

The House Committee on Education offers the following substitute to HB 310:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Part 9 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia
2 Annotated, relating to grants for educational programs, so as to establish grant programs to
3 support recruitment of teachers by providing grants to qualifying student teachers enrolled
4 in eligible educator preparation provider (EPP) programs and to such individuals who have
5 completed their EPP programs and have begun teaching in a Georgia public school; to
6 provide for eligibility; to provide for maximum payments; to require the Georgia Student
7 Finance Commission and the State Board of Education to establish policies, rules, and
8 regulations to implement the respective programs; to provide for definitions; to provide for
9 a short title; to provide for a sunset; to provide for related matters; to provide for contingent
10 effectiveness; 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 "Student Teacher Promotion Act."

SECTION 2.

14

15 Part 9 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
16 relating to grants for educational programs, is amended by revising Code Section 20-2-252,
17 which is reserved, as follows:

18 "20-2-252.

19 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

20 (1) 'Educator preparation provider' or 'EPP' means an institution of the University System
21 of Georgia or an eligible private postsecondary institution, as such term is defined in
22 Code Section 20-3-519, located in this state that is approved by the Professional
23 Standards Commission to provide for the initial and continuing preparation of educators.

24 (2) 'Signing bonus grant program' mean the program established by the State Board of
25 Education to provide signing bonus grants to student teachers pursuant to this Code
26 section.

27 (3) 'Student teacher' means a college or university student who is enrolled in an educator
28 preparation provider program and who, as part of such program, is engaged in student
29 teaching in a public school in this state.

30 (4) 'Student teacher grant program' mean the program established by the Georgia Student
31 Finance Commission to provide grants to student teachers pursuant to this Code section.

32 (b)(1) The Georgia Student Finance Commission shall establish a program to provide
33 grants to student teachers. The purpose of the student teacher grant program shall be to
34 support recruitment of teachers by providing grant funds to qualifying student teachers
35 during the student teaching component of their EPP program. The Georgia Student
36 Finance Commission shall, in consultation with local school systems and other public
37 schools, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, and the Professional
38 Standards Commission, establish such policies, rules, and regulations for the student
39 teacher grant program as are necessary to implement this Code section.

40 (2) Beginning July 1, 2026, the Georgia Student Finance Commission shall provide
41 grants to no more than 500 student teachers each school year. The total amount of such
42 grant funds paid to each student teacher shall not exceed \$5,000.00. Grant funds awarded
43 by the Georgia Student Finance Commission shall be disbursed to student teachers in
44 monthly installments by their respective EPPs utilizing a consistent practice for the
45 calculation and distribution of installment payments.

46 (3)(A) To qualify for a grant under the student teacher grant program and to receive
47 grant installment payments under such program, a student teacher shall be:

48 (i) Eligible to participate in the federal Pell Grant program; and

49 (ii) Actively engaged and in good standing in the student teaching component of his
50 or her EPP program with the public school or local school system to which he or she
51 is assigned.

52 (B) No individual shall receive more than \$5,000.00 under the student teacher grant
53 program.

54 (C) The Georgia Student Finance Commission and each EPP shall be authorized to
55 verify whether an individual is actively engaged and in good standing in the student
56 teaching component of his or her EPP program with the public school or local school
57 system to which he or she is assigned. No individual shall be eligible to receive grant
58 fund installment payments for any installment period for which he or she is determined
59 to not be actively engaged and in good standing in the student teaching component of
60 his or her EPP program with the public school or local school system to which he or she
61 is assigned.

62 (4) The Georgia Professional Standards Commission shall establish reporting
63 requirements for student teachers participating in the student teacher grant program to
64 determine whether and how the teacher vacancy rate in this state has been impacted by
65 the student teacher grant program.

66 (c)(1) The State Board of Education shall establish a program to provide grants to former
67 student teachers who begin working as teachers in public schools in this state. The
68 purpose of the signing bonus grant program shall be to support recruitment of teachers
69 by providing grant funds to qualifying former student teachers shortly after they begin
70 teaching in a public school in this state. The State Board of Education shall, in
71 consultation with local school systems and other public schools, the Board of Regents of
72 the University System of Georgia, and the Professional Standards Commission, establish
73 such policies, rules, and regulations for the signing bonus grant program as are necessary
74 to implement this Code section.

75 (2) Beginning January 1, 2027, the State Board of Education shall provide for signing
76 bonus grants in the amount of one-time fixed payments of \$2,500.00 to individuals who
77 participated in the student teacher grant program provided for in subsection (b) of this
78 Code section, who successfully completed their EPP program, and who have completed
79 30 calendar days of employment as a teacher under an employment contract with a public
80 school in this state.

81 (3) No individual shall receive more than \$2,500.00 under the signing bonus grant
82 program.

83 (4) The State Board of Education and each local school system or other public school
84 shall be authorized to verify whether an individual participated in the student teacher
85 grant program provided for in subsection (b) of this Code section and successfully
86 completed their EPP program.

87 (5) The State Board of Education shall be authorized to establish reporting requirements
88 on the public schools and local school systems participating in the signing bonus grant
89 program.

90 (6) The Department of Education shall develop and publish on its website an application
91 process and seek applications from public schools and local school systems for the
92 signing bonus grant program no later than October 1, 2026.

93 (d) No student teacher grants or signing bonus grants provided for in this Code section
94 shall be funded, awarded, or disbursed after December 31, 2028.
95 (e) The provisions of this Code section are subject to appropriation by the General
96 Assembly. Reserved."

97 **SECTION 3.**

98 This Act shall become effective only if funds are included for such purpose in an
99 appropriations Act making specific reference to the grant programs provided for in this Act
100 and shall become effective when funds so appropriated become available for expenditure.

101 **SECTION 4.**

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