

HB 338 would create the position of Chief Turnaround Officer (CTO) within the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) who would report directly to the State Board of Education (SBOE). The governor appoints the SBOE. The following CTO qualifications are required under the bill: a minimum of 10 years of experience in K-12 education; an advanced degree; experience in the position of principal or higher in a public school system for a minimum of three years; and, extensive experience in turning around failing schools. The CTO is authorized to recommend other individuals, after consulting with the State School Superintendent, as turnaround coaches to the SBOE. These turnaround coaches are to be experienced in turning around schools with similar needs to those needing assistance.

The CTO is responsible for managing and overseeing a system of supports and assistance for low-performing schools. He or she would prioritize these low-performing schools based on the greatest need of assistance. In order to accomplish this, the CTO would work with the local board of education of a low-performing school to amend the charter system or strategic waiver school system (SWSS) flexibility contract. (All but two Georgia school districts have these contracts.) Should a board not agree to amend its contract, the SBOE would have 60 days to implement one or more interventions already in state law or risk losing its flexibility contract. For the two systems not under a flexibility contract, the district would enter into an intervention contract with the SBOE for each school needing assistance.

Turnaround coaches are responsible for working with one or more schools identified by the CTO as needing assistance. These coaches will assist in creating local collaborations to address personal and community conditions. This includes an examination of the needs, issues and problems within the communities where the schools are located, such as poverty, lack of economic development, safety, transportation options for parents and students, adult educational opportunities, wellness and mental health services. The coaches are then responsible for assisting the schools in identifying state and local resources that are available or that could be strengthened to address the issues impacting the struggling schools.

A primary responsibility of turnaround coaches will be to conduct individual assessments of low-performing students and diagnose the factors for low-performance, such as reading development and comprehension, physical health, mental health, access to the internet or other resources expected to be available to students outside of the classroom. The coaches also coordinate with the school to provide interventions for the student such as academic support and enrichment activities, access to programs to promote parental involvement, access to supports for addressing and improving mental and physical health, access to a learning resource center for students and guardians to strengthen academic supports, positive behavioral interventions and supports, and access to experts including data scientists, psychometric personnel, curriculum specialists, learning theorists, CTAE experts and any other experts identified by the coach. These evaluations must be completed in the first 60 days of the contract described below.

The CTO has 90 days from the date of entering the contract with a district to complete a comprehensive on-site evaluation with the assistance of the local regional education service agency (RESA) to determine the cause of the school's low performance or lack of progress. The bill allows the CTO to enlist a third party to assist in this evaluation as long as the third party is selected from an annually established and approved list. Should a district use a party not on the list, the district would be responsible for any expenses.

The following interventions are spelled out in the bill:

- Reallocation of resources and technical assistance
- Changes in school procedures or operations
- Professional learning focused on student achievement for instructional and administrative staff
- Intervention for individual administrators or teachers
- Instructional strategies based on scientifically based research
- Waivers from state statutes or rules
- Adoption of policies and practices to ensure all groups of students meet the state's proficiency level
- Extended instruction time for low-performing students
- Other actions approved by the SBOE

Based on the evaluation and recommendations of the CTO, turnaround coach (or coaches), and the local RESA, the school will then develop its intensive school improvement plan that addresses the academic inefficiencies identified by the school's rating on the CCRPI. If after two years the school is not improving, the CTO shall require one or more of the following:

- Continued implementation of the intensive school improvement plan
- Appointment of a school master or management team to oversee and direct the duties of the principal of the school until the school makes acceptable improvements
- Removal of school personnel, which may include the principal and personnel whose performance has been determined to be insufficient to produce student achievement gains
- Implementation of a state charter school
- Complete reconstitution of the school, removing all personnel, appointing a new principal, and hiring all new staff. Existing staff may reapply for employment at the newly constituted school but shall not be rehired if their performance regarding student achievement has been negative for the past four years
- Mandatory parental option to relocate the student to another public school in the local school system that does not have an unacceptable rating to be chosen by the parents from a list provided by the district. The local system will be required to transport students choosing to relocate from Title I schools. For those students relocating from non-Title I schools, the district will decide whether to provide transportation or place the responsibility for transportation on the individual students
- Complete restructuring of the school's governance arrangement and internal organization of the school
- Operation of the school by another successful school system
- Operation of the school by a private nonprofit entity
- Any other interventions set forth by the CTO and SBOE

If one-half or more of the schools in a single district receive an unacceptable rating for five or more years, the SBOE will hold a hearing to discuss removal of the local board members in the district. The SBOE will then provide a recommendation for removal to the Governor if they deem this step necessary.

Before any interventions are put into place, the local BOE may request a hearing before the SBOE to show cause why an intervention or interventions would not be appropriate. The final decision remains with the SBOE.

The Governor's Office of Student Achievement is authorized in the bill to provide grants, subject to availability of funds, to schools working with the CTO and turnaround coaches to assist in assessing low-performing students and establishing the supports spelled out above. HB 237, a bill by House Education Committee Chairman Brooks Coleman (R-Duluth) would provide the funding mechanism for this grant program.

Also included in HB 338 is the creation of an Education Turnaround Advisory Council (ETAC) that will advise the SBOE in the search and hiring of the CTO including the submittal of names to be considered for the position. Additionally, the ETAC may submit recommendations and input on the request for proposals process conducted by the State Board of Education to establish a list of approved third parties that may be retained to assist in the evaluation of schools. This council would be made up of the executive directors of PAGE, the Georgia School Boards Association, the Georgia School Superintendents Association, the Georgia Association of Educators, the executive director of the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders, and the president of the Georgia PTA, or their designee. HB 338 allows for other duties to be assigned to the ETAC but specifically states that the council "shall have no authority and shall only be advisory in nature."

The bill would also set up the Joint Study Committee on the Establishment of a State Accreditation Process to determine if a state accreditation process to supplement AdvancED accreditation is necessary.

HB 338 also creates the Joint Study Committee on the Establishment of a Leadership Academy. The committee will study the possibility of establishing a leadership academy housed within the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) to provide opportunities for principals and other school leaders to update and expand their leadership knowledge and skills.

Finally, the SBOE will be required to provide an annual report detailing each school receiving an unacceptable rating for one or more consecutive years and the interventions used in each case to be disseminated to members of the General Assembly.