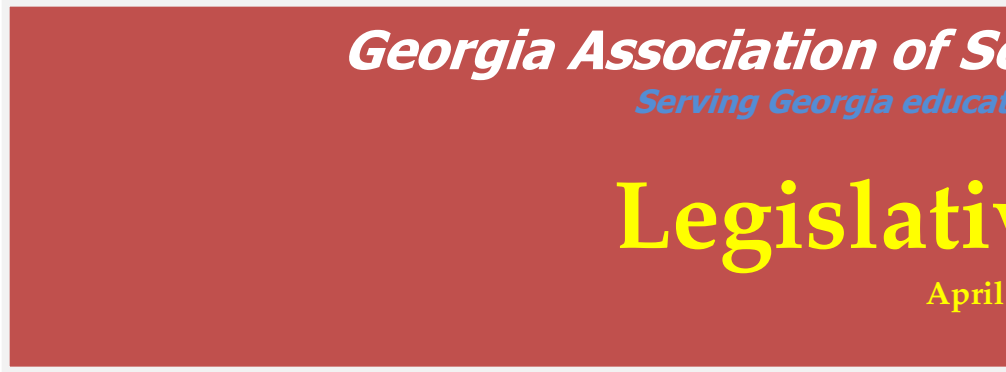


Jimmy Stokes

From: Jimmy Stokes [stokes30650@bellsouth.net]
Sent: Friday, April 23, 2010 1:13 PM
To: Stokes30650@bellsouth.net
Subject: GASSP Legislative Update--April 23, 2010



SAME SONG, 2010 VERSE

The General Assembly is up to its favorite old trick, playing havoc with legislation in the waning days of a legislative session. As expected the more powerful legislators are trying to get their legislation passed by amending it on to legislation that has already passed the other branch of the General Assembly with **SB 521** being a classic example. Pay for performance legislation had been exiled to study committees and/or outright put down but late in the session, the Governor's staff was successful in getting an element of pay for performance added to SB 521—legislation that requires a state-wide evaluation system for principals, assistant principals and teachers that includes student academic achievement. Some members of the House Education committee, Tommy Benton in particular, raised a fuss that lead to the amendment being changed to the point that a fixed percentage of student achievement as a part of the evaluation was dropped. It may be mandated by the State BOE at a later date. It angers many observers that measures are amended to bills that have never been tested through committee hearings and in some cases were even defeated in committee hearing. **SB 521 as amended is bad legislation—it gives the State BOE or others the authority to impose a pay for performance plan without going through the legislative process. You are encouraged to contact your representative and encourage them to vote against the bill as amended. It will be on the House floor on Tuesday, April 27.** It is almost as if the General Assembly operates by one set of rules for the first 35 days and then all rules are off and it's who can wield the most power that controls the

last four to five days, particularly Day 40. Couple that with the war/fireworks/mayhem that will take place over the budget and the remainder of the 2010 Session promises to be repulsive and entertaining.

The sinister side of the General Assembly is acutely demonstrated in the action surrounding HB 305 and the *Dead Peasant Act* (a scheme concocted by former Speaker Glenn Richardson and former Atlanta Falcon Mike Kenn, in which they sell insurance to the retirement systems who insure each retiree with the beneficiary being the retirement system). The only winners in the scheme are Richardson and Kenn who sell the insurance. Needless to say the legislation got nowhere. In the waning days of the session a plot was hatched to attach the Dead Peasants Act to HB 305 in conference committee and have it voted on late in the night on Day 40. Fortunately ERS and TRS got wind of the plot and are working hard to stop it in its tracks! Unfortunately, *it ain't over till it's over!*

COMPARISON OF SENATE AND HOUSE BUDGETS

Agricultural Education

House – Reduce funds by \$707,346

Senate – Reduce funds by \$1,182,155

Central Office

Reduce funds for testing administration associated with eliminated tests

House – (\$650,000)

Senate – Restore funds for CRCT, and ITBS testing – (\$450,000)

Governor's Honors Program

House – Reduce state funds , but maintain a four week program at minimum – (\$300,442)

Senate – Provide funds for Summer of 2010 only and suspend activities for Summer of 2011 or seek other revenue options. (\$500,000)

Non QBE formula Grants

Reduce funds for Sparsity grants

House – Eliminate Sparsity grants – (\$6,098,345)

Senate - Eliminate Alternative Sparsity only – (\$3,115,039)

House – Eliminate funds for Migrant Education – (\$249,113)

Senate – (\$0.00)

RESA's

The House and Senate are in agreement, therefore this will not be an item for discussion in Conference Committee

Increase funds for RESA'S to provide core services - \$6,029,301

Increase funds to fold the mission and function of ETC's into RESA's – 41,500,000

Transfer funds from the Academic Coach program to provide Math Mentors - \$1,787,328

Utilize RESA's to provide School Improvement activities.

Governor's Honors

Senate funds four weeks for 2010 and eliminates all funding for 2011

House funds four weeks for 2010

Pupil Transportation

House-reduce by (\$4,310,393)

Senate-reduce by (\$5,051,367)

CTAE

House-reduce by (\$1,541,659)

Senate-reduce by (\$3,266,908)

Testing

House-reduce funds for PSAT, AP exams, ITBS, CRCT for 1,2-(\$6,739,517)

Senate-reduce funds for PSAT and AP only (\$4,200,000)

NEWS

On **Tuesday** the Senate passed **HB 493** by substitute which creates the Georgia Youth Conservation Corps. The second bill passed by the Senate was **HB 651** which enables the State DOE to notify school systems about sex offenders by email and by website. The Senate Education and Youth Committee on Tuesday gave a do pass to **HB 936** which is the bus refurbishing bill but amended the bill to include revision of the Georgia Education Authority Act to quality for ARRA bond program for schools. Also receiving a do pass was a substitute for **HB 977**, also known as the Crawford Lewis bill, which prevents superintendents from receiving raises when teachers in their systems are furloughed. The committee gave a do pass to **SR 886** which encourages Congress and Georgia state agencies to improve nutritional quality of school meals provided to students. The House Education Committee met on Tuesday afternoon even though the meeting was originally called for a subcommittee—not uncommon at the end of the session. House Ed gave a do pass to **SR 153** which is a Constitutional amendment that would permit the creation of educational improvement districts. Many observers speculate that the school improvement districts would have the power of new school districts. The BIG surprise of the day was House Ed giving a do pass to an amended version of **SB 521**. The amended bill establishes state-wide evaluation instruments for the evaluation of teachers, assistant principals, and principals that permits the

State BOE to include student academic growth as a component of the evaluation. The committee voted down an attempt to set the percentage of the evaluation that could be allocated to student academic growth. The bill does not limit the State BOE from setting those percentages. The bill originally was intended to weight funding to charter schools that use virtual instruction since such instruction is much economical in terms of staff. That provision remains in the bill.

Wednesday was Day 38 and brought its own measure of frustration/excitement. The House passed **SB 340**, requiring schools to report HOPE data to GSFC for freshman, sophomore, juniors, and seniors. The House also passed **SB 427** creating the Georgia Foundation for Public Education. The Senate either passed or agreed to a number of education bills. **HB 907** was passed granting funding for all 6,7,8 grades as middle school, and amended to include changes to the Special Needs Scholarship (SB 10) regarding IEP requirements and payments to private schools. **HB 923** grandfathering in educators in ed leadership programs was passed as amended (2012 for Masters, 2013 for Specialist, and 2014 for doctorate) and will go back to the House where it is expended to be agreed to. **HB 980** passed and permits local BOE members to engage in the bail bond business. The flexibility bill, **HB 908**, passed and excuses systems from spending controls through 2013 and sets class sizes based on system averages and gives the State BOE authority to grant blanket waivers to systems regarding class size. The Senate and House finally agreed to multiple changes in **SB 84**, the BOE governance bill that contains nepotism language regarding BOE members that have relatives employed as administrators in the same system. Systems with FTEs less than 2800 will be able to appeal for a waiver of the rules to the State BOE. The waiver must be granted before the individual can qualify to run for the local BOE. Although the final version as passed is not available at this time, it is believed that the nepotism rules in this bill apply only to local BOE members and their relatives.

The House Committee on Education amended **SB 457** relating to approval or denial of charter petitions so as to provide that the local BOE may act on a petition of a conversion charter school or high school cluster if its approved by 60% of the members of the school councils and parents.

