



# CONNECTED to Public Policy

Integrating State Policy with Local Solutions

March 14, 2017

## Senate Turns Focus to FY18 Budget

After the Crossover Day rush, legislators slowed their pace a bit, but continued work on major pieces of legislation last week—such as the FY18 budget and [HB 338](#) (Rep. Kevin Tanner, 9th) that addresses low-performing schools.

### Low-Performing Schools

The House passed HB 338 on March 1, and the Senate Education and Youth Committee held two hearings on the bill last week.

During the first hearing on March 6, Tanner presented the bill. Committee members' questions focused on how schools will be identified as candidates for involvement with the Chief Turnaround Officer (CTO), how the work will be funded, and to what entity the CTO will report.

Tanner explained that federal law requires states to identify the lowest-performing 5 percent of schools, and that the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) is already required to work with those schools. He further noted the importance of considering any progress schools have made, even if they are classified as low performing, and said there is room for debate and improvement in the legislation regarding how low-performing schools are identified.

Tanner stated that costs for the current fiscal year will be low, as it will take several months to get the process up and running, and that Gov. Nathan Deal will identify funds for the current fiscal year. Tanner also noted that [HB 237](#) (Rep. Brooks Coleman, 97th) authorizes the Public Education Innovation Fund Foundation to receive private donations for public-school grants for the implementation of innovations to improve student achievement. The bill is assigned to the Senate Finance Committee, which held it last week due to questions about constitutionality.

During the second hearing on March 10, State Superintendent Richard Woods addressed the committee. He recommended that the position of CTO be an employee of the GaDOE who reports to the State

Superintendent rather than to the State Board of Education. The committee didn't vote on the bill, and a new substitute version containing changes made by the Senate Education and Youth Committee is expected next week.

## Budget

The Senate Appropriations Committee presented and voted on the Senate version of the FY18 budget on March 13. The Senate made no changes to the House's version of the Georgia Family Connection appropriation.

The full Senate is expected to vote on the FY18 budget later this week, and then the House and Senate will begin negotiations in conference committee to finalize it. If agreed to by the Senate and by the Appropriations Conference Committee, and if signed by the governor, the budget will increase each Family Connection Collaborative's appropriation from \$47,000 to \$48,500 in FY18.

## Schedule

Legislators met Monday, Thursday, and Friday last week to complete 31 of 40 legislative days. They are scheduled to be in session Monday through Thursday this week.

The House and Senate previously adopted an [adjournment resolution](#) that sets the calendar for the remainder of the 2017 session, with the final legislative day scheduled for Thursday, March 30.

## Legislation

The following bills related to children and families were passed out of their original chambers by Crossover Day and acted upon this week.



**[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 House passed the bill on Feb. 16. It is assigned to the Senate Education and Youth Committee, and was scheduled for discussion on March 13.

**[HB 246](#)** (Rep. Wes Cantrell, 22nd) repeals the sunset provision on an annual fitness assessment program approved and funded by the State Board of Education for students in grades 1-12.

**Status:** The House passed the bill on Feb. 23. It is assigned to the Senate Education and Youth Committee, and was scheduled for discussion on March 13.

**[HB 273](#)** (Rep. Demetrius Douglas, 78th) requires each local board of education to schedule a daily recess for students in grades K-5, beginning in the 2017-18 school year, provided that recess will not be required on any day when a student has had physical education or structured activity time. Local boards shall

establish written policies to ensure that recess is a safe experience for students, that recess is scheduled so that it provides a break during academic learning, and that it is not withheld as punishment.

**Status:** The House passed the bill on March 3. It is assigned to the Senate Education and Youth Committee, and was scheduled for discussion on March 13.



## CHILDREN SUCCEEDING IN SCHOOL

**HB 114** (Rep. Robert Dickey, 140th) prohibits local school systems from excluding students in dual credit courses (the Move-on-When-Ready program) from valedictorian or salutatorian determinations. This shall not apply to a high-school student who moves into the local school system after his or her sophomore year and has not taken any courses on-site at the participating high school.

**Status:** The House passed the bill on March 1. It is assigned to the Senate Education and Youth Committee, and was scheduled for discussion on March 13.

**HB 237** (Rep. Brooks Coleman, 97th) authorizes the Public Education Innovation Fund Foundation to receive private donations used for public-school grants for the implementation of academic and organizational innovations to improve student achievement.

**Status:** The House passed the bill on Feb. 24, and it is assigned to the Senate Finance Committee. The committee discussed the bill on March 6, but did not vote on it due to questions about the bill's constitutionality.

**HB 338** (Rep. Kevin Tanner, 9th) provides a comprehensive intervention strategy for chronically underperforming schools and offers an alternative to the Opportunity School District plan that Georgia voters didn't approve in Nov. 2016.

**Status:** The House passed the bill on March 1. It is assigned to the Senate Education and Youth Committee, which held hearings on the bill on March 6 and 10. It's expected that a substitute version will be presented to the Senate Education and Youth Committee this week.

**HR 354** (Rep. Dar'shun Kendrick, 93rd) urges the GaDOE, in consultation with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, to develop and provide a list of training materials on mental-health issues to local school systems.

**Status:** The resolution was assigned to the House Education Committee. This resolution only needs to pass the House, so it was not affected by the Crossover Day deadline. The House Education Early Learning and K-12 Education Subcommittee is scheduled to hear the resolution on March 14.

**SB 149** (Sen. Emanuel Jones, 10th) details training requirements for school resource officers. The Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council shall maintain a 40-hour training course for school resource officers.

**Status:** The Senate passed the bill on March 3. It is assigned to the House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee, and was scheduled for discussion on March 13.

**SB 152** (Sen. Emanuel Jones, 10th) amends mandatory student attendance policy by precluding students from being suspended or expelled without being assigned to an alternative education program and by setting a two-semester maximum for assignment to alternative programs. The bill provides an exception to the two-semester maximum for serious offenses, which include physical assault or battery of school personnel or students, bullying, and unlawful use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol.

**Status:** The Senate passed a substitute version of the bill on March 1, clarifying that the new policy will apply to all students except those guilty of serious offenses. The bill is now assigned to the House Education Committee, and the Subcommittee on Education Administration and Planning was scheduled to discuss it on March 13.

**SB 211** (Sen. Lindsey Tippins, 37th) requires the State Board of Education to adopt research-based student assessment programs that are selected after consulting with local school systems, and to conduct a comparability study to determine whether nationally recognized academic assessments, such as the SAT and ACT, are in alignment with state content standards in grades 9-12. The bill also directs the State Board of Education's existing assessment workgroup to pursue maximum flexibility for state and local assessments under federal law. Reports are due to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, State School Superintendent, and House and Senate Education Committee chairs by Friday, Sept. 1.

**Status:** The Senate passed the bill on March 3. It is scheduled to be heard by the House Education Early Learning and K-12 Education Subcommittee on March 14.



## STABLE, SELF-SUFFICIENT, PRODUCTIVE FAMILIES

**HB 159** (Rep. Bert Reeves, 34th), a comprehensive revision of Georgia's adoption code, lowers the age one can access the adoption reunion registry from 21 to 18, eases foreign adoptions procedures, and permits nonresidents to grant adoption of his or her child.

**Status:** The House Judiciary Committee passed the bill on Feb. 16, and the full House passed it on Feb. 24. The bill is now assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee, and a subcommittee is scheduled to discuss it on March 15.

**HB 359** (Rep. Barry Fleming, 121st) allows a parent to delegate caregiving authority for their child to an individual who resides in Georgia and is a relative or fictive kin for one year or less by executing a power of attorney.

**Status:** The House passed the bill on March 3. The bill was then assigned to the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, which passed it on March 10. The bill is now in the Senate Rules Committee, which will determine whether or not it is sent to the Senate floor for a vote.

**SB 3** (Sen. Lindsey Tippins, 37th), the Creating Opportunities Needed Now to Expand Credentialed Training (CONNECT) Act, directs the Technical College System of Georgia State Board, in consultation with industry representatives, to annually identify fields of study in industries that address a critical workforce need and are linked to occupations in the skilled-trade industry or an emerging technology. Under the bill, the State Board of Education must also include industry credentialing when developing policies and guidelines for awarding high-school credit.

**Status:** The Senate passed the bill on Feb. 17. It is assigned to the House Education Committee, and the Subcommittee on Innovation and the Workforce was scheduled to discuss it on March 13.

**SB 201** (Sen. Butch Miller, 49th) requires employers to allow employees who earn sick leave to use up to five days of accrued leave to care for immediate family members—including an employee's child, spouse, grandchild, grandparent, or parent.

**Status:** The Senate passed the bill on Feb. 27, and it is now assigned to the House Industry and Labor Committee. A subcommittee passed the bill on March 6, and the full committee was scheduled to hear the bill on March 13.



## THRIVING COMMUNITIES

**[HB 37](#)** (Rep. Earl Ehrhart, 36th) prohibits private postsecondary institutions in Georgia from adopting sanctuary policies for undocumented immigrant students and requires that state funding and state-administered federal funding be withheld from institutions in violation of the prohibition.

**Status:** The House passed the bill on Feb. 22. It is now assigned to the Senate Higher Education Committee, and was scheduled for discussion on March 13.

**[HB 86](#)** (Rep. Mary Margaret Oliver, 82nd) expands the definition of sexual abuse to include acts involving trafficking a person for sexual servitude.

**Status:** The House passed the bill on Feb. 22, and the Senate Judiciary Committee passed it on March 10. The bill is now in the Senate Rules Committee, which will determine whether or not it is sent to the Senate floor for a vote.

**[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 have original jurisdiction.

**Status:** The House passed the bill on Feb. 27. It was originally assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee, but the bill was withdrawn and reassigned to the Senate Public Safety Committee on March 9.

**[HB 250](#)** (Rep. Mandi Ballinger, 23rd) provides that an employee of an early care or education program who has received a satisfactory fingerprint and record check within the previous 24 months is exempt from an additional background check for purposes of providing care in a foster home.

**Status:** The House passed the bill on Feb. 21. It is now assigned to the Senate Special Judiciary Committee, and was scheduled for discussion on March 13.

**[HB 391](#)** (Rep. David Clark, 98th) expands the locations where a mother may leave a newborn child without risk of prosecution to include fire and police stations.

**Status:** The House Juvenile Justice Committee passed the bill on Feb. 24, and the full House passed it on March 3. The bill is now assigned to the Senate Special Judiciary Committee, and was scheduled for discussion on March 13.