

## Senate Resolution 21

By: Senators Kemp of the 46th, Grant of the 25th, Tate of the 38th and Hamrick of the 30th

## A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Joint Early Learning Initiative Commission; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, early learning, especially for at-risk children, is essential to improving school  
3 performance for Georgia students; and

4 WHEREAS, the state has invested lottery proceeds, state funds, and federal funds in the  
5 Office of School Readiness and Georgia's Pre-K Program, for a total of \$360,959,969.00 in  
6 the 2004 budget adopted in the 2004 session; and

7 WHEREAS, there are proposals for delegation of authority and funding over certain federal  
8 early learning programs to the states; and

9 WHEREAS, a comprehensive review of early learning opportunities currently available and  
10 recommendations for improvement of early learning opportunities would be helpful to the  
11 General Assembly in adopting education policies and appropriating funds for the most  
12 effective uses.

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
14 GEORGIA that there is created the Joint Early Learning Initiative Commission to be  
15 composed of 18 members, including four members of the House of Representatives to be  
16 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and four members of the Senate  
17 to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Assignments. The Governor shall appoint six  
18 members, including one member with expertise relating to early learning programs, one  
19 parent with a child enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program, one parent with a child currently  
20 enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start, one pre-kindergarten instructor, and one Head  
21 Start instructor. The director of the Georgia Lottery Corporation, the director of the Georgia  
22 Student Finance Commission, the Georgia State School Superintendent or her designee, and  
23 the director of the Office of School Readiness shall be ex-officio members of the  
24 commission. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall designate a member of the  
25 House and the Senate Committee on Assignments shall designate a member of the Senate

1 who shall serve as cochairpersons of the commission. The commission shall meet at the call  
2 of the cochairpersons.

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall undertake a study of the following:  
4 issues relating to the anticipated action of the federal government in delegating authority  
5 relating to Head Start to the state; an examination of federal and state early learning  
6 programs to define efficiencies in each; options for combining federal and state programs if  
7 authority over federal funds and programs are delegated to the state; an investigation of early  
8 learning efforts statewide, including federal, state, and private programs to assess innovative  
9 approaches and to recommend effective practices; an investigation of ways to improve  
10 pre-kindergarten standards, with a focus on a state training program for noncertified  
11 pre-kindergarten instructors; the possible creation of an early learning program specially  
12 designed for at-risk four-year-olds; possible expansion of early learning programs for at-risk  
13 three-year-olds; the impact of an early education income tax credit for families with incomes  
14 under 200 percent of the federally designated poverty level that would allow low-income  
15 families to afford early education options that wealthier families can afford at institutions of  
16 their choice. The commission may recommend any actions or legislation which the  
17 commission deems necessary or appropriate. The commission may conduct such meetings  
18 at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable it to  
19 exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives  
20 and purposes of this resolution. The members of the commission shall receive the  
21 allowances authorized for legislative members of interim legislative committees but shall  
22 receive the same for not more than three days unless additional days are authorized. The  
23 funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from the funds  
24 appropriated to the House of Representatives and Senate. The Carl Vinson Institute at the  
25 University of Georgia is authorized and directed to provide staff services to the commission.  
26 In the event the commission makes a report of its findings and recommendations, with  
27 suggestions for proposed legislation, if any, such report shall be made on or before December  
28 31, 2006. The commission shall stand abolished on December 31, 2006.