

Senate Bill 379

By: Senators Harbin of the 16th, Robertson of the 29th, Burns of the 23rd, Albers of the 56th,
Summers of the 13th and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Code Section 20-2-182 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 program weights to reflect funds for payment of salaries and benefits, maximum class size,
3 reporting requirements, and application to specific school years, so as to authorize local
4 school systems and public schools to employ or accept as a volunteer school chaplains; to
5 provide that school chaplains shall provide support, services, and programs for students as
6 assigned; to authorize school chaplains to be employed or accepted as volunteers in addition
7 to or in lieu of school counselors and to authorize school chaplains to perform duties of
8 school counselors; to provide that school chaplains need not be certificated professional
9 personnel; to provide for an effective date; to provide for related matters; to provide for a
10 short title; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

11 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

12 SECTION 1.

13 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "School Chaplains Act."

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SECTION 2.

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Code Section 20-2-182 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to program weights to reflect funds for payment of salaries and benefits, maximum class size, reporting requirements, and application to specific school years, is amended by revising subsection (c) as follows:

"(c)(1) The program weights for the kindergarten, kindergarten early intervention, primary, primary grades early intervention, upper elementary, upper elementary grades early intervention, middle school, and alternative education programs and the program weights for the high school programs authorized pursuant to paragraph (4) of subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-151, when multiplied by the base amount, shall reflect sufficient funds to pay the beginning salaries for at least one school counselor for every 450 full-time equivalent students. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2015 and thereafter, the program weights for the English for speakers of other languages program and the programs for persons with disabilities shall also earn school counselor funding. Further, beginning in Fiscal Year 2016 and thereafter, the program weights for the program for intellectually gifted students and the remedial education program shall also earn school counselor funding. The duties and responsibilities for such school counselors shall be established by the state board to require a minimum of five of the six full-time equivalent program count segments of the counselor's time to be spent counseling or advising students or parents.

(2) Notwithstanding any provision of paragraph (1) of this subsection or any other law to the contrary, a local school system or public school shall be authorized to employ or accept as a volunteer a school chaplain to provide support, services, and programs for students as assigned by the local school superintendent or the local board of education or other public school governing body. Such school chaplains may be employed or accepted as volunteers in addition to or in lieu of employing school counselors to perform the duties required of a school counselor under this chapter and as provided for in Code

41 Sections 19-15-1 and 49-5-41. A school chaplain employed or accepted as a volunteer
42 under this subsection is not required to be a certificated professional personnel."

43 **SECTION 3.**

44 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
45 without such approval.

46 **SECTION 4.**

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