

DKG Under the Gold Dome

A Weekly Publication to Keep You Informed

TO: All GSO Sisters
FROM: Laura Croom,
Chair, GSO Educational Law & Policy Committee
RE: Legislative Update
DATE: March 5, 2022



Amended FY 2022 Passes—All Good for Teachers

The Amended FY 2022 budget passed this week with a \$2000 supplement for teachers and educators and a \$1000 supplement for some support staff. While the supplement does not cover ALL locally paid employees, it does include unfunded educators (by QBE) in the approved classes of employees covered by the supplement funding. If the personnel are in your CPI report, they will be funded, we are told. Fortunately, CARES Act money can be used to take care of many other classes of employees. It also appears that the \$2000 raise for teachers (and it goes on the salary schedule) in the FY 2023 budget is safe. Well-deserved for the burdens they have carried for Georgia’s families in the last few years!

HB 517—House Votes to Double Voucher Tax Credit Program Funding to Student Scholarship Program to \$200 Million

HB 517 increases the financial cap for the voucher program from \$100 million to \$200 million in the next five years, which was agreed to by the House on Thursday. Yes, they are doubling the amount of money to this voucher program. The SSO’s have little oversight and grants scholarships for students to attend private school and is funded by state tax credit contributions to the funds. It now moves on to the Senate. By the way, by law, you are not allowed to know the identity of the private schools benefiting from this program. (Donors receive dollar-for-dollar credit on their taxes for contributions made to the funds. Individuals are limited as to the amount they can donate for credit; businesses may donate up to the amount of their state income tax liability. This bill allows certain insurance taxes to also be used.)

A Fight Without a Real Winner

As a teenager growing up in the country a couple decades ago, the boys would gang up and go fight other teenagers from a neighboring county. (I was just a spectator at those events.) The Senate did much the same thing arguing over **SB 415**, the mask elimination bill. There was a great deal of name calling and ill will demonstrated and, in the end, it was a party line vote 32-19. The real battle was proving who was in charge – and they knew that before they started. Nobody says politics must make sense.

New Bills and Bills Activated This Week

(Bill lookup: <https://www.legis.ga.gov/>)

- **HB 1416** (Schofield): Requires GADOE to provide information regarding vaccinations to parents of 5th and 6th graders. **Assigned to Education.**
- **HB 1435** (Martin, C.): Creates scholarship to cover financial aid gaps. **Assigned to House Higher Education.**
- **HB 1474** (Mainer): Creates a course on career readiness in grades 6-12. **Assigned to Education.**
- **HB 1482** (Erwin): Revises low-wealth capital outlay rules. **Assigned to Education.**
- **HR 877** (Mainor): Encourage GADOE to commit funds to expand cybersecurity education. **Assigned to Education.**
- **SB 333** (Albers): Updates higher education rules regarding agents as well as other rules and statutes involving higher education.
- **SB 563** (Merritt): Creates Purple Star program for military students to support students and their families. **Assigned to Education and Youth.**
- **SB 575** (Tippins): Local Boards of Education shall review financial status quarterly. **Assigned to Education and Youth.**

Bills in Committee This Week

- **SB 377** (Hatchett): Prohibits “divisive” curricula at all levels. Had its THIRD full hearing in Senate Education and Youth this week. **No vote taken.**
- **SB 333** (Albers): Updates higher education rules regarding agents as well as other rules and statutes involving higher education. **DO PASS by Senate Higher Education.**
- **SB 239** (Harrell): Changes all USG tuition charges to a per credit hour basis. **Hearing Only in Senate Higher Education.**
- **HB 1043** (Jasperse): Creates Georgia Endowment for Teaching Professionals. Offers grants to teachers seeking higher degrees. **DO PASS in House Higher Education.**
- **HB 1319** (Werkheiser): Creates law enforcement service cancellable loan at USG and TCSG schools. **Tabled in House High Education.**
- **HB 1435** (Martin, C.): Financial aid for students in financial aid gap. **Hearing Only in House Higher Education.**
- **HB 1005**: Local school systems to conduct suicide screenings on all students ages eight through eighteen. **In committee on Friday morning (March 4).**
- **HB 1295** (Corbett): Removes GAPSC consequences of “needs development” rating from TKES and LKES. **In committee on Friday morning (March 4).**
- **HB 1357** (Smith, TP): Requires PSC to accept credit toward certification from certain in-state and out-of-state not-for-profit and for-profit institutions. **In committee on Friday morning (March 4).**
- **HB 1184** (Williams, AI): Requires a national college entrance exam be given to all 11th graders. **In committee on Friday morning (March 4).**

- **HB 1283** (Douglas): Requires recess for all K-3 students. **Hearing Only in House Education. In committee on Friday morning (March 4).**
- **SB 267** (Rahman): Permits TRS retirees to change beneficiaries if they are participating in a shared plan. **Given DO PASS by Senate Education and Youth.**
- **SB 357** (Kirkpatrick): Permits military students to choose school districts adjacent to where they reside. **DO PASS by Senate Education and Youth.**
- **SB 452** (McNeill): Requires that SAT or ACT be provided at no cost to 11th graders upon request. **DO PASS by Senate Education and Youth.**
- **HB 1387** (Collins, J.): Suspends vehicle registration if fine for illegally passing a school bus is not paid within 30 days. **DO PASS from Motor Vehicles Committee.**

Bills Adopted by House or Senate

- **HB 1292** (Jasperse): Students participating in 4H activities are not to be counted absent from school. **Goes to Senate.**
- **HB 1303** (Dickey): Converts pilot program for elementary agricultural education to a permanent program. **Goes to Senate.**
- **SB 514** (Dixon): Prohibits a mandatory mask rule in schools. Sunsets June 30, 2027. Passed 31-22 on a party line vote. **Goes to Senate.**

Next Week

The General Assembly will be in session Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday of next week. Thursday is a committee workday.