

House Bill 200 (COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE)

By: Representatives Bazemore of the 69th, Ballard of the 147th, Hugley of the 141st, Miller of the 62nd, Jones of the 25th, and others

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 require that each new elementary school
3 constructed on or after July 1, 2027, shall include a playground meeting certain standards;
4 to provide playground design standards and minimum guidelines; to provide for the State
5 Board of Education to establish a three-year pilot immersive writing program for eligible
6 public elementary schools; to provide for eligibility; to provide for grant funds for eligible
7 public elementary schools to develop and implement immersive writing programs for
8 students in grades two through five; to provide for applications and selection to participate
9 in the pilot program; to provide for assessment and reporting on the impacts of the pilot
10 program; to authorize the State Board of Education to promulgate rules and regulations to
11 implement the pilot program; to provide for automatic repeal; to provide for related matters;
12 to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

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- 41 (C) Enables all students to benefit from state mandated recess time for elementary
42 students;
- 43 (D) Capable for use as an outdoor classroom that is open to all students; and
- 44 (E) Meets the following minimum guidelines:
- 45 (i) Playground is accessible via a sidewalk or pathway from the school;
- 46 (ii) Playground is a minimum of 10,000 square feet in area;
- 47 (iii) Fencing surrounds and encloses the entire playground area;
- 48 (iv) A minimum of 20 percent of the total playground area shall be shaded; provided,
49 however, that such shaded area may comprise more than one area so long as the total
50 shaded area meets or exceeds 20 percent of the total playground area; and, provided,
51 further, that such shading may be provided by natural means, such as existing mature
52 trees, or man-made means, such as sun canopies;
- 53 (v) Unitary surfacing shall be used throughout at least 80 percent of the playground
54 area. Examples of unitary surfacing include, but are not limited to, turf, bonded
55 rubber, and poured in place rubber; and
- 56 (vi) Components that are installed on a portion of the playground with the unitary
57 surfacing and accessible for all users that address the physical, sensory, cognitive,
58 social, emotional, imaginative, and communication needs of those who will visit the
59 playground, including, but not limited to:
- 60 (I) One communication board;
- 61 (II) One learning American Sign Language (ASL) alphabet panel or one learning
62 Braille alphabet panel;
- 63 (III) One roller slide;
- 64 (IV) A minimum of two pieces of equipment that make music, such as chimes,
65 drums, and bells;
- 66 (V) A minimum of two adaptive or accessible swings;

- 67 (VI) A minimum of one play piece accessible to a child remaining in a wheelchair
68 that allows such child to play with other children;
69 (VII) A minimum of four sensory panels; and
70 (VIII) A minimum of one wheelchair accessible raised structure or wheelchair
71 accessible slide."

72 **SECTION 2.**

73 Said title is further amended by designating Code Sections 20-2-330 through 20-2-334 as
74 Part 1 and by adding a new part to read as follows:

75 "Part 2

76 20-2-335.

77 (a)(1) The State Board of Education shall establish a pilot immersive writing program
78 for students in grades two through five in order to:

79 (A) Provide funding for all public school students in grades two through five to
80 participate in programs that provide for immersive writing experiences that are aligned
81 with writing standards established by the State Board of Education and can be
82 integrated into existing curricula;

83 (B) Improve literacy skills of elementary school students and motivate them to engage
84 in writing projects; and

85 (C) Study the impacts of such pilot writing program.

86 (2) Subject to appropriations by the General Assembly, the pilot program shall include
87 funding for up to \$2 million in grants each school year, for up to three school years
88 beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, to participating public elementary schools.

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

90 (A) Serve students in any grades two through five; and

91 (B) By January 1, 2026, submit an application to participate in the pilot program,
92 which application shall include such school's statement of intent for the use of grant
93 funds.

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

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

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

101 (b)(1) By October 1, 2025, the Department of Education shall develop an application
102 process and seek applications from eligible public schools for the pilot program to be
103 submitted no later than January 1, 2026.

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

107 (B) Beginning no later than June 1, 2027, and by June 1 of each year thereafter, the
108 Department of Education shall provide to the State Board of Education a report of the
109 annual assessment provided for in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph.

110 (c) This Code section shall stand repealed in its entirety on July 1, 2029."

111 **SECTION 3.**

112 This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2025.

113 **SECTION 4.**

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