

# 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:** April 4, 2022



## It's Time for the Down and Dirty

The Senate Education and Youth Committee held its final meeting of the session on Tuesday, March 29th and held a hearing on **HB 1084**, the divisive concepts bill from Rep. Will Wade. As expected, testimony from legislators was fierce and pointed. As for the public, they did not get share their feedback. Chairman Chuck Payne denied the fourteen people signed up to speak on the bill the opportunity to testify. He shared that they were out of time and “We heard all we need to hear.” Many of the citizens drove from as far away as Savannah to share, and their displeasure erupted in the meeting to the point where the State Patrol officer witnessing the meeting had to step into the crowd before it dispersed and calmed down again.

The irony is not lost on this observer that the Senate recently passed **SB 68** a few years ago that requires Boards of Education to permit citizens to speak at regular meetings and also this year's **SB 588**, with similar language to **SB 68**, which also ensures that citizens can only be removed from a meeting for an “actual disruption.” It begs the question: Why do BOE members have to listen to testimony and legislators don't? However, that was not the only fireworks in the meeting.

Senator Elena Parent moved to make changes in the bill, but her motions were denied by Chairman Payne. A motion was made by Senator John Albers to close debate and didn't receive a second and a vote on the motion, a violation of Senate rules. Chairman Payne then went directly to the vote on the bill which was 5-3 for DO PASS. There was a lot of complaining about the lack of democratic process and violation of Senate rules but to no avail. This was not the first instance of rough house politics under the Gold Dome and probably will not be the last.

## GHSA Continues to Draw Fire

On Thursday, the House Education Committee entertained a stripped version of **SB 51** (the Homeschool Athletics bill – Dexter Mosely Bill – failed to gain passage last year while the House version passed and was signed into law) which contained new language establishing a new oversight committee for GHSA. There was insufficient time for a thorough vetting, and it passed by voice vote. If it makes it out of House Rules and gains passage on the House floor, it will have to go back to the Senate for confirmation. The stripping of bills during the last two days of the session is not new, and it really evades thorough vetting of legislative ideas. It continues to amaze everyone how some (not all) powerful legislators can manipulate the process to satisfy

their personal agendas yet preach to local systems about the need to be transparent with the citizens of Georgia.

### Some Good News

In addition to the return-to-work bill for retired teachers being on the Governor's desk, the General Assembly added **HB 1083** this week. The bill is a massive overhaul and enrichment of Georgia's plan to deal with mental health, and it didn't hurt that the Speaker of the House David Ralston made it a personal mission of his own to help provide this support. It was a long time in the making, but many Georgians needing these services so badly may get some support in the future!

### Budget News

The FY 2023 Budget is in conference committee and is expected to be voted on today. Many educational observers are on edge about the fate of GNETS. The Senate budget DID NOT eliminate the GNETS program. Instead, it moved the funding over to the FTE/QBE formula, and the proposal drastically reduced the budget for GNETS services to the tune of around a \$25 million cut. Obviously, this caused a statewide literal panic last week. GAEL has been very active in working with our legislators on this issue. Chairman Tillery and Chairman England and their committees have provided educational stakeholders multiple opportunities to share context and data so that the best decision can be made for kids. The conference committee will decide whether to leave it as a categorical grant (House Budget) or move it to QBE and an FTE determination (Senate Budget).

### House Bills (<https://www.legis.ga.gov/>)

- **HB 385** (Blackmon): Teacher return to work. Passed both chambers; at the Governor.
- **HB 1004** (Mainor): Police power for campus security. DO PASS in Senate.
- **HB 1043** (Jasperse): Georgia Endowment for Teaching Professionals. DO PASS in Senate.
- **HB 1084** (Wade): Prohibit divisive curricula. DO PASS in Senate.
- **HB 1178** (Bonner): Parent bill of rights. DO PASS from Senate Education and Youth with 6-5 vote.
- **HB 1215** (Thomas, B): Eliminate restrictions of virtual charter school funding. DO PASS in Senate Education and Youth.
- **HB 1217** (Erwin): Technology protection; prohibit use of obscene materials. DO PASS in Senate Education and Youth.
- **HB 1283** (Douglas): Mandatory recess for Grades K-5. DO PASS in Senate Education and Youth.
- **HB 1292** (Jasperse): Students in 4H activities not counted absent. Adopted by Senate; to the Governor
- **HB 1295** (Corbett): Removes TKES "needs development" from reporting requirements to GaPSC for loss of certification and salary scale consequences. DO PASS Senate Education and Youth.
- **HB 1303** (Dickey): Makes elementary agriculture education pilot permanent. ADOPTED by Senate as a substitute.
- **HB 1319** (Werkheiser): Creates law enforcement scholarship. DO PASS by Senate Higher Education.
- **HB 1357** (Smith, TP): Permits certain out of state providers for certification. DO PASS Senate Education and Youth.
- **HB 1435** (Martin, C): Scholarships for financial aid gaps. Failed to exit Senate Higher Education.
- **HB 1474** (Mainor): Expands career readiness curricula in Grades 6-12. Failed to exit Senate Education and Youth.
- **HB 1482** (Erwin): Revision of low wealth capital outlay rules. DO PASS in Senate Education and Youth.

- **HB 1515** (Bentley): Permits Christian school accreditation to be used for HOPE at Morris Brown and Paine Colleges. Failed to exit Senate Education and Youth.
- **HB 881** (Jackson, M): Encourages study of civil rights era. DO PASS from House Education.
- **HB 1048** (Ehrhart): Creates study committee on accreditation. DO PASS from House Education.

### Senate Bills (<https://www.legis.ga.gov/>)

- **SB 51** (Thompson): Contents of bill stripped by House Education Committee and replaced with a new expanded oversight committee for GHSA. Given a DO PASS by House Education.
- **SB 226** (Anavitarte): Gives parents a complaint process to contest books and other media that are perceived to be obscene. Adopted by House, changes accepted by Senate; to the Governor.
- **SB 231** (Anavitarte): Charter schools for 21- to 35-year-old students. Failed to exit House Education.
- **SB 316** (Anavitarte): Requires written notification of bullying. Failed to exit House Education.
- **SB 333** (Albers): Updates to certain higher statutes. DO PASS from House Higher Education.
- **SB 345** (Mullis): Prohibits requiring COVID passport as a condition of service. Adopted by House as a substitute. Changes must be ratified by Senate.
- **SB 357** (Kirkpatrick): Permits service children to choose nearby school district. DO PASS from Senate Education and Youth.
- **SB 377** (Hatchett): Prohibits divisive curricula. Failed to exit House Education.
- **SB 379** (Strickland): Expands apprenticeship programs at TCSG. Adopted by House and Senate; to the Governor.
- **SB 397** (Goodman): Updates GED to High School Equivalency (HSE) terminology. Adopted by House and Senate; to the Governor.
- **SB 435** (Harbin): Prohibits transgender participation in girls' athletics. Failed to exit House Education.
- **SB 449** (Dixon): Parents bill of rights. Failed to exit House Education
- **SB 498** (Tippins): Sets regulations for recognizing accreditation agencies. DO PASS by House Education as a substitute.
- **SB 514** (Dixon): Unmask Students Act. Adopted by House and Senate; SIGNED by the Governor this week.
- **SB 545** (Halpern): Requires first aid training for health course. DO PASS from House Education.
- **SB 575** (Tippins): Local BOE reviews financials quarterly rather than monthly. DO PASS from House Education.
- **SB 588** (Miller): Requires public participation to be allowed at Board meetings and makes stipulations about removing disruptive citizens from the meeting. Adopted by House and Senate; to the Governor.
- **SB 603** (Rahman): Creates pilot program for outdoor learning space. DO PASS by House Education by substitute.

### This Week

Today is Legislative Day 40. It is that time in the General Assembly when things get done in a hurry. You can expect some last-minute pushes to sneak language into bills with very little time for the public to vet them. Please know that we will get the critical information to you as quickly as possible, but it may be at the last moment.