

Senate Bill 556

By: Senator Halpern of the 39th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 elementary and secondary education, so as to provide for the State Board of Education to
3 establish a three-year pilot robotics program for eligible public schools; to provide for
4 eligibility; to provide for grant funds for eligible public schools to develop and implement
5 school robotics programs and to support students from such schools participating in
6 interscholastic robotics competitions; to provide for applications and selection to participate
7 in the pilot program; to provide for assessment and reporting on the impacts of the pilot
8 program; to authorize the State Board of Education to promulgate rules and regulations to
9 implement the pilot program; to provide for waivers and variances of state rules, regulations,
10 policies, and procedures if necessary; to provide for automatic repeal; to provide for related
11 matters; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

12 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

13 **SECTION 1.**

14 Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to elementary and
15 secondary education, is amended in Article 7, relating to additional state aid, by designating

16 Code Sections 20-2-330 through 20-2-334 as Part 1 and by adding a new part to read as
17 follows:

18 "Part 2

19 20-2-335.

20 (a)(1) The State Board of Education shall establish a pilot robotics program to:

21 (A) Provide funding for:

22 (i) Eligible public schools to develop and implement a school robotics program for
23 their students; and

24 (ii) Students from eligible public schools to participate in interscholastic robotics
25 competitions;

26 (B) Motivate students to pursue education and career opportunities in science,
27 technology, engineering, and mathematics;

28 (C) Improve students' knowledge in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and
29 mathematics;

30 (D) Improve students' teamwork and communication skills;

31 (E) Foster students' digital literacy; and

32 (F) Study the impacts of such school robotics programs for possible state-wide
33 implementation.

34 (2) Subject to appropriations by the General Assembly, the pilot program shall include
35 funding for up to \$2 million in grants each school year, for up to three school years
36 beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, to eligible public schools selected by the State
37 Board of Education to participate in the pilot program.

38 (3) To be eligible to participate in the pilot program, a public school shall:

39 (A) Serve students in any one of grades nine through 12;

40 (B) By November 1, 2024, submit an application to participate in the pilot program,
41 which application shall include:

42 (i) The school's statement of intent for the use of grant funds including plans for:

43 (I) Employing qualified personnel to participate in the school robotics program
44 either with pay or as a volunteer;

45 (II) Procuring equipment and supplies to be used as part of the school robotics
46 program;

47 (III) Use of facilities as part of the school robotics program;

48 (IV) Promoting student involvement in the school robotics program; and

49 (V) Assessing and reporting on the impacts of the school robotics program on the
50 school and the participating students; and

51 (ii) A resolution adopted by the school's local board of education or other governing
52 body stating:

53 (I) Its commitment to support the school's participation in the pilot program; and

54 (II) The local financial and other resources that will be provided to the school for
55 use as part of the school robotics program;

56 (C) Be among the public schools that performed in the lowest 50 percent of all public
57 schools based on the cumulative individual school ratings prepared by the Office of
58 Student Achievement, as provided for in subsection (d) of Code Section 20-14-33, for
59 the two most recent school years for which the Office of Student Achievement issued
60 such ratings; provided, however, that, once an eligible public school has been selected
61 to participate in the pilot program by the State Board of Education, the school shall
62 remain eligible for the duration of the pilot program notwithstanding the provisions of
63 this subparagraph; and

64 (D) Not have sponsored or otherwise supported students participating in an
65 interscholastic robotics competition during the previous five school years.

(4) Up to ten eligible public schools shall be selected by the State Board of Education to participate in the pilot program. In an effort to implement the pilot program in various types of public schools represented in the state, the State Board of Education shall seek to include eligible public schools:

(A) Of varying student enrollment sizes;

(B) In rural, suburban, and urban areas of the state; and

(C) In various geographic areas of the state.

(5) The State Board of Education shall establish pilot program requirements and criteria for selecting eligible public schools to participate in the pilot program in accordance with the provisions of this Code section.

(6) The State Board of Education shall be authorized to establish reporting requirements for the public schools participating in the pilot program.

(7) To implement the pilot program, notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the State Board of Education shall be authorized to waive or provide variances to state rules, regulations, policies, and procedures and to provisions of this chapter that may be reasonably necessary to meet the goals of the pilot program.

(8) The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of this Code section.

(b)(1) By August 1, 2024, the Department of Education shall develop an application process and seek applications from eligible public schools for the pilot program to be submitted no later than November 1, 2024.

(2)(A) The Department of Education shall monitor and annually assess the status of the pilot program with cooperation and input from the public schools and local school systems participating in the pilot program.

(B) Beginning no later than June 1, 2025, and by June 1 of each year thereafter, the Department of Education shall provide to the State Board of Education a report of the annual assessment provided for in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph.

94 **SECTION 2.**96 **SECTION 3.**

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