
GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Serving secondary school administrators across Georgia
Weekly Legislative Update-February 13, 2009



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Vile Rumor

The Capitol is full of rumors and the one that has the best chance of coming true has to do with teacher and student furloughs. It is coming, we just don't know when and how much. Two bills, HB 193 and 198, have been *high jacked* by Ways and Means with the purpose of adding mandated furloughs. *High jacking* is a legislative maneuver used in recent sessions to take pieces of legislation that have been through the first and second reader process and adding to those bills entirely new measures, often stripping the bills original intent. There are speculations that the furloughs will be three days for students and five days for teachers but nothing is certain at the moment. Unfortunately there just are any good solutions to parlaying the state's revenue shortfall other than to raise taxes and that appears to be out of the question among current legislators. **The salvation may come from the Federal Stimulus Package. It is very possible**

that Georgia may receive enough to stop the furlough process.

The New Shape Bill

HB 229, the NEW Shape Bill, now called the Student Health and Physical Education came out of the House Education Committee amended to include all physical education classes taught in grades 1-12 by a certified physical education teacher, beginning with the 2010-2011 school year. The bill requires an annual physical fitness assessment that is report to parents and the State DOE.

The Sneer of the Legislature

The most wise Georgia Legislature continues to look for ways to cut spending, reduce taxes, and make public funds available for private education. On Thursday afternoon in the hot debate on HB 233 which caps property assessments, legislator after legislator took the well of the House to bash the evil "Taxman" and spew their distaste for taxes in any form. I hope that no one introduces a bill to abolish state government with the exception of the legislature because it would pass both chambers! HB 280, a part of the Governor's education package, that creates Master Teacher designations and supplements for beginning math and science teachers passed out the House Education Committee but appear to be doomed by the lack of revenue to fund them. The bill very well may pass the legislature and be signed into law but never be funded and that is true of many other pieces of legislation.

Action on Education Bills

The House Education gave a DO Pass to the following bills:

House Bill 149 MOVE ON WHEN READY

By: Representatives Jones of the 46th, Hembree of the 67th, Dempsey of the 13th, Powell of the 171st, and Harden of the 147th

To amend Part 4 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to financing under the "Quality Basic Education Act," so as to enact the "Move on When Ready Act"; to provide for definitions; to provide a program for eleventh and twelfth grade students to attend postsecondary colleges and schools for high school credit; to provide for notice to parents and students of the program; to provide requirements for course credit; to provide for state funding; to provide for testing; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

House Bill 229 NEW SHAPE BILL

By: Representatives Coleman of the 97th, Dickson of the 6th, Maxwell of the 17th, Kaiser of the 59th, Ashe of the 56th, and others

To amend Part 3 of Article 16 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the health of students in elementary and secondary education, so as to enact the "Student Health and Physical Education Act"; to require local school systems to conduct an annual fitness assessment and to comply with state physical education instruction requirements; to provide for reporting of results; to provide for an annual report to the Governor; to provide for a recognition program; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

House Bill 251 SCHOOL CHOICE

By: Representatives Morgan of the 39th, Kaiser of the 59th, Setzler of the 35th, and Reece of the 11th

To amend Part 13 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to organization of schools and school systems under the "Quality Basic Education Act," so as to provide that a public school student can attend any school in the local school system under certain conditions; to provide for statutory construction; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

The House of Representatives on Thursday passed:

HB 233: PROPERTY ASSESSMENT CAP

To amend Title 48 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, related to revenue and taxation, so as to provide for the comprehensive revision of the manner and method of assessing real property; to limit valuation increases of real property; to provide for procedures, conditions, and limitations; to provide for applicability; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date; to provide for automatic repeal; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

The House defeated the following by a vote of 105 –67. The bill required a vote of 120 to pass since it is a Constitution Amendment

HR 1: A RESOLUTION FOR ASSESSMENT CAP

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution so as to limit valuation increases of real property; to provide for ratification of prior and enactment of new exemptions

and assessment freezes; to provide for applicability; to provide for the submission of this amendment for ratification or rejection; and for other purposes

Education Legislation introduced this week **Reported by Skip Yow**

For more information on the following bills, go to <http://www.legis.state.ga.us/>

House Bill 336 Requires the State BOE to set testing windows so that all school systems have the same number of days prior to the testing window

House Bill 394 Changes the parameters of the private school scholarship organizations to which contributions are a tax credit AND set eligibility for students that they must be eligible for free and reduced lunch

House Bill 400 The NEW Bridge Bill requires two elements of all schools, regardless of whether they receive an improvement grant to not: 1. a individual graduation plan is required of all students and 2. training is required of all counselors and graduation coaches. Otherwise the bill much the same that died on the last day of the session last year.

House Bill 401 Eliminates the food sales tax exemption

House Bill 423 Permits home school students to participate in joint enrollment programs but provides no funding for same

Senate Bill 122 Creates the Georgia School Retiree Health Benefit Fund for certain accounting purposes

Senate Bill 132 Dropout Deterrent Act, revises the age of mandatory attendance to seventeen

Senate Bill 137 Military dependent compact, provides flexibility in dealing with military children that transfer as a result of deployment, vetoed by Governor last year.

Hot Buttons

- 1. HB 33, mandating religious freedom via student speakers at all school events in which students speak, saw no movement this week.**
- 2. HB 103/SB 27 which establishes a Confederate Heritage and History Month will without doubt bring considerable response from minority groups saw no movement this week.**
- 3. HB 3 which creates a school holiday on Veteran's Day is opposed by GASSP. A survey indicated that a great many of our schools have Veteran's Day observances and declaring it a school holiday would mean that only a small percentage of our students would participate in a Veteran's Day observance. It appears that the members of the Defense and Veterans Affairs agree with GASSP's position and the bill may not make it out of committee.**
- 4. HB 215 moves Georgia back to 1990 with the return to a three diploma program, each of which does not prepare students for admission to the University System or Technical College System. Bill was heard by Education Subcommittee but no action was taken.**
- 5. SB 90, the Universal School Choice Bill, has been assigned to the Senate Education and Youth Committee.**
- 6. HB 281 Permits home school students to participate in public high school extracurricular activities**

Responses should be directed to Jimmy C. Stokes at stokes30650@bellsouth.net