

Senate Resolution 87

By: Senators Parent of the 42nd, Martin of the 9th, Ligon, Jr. of the 3rd, Sims of the 12th and Wilkinson of the 50th

A RESOLUTION

1 Creating the Senate Study Committee on Digital Education and Screen Time in Georgia
2 Public Schools; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, creators of education-technology products are increasingly marketing
4 digital-education platforms, including video-gaming platforms, for use in K-12 education;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, Georgia law currently "strongly encourages" local boards of education, on or
7 after July 1, 2020, to purchase all instructional materials and content in digital or electronic
8 format and to provide a laptop, tablet, or other wireless electronic device to every student in
9 grades three or higher for those students to use "as the principal source of reading or
10 accessing instructional materials and content" (Code Section 20-2-1015 of the Official Code
11 of Georgia Annotated); and

12 WHEREAS, because "digital education" is a relatively new phenomenon, there has been a
13 lack of peer-reviewed research about its academic effectiveness and its effects on student
14 users; and

15 WHEREAS, such research is now being published; and

16 WHEREAS, educators are now gaining more classroom experience with digital education
17 and its effects and effectiveness; and

18 WHEREAS, increased use of technology in the classroom raises questions regarding the
19 physical, psychological, and educational effects on the student users;

20 WHEREAS, use of digital software in the classroom creates questions concerning data
21 collection, data-privacy policies, and parental access to curricula; and

22 WHEREAS, providing laptops, tablets, or other wireless electronic devices to students raises
23 issues of cost, maintenance, and possible unauthorized use of these devices; and

24 WHEREAS, to evaluate the best policy regarding digital education in Georgia public
25 schools, it would be beneficial to: (1) review the research relevant to digital education; (2)
26 hear testimony from experts in the field on the effects of increased digital education and
27 screen time on children; (3) analyze issues of data privacy related to digital education; (4)
28 hear testimony from classroom teachers about the advantages and disadvantages of digital
29 education; (5) hear testimony from parents about their experience with digital education; and
30 (6) make recommendations to the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the State Board of
31 Education, the State School Superintendent, the Governor, and local boards of education
32 based on such investigation to ensure that all Georgia education policy operates to the benefit
33 of students and their families.

34 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE:

35 (1) **Creation of Senate study committee.** There is created the Senate Study Committee
36 on Digital Education and Screen Time in Georgia Public Schools.

37 (2) **Members and officers.** The committee shall be composed of three members of the
38 Senate to be appointed by the President of the Senate. The President shall designate a
39 member of the committee as chairperson of the committee.

40 (3) **Powers and duties.** The committee shall undertake a study of the conditions, needs,
41 issues, and problems mentioned above or related thereto and recommend any action or
42 legislation which the committee deems necessary or appropriate.

43 (4) **Meetings.** The chairperson shall call all meetings of the committee. The committee
44 may conduct such meetings at such places and at such times as it may deem necessary or
45 convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and
46 accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution.

47 (5) **Allowances and funding.** The legislative members of the committee shall receive
48 the allowances provided for in Code Section 28-1-8 of the Official Code of Georgia
49 Annotated. The allowances authorized by this resolution shall not be received by any
50 member of the committee for more than five days unless additional days are authorized.
51 Funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from funds
52 appropriated to the Senate.

53 (6) **Report.**

54 (A) In the event the committee adopts any specific findings or recommendations that
55 include suggestions for proposed legislation, the chairperson shall file a report of the

56 same prior to the date of abolishment specified in this resolution, subject to
57 subparagraph (C) of this paragraph.

58 (B) In the event the committee adopts a report that does not include suggestions for
59 proposed legislation, the chairperson shall file the report, subject to subparagraph (C)
60 of this paragraph.

61 (C) No report shall be filed unless the same has been approved prior to the date of
62 abolishment specified in this resolution by majority vote of a quorum of the committee.
63 A report so approved shall be signed by the chairperson of the committee and filed with
64 the Secretary of the Senate.

65 (D) In the absence of an approved report, the chairperson may file with the Secretary
66 of the Senate a copy of the minutes of the meetings of the committee in lieu thereof.

67 (7) **Abolishment.** The committee shall stand abolished on December 1, 2019.