

Jimmy Stokes

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From: Jimmy Stokes [stokes30650@bellsouth.net]  
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To: stokes30650@bellsouth.net  
Subject: 2012 PRE GENERAL ASSEMBLY UPDATE



**2012**  
**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

## **GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

### **January 3, 2012**

#### Welcome to the 2012 General Assembly

The 2012 Georgia General Assembly convenes on January 9, 2012, and promises to be full of comedy, tragedy, foolishness, and perhaps some attempts at sound legislation. **GASSP** will report to you each Friday about the goings on under the Gold Dome for the week just completed. You may disagree with the assessments that are presented but the intent of our reporting is to inform you and to inspire you to stay in close contact with your local legislators—that is the only hope that we have in seeing that sound education legislation is enacted by the 2012 General Assembly. Please feel free to contact the **GASSP** lobbyist, Jimmy Stokes, anytime that you have a question or concern. Jimmy can be contacted at 770-601-3798. The weekly reports could not be possible without the outstanding contributions of **Skip Yow**, lobbyist for Metro Resa and chairman of the Gold Dome Gang, the consortium of education lobbyists. He truly does an excellent job of representing all educators and sharing information about what is happening on a daily basis.

#### Issues to look for in 2012

- Revenue collections are up an average of 5% per month for FY2012 but don't look for much of that money to go to education. If it does, such as a modest teacher pay raise, it will be compromised by taking money away in another education area, probably health insurance. While the public education detractors are not gaining traction, there is no group of legislators that is powerful enough to forge a significant positive movement for public education.

- **One issue that can be expected to surface early is an attempt to propose a constitutional amendment that would reinstall the Charter School Commission that was declared unconstitutional by the Georgia Supreme Court. If it does surface, it will give educators across the state an opportunity to campaign for public education and against the proliferation of state funds by special interest charter schools.**
- **There is a **serious** leadership crisis in the Senate. A number of senators have accepted lucrative state jobs (appointed by Nathan Deal) and left the Senate. Special elections have featured numerous guest appearances by Tommie Williams and Chip Rogers, the current power brokers in the Senate, but their candidates have been defeated overwhelmingly. It will be very interesting to see how the forces allied with Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle deal with the current power structure lead by Williams and Rogers. (Williams and Rogers have not been kind to their Senate foes and therein lies much of the concern over the changes in Senate membership.) While the House has seen some changes due to resignations and deaths, Speaker David Ralston, continues to enjoy reasonable respect of both Republican and Democratic house members.**
- **Do not be confused by the rhetoric regarding reapportionment, nothing will change. The party in power makes the calls on reapportionment—always has been and always will be that way.**
- **Perhaps the most contentious issue facing public education is the what will be done about the cost of health insurance. The costs to local systems for classified personnel and non-certified personnel are going out the roof and local systems have no options other than passing the costs along to those individuals (who probably can least afford such increases) or put more local money into subsidizing the costs—neither option is practical.**
- **Much has been said about education reform, particularly revising Title 20 of the Georgia Code (the basic rules that govern day to day operation of public education). It appears now that few substantial changes will be made. Politics talks loud but seldom delivers.**
- **In general, a relatively quiet session is anticipated for education. Ethics, revenue, and tax reform will get far more attention.**

**Please remember that YOU are the most powerful legislative force that public educators have in this state. Your conversations and relationship with your local legislators do more to promote positive education legislation than anything that lobbyists can ever hope to do. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance to you in your relationship with your local legislator.**

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