



## Bills That Passed 2021

**HB 32** establishes a pilot **tax credit for specified teachers** of \$3000 for up to five years. It requires the State Board to establish a teacher recruitment and retention program to encourage teachers to seek employment in high-need subject areas with rural schools that have performed in the lowest 5% of schools in the state as identified by the state accountability system. Rural is defined in the bill as territory that is more than five miles from the nearest 'urbanized area' and more than 2.5 miles from the nearest 'urban cluster' as the terms are defined in federal standards. The Department of Education will develop criteria for selecting up to 100 participating schools. **Effective July 1, 2021**

**HB 63** changes the **TAVT calculation** for leased vehicles by subtracting all itemized interest or finance charges included in the base payments or down payments. **Effective January 1, 2022**

**HB 98** clarifies provisions on **meetings and hearings by teleconference** during a state of emergency by explicating stating that participation by teleconference means full participation in the same manner as if present. If the meeting by teleconference is a public hearing, members of the public must be afforded the means to participate fully in the same manner as if they were physically present. **Effective upon the signature of the Governor (May 4, 2021)**

**HB 112** The bill extends the **protection from liability claims** related to COVID-19 through July 14, 2022. Under last year's bill, it would sunset on July 14, 2021.

**HB 134** amends the **requirements for open meetings** to add an exception for meetings when discussing or deliberating upon cybersecurity plans, procedures, and contracts regarding the provision of cybersecurity services. It also amends the Open Records Act by adding to the above referenced exclusion to Open Records "any document or plan for protection relating to the existence, nature, location, or function of cybersecurity devices, programs, or systems designed to protect computer, information technology, or communication systems against terrorist or other attacks that depend for their effectiveness in whole or in part upon a lack of general public knowledge." **Effective upon the signature of the Governor (April 29, 2021)**

**HB 146** requires 120 hours of **paid parental leave** over a 12-month period due to the birth of a child, adoption of a child, or receiving a foster child -- referred to in the bill as a qualifying life event. The leave is available only once per eligible employee per year. The leave may be taken as needed and in increments less than eight hours. Unused leave is forfeited after the 12-month period. Eligible employees are full-time employees of state government and local boards of education after six months of continuous months of employment. Hourly workers are eligible if he or she has worked at least 700 hours over the six-month period immediately preceding the requested leave date. **Effective July 1, 2021**

**HB 156** requires every agency, the definition of which includes school districts, to **report** to the director of emergency management and homeland security, or his/her designee, any **cyber attack incident, data**

**breach, or identified use of malware** on an agency or computer or network determined by the director to be the type of cyber attack, data breach, or use of malware to create a life-safety event, substantially impact the security of data and information systems, or affect critical systems, equipment, or service delivery. It also authorizes the Governor to enter into a memorandum of agreement with one or more of the major military commands in the state if it would substantially enhance the education or job placement of Georgians in the area of science, technology, engineering, math, or cyber security. Any expenditures provided for in the agreement are subject to appropriations. **Effective upon the signature of the Governor (March 25, 2021)**

**HB 282** amends the **definitions and valuation of qualified timberland** property. **Effective July 1, 2021**

**HB 287** adds **vapor products** to the currently required instruction on alcohol and drug use. The State Board must prescribe a course of study in **human trafficking awareness** for grades 6-12, which may be included as part of the health and PE course currently required. The revised minimum course of study prescribed by the State Board would be required to be ready for implementation no later than July 1, 2021. **Local boards would have to implement it no later than December 31, 2021.**

**HB 392** allows local jurisdictions to set a **distance between a school and a business selling liquor** for off premise consumption at less than the 100 yards required in state law. **Effective upon signature of the Governor (May 4, 2021)**

**HB 451** allows **freeport exemptions** to be valued at the fair market value as of January 1, 2020 or 2021 instead of the year manufactured for the 2020 tax year. **Effective upon signature of the Governor (May 4, 2021)**

**HR 400** is a **resolution** praising multiple diploma pathways and suggests the State Board of Education adopt a **new graduation rule** to support creating multiple diploma pathways. It has no legislative impact.

**SB 32** exempts **public officials' cell phone number** from disclosure under the Open Records Act. **Effective upon signature of the Governor (May 6, 2021)**

**SB 42** addresses two topics. **Effective July 1, 2021**

1. It requires each local school system to **publish** electronically in a prominent place on its website the information on **student disciplinary and placement actions** as reported to the Department of Education under 20-2-740(a) and (b) and to provide a printed copy of the information for a specific school upon request for no charge "in a format that can be easily understood by parents and other members of the community who are not educators." The published information must report the information for each school in the district.
2. SB 42 became the vehicle for the "Dexter Mosely Act" **allowing homeschooled students in grades 6-12 to participate in extracurricular activities at their local public school.** Definitions and rules are in the bill.

**SB 47** expands the existing **special needs voucher program** to students with a 504 plan relating to one or more of the 21 conditions listed in the bill. It also extends the existing public school transfer option to these students. **Effective July 1, 2021**

**SB 59** prohibits **waiving the early intervention program (EIP)** and provides **additional funding to local charter schools**. They will receive the extra boost to funding that charter systems receive effective July 1, 2022. Other parts of the bill are **effective July 1, 2021**

**SB 66** requires the Georgia Foundation for Public Education to set up a **nonprofit corporation by January 1, 2022, to receive donations from taxpayers** to award grants to public schools for the implementation of academic and organizational innovations to improve student achievement with priority given to schools performing in the lowest 5% in the state. The donors to the Public Education Innovation Fund would receive an income tax credit. The program is capped at \$5 million.

**SB 88** is **Governor Kemp's teacher pipeline bill** designed to help strengthen the teacher workforce. It has several provisions such as the Georgia Teacher of the Year serving as an ex-officio adviser to the State Board at meetings or public hearings; a pathway for veterans to be alternatively certified; swapping some observation time for coaching/mentoring; teacher preparation in differentiated instruction and development of fundamental reading skills; and promoting increased enrollment in historically black colleges and universities in Georgia. **Effective July 1, 2021**

**SB 117** amends the code section dealing with **improper sexual contact by employee or agent**. It creates a new definition for a "person in a position of trust" as one with whom the parent or guardian has entered into an agreement with and entrusts that individual with the responsibility of both education and supervision of that minor. The bill also creates a crime of first degree and second degree for improper sexual contact or actions by the person of trust with the minor. **Effective July 1, 2021**

**SB 153** creates a new category of **alternative charter schools**. It also states the legislature will study alternative education models and funding including those focused on dropout prevention, high school credit recovery, and service of adult and incarcerated students. The study shall include alternative charter schools and state support of those schools. The study is to occur this year and next and conclude with a recommendation regarding alternative education models and funding. **Effective July 1, 2021**

**SB 159** allows local boards to authorize the **use of vehicles other than school buses**, including vehicles for eight passengers or less, for the transport of students who have an IEP OR are currently lacking, or during the previous academic year lacked a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as described in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, to and from school related activities as appropriate. Insurance is required. The State Board will set the minimum specifications. **Effective July 1, 2021**

**SB 204** creates the **Dual Achievement Program**, a five year pilot, to allow the Technical College System of Georgia to issue high school diplomas to students who have withdrawn from a Georgia public school and complete the program which also requires the student to earn a technical credential. **Effective July 1, 2021**

**SB 213** allows school districts to enter into guaranteed **energy savings performance contracts**, to implement the energy cost savings measure in one or more phases with the selected qualified energy services provider, and to make payments on the contract with SPLOST funds. **Effective July 1, 2021**

**SB 246** is the "**Learning Pod Protection Act**." The bill's purpose is "to ensure that parents in this state who choose to voluntarily associate to advance the primary education of their children shall not be

subject to additional restrictions or regulations." To date, there are no known cases in Georgia of this happening or being attempted. **Effective July 1, 2021**

**Study Committees**

**HR 222** House Study Committee on Annexation

**SR 154** Joint Study Committee on Strengthening Georgia's Workforce

**SR 192** Senate Study Committee on Age for Mandatory Education

**SR 203** Senate Study Committee on Outdoor Learning