

House Bill 252

By: Representatives Morgan of the 39th, Kaiser of the 59th, Benfield of the 85th, and Reece of the 11th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Part 12 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia
2 Annotated, relating to effectiveness of educational programs, so as to create the "Georgia
3 Closing the Achievement Gap Commission"; to provide for its membership, purpose,
4 authority, and duties; to provide for periodic reports; to provide for per diem and expenses
5 for its members; to provide for staff and administrative support; to provide for related
6 matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 Part 12 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
10 relating to effectiveness of educational programs, is amended by adding a new Code section
11 to read as follows:

12 "20-2-286.

13 (a)(1) There is created a commission to be known as the 'Georgia Closing the
14 Achievement Gap Commission,' referred to in this Code section as the commission.

15 (2) The commission shall be appointed by the State Board of Education and shall consist
16 of:

17 (A) Four members recommended by the Governor;

18 (B) Three members recommended by the President of the Senate;

19 (C) Three members recommended by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

20 (D) One member recommended by the chairperson of the Senate Education and Youth
21 Committee; and

22 (E) One member recommended by the chairperson of the House Committee on
23 Education.

24 The Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives,
25 the chairperson of the Senate Education and Youth Committee, and the chairperson of the
26 House Committee on Education shall each recommend to the State Board of Education

27 a list of no fewer than two nominees for each appointment to the commission. The
28 appointments shall be made as soon as feasible but no later than September 1, 2009.
29 Each member shall serve a term of two years; however, for the purpose of providing
30 staggered terms, of the initial appointments, six members shall be appointed to one-year
31 terms and six members shall be appointed to two-year terms as determined by the State
32 Board of Education. Thereafter, each appointee shall serve a two-year term unless the
33 State Board of Education, after review and upon recommendation by the initial
34 recommending authority, extends the appointment.

35 (3) In making appointments to the commission, the State Board of Education shall ensure
36 that representatives for at-risk student populations have significant representation on the
37 commission and that the commission includes a group of diverse individuals
38 representative of Georgia's school population.

39 (4) If a vacancy occurs on the commission, it shall be filled by the State Board of
40 Education from a recommendation by the appropriate authority according to the
41 procedure set forth in this subsection.

42 (5) The members of the commission shall annually vote to appoint a chairperson and a
43 vice chairperson from among its membership.

44 (b) The purpose of the commission is to provide a public policy focus on closing the
45 student achievement gap that exists for at-risk students, including groups of students
46 disaggregated by ethnicity, sex, disability, language proficiency, geographic distribution,
47 and socioeconomic status. The commission is to develop successful strategies, reports, and
48 recommendations that will assist in closing this student achievement gap. The commission
49 shall focus on disaggregated student achievement data and shall research programs and
50 strategies utilized in schools in Georgia and nationally to reduce the achievement gap. The
51 commission shall provide reports and recommendations to the Education Coordinating
52 Council and the General Assembly regarding closing the gap in student achievement in
53 Georgia.

54 (c) The commission shall be authorized to:

55 (1) Gather accurate and reliable data and research information pertaining to the status of
56 at-risk students in the Georgia public school system;

57 (2) Identify and visit education programs and other efforts within and outside Georgia
58 that appear to be successful in yielding significant positive results for at-risk students;

59 (3) Consult with higher education faculty members and other persons who have been
60 engaged in extensive research and observation related to these issues and encourage their
61 direct involvement in the activities of the commission;

- 62 (4) Conduct hearings throughout the state for the purpose of obtaining meaningful
 63 information regarding successful education programs and efforts related to those
 64 concerns;
- 65 (5) Identify, consult, and meet with representatives of national, regional, and state-level
 66 organizations and agencies that could be particularly helpful in addressing the concerns
 67 of at-risk student achievement;
- 68 (6) Devise recommendations regarding steps that should be taken to address the concerns
 69 of at-risk student achievement and the steps that should be taken separately and
 70 collectively by:
- 71 (A) State government agencies;
 72 (B) Local government agencies;
 73 (C) Public schools and higher education institutions;
 74 (D) Nonprofit organizations;
 75 (E) Professional educational organizations;
 76 (F) Foundations;
 77 (G) Faith based organizations or institutions;
 78 (H) Civic organizations;
 79 (I) The business community; and
 80 (J) Other entities; and
- 81 (7) Receive reports from and consult with the Office of Student Achievement regarding
 82 the student achievement results including all disaggregated student achievement data.
- 83 (d) The commission should place particular emphasis on reviewing programs and efforts
 84 that have been successful in attaining:
- 85 (1) Improved educational achievement among at-risk students;
 86 (2) Reduction of school discipline and behavioral problems that hinder student
 87 achievement;
 88 (3) Reduction of at-risk student dropout rates; and
 89 (4) Improved parental involvement in a student's academic achievement and in the
 90 school of the student.
- 91 (e) The commission shall periodically report to the Education Coordinating Council and
 92 the General Assembly their findings and recommendations including any legislation that
 93 the commission has determined is needed to implement their recommendations.
- 94 (f) The commission shall receive per diem, subsistence, and travel allowance subject to
 95 appropriation by the General Assembly.
- 96 (g) The commission shall be provided staff and administrative support by the Office of
 97 Student Achievement to carry out the authority described in this Code section."

98

SECTION 2.

99 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.