

Senate Bill 211

By: Senators Hickman of the 4th, Dixon of the 45th, Kennedy of the 18th, Gooch of the 51st, Anavitarte of the 31st and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to education, so as to
2 establish the Georgia Council on Literacy; to provide for definitions; to provide for members
3 and officers; to provide for meetings, agendas, quorum, and compensation; to provide for the
4 council's duties and powers; to provide for consultation with subject matter experts; to
5 provide for automatic repeal; to require local school systems to develop and implement
6 five-year literacy plans for such school system and individual literacy plans for students in
7 kindergarten through grade five; to replace the Education Coordinating Council with the
8 Alliance of Education Agency Heads; to provide for related matters; to make conforming
9 changes; to provide for legislative findings; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other
10 purposes.

11 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

12 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

13 The General Assembly finds that:

14 (1) Current Georgian literacy rates are not where they need to be to support the workforce
15 needs of our growing economy, and it has been many years since there has been a
16 systematic study of Georgia's efforts to support student and adult literacy efforts.

17 (2) A comprehensive study of all state resources and activities that are funded to support
18 improved literacy outcomes is needed. This study should also set recommended priorities
19 for future investments and strategies.

20 (3) Georgia must have a very specific goal that sets clearly defined measures for third,
21 fifth, and eighth grade reading outcomes.

22 **SECTION 2.**

23 Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to education, is amended in
24 Chapter 1, relating to general provisions, by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

25 "20-1-12.

26 As used in this title, the term 'evidence based, peer reviewed literacy instruction methods
27 and curricula' means instructional materials, instructional practices, and curricula that are
28 scientifically based reading instruction, or multisensory language instruction, including oral
29 language development, phonological awareness, and phonics instruction that includes
30 decoding and encoding, fluency, writing, vocabulary, and comprehension."

31 **SECTION 3.**

32 Said title is further amended in Chapter 1, relating to general provisions, by adding a new
33 article to read as follows:

34 "ARTICLE 4

35 20-1-40.

36 As used in this article, the term 'council' means the Georgia Council on Literacy established
37 under this article.

38 20-1-41.

39 There is established the Georgia Council on Literacy for the purpose of conducting
40 comprehensive reviews of birth to postsecondary programs, the alignment of state support
41 for such programs, and other issues related to improving the literacy outcomes of Georgia
42 citizens from birth to adulthood.

43 20-1-42.

44 (a) The council shall be composed of 23 members as follows:

45 (1) The following members appointed by the Governor:

46 (A) A representative from the Sandra Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and
47 Literacy; and

48 (B) Four individuals to include those with knowledge, skills, and experience in early
49 learning, primary and secondary education, adult learning, and workforce development;

50 (2) The following members appointed by the President of the Senate:

51 (A) The chairperson of the Senate Education and Youth Committee;

52 (B) The chairperson of the Senate Higher Education Committee;

53 (C) The chairperson of the Senate Appropriations Committee;

54 (D) Two members of the Senate from the minority caucus; and

55 (E) Four individuals to include a teacher, a local board of education member, a local
56 school superintendent, and a literacy advocate; and

57 (3) The following members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives:

58 (A) The chairperson of the House Committee on Education;

59 (B) The chairperson of the House Committee on Higher Education;

60 (C) The chairperson of the House Committee on Appropriations;

61 (D) Two members of the House of Representatives from the minority caucus; and

62 (E) Four individuals to include a teacher, a local board of education member, a local
63 school superintendent, and a literacy advocate.

64 (b) Each nonlegislative member of the council shall be appointed to serve for a term of
65 four years or until his or her successor is duly appointed. Legislative members of the
66 council shall serve until completion of their current terms of office. Any member may be
67 appointed to succeed himself or herself on the council. If a member of the council is an
68 elected or appointed official, such member, or his or her designee, shall be removed from
69 the council if such member no longer serves as such elected or appointed official.

70 (c) The Governor shall designate one of the members appointed pursuant to subsection (a)
71 of this Code section the chairperson of the council. The council may elect other officers
72 as it deems necessary. The chairperson of the council may designate and appoint
73 committees from among the membership of the council as well as appoint other persons
74 to perform such functions as he or she may determine to be necessary as relevant to and
75 consistent with this article. The chairperson shall only vote to break a tie.

76 (d) The Governor shall direct the Alliance of Education Agency Heads provided for in
77 Article 1 of Chapter 14 of this title to work with members of the council.

78 (e) The council shall be attached for administrative purposes only to the Office of Student
79 Achievement. The Office of Student Achievement shall provide staff support for the
80 council. The Office of Student Achievement shall use any funds specifically appropriated
81 to it to support the work of the council.

82 20-1-43.

83 (a) The council may conduct meetings at such places and times as it deems necessary or
84 convenient to enable it to fully and effectively exercise its powers, perform its duties, and
85 accomplish the objectives and purposes of this article; provided, however, that the council
86 shall meet not less than four times per year. The council shall hold meetings at the call of
87 the chairperson.

88 (b) A quorum for transacting business shall be a majority of the members of the council.

89 (c) Legislative members of the council shall receive the allowances provided for in Code
90 Section 28-1-8. Nonlegislative members of the council shall receive a daily expense
91 allowance in the amount specified in subsection (b) of Code Section 45-7-21 as well as the
92 mileage or transportation allowance authorized for state employees. Members of the
93 council who are state officials, other than legislative members, or state employees shall
94 receive no compensation for their services on the council, but shall be reimbursed for
95 expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties as members of the council in
96 the same manner as they are reimbursed for expenses in their capacities as state officials
97 or state employees. The funds necessary for the reimbursement of the expenses of state
98 officials, other than legislative members, and state employees shall come from funds
99 appropriated to or otherwise available to their respective departments. All other funds
100 necessary to carry out the provisions of this article shall come from funds appropriated to
101 the Senate and the House of Representatives.

102 20-1-44.

103 (a) The council shall have the following duties:

104 (1) Review the conditions, needs, issues, and problems related to state literacy outcomes
105 and provide a report of such review to the Governor, the Office of Planning and Budget,
106 the House Committee on Education, the Senate Education and Youth Committee, the
107 House Committee on Higher Education, the Senate Higher Education Committee, the
108 House Committee on Appropriations, and the Senate Appropriations Committee;

109 (2) Evaluate and consider the best practices, experiences, and results of legislation in
110 other states with regard to literacy improvements from birth to adulthood;

111 (3) Establish a common metric for literacy scores for kindergarten through grade 12;

112 (4) Research and make recommendations on improving literacy rates for low-income
113 students;

- 114 (5) Research and make recommendations on improving literacy rates for minority and
115 English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) students;
- 116 (6) Research and make recommendations on improving literacy rates for students with
117 characteristics of dyslexia;
- 118 (7) Review and set annual literacy improvement goals for all students in grades three,
119 five, and eight;
- 120 (8) Recommend changes or updates to QBE funding to enhance literacy instruction;
- 121 (9) Review and make recommendations on the alignment of teacher certifications to
122 include evidence based literacy instruction and education degree program requirements;
- 123 (10) Review and make recommendations of evidence based, peer reviewed literacy
124 instruction methods and curricula resources and the professional development needed by
125 current teachers for improvements in literacy instruction in pre-kindergarten through
126 grade 12;
- 127 (11) Review state-wide birth to age five initiatives and suggest policy and appropriation
128 changes;
- 129 (12) Review best practices for community based literacy programs and make
130 recommendations for improvement;
- 131 (13) Provide public schools and local school systems with the common metric for
132 literacy scores established by the council; and
- 133 (14) Review local school systems' annual plans for literacy improvements and make
134 recommendations for such school systems':
- 135 (A) Use of evidence based, peer reviewed literacy instruction methods and curricula;
136 and
- 137 (B) Plans to prioritize literacy within such school systems' schedules, budgets,
138 professional development programs, use of personnel, and other components of such
139 school systems' literacy plans.
- 140 (b) The council shall be authorized to:

- 141 (1) Request and receive data from and review the records of appropriate state agencies
 142 to the greatest extent allowed by state and federal law;
 143 (2) Seek and accept public or private grants, devises, and bequests;
 144 (3) Enter into contracts or agreements through the council's chairperson necessary or
 145 incidental to the performance of its duties;
 146 (4) Establish rules and procedures for conducting the business of the council;
 147 (5) Conduct studies, hold public meetings, collect data, or take any other action the
 148 council deems necessary to fulfill its responsibilities; and
 149 (6) Retain the services of attorneys, consultants, subject matter experts, economists,
 150 budget analysts, data analysts, statisticians, and other individuals or organizations as
 151 deemed appropriate by the council. Such services may be obtained through a request for
 152 proposal process conducted through the Office of Planning and Budget; provided,
 153 however, that any final selection shall be approved by the council.

154 20-1-45.

155 The council shall be abolished and this article shall stand repealed on June 30, 2026."

156 **SECTION 4.**

157 Said title is further amended in Part 12 of Article 6 of Chapter 2, relating to effectiveness of
 158 educational programs under the "Quality Basic Education Act," by revising Code Section
 159 20-2-280, which was previously reserved, as follows:

160 "20-2-280.

- 161 (a) Each local school system shall develop a five-year literacy plan for all students in
 162 kindergarten through grade five which sets out the school system's vision and mission for
 163 improving literacy outcomes for such students based on metrics established by the Georgia
 164 Council on Literacy, as provided in Article 4 of Chapter 1 of this title, and clearly specifies:
 165 (1) Goals for improvement of literacy outcomes for such students;

- 166 (2) Local community partnerships to support programs in place or to be developed and
 167 implemented;
- 168 (3) Evidence based, peer reviewed literacy instruction methods and curricula to be used
 169 for interventions;
- 170 (4) Evidence based, peer reviewed literacy instruction methods and curricula to be used
 171 to teach reading; and
- 172 (5) Professional development to be made available for teachers to support the literacy
 173 plan.
- 174 (b) Each local school system shall create individual student literacy plans for students in
 175 kindergarten through grade five. Such plans shall include parent review and notice when
 176 students are reading below grade level and remediation plans for correction.
- 177 (c) Each local school system's five-year literacy plan shall be posted on it public website.
 178 Reserved."

179

SECTION 5.

180 Said title is further amended in Article 1 of Chapter 14, relating to general provisions for
 181 education accountability, by revising Code Section 20-14-8, relating to general powers and
 182 duties, as follows:

183 "20-14-8.

184 The council alliance shall have the following general powers and duties, in addition to any
 185 and all other powers enumerated in this article, any or all of which may be exercised by the
 186 council alliance directly or by the Office of Student Achievement under the direction and
 187 supervision of the council alliance:

- 188 (1) To foster coordination and cooperation among the chief officers of the departments,
 189 boards, and offices represented on the council alliance;
- 190 (2) To develop a seamless and integrated public education system;

- 191 (3) To require the shared and efficient expenditures for and utilization of facilities,
192 personnel, and other resources;
- 193 (4) To require the seamless coordination of curriculum among the departments, boards,
194 and offices represented on the ~~council~~ alliance;
- 195 (5) To require reasonable ease of transition for students among the educational
196 institutions represented on the ~~council~~ alliance;
- 197 (6) To establish and require high and necessary levels of student achievement at all
198 levels of education;
- 199 (7) To exercise oversight of accountability systems that are within or among the
200 departments, boards, and offices represented on the ~~council~~ alliance and develop overlay
201 accountability systems through the Office of Student Achievement;
- 202 (8) To exercise supervision and oversight over the Office of Student Achievement
203 created in Part 2 of Article 2 of this chapter;
- 204 (9) To coordinate the activities of state, regional, and local cooperative public education
205 agencies, offices, or councils, including, but not limited to, the state's regional educational
206 service agencies or other such groups that may be created in addition or in their place;
- 207 (10) To focus on literacy improvements from birth through adulthood;
- 208 (11) To work with the Georgia Council on Literacy to ensure the availability and quality
209 of the education ~~work force~~ workforce through preparation, professional development,
210 and nontraditional routes to employment;
- 211 ~~(11)~~(12) To oversee the development and implementation of a comprehensive
212 system-wide education student information system that will support the implementation
213 of an education accountability system and improve the seamless operation of public
214 education;
- 215 ~~(12)~~(13) To simplify rules and regulations by all departments, boards, and offices
216 represented on the ~~council~~ alliance;

217 ~~(13)~~(14) To develop a state-wide mentoring program that enhances student achievement
218 at all levels of public education;
219 ~~(14)~~(15) To establish and coordinate a school safety collaborative with representation
220 from agencies and organizations designated by the ~~council~~ alliance to improve the school
221 climate and enhance school safety; and
222 ~~(15)~~(16) To mediate disputes among the Department of Education, the University
223 System of Georgia, the Technical College System of Georgia, the Professional Standards
224 Commission, the Department of Early Care and Learning, and the Office of Student
225 Achievement in matters regarding accountability or education system seamlessness."

226

SECTION 6.

227 Said title is further amended by revising subsection (d) of Code Section 20-14-35, relating
228 to office powers, on-site audits, reporting findings and recommendations, and authorization
229 of other school audits, as follows:

230 "(d) The auditors shall report to the local board of education, the local school council, and
231 appropriate school administrators and shall report findings and recommendations
232 concerning any necessary improvements or intervention strategies. School audit reports
233 shall be provided to the ~~council~~ alliance and the State Board of Education."

234

SECTION 7.

235 Said title is further amended by replacing "Education Coordinating Council" and "council"
236 with "Alliance of Education Agency Heads" and "alliance", respectively, wherever the
237 former terms occur in:

238 (1) Code Section 20-2-271, relating to development of regional improvement plan,
239 introduction of core services, instructional care teams, and establishment of alternative
240 methods of teacher certification;

- 241 (2) Code Section 20-2-320, relating to state-wide comprehensive educational information
242 system and identification of data to implement Quality Basic Education Program;
- 243 (3) Code Section 20-14-1, relating to responsibility of council;
- 244 (4) Code Section 20-14-2, relating to creation of council;
- 245 (5) Code Section 20-14-3, relating to membership, officers, and meetings;
- 246 (6) Code Section 20-14-4, relating to quorum and committees;
- 247 (7) Code Section 20-14-5, relating to annual reports;
- 248 (8) Code Section 20-14-6, relating to selection of personnel to support council;
- 249 (9) Code Section 20-14-7, relating to powers of council;
- 250 (10) Code Section 20-14-9, relating to access to records or data;
- 251 (11) Code Section 20-14-10, relating to decisions or actions by council directing action by
252 department, board, or office;
- 253 (12) Code Section 20-14-11, relating to appointment by Governor of study commissions,
254 findings and recommendations, and staff and expenses;
- 255 (13) Code Section 20-14-20, relating to definitions;
- 256 (14) Code Section 20-14-25, relating to creation, director, authority, seal, and
257 administrative assignment;
- 258 (15) Code Section 20-14-26, relating to duties; and
- 259 (16) Code Section 20-14-27, relating to required report and publication format.

260

SECTION 8.

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