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Five Counties Receive AP Stem Grant Awards; Amended FY17 Budget Proceeds in Senate

Gov. Nathan Deal recently [announced five grant awards](#) for the Georgia Rural AP STEM Initiative to support the implementation of AP programs in computer science and statistics. This initiative is the result of a partnership between the Governor's Office of Student Achievement and the College Board and is designed to create a vertical pathway to student success in AP STEM courses in high-need, rural areas. Each grantee will receive up to \$30,000 to aid in the successful creation and strengthening of rigorous STEM courses in middle and high schools.

The grant winners are:

- Appling County (computer science)
- Baldwin County (computer science)
- Colquitt County (computer science)
- McDuffie County (statistics)
- Thomas County (computer science and statistics)

Budget

Work continued last week on the Amended FY17 and FY18 budgets. The Senate Appropriations Committee passed its version of the [Amended FY17](#) budget on Feb. 7, and the full Senate is expected to vote on it later this week.

The House began hearings on the FY18 budget last week, and those continue this week.

Schedule

Legislators were in session Monday through Thursday last week and are scheduled to be in session Tuesday through Friday this week.

On Feb. 1, the House and Senate adopted an [adjournment resolution](#) that sets the calendar for the remainder of the 2017 session. Legislators are scheduled to meet Tuesday through Friday for the next two weeks, and the final legislative day is scheduled for Thursday, March 30.

Legislation

The following bills related to children and families have been introduced this session.



HB 163 (Rep. Betty Price, 48th) prohibits school bus drivers from using a cell phone unless it's used to allow live communication between the driver and school or public safety officials. The bill also stipulates that drivers must use hands-free technology.

Status: The bill is assigned to the Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee.

HB 198 (Rep. Katie Dempsey, 13th) requires that information about influenza and the influenza vaccine will be included in resources regarding immunizations, infectious disease, or other school health issues that are provided to parents of students in grades 6-12 by local boards of education.

Status: The bill is assigned to the House Education Committee.

HB 200 (Rep. Mark Newton, 123rd) requires local boards of education to adopt policies authorizing students to carry and self-administer sunscreen.

Status: The bill is assigned to the House Education Committee.

HB 228 (Rep. Brad Raffensperger, 50th) requires health plans to provide coverage for one hearing aid per impaired ear not to exceed \$3,000 per hearing aid for covered individuals ages 18 years and younger during a 48-month period.

Status: The bill is assigned to the House Insurance Committee.

HR 1 (Rep. Keisha Waites, 60th) proposes a constitutional amendment to dedicate existing fees and assessments to fund driver education and training courses for ninth- through 12th-graders in public schools.

Status: The bill is assigned to the Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee.

SB 16 (Sen. Ben Watson, 1st) adds autism spectrum disorder as a diagnosis eligible for treatment with cannabis oil.

Status: The bill is assigned to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and was scheduled for committee discussion on Feb. 7.



CHILDREN PRIMED FOR SCHOOL

SB 98 (Sen. Elena Parent, 42nd) allows capital outlay funds to be used on educational facilities for school systems' voluntary pre-K programs in addition to the construction of K-12 classrooms for which the funds may currently be used.

Status: The bill is assigned to the Senate Education and Youth Committee.



CHILDREN SUCCEEDING IN SCHOOL

HB 16 (Rep. Keisha Waites, 60th) requires local boards of education to collect data on instances of bullying and harassment and to provide the data to the Georgia Department of Education via an existing annual report on disciplinary and placement actions.

Status: The bill is assigned to the House Education Committee.

HB 170 (Rep. Sheila Jones, 53rd), the Student Online Personal Information Protection Act, prohibits operators of educational websites or services from using a student's personal information to engage in targeted advertising or selling a student's information.

Status: The bill is assigned to the House Education Committee.

HB 178 (Rep. Dave Belton, 112th) stipulates that, subject to funding by the General Assembly, local school systems must provide counselors for students whose parents are on active military duty or were killed or severely injured while on military duty. The bill specifies that there must be one counselor for every 200 military students; that the counselors must spend at least 50 percent of their time advising military students and families; and that funding for the positions will be supplemental to funds already earned for counselors.

Status: The bill is assigned to the House Education Committee.

HB 223 (Rep. Keisha Waites, 60th) requires local schools to provide driver education as an elective course for students in grades 9 through 12 and increases the age for receiving a Class D driver's license from 16 to 17. The bill also repeals a sunset date of June 30, 2019, for collecting additional penalties for traffic violations that fund retirement for various public safety officers such as firefighters.

Status: The bill is assigned to the House Education Committee.

HB 229 (Rep. Matt Dollar, 45th) prevents the amount of tuition and fees charged to a student for an academic year from exceeding those from the previous year, adjusted to the rate of inflation. According to the bill, specified committees of the General Assembly may waive the requirement in any given academic year. Implementation of the bill requires Georgia voters to pass a constitutional amendment, which is proposed via [HR 159](#).

Status: The bill is assigned to the House Higher Education Committee and is scheduled for a hearing on Feb. 8.

[HB 159](#) (Rep. Matt Dollar, 45th) proposes a constitutional amendment to authorize the General Assembly to cap University System of Georgia tuition and fee increases to the rate of inflation. Details of the requirements that would go into effect, should the amendment pass, are provided via [HB 229](#).

Status: The bill is assigned to the House Higher Education Committee.

[SB 77](#) (Sen. Vincent Fort, 39th) increases the age for mandatory school attendance from 16 to 17.

Status: The bill is assigned to the Senate Education and Youth Committee.

[SB 83](#) (Sen. Lester Jackson, 2nd) increases the age for mandatory school attendance from 16 to 17 1/2. The bill also increases the age of eligibility for adult literacy programs from 16 to 17 1/2 and moves oversight and control from the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia to the Technical College System of Georgia.

Status: The bill is assigned to the Senate Education and Youth Committee.



STABLE, SELF-SUFFICIENT, PRODUCTIVE FAMILIES

[HB 124](#) (Rep. David Clark, 98th) revises Georgia law related to fraud in obtaining public assistance, food stamps, or Medicaid to include those who knowingly or intentionally aid or abet a recipient in obtaining or attempting to obtain a benefit to which he or she is not entitled.

Status: The bill is assigned to the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee and was scheduled for discussion in a subcommittee on Feb. 7.

[SB 97](#) (Sen. Elena Parent, 42nd) requires an amendment to the Georgia child-care plan to extend the length of time child-care subsidies are offered to parents attending a job training or educational program, increasing it from up to 12 months to up to 24 months.

Status: The bill is assigned to the Senate Education and Youth Committee.



THRIVING COMMUNITIES

[HB 32](#) (Rep. Joyce Chandler, 105th) amends the definition of sexual assault to include sexual contact between an employee or agent of a school with a student enrolled in the same school. Current law only applies to teachers, principals, assistant principals, or other administrators in a school. The bill also expands the definition to include sexual contact between employees or agents of a correctional facility, juvenile detention facility, facility providing services to a person with a disability, or facility providing child welfare and youth services and a person in custody of any such facility. The law currently only applies to employees and agents of the specific facility in which the person is in custody.

Status: The bill is assigned to the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee and was scheduled for discussion in a subcommittee on Feb. 7.

[HB 53](#) (Rep. Mary Margaret Oliver, 82nd) expands the jurisdiction of juvenile court to include children who are under 18—instead of under 17—when they are alleged to have committed a delinquent act.

Status: The bill is assigned to the House Juvenile Justice Committee. A committee hearing was held on Feb. 2, but no vote was taken.

HB 116 (Rep. Bert Reeves, 34th) adds aggravated assault with a firearm to the list of juvenile offenses (ages 13 to 17) for which superior courts will have original jurisdiction.

Status: The bill is assigned to the House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee and was scheduled for discussion in a subcommittee on Feb. 7.

SB 4 (Sen. Renee Unterman, 45th) establishes the Georgia Mental Health Treatment Task Force to examine the current mental health landscape and the effectiveness of mental health services and programs.

Status: The bill was passed by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and was scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor on Feb. 7.