHARTER SCHOOLS

SB 82, or the 'Local Charter School Authorization and Support Act of 2025' by Sen. Clint Dixon (R-Gwinnett), seeks to promote local approval of charter schools by creating an incentive grant program overseen by the State Charter Schools Commission. School districts would receive grant funds when they approve charter schools. Conversely, if districts deny local charter petitions, they must provide the petitioner, the SBOE, and the Office of Charter School Compliance with a written explanation of denial within twenty days. If a district denies multiple petitions (two or three based on district size) that are subsequently approved by the state, the district would not be able to renew their strategic waivers for three years or until the State Board of Education (SBOE) determines local boards have demonstrated "commitment to increasing student performance and encouraging innovation through high-quality local charter petition authorizations." This provision would not apply to districts with fewer than 10,000 students and would sunset for all districts on July 1, 2035.

# STATE BUDGET

## Literacy

Legislators approved valuable investments in new literacy and student mental health resources in the [\*\*Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2026 budget\*\*](#), which begins July 1. They directed \$18.5 million to fund 116 Regional Education Service Area (RESA)-based literacy coaches. This investment is comprised of \$ 10.8 million in new funds and \$7.7 million reallocated from the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA).

## Mental Health

The FY 2026 budget contains \$2.4 million to fund a full-time social worker for school districts that, due to their small size, earn only a portion of funding for a social worker. It also includes \$871,982 to reduce the funding ratio for school psychologists to 1:2,420 in accordance with legislation passed in 2013. Legislators made additional beneficial investments in student mental health, including \$19.6 million to establish student mental health support grants, which will provide \$20,000 for each middle and high school to support mental health services. They also added \$6.9 million for “qualified student advocacy specialists,” a position incorporated in [\*\*HB 268\*\*](#), a bill described below, which is intended to protect students by enhancing mental health supports and school safety. Student advocacy specialists’ responsibilities will include coordinating district efforts to identify and provide interventions to students at risk for mental health concerns.

## Targeted Student Support

The FY 2026 budget also includes \$15.3 million in one-time district pilot funds for targeted support to economically disadvantaged students, an addition long supported by PAGE.

## Promise Scholarship Voucher Funding

Less welcome appropriation action included lawmakers' approval of \$141 million to launch the state's third private school voucher program: the Georgia Promise Scholarship. The Promise Scholarship joins two existing state private school voucher programs: one for which the state allocates \$120 million in annual tax credits through the Qualified Education Expense Tax Credit program, and the Special Needs Scholarship program for which \$46 million is allocated. PAGE has long opposed the use of public funding for private education.

## Other Budget Items

Other items in the FY 2026 budget items include the following, as well as one item about which the governor subsequently issued a [disregard memo](#):

- \$300 million increase to the Quality Basic Education (QBE) formula to fund enrollment growth, educator training, and experience
- \$100 million added to cover an increase in the employer contribution rate for the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) to 21.91% from 20.78%
- \$172 million added to cover an increase in the employer contribution to the per-member, per-month cost of the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) for certified staff
- \$12.5 million increase for out-of-school care for statewide and community grantees
- \$2 million increase for a research group for competency-based standards and evaluation for literacy coaches in the Governor's Office of Student Achievement
- \$500,000 for grants to school districts to incentivize the establishment of locally approved charter schools
- \$2 million in planning grants for state completion special schools
- \$250,000 to Communities in Schools for affiliates
- \$750,000 to cover the cost of state-funded Advanced Placement and PSAT exams
- \$1.6 million increase to sustain 400 Mbps of state-funded bandwidth for all districts through PeachNet
- \$5.9 million increase for sparsity grants for small schools that are below the base school size under the QBE and do not generate an adequate amount of funding
- \$2 million for one-time funding for character education
- \$75,000 increase in funds for feminine hygiene grants for low property wealth districts with high rates of economically disadvantaged students, boosting total funding for the grants to \$1.6 million
- \$21.5 million increase for State Commission Charter School supplements
- **-\$3 million reduction in formula funds for the school nutrition program**
- \$10 million increase for pupil transportation formula grants
- \$158,400 increase for required bus driver safety training
- **-\$113 million reduction in formula funds for equalization grants**
- **-\$115 million reduction for the local five mill share**
- **-\$298,026 reduction in formula funds for differentiated pay for newly certified math and science teachers**
- **-\$1.8 million reduction in formula funds for Completion Special Schools supplements**

- -\$1.3 million reduction in formula funds for charter system grants
- -\$94,608 reduction in formula funds for Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs)
- -\$92,301 reduction in formula funds for school nurses
- \$150,000 increase for a school safety coordinator position
- \$100,000 increase to technology/career education for a government and public administration pathway
- -\$1.3 million increase to establish a high-demand equipment grant program for new and expanding career and technical education labs
- \$55,000 increase for five new agricultural education programs
- \$100,000 increase for a Young Farmer position in Bibb County
- \$183,509 increase for two education specialist positions at youth camps in the agricultural education program
- **\$268,157 increase for camp-affiliated staff in the agricultural education program (governor issued disregard)**
- \$5.3 million to update teacher training and experience in the pre-kindergarten program
- \$14 million for year two of a four-year phase-in to reduce class size from 22 to 20 students in the pre-kindergarten program
- \$17.4 increase for the dual enrollment program to meet projected need



Claire Suggs Presents on  
State Budget at PDOCH

# OTHER BILLS THAT PASSED

## House

**HB 192**, the "Top State for Talent Act" by Rep. Matthew Gambill (R-Cartersville), mandates the inclusion of programs from the High-demand Career List in curriculum for grades 6-12. It further requires the Department of Education to develop focused programs of study aligned with this list, allowing students to access HOPE grant funds for eligible CTAE courses until 2028. The bill also adds additional funding to an annual competitive grant program for educational equipment aligned with high-demand careers and mandates the creation of individual college and career plans. Additionally, the bill requires the State Workforce Development Board to develop a methodology for evaluating the return on investment for educational programs, and to report on how the practices and programs of K-12 and postsecondary educational agencies align to meet student needs and promote postsecondary attainment while also avoiding duplicating efforts. In addition, the bill mandates the State Workforce Development Board, the Department of Education, and the Technical College System of Georgia to update and maintain a list of relevant workplace credentials associated with high-demand careers.

**HB 371** by Rep. John Corbett (R-Lake Park) stipulates that starting in 2027 the maximum amount of funds allowed to be distributed to the capital outlay program will increase from \$300 million to \$375 million. The bill also includes language requiring that elementary school playgrounds built in the future meet specific ADA requirements.

**HR 887**, introduced by Rep. Shaw Blackmon (R-Bonaire), creates the House Study Committee on Reducing and Prioritizing Mandates for Public School Administration.

## Senate

**SB 63**, by Sen. Clint Dixon (R-Gwinnett), would require school districts that offer PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, PreACT, ACT, ASVAB, or Advanced Placement (AP) exams to students enrolled in the district to offer the same testing to homeschooled students residing in the district. School districts could not charge homeschooled students any fee to take the exams beyond what is currently charged to enrolled students.

**SB 154**, by Sen. Bo Hatchett (R-Cornelia), modifies references to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) in the Georgia code to reference either USED or its successor. During the legislative session, the bill was characterized as a "proactive cleanup bill" in preparation for President Donald Trump's planned elimination of the USED. The provisions become effective upon an act of Congress to eliminate USED formally.

**SB 212**, by Sen. Shawn Still (R-Norcross), prohibits disclosure of public-school student directory information to political entities such as candidates, campaign committees, and political action committees. The bill creates a new felony offense punishable by imprisonment of one to 10 years and/or a fine of up to \$100,000. It also restricts political candidates and committees from soliciting students to organize campaign events on school property when such events are prohibited by law or school policy.

# RETURN TO WORK & OTHER FISCAL RETIREMENT BILLS

Retirement bills with a fiscal impact follow a unique path through the Georgia General Assembly. They require retirement committee approval for an actuarial study between the first and second years of the legislative biennium. If approved for actuarial review, these bills will be eligible for consideration in 2026.

## Fiscal Retirement Bills: Actuarial Review Approved

Already approved for actuarial review is [\*\*SB 150\*\*](#), by Sen. Billy Hickman (R-Statesboro), which extends the sunset date on Georgia's return-to-work program, which is set to expire in 2026 unless legislators act. The program allows retired educators with at least 30 years of service to return to work full-time while drawing TRS benefits. Educators can only return to work after a 12-month waiting period and must teach in a high-needs subject area as determined by their local RESA. SB 150 also seeks to reauthorize the return-to-work program until 2034, drops the required years of service from 30 to 25, and the waiting period from one year to 60 days. It would allow educators to return in any subject area other than athletics and coaching.

[\*\*SB 209\*\*](#), by Sen. Russ Goodman (R-Homerville), was also approved for actuarial review. It would permit Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS) employees to make a one-time irrevocable decision to join TRS.

[\*\*HB 372\*\*](#), by Rep. Bethany Ballard (R-Warner Robins), extends the program until June 30, 2030. It also allows pre-K-12 educators who teach mathematics, special education, reading, writing, or English language arts and hold a current dyslexia or reading endorsement from the GaPSC to the list of eligible participants. HB 372 would allow each public school system to develop a list of three "areas of highest need" to participate in the return-to-work program, shifting the responsibility from RESAs.



Senate Retirement Committee  
Prioritizes Bills for Actuarial Study



PAGE Testifies in  
Support of HB 372

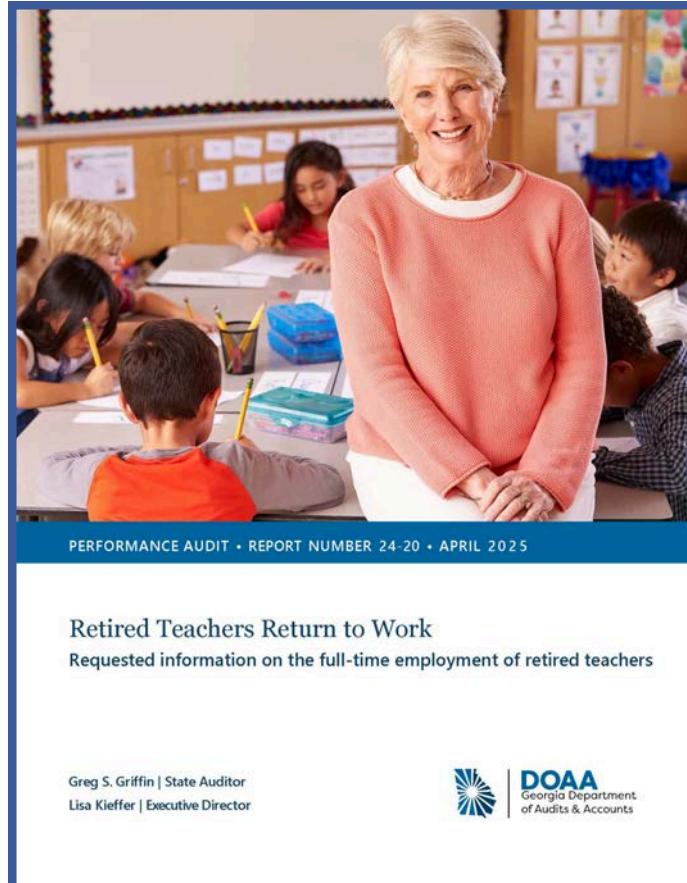
# Fiscal Retirement Bills: Did not Receive Actuarial Review

The following bills were not recommended for actuarial review and are ineligible for passage in 2026:

**HB 599**, by Rep. Sandy Donatucci (R-Buford), would reauthorize the current [return-to-work law](#) until July 1, 2029. The bill does not add categories of educators who are allowed to participate beyond the current program.

**HB 873**, by Rep. Rick Townsend (R-Brunswick), would allow GaDOE employees to utilize the return-to-work program.

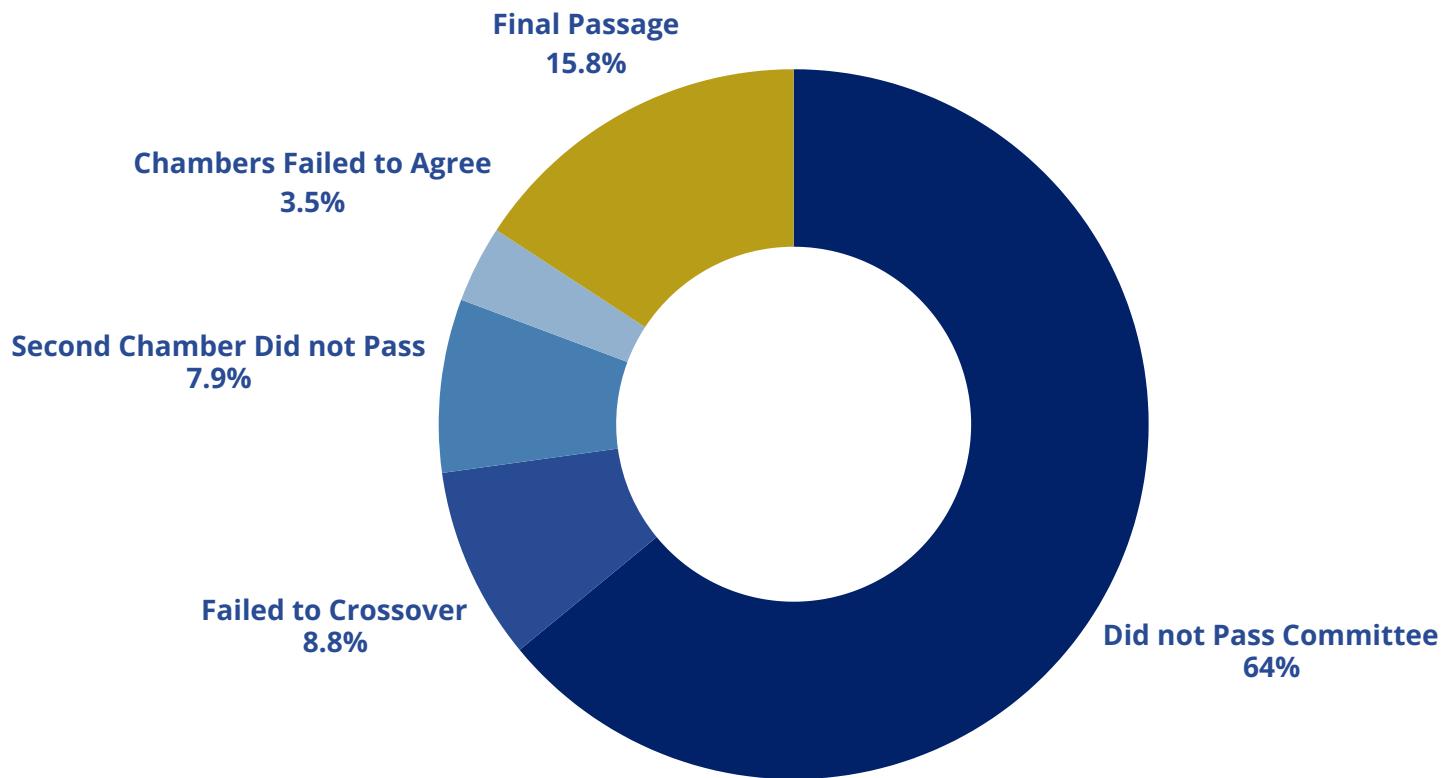
**A recent DOAA report on the teacher return-to-work program found it was beneficial for school districts and had minimal financial impact on TRS.**



[Click to Read Report](#)

# MOST 2025 BILLS DID NOT PASS (YET)

## Fate of Education Committee Bills in 2025



More than 1,000 bills were introduced during the 2025 Legislative Session, but about 70% failed to achieve final passage. About half of all bills introduced did not make it out of committee. Education bills had an even lower 2025 passage rate. Only 16% of bills assigned to the House Education Committee or the Senate Education & Youth Committee achieved final passage.

Of note, compared to 2024, more 2025 education bills failed at the final agreement stage. One possible explanation is this year's sudden Senate adjournment. While final adjournment usually happens around midnight, the Senate abruptly adjourned shortly after 9 p.m. This action precluded further consideration of multiple bills.

However, legislation that did not pass during the first year in a two-year legislative biennium is important, as the legislation remains eligible for consideration during the following legislative session. While not an exhaustive summary of all education legislation that did not pass during the 2025 session, highlights of school-related bills pending in 2026 are included below.

## Bills that did Not Pass: Student Mental Health

**HB 59**, by Lydia Glaize (D-Fairburn), would lower the state funding ratio for school counselors to one counselor for every 250 students. The current ratio is one counselor for every 450 students.

**HB 335**, by Rep. Omari Crawford (D-Decatur), requires athletic associations to develop and post guidelines and materials informing the public about mental health risks for student-athletes and raising awareness of available mental health resources. Schools must provide similar information annually to the parents of student-athletes in grades 6-12. The bill further requires coaches to review these materials annually. Coaches would not be eligible to coach interscholastic athletic activities until they complete this requirement. Finally, HB 335 provides liability protections for relevant individuals and organizations for either removing or choosing not to remove a student-athlete from interscholastic athletic activities due to actual or perceived mental health risks. This protection only applies to healthcare providers if they are volunteers.



Rep. Lydia Glaize,  
HB 59 Sponsor

## Bills that did Not Pass: Completion Schools

**SB 126**, by Sen. Clint Dixon (R-Gwinnett), would lower the age at which students can enroll in completion schools from 18 to 16.

## Bills that did Not Pass: Literacy

**HR 145**, by Rep. Chris Erwin (R-Homer), urges GaDOE and the Department of Public Health (DPH) to collaborate on prioritizing hearing and vision screenings that may impede children's literacy skills and progress.

## Bills that did Not Pass: Educator Benefits

In its original form, [\*\*HB 127\*\*](#), by Rep. Brent Cox (R-Dawsonville), allowed teachers to use two additional days of accumulated sick leave for personal or professional leave. Late in the legislative session, a Senate committee stripped the bill's original language and replaced it with [\*\*SB 120\*\*](#), by Sen. Marty Harbin (R-Tyrone), which would prohibit public K-12 schools and postsecondary institutions from diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs, trainings, recruitment, or retention activities. State or federal funding could be withheld from institutions violating the prohibition.

[\*\*SB 39\*\*](#) by Sen. Blake Tillery (R-Vidalia) would prohibit the SHBP from covering gender-affirming care.

## Bills that did Not Pass: Educator Pay



Rep. Phil Olaleye,  
HB 310 Sponsor

[\*\*HB 310\*\*](#), by Rep. Phil Olaleye (D-Atlanta), would provide grants to support student teachers. While the grants would be state funds, they would be paid to student teachers in regular installments through local districts. Each student teacher could receive a maximum of \$7,500 in grant funds. HB 310 received a hearing near the end of the session, and members of both parties expressed interest in the issue.

PAGE  
Testifies in  
Support of  
HB 310



[\*\*HB 333\*\*](#), by Rep. Tangie Herring (D-Macon), adjusts the state teacher salary schedule annually based on the Consumer Price Index.

## Bills that did Not Pass: School Zone Speed Cameras

[HB 225](#), by Rep. Dale Washburn (R-Macon), would repeal all laws allowing speed cameras in school zones.

[HB 651](#), by Rep. Alan Powell (R-Hartwell), would limit camera operation to one hour before and after the start and end of a school day. Citations could only be issued for violations exceeding 10 mph over the posted limit, and the current \$25 processing fee would be prohibited. The bill requires that half of funds raised by the cameras be allocated for school safety equally to all schools in a school district.

[SB 75](#), by Sen. Max Burns (R-Sylvania), seeks to restrict the use of automatic speed cameras in school zones to weekdays when instruction is taking place, 90 minutes before the start of the school day, and 30 minutes after school starts. Afternoon camera operation could only occur 30 minutes before school dismissal and 90 minutes following dismissal. SB 75 requires signs notifying motorists of school speed zones to be placed one-half mile from the start of schools' reduced speed limit zones.

## Bills that did Not Pass: Legal Protections for Educators and Schools

[SB 21](#), sponsored by Sen. Blake Tillery (R-Vidalia), seeks to remove sovereign immunity from local governments, thus opening them to liability should they adopt policies conflicting with a state prohibition on immigration sanctuary policies. The proposed waiver would apply to governments, officials, and employees violating the prohibition.

[SB 74](#), by Sen. Max Burns (R-Sylvania), would allow school librarians to be convicted of a misdemeanor for allowing students to access harmful materials. The bill exempts librarians from criminal responsibility if they were unaware of the harmful materials, flagged the materials for the library's governing body, or attempted to move the material to a location inaccessible to minors.

## Bills that did Not Pass: School Boards

[SB 4](#), sponsored by Sen. Greg Dolezal (R-Cumming), seeks to address the role of local school boards and the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA). SB 4 would require local school boards to adopt a model code of ethics, allowing citizens over age 18 to file ethics complaints against local school board members. The bill limits training requirements to new school board members and members of districts designated by the Department of Audits and Accounts as high-risk. Finally, the legislation outlines what can and cannot be covered or stated during board training.

## Bills that did Not Pass: Private School Vouchers

In 2024, policymakers approved [\*\*SB 233\*\*](#), creating the “Georgia Promise Scholarship” voucher program, Georgia’s third private school voucher program. SB 233’s author, Sen. Greg Dolezal, attempted to expand the program before it even began via [\*\*SB 152\*\*](#). The bill would modify the voucher program so that the adopted and biological children of foster parents would be eligible for a voucher regardless of their attendance zone. These children would also move up on the priority list for the voucher. The bill does not apply to foster children themselves. The House Education Committee added language to the bill clarifying that students eligible to use the voucher must attend a school scoring in the lowest student-achievement quartile. After the Promise Scholarship’s creation during the 2024 session, the new state agency created to administer it interpreted the voucher’s applicability to students zoned for any school in the lowest quartile in the student’s district. This interpretation vastly expanded applicability. In the case of smaller school districts with sole middle or high schools, if such schools are in the lowest quartile, every student in the district would be eligible for the voucher

Legislators also attempted to expand the student scholarship organization tuition tax credit voucher program with [\*\*HB 328\*\*](#), by Rep. Kasey Carpenter (R-Dalton), which increases the cap for the student scholarship organization tuition tax credit voucher program from \$120 to \$140 million. The bill’s original version initially raised the cap to \$200 million, but a substitute version from the House Ways and Means Committee would raise the cap to \$140 million. The substitute also clarifies that tax credits cannot be carried forward year-to-year and makes some revisions to how insurance companies can contribute to SSOs. PAGE appreciates the compromise version of the bill to limit the cap increase to \$140 million but remains opposed to any voucher increases. The bill did not have a committee hearing in the Senate, but it remains eligible to pass in 2026.



PAGE Legislative Team Members Testified Against Voucher Expansion Throughout Session