

House Bill 1193 (COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE)

By: Representatives Erwin of the 32nd, Burns of the 159th, Hatchett of the 155th, Dubnik of the 29th, Jones of the 47th, 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 promote and advance state-wide literacy and reading education efforts; to include Quality
3 Basic Education funding for school based literacy coaches in each public school in this state
4 with students in any of grades kindergarten through three; to provide for duties and
5 responsibilities of the Georgia Council on Literacy; to require all children to attend
6 kindergarten prior to enrolling in first grade, subject to exception; to encourage families to
7 have their children attend school or a home study program beginning at age five; to provide
8 for parents and guardians of students who are eligible for initial public school enrollment in
9 first grade to elect for their children to be enrolled in kindergarten rather than first grade; to
10 provide for parents and guardians to elect for their children who are either four or five years
11 old to be enrolled in a voluntary pre-kindergarten program provided and operated as part of
12 Georgia's Pre-K Program; to provide for first grade readiness assessments; to require annual
13 reports regarding first grade readiness; to revise provisions relative to grade placement,
14 promotion, and retention; to provide for literacy coaching endorsements for certificated
15 professional personnel; to substantially revise the "Georgia Early Literacy and Dyslexia Act";
16 to include legislative intent; to provide for a definition; to revise provisions of said Act
17 relative to the selection of and requirements for universal reading screeners; to revise
18 provisions for professional learning; to require local school systems and other public schools

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19 to have unified literacy plans; to revise provisions for educator preparation programs and the
20 evaluation of such programs by the Professional Standards Commission; to provide for
21 regional literacy coaches employed by regional educational service agencies; to provide for
22 certification of and funding for high-quality instructional materials; to establish within the
23 Office of Student Achievement the Georgia Literacy Coordinating Committee; to provide
24 for the Georgia Director of Literacy; to provide for the Georgia Coordinator of Literacy
25 Coaches; to repeal the Georgia Literacy Coach; to provide for a position description and
26 minimum qualifications and duties for school based literacy coaches and regional literacy
27 coaches; to establish the Georgia Literacy Task Force; to provide for appointment,
28 qualifications, duties, and compensation of members of such task force; to provide for
29 recommendations of such task force; to provide for consideration of such recommendations
30 by the State Board of Education; to provide for a comprehensive state-wide promotional
31 campaign for literacy awareness; to provide a short title; to provide for an effective date; to
32 provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

33 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

34 **SECTION 1.**

35 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Georgia Early Literacy Act of 2026."

36 **SECTION 2.**

37 Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to education, is amended in
38 Article 4 of Chapter 1, relating to the Council on Literacy, by revising subsection (e) of Code
39 Section 20-1-42, relating to membership, terms, cooperation, and Literacy Coach, as follows:

40 "(e) The council shall be attached for administrative purposes only to the Office of Student
41 Achievement. The Office of Student Achievement shall provide staff support for the
42 council and shall hire an individual to serve as Georgia ~~Literacy Coach~~ Director of Literacy

43 who shall be responsible for coordination of such staff support and for working in
44 coordination with the literacy related efforts of the Alliance of Education Agency Heads.
45 The Office of Student Achievement shall use any funds specifically appropriated to support
46 the work of the council for such purpose."

47 **SECTION 3.**

48 Said title is further amended in said article by revising Code Section 20-1-44, relating to
49 duties and authority relative to the Georgia Council on Literacy, as follows:

50 "20-1-44.

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

52 (1) Work in partnership with the State Board of Education ~~and~~, the Department of
53 Education, the Office of Student Achievement, and the Georgia Literacy Coordinating
54 Committee to implement the requirements of the 'Georgia Early Literacy and Dyslexia
55 Act' as provided for in Code Section 20-2-153.1;

56 (2) Review the conditions, needs, issues, and problems related to state literacy outcomes;
57 make recommendations for legislation and appropriations to support improving such
58 outcomes; and provide by November 30 of each year a report of such review and
59 recommendations to the Governor, the Office of Planning and Budget, the Speaker of the
60 House of Representatives, and the President of the Senate;

61 (3) Evaluate and consider the best practices, experiences, and results of legislation in
62 other states with regard to literacy improvements for students;

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

65 (5) Research and make recommendations on improving literacy rates for minority and
66 English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) students;

67 (6) Research and make recommendations on improving literacy rates for students with
68 characteristics of dyslexia;

- 69 (7) Monitor state-wide literacy goals and measures set by the State Board of Education
70 in consultation with the Department of Education and the Office of Student Achievement
71 and provide by October 31 of each year a report to the State Board of Education and the
72 Office of Student Achievement of the conclusions reached through such monitoring
73 regarding the status and effectiveness of policy initiatives;
- 74 (8) Review changes or updates to QBE funding to enhance literacy instruction;
- 75 (9) Review and make recommendations on the alignment of teacher certifications to
76 include evidence based literacy instruction and education degree program requirements;
- 77 (10) Review and make recommendations for:
- 78 (A) Professional learning and the professional development needed by current teachers,
79 literacy coaches, and school and school system administrators for improving literacy
80 instruction in pre-kindergarten through third grade;
- 81 (B) High-quality instructional materials for literacy instruction in pre-kindergarten
82 through third grade; and
- 83 (C) Universal reading screeners required under Code Section 20-2-153.1;
- 84 (11) Review state-wide birth to age five initiatives and suggest policy and appropriation
85 changes; and
- 86 (12) Review best practices for community based literacy programs and make
87 recommendations for improvement.
- 88 (b) The council shall be authorized to:
- 89 (1) Request and receive data from and review the records of appropriate state agencies
90 to the greatest extent allowed by state and federal law;
- 91 (2) Seek and accept public or private grants, devises, and bequests;
- 92 (3) Enter into contracts or agreements through the council's chairperson necessary or
93 incidental to the performance of its duties;
- 94 (4) Establish rules and procedures for conducting the business of the council;

95 (5) Conduct studies, hold public meetings, collect data, or take any other action the
 96 council deems necessary to fulfill its responsibilities; and
 97 (6) Retain the services of attorneys, consultants, subject matter experts, economists,
 98 budget analysts, data analysts, statisticians, and other individuals or organizations as
 99 deemed appropriate by the council. Such services may be obtained through a request for
 100 proposal process conducted through the Office of Planning and Budget; provided,
 101 however, that any final selection shall be approved by the council."

102 **SECTION 4.**

103 Said title is further amended in Part 3 of Article 6 of Chapter 2, relating to educational
 104 programs under the "Quality Basic Education Act," by revising subsection (c) of Code
 105 Section 20-2-150, relating to eligibility for enrollment for educational programs, as follows:
 106 "(c) All children enrolled for 20 school days or more in the public schools of this state
 107 prior to their ~~seventh~~ sixth birthday shall become subject to all of the provisions of this
 108 article, the provisions of Code Sections 20-2-690 through 20-2-701, and the rules and
 109 regulations of the State Board of Education relating to compulsory school attendance even
 110 though they have not attained ~~seven~~ six years of age."

111 **SECTION 5.**

112 Said title is further amended in said part by revising paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (b)
 113 of Code Section 20-2-151, relating to general and career education programs, purpose, and
 114 authorized programs, as follows:

115 "(1)(A) All local school systems ~~may~~ shall offer a full-day kindergarten program. As
 116 used in ~~For purposes of~~ this subsection, the term 'full-day kindergarten program' means
 117 a student is provided classroom instruction for a minimum of four and one-half hours
 118 daily for a 180 day school year, or the equivalent thereof as determined in accordance
 119 with State Board of Education guidelines.

120 (B)(i) It is the policy of this state that before any child is enrolled in the first grade
121 of a state supported primary grades program, he or she shall attend a full-day
122 kindergarten program unless he or she has been assessed as ready for first grade, as
123 provided for in paragraph (2) of this subsection, and meets the age eligibility
124 requirement for enrollment in the first grade.

125 (ii) The the purposes of the state supported kindergarten program shall be to provide
126 all children with an equal opportunity to become prepared for a successful first grade
127 experience and to acquire the foundation for academic progress throughout the
128 students' educational careers.

129 (iii) To be eligible for enrollment in a state supported kindergarten program, a child
130 must shall attain the age of five by September 1, except as otherwise provided by
131 subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-150.

132 (iv) This subparagraph shall not be construed or applied to require a child to
133 complete a full school year of kindergarten prior to enrolling in first grade.

134 (v) At the discretion of the school principal or at the request of the parent or guardian,
135 a child who meets the age eligibility requirement for enrollment in the first grade may
136 be assessed for first grade readiness as provided for in paragraph (2) of this
137 subsection.

138 (vi) A child who meets the age eligibility requirement for enrollment in the first
139 grade and who has been assessed as ready for first grade, as provided for in
140 paragraph (2) of this subsection, may be placed in or promoted to first grade.

141 (vii) No student shall remain in kindergarten for more than two years.

142 (viii) Notwithstanding any part of this subsection or other provision of law to the
143 contrary:

144 (I) Each child enrolling in a state supported education program for the first time
145 who, by virtue of his or her age and date of birth, is eligible for enrollment in the
146 first grade of a state supported primary grades program pursuant to this Code

147 section or Code Section 20-2-150 shall be enrolled in a state supported kindergarten
148 program at the request of his or her parent or guardian; and

149 (II) Each child who attains the age of either four or five by September 1 shall be
150 eligible for enrollment in a voluntary pre-kindergarten program provided and
151 operated as part of Georgia's Pre-K Program, and each such child shall be enrolled
152 in such program at the request of his or her parent or guardian; provided, however,
153 that this paragraph shall not be construed or applied to require or permit a child to
154 be enrolled in such a program for more than one year; and, provided, further that
155 children ages four and five shall be treated on the same basis relative to selection
156 for available seats in such programs.

157 (2)(A) It is the policy of this state that the purpose of the primary grades program shall
158 be mastery by enrolled students of the essential basic skills and knowledge which will
159 enable them to achieve more advanced skills and knowledge offered at the higher grade
160 levels. For purposes of funding under this article, the primary grades program shall
161 include grades one, two, and three.

162 (B) To be eligible for enrollment in the first grade of a state supported primary grades
163 program, a child ~~must~~ shall:

164 (i) Be assessed for readiness by teachers and other personnel of the local school
165 system or public school. Such assessment shall include:

166 (I) The use of assessments, screeners, and other instruments approved for such
167 purpose by the State Board of Education, including, but not limited to:

168 (a) The first grade readiness assessment adopted by the State Board of Education
169 pursuant to Code Section 20-2-281; and

170 (b) A universal reading screener adopted by the State Board of Education
171 pursuant to Code Section 20-2-153.1;

172 (II) Consideration of teacher input and recommendations; and

173 (III) Other relevant information, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, the
174 preference of such child's parent or guardian; and

175 (ii) Attain attain the age of six by September 1, except as otherwise provided by
176 subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-150. ~~The State Board of Education shall adopt~~
177 ~~an instrument or instruments, procedures, and policies necessary to assess the first~~
178 ~~grade readiness of children enrolled in Georgia's public school kindergarten programs~~
179 ~~pursuant to Code Section 20-2-281. Readiness information obtained by the~~
180 ~~instrument or instruments adopted by the state board shall be used by local school~~
181 ~~systems in concert with teacher recommendations and other relevant information to~~
182 ~~make appropriate student grade placement decisions.~~

183 (C) If, upon being assessed for first grade readiness pursuant to this paragraph, a child
184 is identified as significantly at risk of not attaining grade level reading proficiency, as
185 provided for in Code Section 20-2-153.1:

186 (i) A tiered reading intervention plan shall be immediately developed and
187 implemented for such child; and

188 (ii) The parent or guardian of the student shall be notified in writing by first-class
189 mail by the school principal or the principal's designee regarding the determination
190 that the student has been identified as significantly at risk of not attaining grade level
191 reading proficiency prior to beginning the first grade, the student's tiered reading
192 intervention plan, and the possibility that the student might not be placed or promoted
193 to the first grade.

194 (D) When a child who meets the age eligibility requirement for enrollment in the first
195 grade has been identified as significantly at risk of not attaining grade level reading
196 proficiency and, after a tiered reading intervention plan has been implemented, the child
197 continues to be significantly at risk of not attaining grade level reading proficiency, the
198 following shall occur:

- 199 (i) The school principal or the principal's designee shall determine the child is not
200 ready for placement in or promotion to the first grade program except as otherwise
201 provided in this paragraph;
- 202 (ii) The school principal or the principal's designee shall notify in writing by
203 first-class mail the parent or guardian of the child regarding the determination that the
204 child is not ready for placement in or promotion to the first grade program. The
205 notice shall describe the option of the parent or guardian to appeal such determination
206 and shall further describe the composition and functions of the placement committee
207 as provided for in this paragraph, including the requirement that a decision to place
208 the child in or promote the child to the first grade must be a unanimous decision of
209 the committee;
- 210 (iii) If the parent or guardian appeals the determination that his or her child is not
211 ready for placement in or promotion to the first grade program, then the school
212 principal or the principal's designee shall establish a placement committee composed
213 of the school principal or the principal's designee, the student's parent or guardian, and
214 the student's teacher, and shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or
215 guardian of the time and place for convening the placement committee;
- 216 (iv) The placement committee shall:
- 217 (I) Review the child's overall readiness for placement in or promotion to the first
218 grade program and his or her progress toward grade level reading proficiency;
- 219 (II) Decide whether the child shall be placed in or promoted to the first grade
220 program; provided, however, that a decision to place the child in or promote the
221 child to the first grade program shall be a unanimous decision; and
- 222 (III) Prescribe for the child such accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction
223 as needed to perform at grade level by the conclusion of the subsequent school year,
224 prescribe such additional assessments as may be appropriate in addition to
225 assessments administered to other students at the grade level during the year, and

226 provide for a plan of continuous assessment during the subsequent school year in
227 order to monitor the progress of the child;

228 (v) For children who are eligible to receive special education or related services, the
229 child's Individualized Education Plan Committee shall serve as the placement
230 committee; and

231 (vi) The decision of the placement committee may be appealed only as provided for
232 by the local board of education or other public school governing body.

233 (E) By July 1, 2026, the State Board of Education shall:

234 (i) Adopt policies and procedures necessary to implement the requirements of this
235 paragraph; and

236 (ii) Approve one or more assessments, screeners, and other instruments for assessing
237 the first grade readiness of children. The State Board of Education shall consider for
238 approval any assessment, screener, or other instrument recommended by the Office
239 of Student Achievement.

240 (F) By July 15, 2026, the ~~The~~ Department of Education, in collaboration with the
241 Office of Student Achievement, shall develop guidelines for utilization of ~~the~~
242 instrument or instruments such assessments, screeners, and other instruments approved
243 by the State Board of Education in grade placement decisions and shall provide such
244 guidelines and technical assistance to local school systems and public schools. The
245 guidelines shall include information pertinent to consideration of the placement of
246 students who have been identified as being disabled or limited-English-proficient.

247 (G) Whenever the decision is made not to place a child in or promote a child to the first
248 grade, the local school system or public school shall document the reasons for ~~the such~~
249 decision not to promote, according to policies, procedures, and guidelines established
250 by the ~~board~~ State Board of Education and shall provide such reasons in writing to the
251 parent or guardian of the child.

252 (H) By November 1 each year, the Office of Student Achievement shall ~~The State~~
 253 ~~School Superintendent may annually provide a report summarizing the results of the~~
 254 ~~readiness of first grade Georgia public school kindergarten children. No student shall~~
 255 ~~remain in kindergarten for more than two years~~ the readiness of Georgia children for
 256 placement in or promotion to the first grade program. Such report shall include, but
 257 shall not be limited to, information on the grade level reading proficiency of such
 258 children. Such report shall be submitted to the Governor; the President of the Senate;
 259 the Speaker of the House of Representatives; the chairpersons of the House Committee
 260 on Education, the Senate Education and Youth Committee, the House Committee on
 261 Higher Education, the Senate Higher Education Committee, the House Committee on
 262 Appropriations, and the Senate Appropriations Committee; and the State Board of
 263 Education.

264 (I)(i) The provisions of subparagraphs (C) and (D) of this paragraph shall apply
 265 beginning with the 2027-2028 school year and continue thereafter.

266 (ii) By July 1, 2027, the State Board of Education and the Department of Education
 267 shall update the policies, procedures, guidelines required in subparagraphs (E) and (F)
 268 of this paragraph;"

269 **SECTION 6.**

270 Said title is further amended in said part by repealing and replacing paragraph (6) of
 271 subsection (b), redesignating paragraph (16) of subsection (b) as paragraph (17), adding a
 272 new paragraph to subsection (b), revising subsection (c), paragraph (2) of subsection (d), and
 273 subsection (d.1), repealing and replacing subsection (e), and adding a new subsection to Code
 274 Section 20-2-153.1, the "Georgia Early Literacy and Dyslexia Act," as follows:

275 "(a.1) It is the intent of the General Assembly that:

276 (1) Early literacy instruction in this state shall be:

277 (A) Comprehensive;

278 (B) Focused on structured literacy and foundational literacy skills;
279 (C) Aligned to the science of reading; and
280 (D) Anchored by high-quality instructional materials that are aligned to the science of
281 reading;
282 (2) Educators shall have access to and be provided with research on the science of
283 reading and receive comprehensive curriculum based professional learning to support
284 them in applying such research in instructional practices; and
285 (3) The ongoing involvement of parents and guardians in comprehensive state-wide
286 literacy efforts shall be encouraged and integrated into their children's educations."
287 "(6) 'Dyslexia' shall have the same meaning as the definition adopted and amended from
288 time to time by the International Dyslexia Association and approved by the Georgia
289 Literacy Coordinating Committee and posted on the website of the Office of Student
290 Achievement."
291 "(16) 'Unified literacy plan' means a comprehensive, evidence based framework to ensure
292 coherent, aligned, and continuous literacy development for learners from birth through
293 career readiness. Such plan shall, as appropriate according to grade levels served:
294 (A) Establish measurable literacy goals for all tested grade levels, using state-wide
295 assessment results and approved universal reading screener data to monitor student
296 progress, guide instructional decision making, and evaluate program effectiveness;
297 (B) Include explicit strategies for collaboration with early learning providers for
298 learners from birth to age five to support school readiness and early language
299 development; and
300 (C) Establish literacy transition plans for the transition from kindergarten to elementary
301 school."
302 "(c)(1) The board, in consultation with the department and the Office of Student
303 Achievement, shall establish such policies, rules, and regulations as necessary to
304 implement uniform grade-appropriate metrics for measuring literacy.

305 (2) By March 1, 2027 ~~As soon as practicable but not later than January 1, 2024,~~ the
 306 board shall:

307 (A) Upon the recommendation of the Office of Student Achievement, approve
 308 ~~Approve~~ high-quality instructional materials aligned to the science of reading to be
 309 used for teaching students in kindergarten through third grade to read; and

310 (B) Establish a procedure for each public school and local school system to annually
 311 certify to the department that such school or school system's locally approved
 312 instructional materials and content, as defined in subsection (a) of Code
 313 Section 20-2-1017, constitute high-quality instructional materials aligned to the science
 314 of reading.

315 ~~(3)(A) Every three years beginning in 2027, the center shall review and update, as~~
 316 ~~appropriate, qualifications, timelines, and submission procedures for education service~~
 317 ~~providers to submit one or more universal reading screeners to be considered for~~
 318 ~~inclusion on the board's list of approved universal reading screener providers provided~~
 319 ~~for in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph.~~

320 ~~(B)~~(3) By April 1, 2028, and by April 1 every third year thereafter, upon the
 321 recommendation of the Office of Student Achievement a list of no less than two and ~~As~~
 322 ~~soon as practicable but not later than May 15, 2025, the board shall approve the~~
 323 ~~memorandum of agreement between the council and the department, as provided for in~~
 324 ~~subparagraph (B) of paragraph (4) of this subsection, for a list of no more than five~~
 325 ~~universal reading screeners, one of which shall be a free universal reading screener, for~~
 326 ~~use by public schools and local school systems as part of their comprehensive literacy~~
 327 ~~programs which meet the following criteria shall be approved by the board. Each such~~
 328 universal reading screener shall:

329 ~~(i) Capable of providing relevant information to assist teachers with targeting~~
 330 ~~instruction based on student needs;~~

331 ~~(ii) Capable of measuring foundational literacy skills;~~

- 332 ~~(iii) Capable of identifying students who are significantly at risk of not attaining~~
 333 ~~grade level reading proficiency, including, but not limited to, identifying students with~~
 334 ~~characteristics of dyslexia;~~
 335 ~~(iv) Prescribed parameters on the time required to administer a universal reading~~
 336 ~~screener with the primary objective of such prescription being to minimize impacts~~
 337 ~~on instructional time; and~~
 338 ~~(v) Capable of progress monitoring.~~
- 339 (A) Provide screening and diagnostic capabilities for monitoring student progress;
 340 (B) Measure, at a minimum, a student's foundational reading skills, including, but not
 341 limited to, a student's phonological awareness, oral language, the alphabetic principle,
 342 including letter naming, letter sound, and sound letter correspondences, decoding,
 343 encoding, accuracy, vocabulary, and comprehension;
 344 (C) Identify students who are significantly at risk of not attaining grade level reading
 345 proficiency, including, but not limited to, identifying students with characteristics of
 346 dyslexia; and
 347 (D) Have robust reporting capabilities, including, but not limited to, the capability to
 348 generate and provide directly to the department and the Office of Student Achievement
 349 reports of screener results by:
- 350 (i) Student;
 351 (ii) Student subgroups based on grade level, educational program, demographic
 352 characteristics, and other criteria identified by the Georgia Literacy Task Force;
 353 (iii) School; and
 354 (iv) Local school system.
- 355 (4)(A) ~~The~~ By July 15 each year, the department shall publish and regularly update on
 356 its ~~public~~ website the free universal reading screener and the list of other approved
 357 universal reading screeners provided for in paragraph (3) of this subsection, one of which
 358 each public school and local school system shall adopt and administer ~~in order to comply~~

359 ~~with the requirements of subparagraph (B) of paragraph (3) of this subsection as part of~~
 360 ~~their comprehensive literacy programs.~~

361 ~~(B) The council, in collaboration with the center and the Office of Planning and~~
 362 ~~Budget, shall identify a free universal reading screener that meets the criteria~~
 363 ~~established by the board as provided in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (3) of this~~
 364 ~~subsection. The council shall enter into a memorandum of agreement with the~~
 365 ~~department to make such universal reading screener available for use free of charge to~~
 366 ~~public schools and local school systems.~~

367 (5) The department shall publish on its public website and distribute by ~~July 15~~ July 1
 368 each year by electronic means to each local school system and public school in this state
 369 a dyslexia informational handbook that includes guidance, technical assistance, and
 370 training to assist all schools in the implementation of evidence based practices for
 371 instructing students with characteristics of dyslexia. Such handbook shall include, but
 372 shall not be limited to, ~~the following information:~~

373 (A) Evidence based practices designed specifically for students with characteristics of
 374 dyslexia;

375 (B) Guidance on developing support plans for students with characteristics of dyslexia;

376 (C) A list and brief description of the dyslexia related training programs accredited by
 377 the International Dyslexia Association and any other nationally or internationally
 378 recognized accrediting organization; and

379 (D) A list of dyslexia endorsement programs approved by the Professional Standards
 380 Commission in collaboration with the Office of Student Achievement.

381 (6) The department shall, in consultation with the University System of Georgia, the
 382 Professional Standards Commission, the Office of Student Achievement, the Georgia
 383 Literacy Coordinating Committee, Georgia's regional ~~education~~ educational service
 384 agencies, and literacy experts, develop or procure one or more training professional
 385 learning programs for kindergarten through third grade teachers on the science of reading,

386 structured literacy, and foundational literacy skills that enable students to develop reading
387 skills required to meet state standards in literacy. Such programs shall emphasize the
388 importance of applying research about the science of reading to instructional practices
389 and of using high-quality instructional materials. Such training programs shall be
390 developed or procured to promote teachers' knowledge and skills for teaching all students
391 to read, including students with dyslexia, and to ensure teachers and literacy coaches have
392 the knowledge and skills necessary to use approved universal reading screeners and to
393 use assessment data to inform instruction based on student needs. One such program
394 shall be a state-wide comprehensive curriculum based professional learning program in
395 structured literacy that is aligned to and includes research on the science of reading to
396 support teachers and literacy coaches in applying such research into instructional
397 practices for kindergarten through grade three teachers and literacy coaches. Beginning
398 no later than the 2027-2028 school year, such comprehensive program shall be made
399 available free of charge to public school kindergarten through third grade teachers.

400 (7) The department shall provide technical assistance to aid public schools and local
401 school systems in implementing the provisions of this Code section.

402 (8)(A) By November 1 each year Beginning April 1, 2026, the department shall
403 provide an annual report on the impacts of the implementation of the provisions of this
404 Code section, including, but not limited to, reporting the results by school and school
405 system of:

406 (i) The comprehensive summative assessment program for third grade students
407 provided for in subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-281; and

408 (ii) The formative reading assessments for first and second grade students provided
409 for in Code Section 20-2-280.

410 (B) Such report shall also include analyses of the impact of use of universal reading
411 screeners, the use of high-quality instructional materials, and instructional practices
412 ~~grounded in~~ aligned to the science of reading. Such report shall be provided to the

413 Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the
 414 ~~chairperson~~ chairpersons of the House Committee on Education, the Senate Education
 415 and Youth Committee, the House Committee on Higher Education, the Senate Higher
 416 Education Committee, the House Committee on Appropriations, and the Senate
 417 Appropriations Committee, and the board, and shall be made available on the
 418 department's public website for access by the public."

419 "(2)(A) Utilizing school based literacy coaches and other available resources, each ~~Each~~
 420 public school and local school system shall provide instructional support for kindergarten
 421 through third grade teachers that shall include:

422 (i)(A) Onsite teacher training professional learning and research materials on the
 423 science of reading, structured literacy, foundational literacy skills, and evidence based
 424 decision making;

425 (ii)(B) Demonstrated lessons to support teachers in applying such professional learning
 426 and research materials in instructional practices;

427 (C) School based literacy coaches working side-by-side with teachers in classrooms;

428 (D) School based literacy coaches working directly with individual students and small
 429 groups of students as time permits; and

430 (iii)(E) Prompt feedback for improving instruction.

431 ~~(B)(i) Any public school or local school system claiming that a lack of sufficient~~
 432 ~~funding prevents such public school or local school system from providing~~
 433 ~~instructional support as required in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph shall promptly~~
 434 ~~and in writing notify the department and shall describe all efforts such school or~~
 435 ~~school system has undertaken to secure sufficient funding from local, state, federal,~~
 436 ~~and private sources.~~

437 ~~(ii) The department shall provide technical assistance and other guidance to public~~
 438 ~~schools and local schools systems in identifying local, state, federal, and private~~

439 funding sources to provide for instructional support as required in subparagraph (A)
 440 of this paragraph."

441 "(d.1)(1) The Professional Standards Commission shall adopt rules which establish
 442 criteria for core curricula for each state approved educator preparation program. Such
 443 rules shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

444 ~~(1)~~(A) The use of content standards established by the State Board of Education that
 445 are aligned to the science of reading to guide curricula and instruction;

446 ~~(2)~~(B) Evidence based standards for the teaching of reading that:

447 ~~(A)~~(i) Are exclusively aligned ~~with~~ to the science of reading;

448 ~~(B)~~(ii) Prepare teachers to provide explicit, systematic, sequential, diagnostic, and
 449 cumulative approaches to teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary,
 450 fluency, and text comprehension; and

451 ~~(C)~~(iii) Employ multisensory and multimodal intervention strategies;

452 ~~(3)~~(C) Content based literacy and mathematics practices;

453 ~~(4)~~(D) Strategies appropriate for the instruction of English language learners;

454 ~~(5)~~(E) Strategies appropriate for the instruction of students with disabilities;

455 ~~(6)~~(F) Strategies ~~to~~ including, but not limited to, the use of assessment results, to
 456 identify student strengths and weaknesses and differentiate instruction based on student
 457 needs;

458 ~~(7)~~(G) Strategies and practices to support research based content aligned to state
 459 standards and grading practices;

460 ~~(8)~~(H) Strategies appropriate for the early identification of a student with a reading
 461 deficiency; and

462 ~~(9)~~(I) Strategies to support the use of technology in education and distance learning.

463 (2) Beginning January 1, 2027, the Professional Standards Commission shall undertake
 464 an ongoing review of each state approved educator preparation program's compliance
 465 with the rules provided for in paragraph (1) of this subsection, with a particular emphasis

466 on subparagraphs (B) and (F) of paragraph (1) of this subsection. The Executive Director
467 shall have the discretion to determine the order and priority of reviews; provided,
468 however, that all educator preparation programs shall be reviewed no less often than
469 every four years. By November 1 each year, the Professional Standards Commission
470 shall provide a report of its review and significant findings to the Chancellor of the Board
471 of Regents of the University System of Georgia, the governing body of each state
472 approved educator preparation program that is not an institution of the University System
473 of Georgia, the State Board of Education, the Office of Student Achievement, the Georgia
474 Council on Literacy, and the chairpersons of the House Committee on Higher Education,
475 the Senate Higher Education Committee, the House Committee on Education, and the
476 Senate Education and Youth Committee.

477 (e)(1) Not later than January 1, 2027, each local board of education and other public
478 school governing body shall adopt a unified literacy plan.

479 (2) Beginning January 1, 2027:

480 (A) No local school system shall be eligible for any waiver or variance granted under
481 Code Section 20-2-244 or Article 4 of this chapter or to enter into or renew a charter
482 system contract or strategic waivers school system contract with the State Board of
483 Education unless such local school system has adopted a unified literacy plan;

484 (B) Neither the State Board of Education nor any local board of education shall
485 authorize a new charter petition or a renewal charter petition for a local charter school,
486 as such term is defined in Code Section 20-2-2062, unless such petition includes a
487 unified literacy plan for such local charter school; and

488 (C) Neither the State Board of Education nor the State Charter Schools Commission
489 shall authorize a new charter petition or a renewal charter petition for a state charter
490 school, as such term is defined in Code Section 20-2-2081, unless such petition includes
491 a unified literacy plan for such state charter school."

492

SECTION 7.

493 Said title is further amended in Part 5 of Article 6 of Chapter 2, relating to program weights
494 and funding requirements under the "Quality Basic Education Act," by deleting "and" at the
495 end of paragraph (4), by replacing the period at the end of paragraph (5) with "; and", and by
496 adding a new paragraph to subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-186, relating to allocation
497 of funds for local education agencies to pay beginning salaries of superintendents,
498 secretaries, accountants, nurses, and certain other personnel and eligibility of failing schools
499 for funds, to read as follows:

500 "(6) Each local education agency shall earn funding sufficient to pay the beginning salary
501 of one full-time equivalent school based literacy coach for each school with any of grades
502 kindergarten through three, except that any such school with 200 or fewer full-time
503 equivalent students shall earn 50 percent of such funding. Such funding shall be based
504 on a contract length of 190 days. Each such school based literacy coach shall be a teacher
505 or other certificated professional personnel who meets the qualifications established by
506 the State Board of Education upon a recommendation from the Office of Student
507 Achievement, as provided for in Code Section 20-14-202. Such qualifications shall
508 include a preference for certificated professional personnel with a literacy coaching
509 endorsement established pursuant to Code Section 20-2-208.2. Each local education
510 agency shall be permitted to utilize one full-time school based literacy coach for each
511 qualifying school or a combination of part-time school based literacy coaches for each
512 qualifying school; provided, however, that each local education agency shall expend 100
513 percent of the funds earned pursuant to this paragraph for salaries and benefits for school
514 based literacy coaches; and provided, further, that no individual employed by a local
515 education agency as a full-time or part-time school based literacy coach shall be
516 employed by such local education agency in any other capacity or for any other purpose."

517 **SECTION 8.**

518 Said title is further amended in Subpart 1 of Part 6 of Article 6 of Chapter 2, relating to
519 certificated professional personnel, by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

520 "20-2-208.2.

521 (a) No later than December 30, 2026, the Professional Standards Commission shall
522 establish a literacy coaching endorsement for teachers and other certificated professional
523 personnel trained in an evidence based approach to teaching oral and written language
524 aligned to the science of reading founded on the science of how children learn to read and
525 characterized by explicit, systematic, cumulative, and diagnostic instruction in phonology,
526 sound-symbol association, syllable instruction, morphology, syntax, and semantics.

527 (b) The requirements to receive such literacy coaching endorsement shall include training
528 on the use of universal reading screeners to measure and monitor a student's progress in
529 foundational literacy skills, providing guidance to parents, and providing training or
530 guidance to other teachers and school personnel."

531 **SECTION 9.**

532 Said title is further amended in Part 11 of Article 6, relating to regional educational service
533 agencies, by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

534 "20-2-270.3.

535 (a) The board of control of each regional educational service agency (RESA) shall
536 authorize regional literacy coaches and regional leadership literacy coaches to provide
537 literacy coaching, support, and related services to local school systems and other public
538 schools in the RESA service area.

539 (b) In collaboration with the Georgia Director of Literacy and the Georgia Literacy Coach
540 Coordinator, the board of control of each RESA shall assign regional literacy coaches to
541 the local school systems and public schools of the RESA service area, and at least one

542 regional leadership literacy coach shall be assigned to serve as the primary point of contact
 543 with local school system and school leaders.

544 (c) Each regional literacy coach and regional leadership literacy coach authorized by the
 545 board of control of a RESA shall be employed by such RESA and shall report to the
 546 director of the RESA.

547 (d) Each regional literacy coach, regional leadership literacy coach, and RESA director
 548 shall work in full cooperation with the Georgia Literacy Coordinating Committee, the
 549 Georgia Director of Literacy, and the Georgia Literacy Coach Coordinator.

550 (e) Each regional literacy coach and regional leadership literacy coach shall work in full
 551 cooperation with any observation, evaluation, and feedback provided by the Georgia
 552 Literacy Coach Coordinator or his or her designee."

553 **SECTION 10.**

554 Said title is further amended in Part 12 of Article 6 of Chapter 2, relating to effectiveness of
 555 educational programs, by revising Code Section 20-2-283, relating to criteria, specific
 556 requirements for students in grades three, five, and eight, and implementation, as follows:

557 "20-2-283.

558 (a) No later than ~~January 1, 2002~~ July 1, 2026, the State Board of Education shall adopt
 559 criteria for the development of a placement and promotion policy by each local board of
 560 education and other public school governing body consistent with the Georgia Academic
 561 Placement and Promotion Policy.

562 (b) Such criteria as adopted by the State Board of Education shall require the following for
 563 students in grades one, three, five, and eight:

564 (1) No student shall be promoted, except as provided in this Code section, to:

565 (A) The second grade program to which the student would otherwise be assigned if the
 566 student is determined to be significantly at risk of not attaining grade level reading
 567 proficiency, as determined in accordance with Code Section 20-2-153.1, by the end of

568 the first grade program and does not meet the promotional standards and criteria
569 established by the State Board of Education and by the local board of education or other
570 governing body for the school that the student attends;

571 ~~(A)~~(B) The fourth grade program to which the student would otherwise be assigned if
572 the student does not achieve grade level as defined by the Office of Student
573 Achievement in accordance with Code Section 20-14-31 on the third grade
574 end-of-grade reading assessment developed in accordance with subsection (a) of Code
575 Section 20-2-281 and meet the promotional standards and criteria established by the
576 State Board of Education and by the local ~~school~~ board of education or other governing
577 body for the school that the student attends;

578 ~~(B)~~(C) The sixth grade program to which the student would otherwise be assigned if
579 the student does not achieve grade level as defined by the Office of Student
580 Achievement in accordance with Code Section 20-14-31 on the fifth grade end-of-grade
581 mathematics assessment and fifth grade end-of-grade reading assessment developed in
582 accordance with subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-281 and meet the promotional
583 standards and criteria established by the State Board of Education and by the local
584 ~~school~~ board of education or other governing body for the school that the student
585 attends; or

586 ~~(C)~~(D) The ninth grade program to which the student would otherwise be assigned if
587 the student does not achieve grade level as defined by the Office of Student
588 Achievement in accordance with Code Section 20-14-31 on the eighth grade
589 end-of-grade mathematics assessment and eighth grade end-of-grade reading
590 assessment developed in accordance with subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-281 and
591 meet the promotional standards and criteria established by the State Board of Education
592 and by the local ~~school~~ board of education or other governing body for the school that
593 the student attends;

594 (2) When a student does not perform at grade level on any end-of-grade assessment
595 specified in subparagraph (B), (C), or (D) of paragraph (1) of this subsection, then the
596 following shall occur:

597 (A) The parent or guardian of the student shall be notified in writing by first-class mail
598 by the school principal or ~~such official's~~ the principal's designee regarding the student's
599 performance below grade level on the assessment instrument, the retest to be given the
600 student, the accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction program to which the
601 student is assigned, and the possibility that the student might be retained at the same
602 grade level for the next school year;

603 (B) The student shall be retested with an end-of-grade assessment or an alternative
604 assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided for
605 by the State Board of Education and the local board of education or school governing
606 body; and

607 (C) The student shall be given an opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or
608 additional instruction in the applicable subject; ~~and~~

609 (3) When a student does not perform at grade level on any end-of-grade assessment
610 specified in subparagraph (B), (C), or (D) of paragraph (1) of this subsection and also
611 does not perform at grade level on a second additional opportunity as provided for in
612 paragraph (2) of this subsection, then the following shall occur:

613 (A) The school principal or the principal's designee shall retain the student for the next
614 school year except as otherwise provided in this subsection;

615 (B) The school principal or the principal's designee shall notify in writing by first-class
616 mail the parent or guardian of the student and the teacher regarding the decision to
617 retain the student. The notice shall describe the option of the parent, guardian, or
618 teacher to appeal the decision to retain the student and shall further describe the
619 composition and functions of the placement committee as provided for in this

620 subsection, including the requirement that a decision to promote the student must be a
621 unanimous decision of the committee;

622 (C) If the parent, guardian, or teacher appeals the decision to retain the student, then
623 the school principal or the principal's designee shall establish a placement committee
624 composed of the principal or the principal's designee, the student's parent or guardian,
625 and the teacher of the subject of the assessment instrument on which the student failed
626 to perform at grade level and shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or
627 guardian of the time and place for convening the placement committee;

628 (D) The placement committee shall:

629 (i) Review the overall academic achievement of the student in light of the
630 performance on the end-of-grade assessment and the standards and criteria as adopted
631 by the local board of education and make a determination to promote or retain. A
632 decision to promote must be a unanimous decision and must determine that if
633 promoted and given accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction during the
634 next year, the student is likely to perform at grade level as defined by the Office of
635 Student Achievement in accordance with Code Section 20-14-31 by the conclusion
636 of the school year; and

637 (ii) Prescribe for the student, whether the student is retained or promoted, such
638 accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction as needed to perform at grade
639 level by the conclusion of the subsequent school year, prescribe such additional
640 assessments as may be appropriate in addition to assessments administered to other
641 students at the grade level during the year, and provide for a plan of continuous
642 assessment during the subsequent school year in order to monitor the progress of the
643 student;

644 (E) For students receiving special education or related services, the Individualized
645 Education Plan Committee shall serve as the placement committee; and

646 (F) The decision of the placement committee may be appealed only as provided for by
647 the local board of education or other public school governing body; and

648 (4)(A) When a student is determined to be significantly at risk of not attaining grade
649 level reading proficiency, as specified in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of this
650 subsection, then the following shall occur:

651 (i) The parent or guardian of the student shall be notified in writing by first-class mail
652 by the school principal or the principal's designee regarding the determination that the
653 student has been determined to be significantly at risk of not attaining grade level
654 reading proficiency by the end of the first grade program, the student's updated tiered
655 reading intervention plan, and the possibility that the student might be retained at the
656 same grade level for the next school year;

657 (ii) The student shall be reassessed to determine if he or she is to be significantly at
658 risk of not attaining grade level reading proficiency by the end of the first grade
659 program; and

660 (iii) The student shall receive intensive reading intervention in accordance with Code
661 Section 20-2-153.1.

662 (B) When a student is determined to be significantly at risk of not attaining grade level
663 reading proficiency, as specified in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of this
664 subsection, and continues to be significantly at risk of not attaining grade level reading
665 proficiency after provisions of subparagraph (A) of this paragraph are implemented,
666 then the following shall occur:

667 (i) The school principal or the principal's designee shall retain the student for the next
668 school year except as otherwise provided in this paragraph;

669 (ii) The school principal or the principal's designee shall notify in writing by
670 first-class mail the parent or guardian of the student regarding the decision to retain
671 the student. The notice shall describe the option of the parent or guardian to appeal
672 the decision to retain the student and shall further describe the composition and

673 functions of the placement committee as provided for in this paragraph, including the
674 requirement that a decision to promote the student must be a unanimous decision of
675 the committee;

676 (iii) If the parent or guardian appeals the decision to retain the student, then the
677 school principal or the principal's designee shall establish a placement committee
678 composed of the school principal or the principal's designee, the student's parent or
679 guardian, and the student's teacher and shall notify in writing by first-class mail the
680 parent or guardian of the time and place for convening the placement committee;

681 (iv) The placement committee shall:

682 (I) Review the overall academic achievement of the student and his or her progress
683 toward grade level reading proficiency and make a determination to promote or
684 retain. A decision to promote must be a unanimous decision and must determine
685 that if promoted and given intensive reading intervention in accordance with Code
686 Section 20-2-153.1 during the next year, the student is likely to perform at grade
687 level as defined by the Office of Student Achievement in accordance with Code
688 Section 20-14-31 by the conclusion of the school year; and

689 (II) Prescribe for the student, whether the student is retained or promoted, such
690 accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction as needed to perform at grade
691 level by the conclusion of the subsequent school year, prescribe such additional
692 assessments as may be appropriate in addition to assessments administered to other
693 students at the grade level during the year, and provide for a plan of continuous
694 assessment during the subsequent school year in order to monitor the progress of the
695 student;

696 (v) For students receiving special education or related services, the Individualized
697 Education Plan Committee shall serve as the placement committee;

698 (vi) The decision of the placement committee may be appealed only as provided for
699 by the local board of education or other public school governing body; and

700 (vii) No student shall remain in the first grade program for more than two years.

701 (c) This Code section does not preclude the retention by the school principal or the
 702 principal's designee of a student who performs satisfactorily on the end-of-grade
 703 assessments specified in subparagraph (B), (C), or (D) of paragraph (1) of subsection (b)
 704 of this Code section as provided for by the local board of education or other public school
 705 governing body.

706 (d) This Code section does not create a property interest in promotion.

707 (e) The State Board of Education shall establish policies and procedures for
 708 implementation of this Code section."

709 **SECTION 11.**

710 Said title is further amended in said part by revising Code Section 20-2-284, relating to
 711 criteria for local boards of education and model placement and promotion policy, as follows:

712 "20-2-284.

713 (a) No later than July 1, ~~2003~~ 2026, each local board of education and other public school
 714 governing body shall develop and adopt a placement and promotion policy in accordance
 715 with the criteria established by the State Board of Education as provided in Code
 716 Section 20-2-283 and consistent with the Georgia Academic Placement and Promotion
 717 Policy.

718 (b) Except for those end-of-grade assessments specified in Code Section 20-2-283, the
 719 placement and promotion policy as developed and adopted by each local board of
 720 education and other public school governing body shall state how the end-of-grade
 721 assessments administered under Code Section 20-2-281 for grades one through eight, and
 722 assessments administered to determine grade level reading proficiency for grade one, will
 723 be weighted or otherwise utilized by the school principal or the principal's designee in
 724 determining the overall academic achievement of a student and an appropriate plan of

725 accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction, placement, promotion, or retention of
726 a student.

727 (c) To assist each local board of education and other public school governing body, the
728 State Board of Education shall develop a model placement and promotion policy ~~which~~
729 ~~may be utilized by a local board of education."~~

730 **SECTION 12.**

731 Said title is further amended in said part by revising Code Section 20-2-285, relating to
732 timetable for implementation of policy, as follows:

733 "20-2-285.

734 The State Board of Education shall provide for a timetable of implementation of this Code
735 section and the Georgia Academic Placement and Promotion Policy which shall include:

- 736 (1) The third grade beginning with the 2003-2004 school year;
737 (2) The fifth grade beginning with the 2004-2005 school year; ~~and~~
738 (3) The eighth grade beginning with the 2005-2006 school year; and
739 (4) The first grade beginning with the 2026-2027 school year."

740 **SECTION 13.**

741 Said title is further amended in Subpart 2 of Part 1 of Article 16 of Chapter 2, relating to
742 compulsory attendance, by revising subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-690.1, relating to
743 compulsory education for children between ages six and 16 and voluntary withdrawal, as
744 follows:

745 "(b) Each child in this state shall be required to attend a public school, a private school, or
746 a home study program between his or her sixth and sixteenth birthdays; provided, however,
747 that it is the policy of this state that families are encouraged to have their children attend
748 a public school, a private school, or a home study program beginning at age five. Such

749 compulsory attendance shall not apply to any child who has successfully completed all
750 requirements for a high school diploma or state approved high school equivalency (HSE)
751 diploma."

752 **SECTION 14.**

753 Said title is further amended in Article 19 of Chapter 2, relating to instructional materials and
754 content, by revising Code Section 20-2-1010, relating to instructional materials and content,
755 as follows:

756 "20-2-1010.

757 (a) The State Board of Education ~~is authorized to~~ shall prescribe, by regulation, the
758 definition of the term 'instructional materials and content' to include but not be limited to
759 systematically designed material in any medium, including digital instructional materials
760 and content and any computer hardware, software, and technical equipment necessary to
761 support such instructional materials and content, that constitutes the principal source of
762 study for a state funded course to be used in the various grades in the public schools of this
763 state, including ~~the elementary grades and high school grades~~ kindergarten through
764 grade 12. The state board may provide, by regulation, for multiple listings of instructional
765 materials and content for use in the various grades and may, in its discretion, authorize the
766 local school ~~superintendents~~ systems and other public schools to exercise a choice as
767 between various instructional materials and content so listed or adopted for any particular
768 grade.

769 (b) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to exempt computer hardware or
770 related equipment acquired by the state from competitive bidding.

771 (c) Notwithstanding any provision of law, including, but not limited to, any provision of
772 this article to the contrary, it is the policy of this state that:

773 (1) Only high-quality instructional materials that are aligned to the science of reading,
774 as such terms are defined in Code Section 20-2-153.1, shall be used for literacy and
775 reading education in kindergarten through grade three; and
776 (2) Beginning with the 2029-2030 school year and continuing thereafter, no public
777 school that receives funds under Article 6 of this chapter shall use any portion of such
778 funds for the purchase or use of instructional materials for literacy and reading education
779 in kindergarten through grade three that are not approved for such purpose by the State
780 Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Georgia Literacy Task Force."

781 **SECTION 15.**

782 Said title is further amended in said article by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

783 "20-2-1015.1.

784 (a) Local boards of education and other public school governing bodies shall approve
785 high-quality instructional materials for students in kindergarten through grade three as
786 required under Code Section 20-2-153.1, the 'Georgia Early Literacy and Dyslexia Act.'

787 (b) Local boards of education and other public school governing bodies are strongly
788 encouraged to provide exclusively for the use of high-quality instructional materials that
789 are aligned to the science of reading, as such terms are defined in Code Section 20-2-153.1,
790 for literacy and reading instruction for students in kindergarten through grade three.

791 (c) The State Board of Education shall annually determine a reasonable level of funding
792 to assist local boards of education and other public school governing bodies in attaining
793 high-quality instructional materials pursuant to this Code section. Such level of funding
794 shall annually be presented to the General Assembly for its consideration in including
795 appropriations for such purposes."

796 **SECTION 16.**

797 Said title is further amended in Chapter 14, relating to education accountability, by adding
798 a new article to read as follows:

799 "ARTICLE 4

800 20-14-200.

801 (a) There is established within the Office of Student Achievement the Georgia Literacy
802 Coordinating Committee. Such committee shall comprise, at a minimum, the Georgia
803 Director of Literacy, the Georgia Literacy Coach Coordinator, a representative of the
804 Department of Education, at least one representative of Georgia's regional educational
805 service agencies, at least one representative of an educator preparation program, other
806 subject matter experts identified by the Georgia Director of Literacy, and the director of
807 the Office of Student Achievement, or his or her designee. Each member of the Georgia
808 Literacy Coordinating Committee shall have knowledge of the science of reading and
809 expertise in quality reading instruction and intervention.

810 (b) The Georgia Literacy Coordinating Committee shall be responsible for:

811 (1) Coordinating the efforts of all state-wide literacy and reading education programs
812 across state, regional, and local agencies, systems, and initiatives;

813 (2) Developing a state-wide literacy plan; and

814 (3) Reviewing and making recommendations for local unified literacy plans.

815 (c) Upon the recommendation of the Georgia Director of Literacy, the Office of Student
816 Achievement is authorized to engage individuals with subject matter expertise to work with
817 the Georgia Literacy Coordinating Committee.

818 20-14-201.

819 The Office of Student Achievement shall employ:

820 (1) The Georgia Director of Literacy, who shall report to the director of the Office of
821 Student Achievement and shall be responsible for:

822 (A) Oversight of development, implementation, alignment, and evaluation of a
823 state-wide literacy plan;

824 (B) Evaluating and making recommendations for the continuous improvement and
825 alignment of state-wide literacy and reading education programs across state, regional,
826 and local agencies, systems, and initiatives;

827 (C) Serving as the primary liaison with the Department of Education, the Department
828 of Early Care and Learning, the Department of Public Health, the University System
829 of Georgia, Georgia's regional educational service agencies, the Professional Standards
830 Commission, and the Office of Student Achievement with respect to state-wide literacy
831 and reading education efforts;

832 (D) Making recommendations for effective implementation of and continuous
833 improvements to the 'Georgia Early Literacy and Dyslexia Act' and other legislation,
834 policies, rules, and regulations relative to literacy and reading instruction across all ages
835 and grades;

836 (E) Serving as chairperson of the Georgia Literacy Coordinating Committee;

837 (F) Serving as chairperson of the Georgia Literacy Task Force; and

838 (G) Supervision and evaluation of staff assigned to work with the Georgia Literacy
839 Coordinating Committee or the Georgia Literacy Task Force, including, but not limited
840 to, the Georgia Literacy Coach Coordinator; and

841 (2) The Georgia Literacy Coach Coordinator, who shall report to the Georgia Director
842 of Literacy and shall be responsible for:

843 (A) Serving on the Georgia Literacy Coordinating Committee;

844 (B) State-wide coordination of regional leadership literacy coaches, regional literacy
845 coaches, and school based literacy coaches;

846 (C) Collaboration with and coordination of literacy coaches and specialists affiliated
847 with the Department of Education or a regional educational service agency whose
848 positions are supported with state or federal funds, including, but not limited to,
849 regional literacy coaches;

850 (D) Observing, evaluating, and providing feedback to literacy coaches and specialists
851 affiliated with the Department of Education or a regional educational service agency
852 whose positions are supported with state or federal funds, including, but not limited to,
853 regional literacy coaches; and

854 (E) Reviewing and collaborating on the development and implementation of state-wide
855 professional learning and professional development programs and training for literacy
856 and reading education.

857 20-14-202.

858 (a) The Georgia Literacy Coordinating Committee shall develop and recommend to the
859 State Board of Education, local boards of education, and the regional educational service
860 agencies position descriptions and minimum qualifications and duties for school based
861 literacy coaches, regional literacy coaches, and regional leadership literacy coaches.

862 (b)(1) The minimum qualifications for school based literacy coaches shall include, but
863 shall not be limited to:

864 (A) Certification by the Professional Standards Commission;

865 (B) A minimum of five years of documented successful classroom teaching or literacy
866 intervention experience at assigned grade levels; and

867 (C) A knowledge of scientifically based reading research, special expertise in quality
868 reading instruction and intervention, dyslexia specific interventions, and data analysis.

869 (2) The minimum duties for school based literacy coaches shall include, but shall not be
870 limited to:

- 871 (A) Demonstrating competency through approved, periodic, practice based assessment
872 that verifies the literacy coach's ability to:
- 873 (i) Apply the science of reading, learning science, and instructional science to deliver
874 explicit, systematic, evidence based literacy instruction directly with students;
- 875 (ii) Analyze student data, including screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring
876 data, to inform instruction, grouping, and intervention within a multi-tiered system of
877 supports framework;
- 878 (iii) Synthesize student performance data and educator practice data to establish
879 coaching goals and design targeted, needs based support for educators;
- 880 (iv) Coach educators using nonevaluative, evidence based practices, including
881 modeling instruction, analyzing instructional practice and data, providing actionable
882 feedback, and delivering side-by-side classroom support; and
- 883 (v) Support the implementation and monitoring of evidence based literacy curricula
884 and instructional materials with fidelity, ensuring alignment to the science of reading;
- 885 (B) Collaborating with the school principal to create a strategic plan for literacy
886 coaching;
- 887 (C) Spending no less than 70 percent of the school day in classrooms working directly
888 with students and teachers; and
- 889 (D) Prioritizing time for those teachers, activities, and roles that will have the greatest
890 impact on student reading achievement, such as coaching and mentoring in classrooms;
891 and
- 892 (3) A school based literacy coach shall not be:
- 893 (A) Authorized or required to perform administrative functions or duties, including, but
894 not limited to, performing any rotating duty assignments or serving as an evaluator,
895 substitute teacher, assessment coordinator, or school administrator;
- 896 (B) Invited, required, or permitted to attend placement committee meetings; or
897 (C) Designated as a teacher of record.

898 (c)(1) The minimum qualifications for regional literacy coaches shall include, but shall
899 not be limited to:

900 (A) Certification by the Professional Standards Commission;

901 (B) A minimum of five years of documented successful classroom teaching or literacy
902 intervention experience at assigned grade levels; and

903 (C) A knowledge of scientifically based reading research, special expertise in quality
904 reading instruction and intervention, dyslexia specific interventions, and data analysis.

905 (2) The minimum duties for regional literacy coaches shall include, but shall not be
906 limited to:

907 (A) Demonstrating competency through approved, periodic, practice based assessment
908 that verifies the literacy coach's ability to:

909 (i) Apply the science of reading, learning science, and instructional science to deliver
910 explicit, systematic, evidence based literacy instruction directly with students;

911 (ii) Analyze student data, including screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring
912 data, to inform instruction, grouping, and intervention within a multi-tiered system of
913 supports framework;

914 (iii) Synthesize student performance data and educator practice data to establish
915 coaching goals and design targeted, needs based support for educators; and

916 (iv) Coach educators using nonevaluative, evidence based practices, including
917 modeling instruction, analyzing instructional practice and data, providing actionable
918 feedback, and delivering side-by-side classroom support;

919 (B) Supporting the implementation and monitoring of evidence based literacy curricula
920 and instructional materials with fidelity, ensuring alignment to the science of reading;

921 (C) Providing ongoing support to local school systems and public schools for effective
922 implementation and continuous improvement of comprehensive literacy programs;

923 (D) Collaborating with school principals, school based literacy coaches, and
924 representatives of the Georgia Literacy Coordinating Committee; and

925 (E) Providing ongoing professional learning activities and materials for teachers and
926 literacy coaches that include research on the science of reading and curriculum based
927 professional learning to support them in applying such training and research into
928 instructional practices.

929 (d)(1) The minimum qualifications for regional leadership literacy coaches shall include,
930 but shall not be limited to:

931 (A) Certification by the Professional Standards Commission;

932 (B) A minimum of five years of documented success as a literacy coach or as a
933 classroom teacher or administrator in kindergarten to grade three;

934 (C) A knowledge of scientifically based reading research, special expertise in quality
935 reading instruction and intervention, dyslexia specific interventions, and data analysis;

936 (D) Successful experience in leading a school, a school district, or a regional literacy
937 program to include the role of principal, curriculum director, superintendent, or
938 state-level literacy specialist;

939 (E) Extensive knowledge of the implementation of a structured literacy program that
940 is founded in the science of reading;

941 (F) Successful experience in working with adult learners;

942 (G) Exceptional interpersonal skills;

943 (H) Exceptional communication skills; and

944 (I) Successful experience in leading educational programs and/or initiatives.

945 (2) The minimum duties for regional leadership literacy coaches shall include, but shall
946 not be limited to:

947 (A) Attending and participating in professional learning related to literacy
948 improvement and coaching within the RESA network;

949 (B) Collaborating with local school superintendents and school principals to create a
950 literacy rich environment within the local school system, with priority given to schools
951 that include kindergarten through third grade;

- 952 (C) Joining local school superintendents and school principals in side-by-side
 953 classroom observations to support teachers and paraprofessionals in applying the
 954 science of reading into instructional practices;
 955 (D) Assisting regional literacy coaches to prioritize the needs of the local school
 956 system based on student data and communication with local school system leaders;
 957 (E) Facilitating communication and collaboration between the local school system and
 958 regional literacy coaches;
 959 (F) Providing guidance to local school systems in the development and implementation
 960 of the local unified literacy plan;
 961 (G) Facilitating collaboration between the local school system and the local community
 962 to support literacy development for children from birth to age five;
 963 (H) Facilitating collaboration between the local school system and the local and
 964 regional postsecondary educational institutions; and
 965 (I) Collaborating with other regional leadership literacy coaches.

966 20-14-203.

967 (a) As used in this Code section, the term 'task force' means the Georgia Literacy Task
 968 Force established pursuant to this Code section.

969 (b) There is established the Georgia Literacy Task Force, a standing task force which shall
 970 be convened by the Office of Student Achievement by September 1, 2026, and which shall
 971 be responsible for providing recommendations to the State Board of Education, the Office
 972 of Student Achievement, the Georgia Literacy Coordinating Committee, and the Georgia
 973 Director of Literacy for:

974 (1) Effective implementation of and continuous improvements to the 'Georgia Early
 975 Literacy and Dyslexia Act' and other legislation, policies, rules, and regulations relative
 976 to literacy and reading instruction across all ages and grades;

977 (2) The state-wide comprehensive curriculum based professional learning program in
978 structured literacy that is aligned to and includes research on the science of reading to
979 support teachers and literacy coaches in applying such research into instructional
980 practices for kindergarten through grade three teachers and literacy coaches to be made
981 available at no cost as provided for in Code Section 20-2-153.1;

982 (3)(A) A list of no less than two and no more than five universal reading screeners that
983 are valid and reliable reading screening, formative, and diagnostic assessment systems
984 for selection and use by local school systems and public schools.

985 (B) Each universal reading screener recommended by the task force shall:

986 (i) Provide screening and diagnostic capabilities for monitoring student progress;

987 (ii) Measure, at a minimum, a student's foundational reading skills, as such term is
988 defined in Code Section 20-2-153.1, including, but not limited to, a student's
989 phonological awareness, oral language, the alphabetic principle, including letter
990 naming, letter sound, and sound letter correspondences, decoding, encoding,
991 accuracy, vocabulary, and comprehension;

992 (iii) Identify students who are significantly at risk of not attaining grade level reading
993 proficiency, including, but not limited to, identifying students with characteristics of
994 dyslexia; and

995 (iv) Have robust reporting capabilities, including, but not limited to, the capability
996 to generate and provide directly to the department and the Office of Student
997 Achievement reports of screener results by:

998 (I) Student;

999 (II) Student subgroups based on grade level, educational program, demographic
1000 characteristics, and other criteria identified by the Georgia Literacy Task Force;

1001 (III) School; and

1002 (IV) Local school system.

- 1003 (C) In determining which universal reading screeners to recommend for use by local
1004 school systems and public schools, the task force shall, at a minimum, consider:
- 1005 (i) The time required to conduct the universal reading screener, with the intention of
1006 minimizing the impact on instructional time;
- 1007 (ii) The level of integration of universal reading screener results with instructional
1008 support for teachers and students; and
- 1009 (iii) The timeliness in reporting assessment results to teachers, administrators, and
1010 parents.
- 1011 (D) The task force shall recommend one universal reading screener to be made
1012 available free of charge to local school systems and public schools.
- 1013 (E) By March 1, 2028, and by March 1 every third year thereafter, the task force shall
1014 submit to the State Board of Education the list of recommended universal reading
1015 screeners, including the universal reading screener to be made available free of charge
1016 to local school systems and public schools.
- 1017 (F) No universal reading screener shall be approved by the State Board of Education
1018 unless it has been recommended by the task force; and
- 1019 (4) An annual list of high-quality instructional materials that are aligned to the science
1020 of reading, as such terms are defined in Code Section 20-2-153.1, for students in
1021 kindergarten through grade three for recommendation to the State Board of Education.
- 1022 (c)(1) The Georgia Director of Literacy shall serve as chairperson of the task force.
- 1023 (2) In addition to the Georgia Director of Literacy, the membership of the task force shall
1024 include the following appointed members, each of whom shall have at least three years
1025 of experience with scientifically based reading instruction:
- 1026 (A) Three members appointed by the Governor, two of whom shall have significant
1027 experience as a literacy or reading specialist, coach, or teacher or as a curriculum
1028 specialist;

1029 (B) Three members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, two of
1030 whom shall have significant experience as a literacy or reading specialist, coach, or
1031 teacher or as a curriculum specialist;

1032 (C) Three members appointed by the President of the Senate, two of whom shall have
1033 significant experience as a literacy or reading specialist, coach, or teacher or as a
1034 curriculum specialist;

1035 (D) One member who shall be a certified academic dyslexia therapist for a minimum
1036 of three years appointed by the Office of Student Achievement; and

1037 (E) One member appointed by the State Board of Education.

1038 (3) The Office of Student Achievement shall verify that each appointed member of the
1039 task force satisfies the credentials under which he or she was appointed.

1040 (4) Members appointed to the task force shall be appointed to serve a three-year term and
1041 may be reappointed to serve one additional two-year term.

1042 (5)(A) The task force shall be authorized to conduct meetings at such places and times,
1043 either virtually or in-person, as it deems necessary or convenient to enable it to fully
1044 and effectively perform its duties; provided, however, that it shall meet not less than
1045 two times per year and shall hold meetings at the call of the chairperson.

1046 (B) A quorum for transacting business of the task force shall be a majority of the
1047 members.

1048 (C) Meetings of the task force shall be exempt from the provisions of Chapter 14 of
1049 Title 50 notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary.

1050 (6) Legislative members of the task force shall receive the allowances provided for in
1051 Code Section 28-1-8. Nonlegislative members of the task force shall receive a daily
1052 expense allowance in the amount specified in subsection (a) of Code Section 45-7-21 as
1053 well as the mileage or transportation allowance authorized for state employees. Members
1054 of the task force who are state officials, other than legislative members, or state
1055 employees shall receive no compensation for their services on the task force, but shall be

1056 reimbursed for expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties as members
1057 of the task force in the same manner as they are reimbursed for expenses in their
1058 capacities as state officials or state employees. The funds necessary for the
1059 reimbursement of the expenses of state officials, other than legislative members, and state
1060 employees shall come from funds appropriated to or otherwise available to their
1061 respective departments. All other funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this
1062 article shall come from funds appropriated to the Office of Student Achievement.

1063 (d) The task force shall endeavor to include multiple vendors in each annual list of
1064 universal reading screeners and high-quality instructional materials provided for in
1065 subsection (a) of this Code section. The task force shall make public all rubrics and
1066 measurements used to determine eligibility and compliance for all universal reading
1067 screeners and high-quality instructional materials accepted for consideration.

1068 20-14-204.

1069 (a) Within 60 days of receiving any recommendation from the Georgia Literacy Task
1070 Force, the State Board of Education shall vote to adopt or reject such recommendation.

1071 (b) The State School Superintendent shall recommend that the State Board of Education
1072 adopt recommendations received pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code section; provided,
1073 however, that if the State School Superintendent disagrees with a recommendation received
1074 pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code section, he or she shall submit to the State Board
1075 of Education the reasons for such disagreement in writing. Irrespective of whether the
1076 State School Superintendent submits any disagreement, the State Board of Education shall
1077 timely vote to adopt or reject the recommendation from the Georgia Literacy Task Force.

1078 20-14-205.

1079 The Office of Student Achievement shall be responsible for developing and implementing,
1080 in collaboration with the Department of Education, the Department of Early Care and

1081 Learning, the Department of Public Health, the University System of Georgia, Georgia's
1082 regional educational service agencies, and local school systems and public schools, a
1083 comprehensive state-wide promotional campaign to increase public awareness and
1084 education about the essential importance of literacy in the lives of all Georgians and to urge
1085 all Georgia families and communities to support and participate in literacy programs and
1086 other efforts, especially for children from birth through fifth grade."

1087 **SECTION 17.**

1088 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
1089 without such approval.

1090 **SECTION 18.**

1091 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.