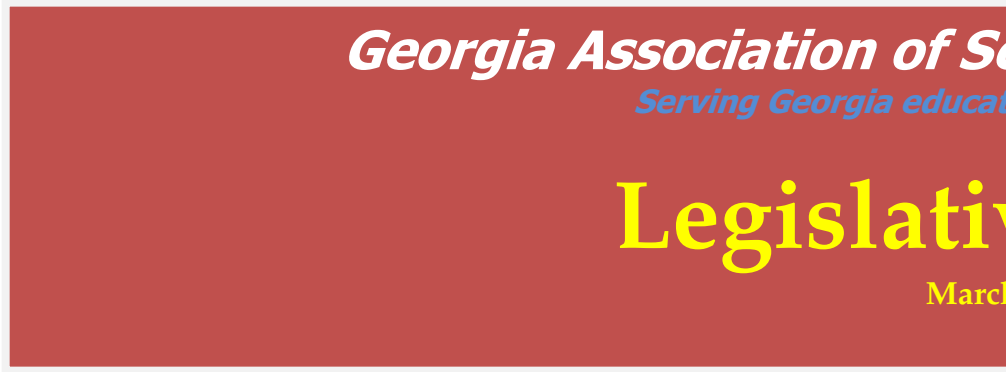


Jimmy Stokes

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From: Jimmy Stokes [stokes30650@bellsouth.net]  
Sent: Friday, March 05, 2010 4:41 PM  
To: stokes30650@bellsouth.net  
Subject: GASSP Legislative Update--March 5, 2010



## Riding On The Night Train

Even though the Legislature was in recess this week, the Senate Education and Youth Committee met anyway. The House Education Committee was not permitted to meet at the direction of Speaker David Ralston. The Senate Education train ran on through the night, whistle blowing but with few there to hear it. The meeting heard testimony and passed **SB 299**, designed to eliminate zero tolerance measures for weapons at school (local regulations on weapons remain intact; the primary change is that the first offense for any weapon other than a gun or similar weapon does not involve the judiciary system as is required in the current statute); **SB 332** requiring systems to report not only the number of weapons cases that go to hearing, but the result of the hearings and **SB 420** which establishes excuses that permit students to receive perfect attendance awards even when they are absent. If the credibility of these pieces of legislation puzzle you, they puzzle education observers across the state. Opening the door to bringing weapons to school, awarding perfect attendance when the student does not have perfect attendance, and requiring reports of information that heretofore has been considered sealed just doesn't make sense to people that have spent time working in a public school. Observers offer that each of the pieces of legislation came in response to single incident situations—such is the way of state politics. Yuck!

**SB 84** which was revived in the House earlier this session is on the Senate calendar for March 8. The bill sets qualifications, training, and ethics requirements for local BOEs. There is some argument that the bill is

**unconstitutional in that one constitutional branch of government is setting qualifications for another constitutional branch. Truthfully, the Constitution of the State of Georgia has not be a deterrent to the Legislature in the past.**

**Legislators are somewhat close mouthed about the progress of **budget development**, both the FY2010 supplemental and the FY2011. That has not stopped the “media hounds” that love to stand in front of the television cameras and espouse on their salvation plan for state finances—lots of fluff, very little substance. One thing that is glaringly obvious: the Governor is miffed with the Legislature, the Legislature is miffed with the Governor, and the opportunity to find common ground is very limited at this point. Rumors suggest that there will be several measureable changes to the Governor’s proposed budgets—but nothing specific at this time. One key legislator indicated that budgets may not be finalized until **April 15 or later**. Budget, finance, job cuts, furloughs, etc. are in a tremendously unsettled state and it is anyone’s guess as to how it will all end up!**

**The legislature convenes again on March 8 and there will be more to report next week.**

## **NEW Legislation**

**House Bill 951 Extends for 2010 the sales tax holiday for school supplies, clothing, footwear, computers and computer accessories, and energy products**

**HB 952 Extends for 2010 the sales tax holiday for school supplies, clothing, footwear, computers and computer accessories but NOT energy products**

**HB 953 Extends for 2010 the sales tax holiday for energy efficient products but NOT for school related supplies.**

**Senate Bill 60 Allows local boards to set the dropout age at 16, 17, or 18**

**SB 132 raises the state dropout age to 17**

**SB 298 Would require a basic first aid course as part of the 8th grade health course**

**SB 307 Teacher Bill of Rights adapted from MACE’s Teacher’s Bill of Rights**

