

**SENATE SUBSTITUTE TO HB 1193****ADOPTED SENATE****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 provide for funding  
3 for school based literacy coaches in all public schools in this state with students in any of  
4 grades kindergarten through three; to provide for regional literacy coaches employed by  
5 regional educational service agencies; to provide for literacy coaching endorsements for  
6 certificated professional personnel; to substantially revise the "Georgia Early Literacy and  
7 Dyslexia Act"; to include legislative intent; to provide for a definition; to revise provisions  
8 of said Act relative to the selection of and requirements for universal reading screeners; to  
9 revise provisions for professional learning; to require local school systems and other public  
10 schools to have unified literacy plans; to revise provisions for educator preparation programs  
11 and the evaluation of such programs by the Professional Standards Commission; to provide  
12 for certification of and funding for high-quality instructional materials; to establish within  
13 the Office of Student Achievement the Georgia Literacy Coordinating Committee; to provide  
14 for the State Literacy Director; to provide for the Georgia Coordinator of Literacy Coaches;  
15 to provide for a position description and minimum qualifications and duties for school based  
16 literacy coaches and regional literacy coaches; to establish the Georgia Literacy Task Force;  
17 to provide for appointment, qualifications, duties, and compensation of members of such task  
18 force; to provide for recommendations of such task force; to provide for consideration of

19 such recommendations by the State Board of Education; to provide for a comprehensive  
20 state-wide promotional campaign for literacy awareness; to provide for the termination of the  
21 Georgia Council on Literacy; to encourage families to have their children attend school or  
22 a home study program beginning at age five; to provide for the placement of newly enrolled  
23 students; to provide for parents and guardians of students who are eligible for initial public  
24 school enrollment in first grade to elect for their children to be enrolled in kindergarten rather  
25 than first grade; to provide for parents and guardians to elect for their children who are either  
26 four or five years old to be enrolled in a voluntary pre-kindergarten program provided and  
27 operated as part of Georgia's Pre-K Program; to provide for first grade readiness assessments;  
28 to require annual reports regarding first grade readiness; to revise provisions relative to grade  
29 placement, promotion, and retention; to provide a short title; to provide for an effective date;  
30 to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

31           BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

32   **PART I**  
33   **SECTION 1-1.**

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

35   **SECTION 1-2.**

36 Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to education, is amended in Part  
37 5 of Article 6 of Chapter 2, relating to program weights and funding requirements under the  
38 "Quality Basic Education Act," by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

39 "20-2-186.1.

40 (a) As used in this paragraph, the term 'eligible school' means a school with any of grades  
41 kindergarten through three.

42 (b) Subject to appropriations by the General Assembly, the State Board of Education shall  
43 provide grants to local units of administration with eligible schools for the purpose of  
44 reimbursing such units of administration for expenditures sufficient to pay the beginning  
45 salary and benefits of one school based literacy coach per eligible school, except that any  
46 such school with 200 or fewer full-time equivalent students shall earn 50 percent of such  
47 amount.

48 (c)(1) The State Board of Education, in collaboration with the Office of Student  
49 Achievement, shall establish the minimum qualifications and duties for school based  
50 literacy coaches.

51 (2) The minimum qualifications for school based literacy coaches shall include, but shall  
52 not be limited to:

53 (A) Certification by the Professional Standards Commission;

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

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

58 (3) The minimum duties for school based literacy coaches shall include, but shall not be  
59 limited to:

60 (A) Coaching educators using nonevaluative, evidence based practices, including  
61 modeling instruction, analyzing instructional practice and data, providing actionable  
62 feedback, and delivering side-by-side classroom support;

63 (B) Collaborating with the school principal to create a strategic plan for literacy  
64 coaching;

- 65 (C) Spending no less than 70 percent of the school day in classrooms working directly  
66 with students and teachers;
- 67 (D) Prioritizing time for those teachers, activities, and roles that will have the greatest  
68 impact on student reading achievement, such as coaching and mentoring in classrooms;
- 69 (E) Analyzing student data, including screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring  
70 data, to inform instruction, grouping, and intervention within a multi-tiered system of  
71 supports framework;
- 72 (F) Synthesizing student performance data and educator practice data to establish  
73 coaching goals and design targeted, needs based support for educators;
- 74 (G) Supporting the implementation and monitoring of evidence based literacy curricula  
75 and instructional materials with fidelity, ensuring alignment to the science of reading;  
76 and
- 77 (H) Demonstrating competency through approved, periodic, practice based assessment  
78 that verifies his or her ability to apply the science of reading, learning science, and  
79 instructional science to deliver explicit, systematic, evidence based literacy instruction  
80 directly with students.
- 81 (4) A school based literacy coach shall not be:
- 82 (A) Authorized or required to perform administrative functions or duties, including, but  
83 not limited to, performing any rotating duty assignments or serving as an evaluator,  
84 substitute teacher, assessment coordinator, or school administrator;
- 85 (B) Invited, required, or permitted to attend placement committee meetings; or
- 86 (C) Designated as a teacher of record.
- 87 (d) By August 1, 2026, the State Board of Education shall establish policies, rules, and  
88 regulations necessary for the implementation of this Code section, including, but not  
89 limited to, the process by which local units of administration shall request and receive such  
90 grant funds.

91 (e) Nothing in the Code section shall be construed to prohibit local units of administration  
92 from hiring or contracting with school based literacy coaches using other funds available  
93 for such purpose."

94 **SECTION 1-3.**

95 Said title is further amended in Part 11 of Article 6 of Chapter 2, relating to regional  
96 educational service agencies, by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

97 "20-2-270.3.

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

102 (b) In collaboration with the State Literacy Director and the Georgia Literacy Coach  
103 Coordinator, the board of control of each RESA shall assign regional literacy coaches to  
104 the local school systems and public schools of the RESA service area, and at least one  
105 regional leadership literacy coach shall be assigned to serve as the primary point of contact  
106 with local school system and school leaders.

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

110 (d) Each regional literacy coach, regional leadership literacy coach, and RESA director  
111 shall work in full cooperation with the Georgia Literacy Coordinating Committee, the State  
112 Literacy Director, and the Georgia Literacy Coach Coordinator.

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

116 (f)(1) The State Board of Education, in collaboration with the Office of Student  
117 Achievement, shall establish the minimum qualifications and duties for regional literacy  
118 coaches.

119 (2) The minimum qualifications for regional literacy coaches shall include, but shall not  
120 be limited to:

121 (A) Certification by the Professional Standards Commission;

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

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

126 (3) The minimum duties for regional literacy coaches shall include, but shall not be  
127 limited to:

128 (A) Coaching educators using nonevaluative, evidence based practices, including  
129 modeling instruction, analyzing instructional practice and data, providing actionable  
130 feedback, and delivering side-by-side classroom support;

131 (B) Collaborating with school principals, school based literacy coaches, and  
132 representatives of the Department of Education and the Office of Student Achievement;

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

135 (D) Providing ongoing professional learning activities and materials for teachers and  
136 literacy coaches that include research on the science of reading and curriculum based  
137 professional learning to support them in applying such training and research into  
138 instructional practices; and

139 (E) Analyzing student data, including screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring  
140 data, to inform instruction, grouping, and intervention within a multi-tiered system of  
141 supports framework.

142 (g)(1) The State Board of Education, in collaboration with the Office of Student  
143 Achievement, shall establish the minimum qualifications and duties for regional  
144 leadership literacy coaches.

145 (2) The minimum qualifications for regional leadership literacy coaches shall include,  
146 but shall not be limited to:

147 (A) Certification by the Professional Standards Commission;

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

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

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

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

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

158 (G) Exceptional interpersonal skills;

159 (H) Exceptional communication skills; and

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

161 (3) The minimum duties for regional leadership literacy coaches shall include, but shall  
162 not be limited to:

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

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

- 168 (C) Joining local school superintendents and school principals in side-by-side  
169 classroom observations to support teachers and paraprofessionals in applying the  
170 science of reading into instructional practices;
- 171 (D) Assisting regional literacy coaches to prioritize the needs of the local school  
172 system based on student data and communication with local school system leaders;
- 173 (E) Facilitating communication and collaboration between the local school system and  
174 regional literacy coaches;
- 175 (F) Providing guidance to local school systems in the development and implementation  
176 of the local unified literacy plan;
- 177 (G) Facilitating collaboration between the local school system and the local community  
178 to support literacy development for children from birth to age five;
- 179 (H) Facilitating collaboration between the local school system and the local and  
180 regional postsecondary educational institutions; and
- 181 (I) Collaborating with other regional leadership literacy coaches.

182 **SECTION 1-4.**

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

185 "20-2-208.2.

- 186 (a) No later than December 31, 2026, the Professional Standards Commission shall  
187 establish a literacy coaching endorsement for teachers and other certificated professional  
188 personnel trained in an evidence based approach to teaching oral and written language  
189 aligned to the science of reading founded on the science of how children learn to read and  
190 characterized by explicit, systematic, cumulative, and diagnostic instruction in phonology,  
191 sound-symbol association, syllable instruction, morphology, syntax, and semantics.
- 192 (b) The requirements to receive such literacy coaching endorsement shall include training  
193 on the use of universal reading screeners to measure and monitor a student's progress in

194 foundational literacy skills, providing guidance to parents, and providing training or  
195 guidance to other teachers and school personnel."

196

**PART II**

197

**SECTION 2-1.**

198 Said title is further amended in Part 3 of Article 6 of Chapter 2, relating to educational  
199 programs under the "Quality Basic Education Act," by repealing and reserving paragraph (2)  
200 and repealing and replacing paragraph (6) of subsection (b), redesignating paragraph (16) of  
201 subsection (b) as paragraph (17), adding a new paragraph to subsection (b), revising  
202 subsection (c), paragraph (2) of subsection (d), subsection (d.1), and subsection (e), and  
203 adding new subsections to Code Section 20-2-153.1, the "Georgia Early Literacy and  
204 Dyslexia Act," to read as follows:

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

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

207 (A) Comprehensive;

208 (B) Focused on structured literacy and foundational literacy skills;

209 (C) Aligned to the science of reading; and

210 (D) Anchored by high-quality instructional materials that are aligned to the science of  
211 reading;

212 (2) Educators shall have access to and be provided with research on the science of  
213 reading and receive comprehensive curriculum based professional learning to support  
214 them in applying such research in instructional practices; and

215 (3) The ongoing involvement of parents and guardians in comprehensive state-wide  
216 literacy efforts shall be encouraged and integrated into their children's educations."

217 "(6) 'Dyslexia' shall have the same meaning as the definition adopted and amended from  
218 time to time by the International Dyslexia Association and approved by the board and  
219 posted on the websites of the department and the Office of Student Achievement."

220 "(16) 'Unified literacy plan' means a comprehensive, evidence based framework to ensure  
221 coherent, aligned, and continuous literacy development for learners from birth through  
222 career readiness. Such plan shall, as appropriate according to grade levels served:

223 (A) Establish measurable literacy goals for all tested grade levels, using state-wide  
224 assessment results and approved universal reading screener data to monitor student  
225 progress, guide instructional decision making, and evaluate program effectiveness;

226 (B) Include explicit strategies for collaboration with early learning providers for  
227 learners from birth to age five to support school readiness and early language  
228 development; and

229 (C) Establish literacy transition plans for the transition from kindergarten to elementary  
230 school."

231 "(c)(1) The board, in consultation with the department and the Office of Student  
232 Achievement, shall establish such policies, rules, and regulations as necessary to  
233 implement uniform grade-appropriate metrics for measuring literacy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

261 ~~(iii) Capable of identifying students who are significantly at risk of not attaining~~  
262 ~~grade level reading proficiency, including, but not limited to, identifying students with~~  
263 ~~characteristics of dyslexia;~~

264 ~~(iv) Prescribed parameters on the time required to administer a universal reading~~  
265 ~~screener with the primary objective of such prescription being to minimize impacts~~  
266 ~~on instructional time; and~~

267 ~~(v) Capable of progress monitoring.~~

268 (A) Provide screening and diagnostic capabilities for monitoring student progress;

269 (B) Measure, at a minimum, a student's foundational reading skills, including, but not  
270 limited to, a student's phonological awareness, oral language, the alphabetic principle,

271 including letter naming, letter sound, and sound letter correspondences, decoding,  
272 encoding, accuracy, vocabulary, and comprehension;

273 (C) Identify students who are significantly at risk of not attaining grade level reading  
274 proficiency, including, but not limited to, identifying students with characteristics of  
275 dyslexia; and

276 (D) Have robust reporting capabilities, including, but not limited to, the capability to  
277 generate and provide directly to the department and the Office of Student Achievement  
278 reports of screener results by:

279 (i) Student;

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

282 (iii) School; and

283 (iv) Local school system.

284 ~~(4)(A) The By July 15 each year, the department shall publish and regularly update on~~  
285 ~~its public website the free universal reading screener and the list of other approved~~  
286 ~~universal reading screeners provided for in paragraph (3) of this subsection, one of which~~  
287 ~~each public school and local school system shall adopt and administer in order to comply~~  
288 ~~with the requirements of subparagraph (B) of paragraph (3) of this subsection as part of~~  
289 ~~their comprehensive literacy programs.~~

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

296 (5) The department shall publish on its public website and distribute by ~~July 15~~ July 1  
297 each year by electronic means to each local school system and public school in this state

298 a dyslexia informational handbook that includes guidance, technical assistance, and  
299 training to assist all schools in the implementation of evidence based practices for  
300 instructing students with characteristics of dyslexia. Such handbook shall include, but  
301 shall not be limited to, ~~the following information:~~

302 (A) Evidence based practices designed specifically for students with characteristics of  
303 dyslexia;

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

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

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

310 (6) The department shall, in consultation with the University System of Georgia, the  
311 Professional Standards Commission, the Office of Student Achievement, the Georgia  
312 Literacy Coordinating Committee, Georgia's regional ~~education~~ educational service  
313 agencies, and literacy experts, develop or procure one or more training professional  
314 learning programs for kindergarten through third grade teachers on the science of reading,  
315 structured literacy, and foundational literacy skills that enable students to develop reading  
316 skills required to meet state standards in literacy. Such programs shall emphasize the  
317 importance of applying research about the science of reading to instructional practices  
318 and of using high-quality instructional materials. Such ~~training~~ programs shall be  
319 developed or procured to promote teachers' knowledge and skills for teaching all students  
320 to read, including students with dyslexia, and to ensure teachers and literacy coaches have  
321 the knowledge and skills necessary to use approved universal reading screeners and to  
322 use assessment data to inform instruction based on student needs. One such program  
323 shall be a state-wide comprehensive curriculum based professional learning program in  
324 structured literacy that is aligned to and includes research on the science of reading to

325 support teachers and literacy coaches in applying such research into instructional  
326 practices for kindergarten through grade three teachers and literacy coaches. Such  
327 program shall be recommended by the Georgia Literacy Task Force, as provided for in  
328 Code Section 20-14-202. Beginning no later than the 2027-2028 school year, such  
329 comprehensive program shall be made available free of charge to public school  
330 kindergarten through third grade teachers.

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

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

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

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

341 (B) Such report shall also include analyses of the impact of use of universal reading  
342 screeners, the use of high-quality instructional materials, and instructional practices  
343 grounded in aligned to the science of reading. Such report shall be provided to the  
344 Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the  
345 ~~chairperson~~ chairpersons of the House Committee on Education, the Senate Education  
346 and Youth Committee, the House Committee on Higher Education, the Senate Higher  
347 Education Committee, the House Committee on Appropriations, and the Senate  
348 Appropriations Committee, and the board, and shall be made available on the  
349 department's public website for access by the public."

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

353 ~~(i)(A)~~ Onsite teacher ~~training~~ professional learning and research materials on the  
 354 science of reading, structured literacy, foundational literacy skills, and evidence based  
 355 decision making;

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

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

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

361 ~~(iii)(E)~~ Prompt feedback for improving instruction.

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

368 ~~(ii) The department shall provide technical assistance and other guidance to public~~  
 369 ~~schools and local schools systems in identifying local, state, federal, and private~~  
 370 ~~funding sources to provide for instructional support as required in subparagraph (A)~~  
 371 ~~of this paragraph.”~~

372 ~~”(d.1)(1)~~ The Professional Standards Commission shall adopt rules which establish criteria  
 373 for core curricula for each state approved educator preparation program. Such rules shall  
 374 include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

375 ~~(H)(A)~~ The use of content standards established by the State Board of Education board  
 376 that are aligned to the science of reading to guide curricula and instruction;

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

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

379 ~~(B)~~(ii) Prepare teachers to provide explicit, systematic, sequential, diagnostic, and

380 cumulative approaches to teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary,

381 fluency, and text comprehension; and

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

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

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

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

386 ~~(6)~~(F) Strategies ~~to~~ including, but not limited to, the use of assessment results, to

387 identify student strengths and weaknesses and differentiate instruction based on student

388 needs;

389 ~~(7)~~(G) Strategies and practices to support research based content aligned to state

390 standards and grading practices;

391 ~~(8)~~(H) Strategies appropriate for the early identification of a student with a reading

392 deficiency; and

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

394 (2) Beginning January 1, 2027, the Professional Standards Commission shall undertake

395 an ongoing review of each state approved educator preparation program's compliance

396 with the rules provided for in paragraph (1) of this subsection, with a particular emphasis

397 on subparagraphs (B) and (F) of paragraph (1) of this subsection. The Executive Director

398 shall have the discretion to determine the order and priority of reviews; provided,

399 however, that all educator preparation programs shall be reviewed no less often than

400 every four years. By November 1 each year, the Professional Standards Commission

401 shall provide a report of its review and significant findings to the Chancellor of the Board

402 of Regents of the University System of Georgia, the governing body of each state

403 approved educator preparation program that is not an institution of the University System

404 of Georgia, the State Board of Education, the Office of Student Achievement, the Georgia  
405 Council on Literacy, and the chairpersons of the House Committee on Higher Education,  
406 the Senate Higher Education Committee, the House Committee on Education, and the  
407 Senate Education and Youth Committee.

408 "(e)(1) There is established within the Office of Student Achievement the Georgia  
409 Literacy ~~Coach~~ Coordinating Committee. Such committee shall comprise, at a minimum,  
410 ~~the Georgia Literacy Coach, the Coordinator of Georgia Literacy Coaching, State~~  
411 Literacy Director, the Georgia Literacy Coach Coordinator, a representative of the  
412 ~~Department of Education~~ department, at least one representative of Georgia's regional  
413 ~~education services~~ educational service agencies, ~~a representative~~ representatives of a  
414 research based education ~~organization~~ organizations with subject matter expertise  
415 identified by the ~~Georgia Council on Literacy~~ department and the Office of Student  
416 Achievement, and other subject matter experts identified by the ~~Georgia Literacy Coach~~  
417 ~~or the Georgia Council on Literacy~~ department and the Office of Student Achievement.  
418 In collaboration with the board, the department, the Department of Early Care and  
419 Learning, the Department of Public Health, the University System of Georgia, the  
420 Technical College System of Georgia, and other appropriate stakeholders as determined  
421 by the Office of Student Achievement, the Georgia Literacy Coordinating Committee  
422 shall:

423 (A) Maintain and amend as needed the Georgia Literacy Plan originally created by the  
424 Georgia Council on Literacy;

425 (B) Review to ensure oversight, accountability, and effectiveness of implementation  
426 of this Code section and other literacy efforts supporting schools and school systems,  
427 children and families, and adult learners provided for in the Georgia Literacy Plan;

428 (C) Support the coordination of the efforts of all state-wide literacy and reading  
429 education programs across state, regional, and local agencies, systems, and initiatives;

430 (D) Review the conditions, needs, issues, and problems related to state literacy  
 431 outcomes, and make recommendations for legislation and appropriations to support  
 432 improving such outcomes;

433 (E) Review and make recommendations for local unified literacy plans;

434 (F) Review state-wide birth to age five initiatives and suggest policy and appropriation  
 435 changes; and

436 (G) Review best practices for community based literacy programs and make  
 437 recommendations for improvement.

438 (2) The Office of Student Achievement shall employ the State Literacy Director and the  
 439 Georgia Literacy Coach Coordinator, whose duties and responsibilities shall be provided  
 440 for in Article 4 of Chapter 14 of this title.:

441 (A) ~~The Georgia Literacy Coach; and~~

442 (B) ~~The Coordinator of Georgia Literacy Coaching, who shall be responsible for:~~

443 ~~(i) Serving as the chairperson of the Georgia Literacy Coach Coordinating~~  
 444 ~~Committee;~~

445 ~~(ii) Coordinating state-wide literacy coaching efforts;~~

446 ~~(iii) Serving as the primary liaison with the Department of Education with respect to~~  
 447 ~~state-wide literacy coaching efforts;~~

448 ~~(iv) Direction and oversight of literacy coaches affiliated with the Department of~~  
 449 ~~Education or a regional education service agency whose positions are supported with~~  
 450 ~~state or federal funds; and~~

451 ~~(v) Coordinating with designated organizations affiliated with the Georgia Council~~  
 452 ~~on Literacy with respect to research, best practices, and proactive intervention~~  
 453 ~~strategies for birth to adult language and literacy learning."~~

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

456 (2) Beginning January 1, 2027:

457 (A) No local school system shall be eligible for any waiver or variance granted under  
 458 Code Section 20-2-244 or Article 4 of this chapter or to enter into or renew a charter  
 459 system contract or strategic waivers school system contract with the State Board of  
 460 Education unless such local school system has adopted a unified literacy plan;  
 461 (B) Neither the State Board of Education nor any local board of education shall  
 462 authorize a new charter petition or a renewal charter petition for a local charter school,  
 463 as such term is defined in Code Section 20-2-2062, unless such petition includes a  
 464 unified literacy plan for such local charter school; and  
 465 (C) Neither the State Board of Education nor the State Charter Schools Commission  
 466 shall authorize a new charter petition or a renewal charter petition for a state charter  
 467 school, as such term is defined in Code Section 20-2-2081, unless such petition includes  
 468 a unified literacy plan for such state charter school."

469 **SECTION 2-2.**

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

473 "20-2-1010.

474 (a) The State Board of Education ~~is authorized to~~ shall prescribe, by regulation, the  
 475 definition of the term 'instructional materials and content' to include but not be limited to  
 476 systematically designed material in any medium, including digital instructional materials  
 477 and content and any computer hardware, software, and technical equipment necessary to  
 478 support such instructional materials and content, that constitutes the principal source of  
 479 study for a state funded course to be used in the various grades in the public schools of this  
 480 state, including ~~the elementary grades and high school grades~~ kindergarten through  
 481 grade 12. The state board may provide, by regulation, for multiple listings of instructional  
 482 materials and content for use in the various grades and may, in its discretion, authorize the

483 local school ~~superintendents~~ systems and other public schools to exercise a choice as  
484 between various instructional materials and content so listed or adopted for any particular  
485 grade.

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

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

490 (1) Only high-quality instructional materials and content that are aligned to the science  
491 of reading, as such terms are defined in Code Section 20-2-153.1, shall be used for  
492 literacy and reading education in kindergarten through grade three; and

493 (2) Beginning with the 2029-2030 school year and continuing thereafter, no public  
494 school that receives funds under Article 6 of this chapter shall use any portion of such  
495 funds for the purchase or use of instructional materials and content for literacy and  
496 reading education in kindergarten through grade three that are not approved for such  
497 purpose by the State Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Georgia  
498 Literacy Task Force."

499

### SECTION 2-3.

500 Said title is further amended in said article of said chapter by adding a new Code section to  
501 read as follows:

502 "20-2-1015.1.

503 (a) Local boards of education and other public school governing bodies shall approve  
504 high-quality instructional materials for students in kindergarten through grade three as  
505 required under Code Section 20-2-153.1.

506 (b) Local boards of education and other public school governing bodies are strongly  
507 encouraged to provide exclusively for the use of high-quality instructional materials that

508 are aligned to the science of reading, as such terms are defined in Code Section 20-2-153.1,  
509 for literacy and reading instruction for students in kindergarten through grade three.  
510 (c) The State Board of Education shall annually determine a reasonable level of funding  
511 to assist local boards of education and other public school governing bodies in attaining  
512 high-quality instructional materials pursuant to this Code section. Such level of funding  
513 shall annually be presented to the General Assembly for its consideration in including  
514 appropriations for such purposes."

515 **SECTION 2-4.**

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

518 "ARTICLE 4

519 20-14-200.

520 (a) As provided for in Code Section 20-2-153.1, there is established within the Office of  
521 Student Achievement the Georgia Literacy Coordinating Committee. The members and  
522 responsibilities of such committee shall be as provided for in Code Section 20-2-153.1, the  
523 'Georgia Early Literacy and Dyslexia Act,'

524 (b) Upon the recommendation of the State Literacy Director, the Office of Student  
525 Achievement is authorized to engage individuals with subject matter expertise to work with  
526 the Georgia Literacy Coordinating Committee.

527 20-14-201.

528 As provided for in Code Section 20-2-153.1, the Office of Student Achievement shall  
529 employ:

530 (1) The State Literacy Director, who shall report to the director of the Office of Student  
531 Achievement and shall be responsible for:

532 (A) Oversight of the maintenance, amendment, implementation, alignment, and  
533 evaluation of the state-wide literacy plan in collaboration with other stakeholders as  
534 provided for in Code Section 20-2-153.1;

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

538 (C) Serving as the primary liaison with the Department of Education, the Department  
539 of Early Care and Learning, the Department of Public Health, the University System  
540 of Georgia, the Technical College System of Georgia, Georgia's regional educational  
541 service agencies, the Professional Standards Commission, and the Office of Student  
542 Achievement with respect to state-wide literacy and reading education efforts;

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

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

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

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

552 (2) The Georgia Literacy Coach Coordinator, who shall report to the State Literacy  
553 Director and shall be responsible for:

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

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

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

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

565 (E) Reviewing and collaborating on the development and implementation of state-wide  
566 professional learning and professional development programs and training for literacy  
567 and reading education.

568 20-14-202.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

597 (I) Student;

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

600 (III) School; and

601 (IV) Local school system.

602 (C) In determining which universal reading screeners to recommend for use by local  
603 school systems and public schools, the task force shall, at a minimum, consider:

604 (i) The time required to conduct the universal reading screener, with the intention of  
605 minimizing the impact on instructional time;

606 (ii) The level of integration of universal reading screener results with instructional  
607 support for teachers and students; and

608 (iii) The timeliness in reporting assessment results to teachers, administrators, and  
609 parents.

610 (D) The task force shall recommend one universal reading screener to be made  
611 available free of charge to local school systems and public schools.

612 (E) By April 1, 2028, and by April 1 every third year thereafter, the task force shall  
613 submit to the State Board of Education the list of recommended universal reading  
614 screeners, including the universal reading screener to be made available free of charge  
615 to local school systems and public schools.

616 (F) No universal reading screener shall be approved by the State Board of Education  
617 unless it has been recommended by the task force; and

618 (3)(A) A list of no less than two and no more than five of systematically designed  
619 programs of high-quality instructional materials that are aligned to the science of  
620 reading, as such terms are defined in Code Section 20-2-153.1, for students in  
621 kindergarten through grade three for recommendation to the State Board of Education.

622 (B) By April 1, 2027, and by April 1 every fourth year thereafter, the task force shall  
623 submit to the State Board of Education the list of recommended systematically designed  
624 programs of high-quality instructional materials that are aligned to the science of  
625 reading.

626 (c)(1) The State Literacy Director shall serve as chairperson of the task force.

627 (2) In addition to the State Literacy Director, the membership of the task force shall  
628 include the following appointed members, each of whom shall have at least three years  
629 of experience with scientifically based reading instruction:

630 (A) Three members appointed by the Governor, two of whom shall have significant  
631 experience as a literacy or reading specialist, coach, or teacher or as a curriculum  
632 specialist;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

660 reimbursed for expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties as members  
661 of the task force in the same manner as they are reimbursed for expenses in their  
662 capacities as state officials or state employees. The funds necessary for the  
663 reimbursement of the expenses of state officials, other than legislative members, and state  
664 employees shall come from funds appropriated to or otherwise available to their  
665 respective departments. All other funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this  
666 article shall come from funds appropriated to the Office of Student Achievement.

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

672 20-14-203.

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

675 (b) The State School Superintendent shall recommend that the State Board of Education  
676 adopt recommendations received pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code section; provided,  
677 however, that if the State School Superintendent disagrees with a recommendation received  
678 pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code section, he or she shall submit to the State Board  
679 of Education the reasons for such disagreement in writing. Irrespective of whether the  
680 State School Superintendent submits any disagreement, the State Board of Education shall  
681 timely vote to adopt or reject the recommendation from the Georgia Literacy Task Force.

682 20-14-204.

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

685 Learning, the Department of Public Health, the University System of Georgia, the  
686 Technical College System of Georgia, Georgia's regional educational service agencies, and  
687 local school systems and public schools, a comprehensive state-wide promotional  
688 campaign to increase public awareness and education about the essential importance of  
689 literacy in the lives of all Georgians and to urge all Georgia families and communities to  
690 support and participate in literacy programs and other efforts, especially for children from  
691 birth through fifth grade."

692 **SECTION 2-5.**

693 Said title is further amended by revising Code Section 20-1-45, relating to termination, as  
694 follows:

695 "20-1-45.

696 The council shall be abolished and this article shall stand repealed on December 31, ~~2030~~  
697 2026."

698 **PART III**

699 **SECTION 3-1.**

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

704 "(b) Each child in this state shall be required to attend a public school, a private school, or  
705 a home study program between his or her sixth and sixteenth birthdays; provided, however,  
706 that it is the policy of this state that families are encouraged to have their children attend  
707 a public school, a private school, or a home study program beginning at age five. Such  
708 compulsory attendance shall not apply to any child who has successfully completed all

709 requirements for a high school diploma or state approved high school equivalency (HSE)  
710 diploma."

711 **SECTION 3-2.**

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

720 **SECTION 3-3.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

753 (I) Each child enrolling in a state supported education program for the first time  
754 who, by virtue of his or her age and date of birth, is eligible for enrollment in the  
755 first grade of a state supported primary grades program pursuant to this Code  
756 section or Code Section 20-2-150 shall be enrolled in a state supported kindergarten  
757 program at the request of his or her parent or guardian; and

758 (II) Each child who attains the age of either four or five by September 1 shall be  
759 eligible for enrollment in a voluntary pre-kindergarten program provided and  
760 operated as part of Georgia's Pre-K Program, and each such child shall be enrolled

761 in such program at the request of his or her parent or guardian; provided, however,  
762 that this paragraph shall not be construed or applied to require or permit a child to  
763 be enrolled in such a program for more than one year; and, provided, further that  
764 children ages four and five shall be treated on the same basis relative to selection  
765 for available seats in such programs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

784 (ii) Attain attain the age of six by September 1, except as otherwise provided by  
785 subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-150. ~~The State Board of Education shall adopt~~  
786 ~~an instrument or instruments, procedures, and policies necessary to assess the first~~  
787 ~~grade readiness of children enrolled in Georgia's public school kindergarten programs~~

788 ~~pursuant to Code Section 20-2-281. Readiness information obtained by the~~  
789 ~~instrument or instruments adopted by the state board shall be used by local school~~  
790 ~~systems in concert with teacher recommendations and other relevant information to~~  
791 ~~make appropriate student grade placement decisions.~~

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

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

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

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

808 (i) The school principal or the principal's designee shall determine the child is not  
809 ready for placement in or promotion to the first grade program except as otherwise  
810 provided in this paragraph;

811 (ii) The school principal or the principal's designee shall notify in writing by  
812 first-class mail the parent or guardian of the child regarding the determination that the  
813 child is not ready for placement in or promotion to the first grade program. The  
814 notice shall describe the option of the parent or guardian to appeal such determination

815 and shall further describe the composition and functions of the placement committee  
816 as provided for in this paragraph, including the requirement that a decision to place  
817 the child in or promote the child to the first grade must be a unanimous decision of  
818 the committee;

819 (iii) If the parent or guardian appeals the determination that his or her child is not  
820 ready for placement in or promotion to the first grade program, then the school  
821 principal or the principal's designee shall establish a placement committee composed  
822 of the school principal or the principal's designee, the student's parent or guardian, and  
823 the student's teacher, and shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or  
824 guardian of the time and place for convening the placement committee;

825 (iv) The placement committee shall:

826 (I) Review the child's overall readiness for placement in or promotion to the first  
827 grade program and his or her progress toward grade level reading proficiency;

828 (II) Decide whether the child shall be placed in or promoted to the first grade  
829 program; provided, however, that a decision to place the child in or promote the  
830 child to the first grade program shall be a unanimous decision; and

831 (III) Prescribe for the child such accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction  
832 as needed to perform at grade level by the conclusion of the subsequent school year,  
833 prescribe such additional assessments as may be appropriate in addition to  
834 assessments administered to other students at the grade level during the year, and  
835 provide for a plan of continuous assessment during the subsequent school year in  
836 order to monitor the progress of the child;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

861 (H) By November 1 each year, the Office of Student Achievement shall The State  
862 School Superintendent may annually provide a report summarizing the results of the  
863 readiness of first grade Georgia public school kindergarten children. No student shall  
864 remain in kindergarten for more than two years the readiness of Georgia children for  
865 placement in or promotion to the first grade program. Such report shall include, but  
866 shall not be limited to, information on the grade level reading proficiency of such  
867 children. Such report shall be submitted to the Governor; the President of the Senate;  
868 the Speaker of the House of Representatives; the chairpersons of the House Committee

869 on Education, the Senate Education and Youth Committee, the House Committee on  
870 Higher Education, the Senate Higher Education Committee, the House Committee on  
871 Appropriations, and the Senate Appropriations Committee; and the State Board of  
872 Education.

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

875 (ii) By July 1, 2027, the State Board of Education and the Department of Education  
876 shall update the policies, procedures, guidelines required in subparagraphs (E) and (F)  
877 of this paragraph;”

878 **SECTION 3-4.**

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

882 "20-2-283.

883 (a) No later than ~~January 1, 2002~~ January 1, 2027, the State Board of Education shall adopt  
884 criteria for the development of a placement and promotion policy by each local board of  
885 education and other public school governing body consistent with the Georgia Academic  
886 Placement and Promotion Policy.

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

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

890 (A) The second grade program to which the student would otherwise be assigned if the  
891 student is determined to be significantly at risk of not attaining grade level reading  
892 proficiency, as determined in accordance with Code Section 20-2-153.1, by the end of  
893 the first grade program and does not meet the promotional standards and criteria

894 established by the State Board of Education and by the local board of education or other  
895 governing body for the school that the student attends;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

953 (D) The placement committee shall:

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

962 (ii) Prescribe for the student, whether the student is retained or promoted, such  
963 accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction as needed to perform at grade  
964 level by the conclusion of the subsequent school year, prescribe such additional  
965 assessments as may be appropriate in addition to assessments administered to other  
966 students at the grade level during the year, and provide for a plan of continuous  
967 assessment during the subsequent school year in order to monitor the progress of the  
968 student;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

998 functions of the placement committee as provided for in this paragraph, including the  
999 requirement that a decision to promote the student must be a unanimous decision of  
1000 the committee;

1001 (iii) If the parent or guardian appeals the decision to retain the student, then the  
1002 school principal or the principal's designee shall establish a placement committee  
1003 composed of the school principal or the principal's designee, the student's parent or  
1004 guardian, and the student's teacher and shall notify in writing by first-class mail the  
1005 parent or guardian of the time and place for convening the placement committee;

1006 (iv) The placement committee shall:

1007 (I) Review the overall academic achievement of the student and his or her progress  
1008 toward grade level reading proficiency and make a determination to promote or  
1009 retain. A decision to promote must be a unanimous decision and must determine  
1010 that if promoted and given intensive reading intervention in accordance with Code  
1011 Section 20-2-153.1 during the next year, the student is likely to perform at grade  
1012 level as defined by the Office of Student Achievement in accordance with Code  
1013 Section 20-14-31 by the conclusion of the school year; and

1014 (II) Prescribe for the student, whether the student is retained or promoted, such  
1015 accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction as needed to perform at grade  
1016 level by the conclusion of the subsequent school year, prescribe such additional  
1017 assessments as may be appropriate in addition to assessments administered to other  
1018 students at the grade level during the year, and provide for a plan of continuous  
1019 assessment during the subsequent school year in order to monitor the progress of the  
1020 student;

1021 (v) For students receiving special education or related services, the Individualized  
1022 Education Plan Committee shall serve as the placement committee;

1023 (vi) The decision of the placement committee may be appealed only as provided for  
1024 by the local board of education or other public school governing body; and

1025 (vii) No student shall remain in the first grade program for more than two years.

1026 (c) This Code section does not preclude the retention by the school principal or the  
1027 principal's designee of a student who performs satisfactorily on the end-of-grade  
1028 assessments specified in subparagraph (B), (C), or (D) of paragraph (1) of subsection (b)  
1029 of this Code section as provided for by the local board of education or other public school  
1030 governing body.

1031 (d) This Code section does not create a property interest in promotion.

1032 (e) The State Board of Education shall establish policies and procedures for  
1033 implementation of this Code section."

1034 **SECTION 3-5.**

1035 Said title is further amended in said part by revising Code Section 20-2-284, relating to  
1036 criteria for local boards of education and model placement and promotion policy, as follows:  
1037 "20-2-284.

1038 (a) No later than July 1, ~~2003~~ 2026, each local board of education and other public school  
1039 governing body shall develop and adopt a placement and promotion policy in accordance  
1040 with the criteria established by the State Board of Education as provided in Code  
1041 Section 20-2-283 and consistent with the Georgia Academic Placement and Promotion  
1042 Policy.

1043 (b) Except for those end-of-grade assessments specified in Code Section 20-2-283, the  
1044 placement and promotion policy as developed and adopted by each local board of  
1045 education and other public school governing body shall state how the end-of-grade  
1046 assessments administered under Code Section 20-2-281 for grades one through eight, and  
1047 assessments administered to determine grade level reading proficiency for grade one, will  
1048 be weighted or otherwise utilized by the school principal or the principal's designee in  
1049 determining the overall academic achievement of a student and an appropriate plan of

1050 accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction, placement, promotion, or retention of  
1051 a student.

1052 (c) To assist each local board of education and other public school governing body, the  
1053 State Board of Education shall develop a model placement and promotion policy ~~which~~  
1054 ~~may be utilized by a local board of education."~~

1055 **SECTION 3-6.**

1056 Said title is further amended in said part by revising Code Section 20-2-285, relating to  
1057 timetable for implementation of policy, as follows:

1058 "20-2-285.

1059 The State Board of Education shall provide for a timetable of implementation of this Code  
1060 section and the Georgia Academic Placement and Promotion Policy which shall include:

- 1061 (1) The third grade beginning with the 2003-2004 school year;  
1062 (2) The fifth grade beginning with the 2004-2005 school year; ~~and~~  
1063 (3) The eighth grade beginning with the 2005-2006 school year; and  
1064 (4) The first grade beginning with the 2027-2028 school year."

1065 **PART IV**

1066 **SECTION 4-1.**

1067 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law  
1068 without such approval.

1069 **SECTION 4-2.**

1070 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.