Passage of Education Legislation
1970 – 2018

Historical Note: GAE was founded May 9, 1970, by a merger of the 100-year-old Georgia Education Association (GEA) and the 90-year-old Georgia Teachers and Education Association (GT&EA). Thus, the Georgia Association of Educators and its founding groups have advocated for the interests of Georgia education and educators with the Georgia General Assembly and other state bodies and policymakers for over 130 years.

Begun with the merger, this compilation of the GAE Legislative Accomplishments is a living history of our collective efforts on education’s behalf and the achievements enjoyed by all public school employees. It is also a testament to GAE members and staff who have worked to better the profession and public education in Georgia. Over the years, this document has transformed into a microcosm of legislation passed and defeated during each session.

Table of Contents

SALARY.................................................................................................................. 3
RETIREMENT BENEFITS ....................................................................................... 4
HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS ........................................................................... 7
DUE PROCESS ........................................................................................................ 8
EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS (ESP)................................................. 10
EMPLOYEE RIGHTS & BENEFITS ......................................................................... 11
PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES COMMISSION (PPC) ........................................... 12
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMISSION (PSC) ........................................... 12
LEAVE BENEFITS FOR PERSONNEL .................................................................... 13
CERTIFICATION .................................................................................................... 13
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT/SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ........................................ 15
KINDERGARTEN & EARLY LEARNING ................................................................. 19
CLASS SIZE/PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO ................................................................. 19
ADEQUATE PROGRAM FOR EDUCATION IN GEORGIA (APEG) .................... 20
QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION (QBE) ACT .......................................................... 18
EDUCATION REFORM COMMISSION ................................................................. 22
CHILD PROTECTION/SCHOOL SAFETY ............................................................... 25
FINANCE – TAXATION ......................................................................................... 28
LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION ....................................................................... 30
FUNDING (BUDGETS) ................................................................................................................. 28
VOUCHERS .................................................................................................................................... 32
LOTTERY-FUNDED EDUCATION PROGRAMS .............................................................................. 34
SEX EQUITY ................................................................................................................................. 35
A+ EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 2000 (HB 1187) ................................................................. 35
SCHOOL REFORMS ....................................................................................................................... 32
SALARY

1970 ....... T-4 beginning $5,600
1983 ....... 16th step index salary schedule

1985 ....... T-4 beginning $16,800- $1200 increase
1984 ....... 18th step index salary schedule
1985 ....... New salary schedule 2.5%, true increment
1986 ....... 2.6% increment
1987 ....... 2.7% increment
1988 ....... 2.8% increment
1989 ....... 2.9% increment
1990 ....... 3% increment
1990 ....... Funds applied to salary schedule to yield larger increases for veteran teachers
1991 ....... Preserved increment salary increases on the state salary schedule
1992 ....... 2.5% salary increase applied to the state salary schedule – despite recession!
1993 ....... Added L-5 step to state salary schedule
1994 ....... 5% salary increase applied to state salary schedule
1994 ....... Legislation adopted prohibiting local boards of education from decreasing local salary
supplements of educators or ESP without holding public hearings
1995 ....... 6% salary increase applied to state salary schedule
1996 ....... 6% salary increase applied to state salary schedule
1997 ....... 6% salary increase applied to state salary schedule
1998 ....... 6% salary increase applied to state salary schedule
1999 ....... 4% salary increase applied to state salary schedule
2000 ....... 3% salary increase applied to state salary schedule
2001 ....... 4.5% salary increase applied to state salary schedule
2001 ....... Pay for beginning teachers at the end of the first month of work
2002 ....... 3.25% salary increase applied to the state salary schedule
2004 ....... 2% salary increase applied to state salary schedule (delayed until January 2005)
2004 ....... Step added to top of salary scale
2005 ....... 2% salary increase applied to state salary schedule (Higher Ed salary raise delayed until
January 2006)
2006 ....... 4% salary increase applied to state salary schedule (Higher Ed salary raise delayed until
January 2007)
2006 ....... Local boards required to have a second public hearing (one required previously) before
the local teacher salary supplement can be lowered. New measures also require
notifying teachers of hearings and holding hearings after school hours
2007 ....... 3% salary increase applied to state salary schedule (Higher Ed salary raise delayed until
January 1, 2008)
2008 ....... 2.5% salary increase applied to state salary schedule (Higher Ed salary raise delayed
until January 1, 2009)
2009 ....... After July 1, 2010, an educator’s placement on the salary schedule will not based on a
leadership degree, degree earned in conjunction with completion of an educator
leadership preparation program approved by the Professional Standards Commission.
Educator will be required to hold a leadership position in order to be place on the salary
schedule at that level
2011…….$12.6 million appropriated in the Amended FY11 budget for differentiated pay for newly certified math and science teachers. Math and science teachers, grades 6-12, will be moved to the salary step on the state salary schedule that is applicable to six years of creditable service (which equates to salary step four), unless he or she is already on or above such salary step. Math and science teachers, grades K-5, who receive an endorsement in mathematics, science, or both from the PSC will receive a stipend of $1,000 per endorsement for each year such endorsement is in effect, up to a maximum of five years

2011…….$12.6 million appropriated in the FY12 budget for differentiated pay for newly certified math and science teachers

2012…….$2.3 million appropriated in the FY13 budget differentiated pay for newly certified math and science teachers

2012…….Certificated personnel who receive a salary increase or bonus based on the falsification of student test scores must forfeit those monies and will be held liable for repayment

2013…….$1.9 million appropriated in the FY 14 budget for differentiated pay for newly certified math and science teachers

2015…….$1.2 million appropriated in the FY 16 budget for differentiated pay for newly certified math and science teachers

2015…….$280 million increased funds to offset the austerity reductions in order to provide local education authorities the flexibility to eliminate teacher furlough days, increase instructional days and teacher salaries

2016…….$300 million added to K-12 education budget to offset austerity reductions ($167 million remain in austerity reductions) in order to provide local education authorities the flexibility to eliminate teacher furloughs, restore 180 days of student instruction and provide 3% pay raise for teachers. The Governor in his State-of-the-State Address strongly emphasized that he wanted to see this raise passed on to teachers

2017…….2% salary increase applied to the state salary schedule

**RETIREMENT BENEFITS**

1970…….Vesting and disability benefits after 20 years; Retire after 35 years service (Formula = 1.75%)

1972…….Defeated efforts to put TRS funds under Department of Administration during reorganization

1973…….Vesting and disability benefits after 10 years

1974…….Retire with 31 years service

1975…….Formula = 1.76% and 3% cost of living; retire after 30 years` service with no age factor penalty

1976…….Formula = 1.78%

1977…….Formula = 1.80%; Improvement in the retirement formula retroactive to retired teachers

1978…….Formula = 1.84%; Enabling legislation to compute formula on the average of the highest two consecutive years’ salary

1979…….Formula = 1.88%

1980…….Formula based on best two years of consecutive service

1981…….Formula = 1.92%. Retirement credit for periods of full-time graduate study under certain conditions

1982…….Formula = 2%, effective January 1, 1983

1984…….Retirement benefits increased for already retired teachers

1985…….Formula for PSERS (support personnel) increased by 7% ($7.00-$7.50)

1986…….3% COLA for PSERS (support personnel)
1986 ....... Purchase maternity leave prior service to 1976 (rescinded in 1987 due to lack of funding)
1986 ....... Benefits increased for retired teachers
1987 ....... Tax sheltering of employee contributions to TRS
1987 ....... Formula for PSERS (support personnel) increased from $7.50 to $8.00 per month times number of years' service
1988 ....... Retirement benefits increased .5% to 12% for already retired teachers
1988 ....... Legislation allowing PSERS (support personnel) Board of Trustees to grant COLAs
1988 ....... Formula for PSERS (support personnel) increased from $8.00 per month per year of service to $10.00 (not funded)
1988 ....... Reduction in purchasing cost of creditable service in TRS for time lost due to pregnancy (rescinded in 1989 due to lack of funding)
1989 ....... Defeated legislation creating joint management of TRS and ERS investments
1990 ....... 1.75% one-time COLA for TRS members to help offset the loss of state income tax exempt status of pension benefits. Special COLA secured for current & future retirees (COLA increased to 3% in 1991 by TRS Board)
1991 ....... Added a classroom teacher member to TRS Board of Trustees to replace the State Insurance Commissioner
1992 ....... 25-year retirement with penalties
1992 ....... Re-established credit in TRS via payments in intervals instead of one-time lump sum
1994 ....... Reduced employee’s TRS contribution rate from 6% of salary to 5%
1994 ....... Reduced employee’s contribution rate for members of the Board of Regents Optional Retirement Program
1994 ....... 3% COLA for already retired TRS members
1994 ....... Increased exclusion amount on retirement income in the computation of Ga. taxable net income from $10,000 to $11,000 for 1994 tax year and $12,000 for 1995 tax year
1994 ....... Reduction in purchasing costs of creditable service in TRS for time lost due to pregnancy (not funded)
1995 ....... Funded increase for PSERS (support personnel) formula from $8 to $9 per month times number of years of service
1996 ....... 25-year retirement at any age with 7% penalty (up to a maximum of 35%) for each year the retiree is under 30 years of service or age 60, whichever is less
1996 ....... Reduction in purchasing cost of creditable service in TRS for time lost due to pregnancy (not funded)
1996 ....... Increased PSERS benefit from $9 to $9.25 per month x number of years of service
1997 ....... Increased PSERS benefit from $9.25 to $9.50 per month x number of years of service
1997 ....... Established a Joint House and Senate Retirement Committee to study needed improvements in the retirement benefits of educational support personnel
1998 ....... Established retirement credit for unused/unpaid sick leave based on a ratio of one-day retirement credit for each two days of unused/unpaid sick leave
1998 ....... Increased PSERS benefit from $9.50 to $10 per month x number of years of service
1998 ....... Provided state merit health insurance to PSERS members who retired prior to 1985
1998 ....... Increased PSERS monthly benefit ceiling from $10 to $12 (implemented as funded)
1998 ....... Increased taxable ceiling exclusion for retirees from $12,000 to $13,000 from Georgia state income tax
1998 ....... Allowed for transfer of TRS retirement benefits to secondary beneficiary if primary beneficiary does not survive TRS member by at least 32 days
1999 ....... Fully funded TRS retirement credit for each unused, unpaid sick leave day
1999 ....... Increased PSERS retirement benefit from $10 per month to $10.50 per month x years of creditable service
2000 ....... Increased PSERS retirement benefit from $10.50 to $12 per year of service
2001 ........ Included public school employees with other state employees who are allowed to participate in deferred compensation plans operated by the state

2002 ........ Increased PSERS retirement benefit from $12 per month to $12.50 per year of service, with an increased benefit ceiling of $15

2002 ........ Allowed TRS members who retired prior to Dec. 31, 2001 to return to teaching in a “qualified” school system

2002 ........ Created two study committees that include GAE representatives serving on the committee to look at ways to increase retirement benefits for TRS members and to protect the investments of TRS

2002 ........ Allowed TRS members with 25 years of service to purchase up to an additional three years of credit in order to allow members to retire early without penalty

2002 ........ Increased amount of tax-exempt retirement income to $14,500 in 2002 and $15,000 in 2003

2003 ........ Increased PSERS benefit from $12.50 to $13 per month for each year of creditable service. Future benefit increases to be funded from PSERS assets, instead of only by the General Assembly

2004 ........ Allowed TRS members who retired prior to Dec. 31, 2003, to return to teaching without penalties or loss of benefits

2004 ........ Allowed TRS members a new option for lump sum payment upon retirement

2005 ........ Increased PSERS benefit from $13 to $13.50 per month (multiplied by years of creditable service (Current law caps the benefit at $15)

2005 ........ Allowed investing in exchange-traded funds to allow for safer and more lucrative investing of some of the TRS assets

2005 ........ Improved 2004 “return-to-work” law to allow any TRS member who retired by December 31, 2003 to be re-employed in a full-time capacity by a local school system or RESA in virtually any position with no effect on retirement benefit

2006 ........ Increased benefit for those who retired with at least 20 years’ service before July 1987.

2006 ........ Increased PSERS benefit from $13.50 to $14.00 per month for each year of creditable service

2007 ........ Increased PSERS benefit from $14.00 to $14.25 per month for each year of creditable service

2007 ........ Allowed TRS and ERS to increase the amount of money invested in foreign owned companies from the current 10 to 15%. This allows these retirement systems greater diversity in investing to increase the assets of their retirement funds

2008 ........ Retired teachers who retired on a normal service retirement and have been retired for a minimum of 12 months allowed to return to work and continue receiving retirement benefits. “Normal service retirement” means the retiree must have retired on a service retirement with 30 years of service regardless of age or 10 years of service and at least age 60. Local school systems would be allowed to employ a retiree as a full-time classroom teacher, principal, superintendent, media specialist or counselor

2008 ........ Retiree who has elected one of the survivorship options and has named his or her spouse and one or more other persons as beneficiaries allowed to revoke the selection of the spouse as a beneficiary upon a final judgement of complete divorce. The retiree may then either allocate the spouse’s percentage to the other beneficiaries or keep their percentages the same. The retiree’s benefit will be recalculated to compensate for the remaining beneficiaries

2008 ........ Increased PSERS benefit from $14.25 to $14.75 per month for each year of creditable service

2009 ........ Definition of a large retirement system revised. Investment in equities increased from 65% to 70% on and after July 1, 2010. After July 1, 2011, increased to 75%

2009 ........ Georgia Retiree Health Benefit Fund divided into two funds by creating the Georgia State Retiree Health Benefit Fund and the Georgia School Retiree Health Benefit Fund.
The Georgia School Retiree Health Benefit Fund is created to help pay for the cost of retiree post-employment health insurance benefits—mainly an accounting measure.

2012…….Increased PSERS benefit from $14.75 per month per each year of service to $16.50 for those retiring after July 1, 2012. Current retirees will receive $15.00 per month per each year of creditable service. Also PSERS members’ premium increased from $4 to $10 per month.

2012…….Repealed the date of retired educators returning to work full-time to June 30, 2013, in effect ending the program.

2013…….Clarified definition that teacher means a permanent status employee employed not less than half time.

2015…….Thwarted attempts to alter the current TRS defined benefit contribution plan.

2017…….Increased PSERS benefit from $14.75 to $16.00 per month for each year of creditable service.

2018…….$362 million added to cover state’s portion to TRS.

HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS

1973…….Passed first legislation (vetoed).
1975…….Passed second legislation (signed).
1977…….Legislation to allow local boards to purchase plan.
1978…….Health insurance funded.
1980…….Dental and vision insurance added to the statewide health insurance.
1983…….$17 million to fund increasing costs.
1984…….Funding for health insurance for support personnel effective 1/1/85.
1986…….Constitutional amendment to provide retired support personnel health insurance.
1987…….Support personnel to be covered by state health insurance when funded.
1988…….$16.5 million to fund increasing costs.
1989…….$70 million to fund increasing costs.
1990…….$46.3 million to fund increasing costs.
1994…….Legislation adopted allowing public school employees with 20+ years of service but who are ineligible for retirement benefits because of age to pay employer and employee premiums for state health insurance coverage.
1996…….Secured legislation allowing TRS retired members to pay state health insurance premiums monthly if TRS benefit is too small to allow automatic deductions.
1998…….Provided state merit health insurance to PSERS members who retired prior to 1985.
1999…….Combined all state agency health care benefit plans into a unified Georgia Department of Community Health maximizing services and efficiency.
1999…….Required health care plans to permit those insured to choose the doctor of their choice.
2000…….Added $1,500 per employee to budget in order to reduce impact of rising health care costs.
2001…….Reduced the required number of creditable years of service to eight in order to purchase health insurance if the employee is not eligible for retirement.
2005…….Lowered the proposed increase in health insurance premium from 13% to 9.5% (each 1% reduction costs the state $7 million).
2005…….Increased employer contribution to premium nearly $47 million ($25+ million more than governor’s recommendation), compared to FY 2005; overall appropriation was a $181 million increase for employer-paid health insurance.
2005…….Cost-saving measures imposed in response to control runaway increases, including:
   • New surcharges for spousal coverage if offered by spouse’s employer and for tobacco users.
   • Four-tiered premium system (previously two).
2006 ........ Premium increase for employees paid by state through $138 million budget allocation, insuring no increase through 2007
2007 ........ $105.9 million to fund increasing costs (a 10% premium increase for employees beginning January 2008)
2007 ........ House Study Committee created to review State Health Benefit Plan
2008 ........ Charter school employees provided the opportunity to participate in the State Health Benefit Plan
2008 ........ $166 million to fund increasing costs (a 7.5% premium increase for employees beginning January 2009)
2010.......10% employee premium increase beginning January 2011 (state will continue to pay 75% of the cost of coverage)
2011.......10% employee premium increase beginning January 2012 (state will continue to pay 75% of the cost of coverage)
2011.......Resolution adopted creating the House State Health Insurance Plan Alternative Funding Study Committee. Committee is charged with studying the needs, issues, and problems impacting coverage, premiums, and other costs of providing adequate and effective coverage for employees while ensuring actuarial soundness and budgetary responsibility
2012.......9% employee premium increase beginning January 2013 (state will continue to pay 75% of the cost of coverage – 2% of the increase covers 100% of the cost of preventative health services for women as called for in the Affordable Care Act (ACA)
2013.......7.5% premium increase for employee-only and employee + child(ren) tier; 2% employee premium increase from the requirements of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA)
2013.......FY 14 Budget increase to cover per month/per member employer health care coverage cost for noncertificated school service personnel from $446.20 to $596.20; certificated employees from $912.34 to $945.00
2013.......Defeated legislation that would have required school personnel who become eligible for a post-employment health benefit fund on or after July 1, 2013 to pay the full cost of their health insurance premium. New hires would have been negatively impacted by this change
2016.......Resolution encouraging the Department of Community Health to create and seek counsel of a State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) Customer Advisory Council. Panel would be made up of 12 customers of the SHBP and not compensated for services. Also they would either be an active or retired member of the Employees Retirement System or Teachers Retirement System

**DUE PROCESS**

1970....... No due process procedure for non-renewed educators
1975....... Due process including hearing, representation, and other protections after successfully completing three years of service
1975....... All educators must be notified by April 15 of non-renewal
1982....... Transfer of due process rights from one school system to another with a one-year probationary period
1986....... All notices by certified mail, statement of rights, 20 days to respond
1987....... 10-day review of annual contracts by teachers prior to signing
1987....... Protection of due process rights of teachers involved in the merger of school systems
1987....... Legislative study committee created to investigate need for grievance procedure established by legislation for all public school employees
1988 ....... Minimum standards established for local school board policies on grievance procedures for teachers (vetoed)
1988 ....... Legislation guaranteeing all written personnel evaluations will be confidential and kept in the employee's personnel file
1989 ....... Defeated legislation creating a data bank to store negative information on educators to be developed and administered by the PPC and used by potential employers
1990 ....... Introduced a bill establishing minimum standards for local school board policies on grievance procedures for teachers that led to negotiations with the State Board of Education and the minimum standards being incorporated in SBE policy. Standards must be adopted by all local boards of education by July 1, 1990
1992 ....... Legislation adopted and signed by Governor establishing minimum standards for local school board policies governing grievance procedures for professional personnel
1993 ....... Legislation adopted protecting negotiated agreements between school boards and employees regarding references distributed to prospective employers
1993 ....... Amended the Georgia Open Records Act to provide access to personnel records needed in the representation of school employees during hearings
1994 ....... Legislation adopted prohibiting local boards of education to terminate an educator’s employment contract for refusing to alter student grades
1995 ....... Amended legislation abolishing administrative due process rights by permitting administrators to negotiate up to three-year contracts of employment with local boards of education and authorizing local boards to adopt due process policies for administrators
1995 ....... Amended legislation creating the Office of State Administrative Hearings to ensure that PPC tribunals continue to make findings of fact and recommendations on certificate revocation proceedings
1997 ....... Expanded maximum number of days from 120 to 200 that a local board of education can employ a newly hired teacher under a temporary contract to allow for the receipt of the results of a criminal records check
1998 ....... Requirements added that educators under investigation will receive written notification of the complaint, limit investigation to 60 days, expunge records if educator is exonerated, and probable cause must be determined by an administrative law judge
2000 ....... Requirement that any certificated employee receive written reason for termination. (Due process /fair dismissal rights eliminated for any person who first began teaching after July 1, 2000.)
2003 ....... Reinstatement of fair dismissal rights equally for all teachers. This GAE legislative accomplishment reversed action in 2000 that eliminated fair dismissal rights for new teachers
2003 ....... Local boards of education are required to include the salary and benefits in teacher employment contracts before requiring a signature. Letters of intent to return to the school district cannot be legally binding
2005 ....... Protected due process rights for charter school employees in revision of charter school laws
2007 ....... Senate Study Committee created to review the current grievance procedure law
2009…… Amended legislation that would have extended for two years the deadline date for teacher contract renewals and teachers electing not to accept employment for the ensuing school year. Amended legislation only allowed local boards school year 2009-2010 to extend contract renewals to May 15, 2009 and letters of resignation to be tendered no later than June 1, 2009
2010…… Defeated an amendment to the dual enrollment formula legislation. Amended language called for performance evaluations for teachers, assistant principals, and principals prior to July 1, 2011. Statewide instrument would have taken student achievement into consideration when assessing personnel
2012……Local school board’s RIF policies mandated to use job performance as the primary factor in determining a reduction in force and student performance “may” be one such performance measure. Local boards prohibited from using length of service as the primary measure to identify employees for RIF. Legislation also created a Professional Learning Rules Task Force for the purposes of reviewing professional learning and making suggestions to improve professional learning

EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS (ESP)
(see also Retirement & Health Insurance sections)

1989........Legislation introduced and studied during the interim mandating written contracts and job descriptions for educational support personnel
1990........Created Senate study committee to conduct hearings on the employment status and needs of educational support personnel. (Study committee was not appointed by lieutenant governor, so it did not function)
1991........Senate Education Committee agreed to conduct hearings on the employment status and needs of educational support personnel prior to ’92 session (sub-committee met once and made no recommendations)
1991........Legislation adopted which provides for increases in the state base salary of school bus drivers (not funded in FY ’92 Budget)
1992........Legislation mandating that ESP's children be allowed to attend the school where the parent works
1992........Created Senate study committee to conduct hearings on the employment status and needs of educational support personnel
1993........Legislation authorizing retired ESP to participate in state health insurance program by paying employee’s share of premium on a quarterly basis to State Merit Personnel Board. (Currently only those school employees whose monthly retirement benefit is great enough to allow these costs to be deducted by PSERS or TRS may participate)
1994........4% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
1995........5% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
1995........Increased food service managers’ supplement from $350 to $400
1996........4% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
1997........4% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
1997........Educational support personnel in all school safety legislation originally introduced to protect teachers
1998........4% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
1999........3% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
2000........3% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
2000........Legislation providing bonuses to paraprofessionals in “A” and “B” rated schools
2000........HOPE Scholarship extended to teacher assistants (most paraprofessional positions were eliminated in HB 1187)
2001........3.5% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
2001........Protection of personal information (social security numbers, home addresses, and telephone numbers, etc.) for all public school employees
2002........Legislation to require codes of conduct on school buses, including prohibition of cell phone & pager use; students and parents must sign that they received the bus code of conduct and grants discipline authority to all school employees to deal with student misbehavior
2002........Legislation to protect all school employees and students from verbal or physical assault, including the consequences for such actions
2004........2% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
2004 ....... School safety/discipline laws expanded to cover bus drivers and bus stops
2005 ....... 2% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers effective July 1
2006 ....... 4% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers effective July 1
2007 ....... 3% salary increase for state paid paraprofessionals, bus drivers, and cafeteria workers
2008 ....... 2.5% salary increase for state paid paraprofessionals, bus drivers, and cafeteria workers
effective July 1, 2008
2008 ....... 3rd week in October declared “School Bus Safety Week.”
2008 ....... 3rd Monday in October declared “Bus Driver Appreciation”
2008 ....... $2.5 million provided for a 3% salary increase for school bus drivers, lunch room
workers, and school nurses effective July 1, 2016
2016 ...... Local boards of education that employ sworn police officers certified by the Georgia
Peace Officer Standards and Training Council may allow these officers to retain their
weapon and badge upon leaving such employment as a result of a disability arising in
the line of duty
2016 ...... Legislation allowing school bus drivers to only use their cell phones while the bus is in
motion if it is being used in a similar manner as a two-way radio to allow live
communications between the driver and school or public safety official
2016 ...... 2% salary increase for school nurses, bus drivers, and nutrition personnel

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS & BENEFITS

2005 ....... Granted tax deduction to teachers for personal cost of certain school supplies,
equipment, & materials for classroom use (retroactive to 2004)
2005 ....... Defeated anti-public employee legislation that would have required stringent record
keeping and limited the ability of public employees to participate in the political
process
2005 ....... Expansion of “Whistleblower protection” for state employees, but GAE proposal to
include educators excluded
2005 ....... Professional liability insurance provided free to all certificated personnel in local
school systems and to student teachers (Widely viewed as administration’s effort to
diminish value of employee organizations’ liability insurance coverage, and thereby to
discourage membership in same. Not a real benefit, as it duplicates coverage already
provided free by most school systems)
2005 ....... Amended bill intended to target and weaken education organizations’ member
recruitment of college education majors, so that it applied evenly to all degree
programs in university system
2006 ....... Teacher “Purchase Card” provided free to all classroom teachers, allowing $100
purchase of classroom supplies during tax-free holiday ($10 million cost)
2007 ....... Whistleblower protection law expanded to include public education employees from
retaliation when they report waste, fraud, or abuse in public schools
2007 ....... “Grade Integrity Act” prohibits a teacher being forced, required, or coerced into
changing a student’s grade. If an administrator or superintendent changes a student’s
grade, his/her name must be noted in the student’s record. The teacher shall also not be
required to grant a grade other than what the student earned
2007 ....... Teacher “Purchase or Gift Cards” in the amount of $100 were provided to all full-time
classroom teachers and one per school media center
2008 ....... Teacher Protection Act established requiring students who accuse educators of
misconduct to provide a statement in support of their claims
2008 ....... Professional liability insurance reduced by $600,000 (passed in 2005 – widely viewed
as an attempt by Governor’s office to diminish value of employee organizations’
liability insurance coverage thereby discouraging membership in these organizations.)
2008.......Teacher “Purchase Card” provided free to all classroom teachers and one per media center allowing $100 purchase of classroom supplies—could also be used in conjunction with tax-free holiday
2010.......School employees email addresses added as an exemption to requirement for disclosure of public records. Also information relating to tests administered by the PSC was exempted from disclosure
2011.......Defeated legislation impacting membership in labor organizations
2012.......Defeated legislation that would have made it more difficult for organizations such as GAE to collect membership dues via payroll deduction. It would have required GAE to annually sign up every member rather than allowing memberships to roll over each year via payroll deduction. Additionally the bill would have impacted First Amendment rights of citizens to peacefully protest in many settings
2012.......”Teacher Bill of Rights” – if a teacher is dismissed due to economic circumstances, a note must be placed in that teacher’s file stating that he/she was not terminated due to performance. Also added …”In the event that a local school system furloughs teachers and other school personnel during any school year, such furlough day shall be on a Monday or Friday or in conjunction with a holiday, unless the local board of education provides otherwise…”
2013.......Protected payroll deduction rights for payment of membership dues for organizations like GAE, firefighters and police officers
2013.......Defeated legislation barring public employees, and specifically targeting educators, from using all forms of public facilities (computers, fax, email, phones, etc.) to take a position promoting or opposing any legislation from the General Assembly or Governor
2015.......Eight hours of paid leave provided for full-time state employees, not including teachers, to promote education. Time may not be spent in political activity

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES COMMISSION (PPC)

1973.......Initial funding $50,000
1974-97......Continued funding of PPC
1997.......Legislation authorizing reappointment of PPC member to additional three-year term on hearing panel
1998.......Combined Professional Practices Commission with the Professional Standards Commission to streamline services and decrease costs

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMISSION (PSC)

1976.......Legislation establishing PSC, which should increase teacher participation in establishing standards for the teaching profession
1979.......Legislation continuing PSC until 1982
1976-97......Continued funding of PSC
1982.......Legislation continuing PSC
1991.......Created new PSC in charge of teacher certification and composed of a majority of classroom teachers
1998.......Combined services of the Professional Practices Commission with the PSC
2001.......Protection of personal information for all public school employees
2002.......Legislation providing educators an opportunity for a hearing if the PSC denies, suspends, or revokes a teaching certificate
2002........ Notification of PSC action and findings of investigative officers must be sent to educators and their attorneys; also, an educator cannot be under investigation without notification from the PSC

2002........ Minor misdemeanors no longer a part of the complaint process for reviewing an educator’s certification. Allegations against an educator must be based on a felony, crime of moral turpitude, or violation of the professional code of ethics for educators. PSC must decide action within 60 days of receipt of the findings of the investigation

2008........ PSC provided the ability to expedite investigations against certified educators accused of unethical conduct

2009…… Current holders of education leadership degrees and those who earn the degree prior to July 1, 2010 shall continue to be placed on the salary schedule based on the leadership degree, regardless if they are or are not working in a leadership position. On or after July 1, 2010, those earning the degree will only be placed on the salary schedule at education leadership step if they are actually employed in a leadership position as defined by the State Board of Education

2010…….. Amended education leadership law stating that an educator must have begun the program by April 1, 2009 and completed Master by 2012; 6-year degree by 2013; and doctorate by 2014 in order to be paid on a leadership degree on the salary schedule but not yet working in a leadership position

2010…….. Adopted legislation allowing the PSC to accept additional methods of payment for recertification including cashier’s check, money order, credit card, debit card, or other approve method

2011…….. PSC authorizing agent to adopt rules and regulations relative to criminal background checks—no longer the State Board of Education

2011…….. PSC required to revise certification renewal rules based on impact of professional learning on educator’s performance and student learning effective July, 2015

2011…….. PSC and DOE authorized to develop an online course on educator ethics with emphasis on best practices for administering state-mandated assessments

2011…….. PSC allowed to expunge certain records

2011…….. PSC commended for its support of the rule change on certification upgrades for advanced degrees coming from providers that meet established quality standards and for degrees that are in a field for which the PSC offers a certificate

**LEAVE BENEFITS FOR PERSONNEL**

1970........ Three days personal and/or professional leave provided

1977........ Clarification of personal leave law - personal leave cannot be denied for failure to give reason(s)

1977........ Legislation allowing jury duty without loss of pay

2006........ Sick leave bank provisions provided locally must allow participating employee to donate up to ten sick leave days to spouse employed in same system

2015…….. Eight hours of paid leave provided for full-time state employees, not including teachers, to promote education. Time may not be spent in political activity

**CERTIFICATION**

1980........ Introduced constitutional amendment that requires State Board of Education to reimburse tuition for required courses

1986........ Reimbursement of TCT registration fee (once)

1987........ Legislative study committee created to examine the teacher certification process and the frequency and variety of standardized tests given to students and teachers
1988 ....... Exempted teachers employed in Georgia schools or students graduating from Georgia teacher training programs from payment of newly created certification fees
1989 ....... Legislation exempting certain educators from requirement to pass the Teacher Performance Assessment Instrument (TPAI)
1990 ....... Legislation abolishing the TPAI and extending exemptions secured in 1988 to additional educators
1990 ........ Funding to increase stipends paid to supervisors of student teachers from $125 to $250
1990 ........ Created Senate Teacher Certification Study Committee to investigate certification conditions and problems
1990 ........ Created Senate Study Committee on Minority Educators to investigate the declining number of minority students in teacher training programs
1991 ........ Removed teacher certification from the domain of the State Department of Education and created a teacher certification board (Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC))
1992 ........ Original T-5 or higher-level certificate granted based on highest degree held; degree need not be in "education"
1992 ........ Made "special education" course prerequisite for certification less strict
1996 ........ Special 5% salary increase and payment of fees ($2,000) for teachers earning National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification
1996 ........ Resolution honoring the four GAE members who were Georgia’s first and only teachers to be certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
1997 ........ Removed the legal requirement that candidates must have three years of practical teaching experience to qualify for the office of State School Superintendent; retained Constitutional requirements: U.S. citizen for 10 years; legal resident of Georgia for four years; 25 years old, four-year degree from accredited college or university; and no conviction for any crime of moral turpitude
2000 ........ 10% salary increase applied to the state salary schedule for teachers earning National Board certification
2000 ........ Teachers earning National Board certification are re-certified in Georgia for the life of the NBPTS certificate
2000 ........ Technology skills competency requirement added for re-certification
2000 ........ Criminal background check required for re-certification
2000 ........ Requirement that teachers receive a satisfactory evaluation in order to be re-certified
2000 ........ School administrators required to work as a classroom teacher for at least five days annually in order to be recertified
2002 ........ Funding correction for the salary increase for NBPTS-certified teachers: 10% supplement must be adjusted annually as salary increases, not frozen at initial level
2002 ........ 10% supplement funded when National Board Certificate is earned, ending the one-year delay
2003 ........ Professional Standards Commission (PSC) permitted to adopt a policy granting certification reciprocity to teachers from other states. The policy may recognize the successful passage of a teacher certification test administered in another state
2004 ........ Online courses approved for in-service and certificate renewal
2005 ........ Master Teacher and Academic Coach programs created
  • Master Teacher certificate to be created, but for recognition of excellence only (unfunded), certificate required to become an Academic Coach
  • Academic Coach program to provide some teachers an avenue for higher pay while remaining in teacher position (funding to be approved)
  • Academic Coach will mentor teachers in low-performing schools
2005 ........ Newly-certified NBPTS-certified teachers must teach in a “high-needs school” to receive 10% increase, but maintained NBPTS bonus for teachers in “high-needs schools” after designation is lifted due to improvement
2006.......Basic computer skills competency test (for recertification) must be made available at assigned school by school system
2007.......Graduation Coach Program expanded to middle schools. School systems will earn one coach per middle and high schools except for high schools with a graduation rate of 95% or higher. Local systems will allocate between middle and high schools depending on highest risk of dropout
2007.......10% salary increase provided for teachers earning National Board Certification who teach in “high-needs schools”
2007.......Local school systems allowed to create alternative certification programs for persons with a master’s, doctorate, or Juris Doctor degree to begin teaching and participating in a certification process. Applicant is not granted a clear renewable certificate until he/she has completed the program created by the local and approved by the Professional Standards Commission
2008.......10% salary increase for National Board Certified teachers to local systems (jointly administered between the Department of Education and the Professional Standards Commission)
2009.......Original language in HB 243 repealed the law granting a 10% stipend for National Board Certified Teachers. Bill amended restoring the 10% stipend for teachers who have earned NBC and also included those enrolled in the program on/or before March 1, 2009, however the stipend is subject to General Assembly appropriations. The 10% will be based on the teacher’s current salary
2009.......Removed sunset provision for the Master Teacher Program
2010.......Requirement for professional learning units (PLUs) for certification renewal for clear renewable certification are waived from July 1, 2010 through July 1, 2015 including certificate renewals for paraprofessionals. Additionally the computer skill competency course was eliminated
2011.......Resolution adopted expressing House of Representatives intent to restore funding for National Board Certified teachers at the earliest possible date, as funding permits
2011.......Resolution adopted directing the State Board of Education to revise its professional learning rules, to establish a Professional Learning Rules Task Force and directing the PSC to establish certification renewal rules that require the impact of professional learning on educator performance and student learning
2013.......Revises the evaluation instrument for teachers, assistant principals, and principals. All teachers of record, assistant principals, and principals shall have a pre-evaluation conference, midyear evaluation conference, and a summative evaluation conference.
2016.......Significant revisions to TKES and LKES (teachers and administrators evaluation instruments). Legislation addressed some of the major concerns of educators: percentage of student growth included in evaluation; professional growth, school climate, achievement gap closure, Beat the Odds, and CCRPI
2016.......The “Student Protection Act was vetoed. It addressed the right of parents to refuse to allow their children to take standardize tests and provisions made for those students not taking the tests
2017.......Process established by the Professional Standards Commission by which military spouses may qualify for temporary certificates, certificate by endorsement, or expedited certificate upon moving to Georgia with their service member or transitional service member spouse. Process must be in place by July 1, 2018 [In 2018, legislature cited the code as “Tracy Rainey Act.”
“High Performance Principals” grant program provides salary supplement for qualified principals selected to serve in “Needs-Improvement” schools. (Maximum 3-year supplement of up to $15,000 per year). Future of grant dependent on continued funding.

“Graduation Specialist” position funded for every high school to improve graduation rate.

Dropout Prevention measures require parent conference and permission before student between 16 and 18 years old is allowed to dropout.

Students who serve as pages at the General Assembly shall be counted present at school the same as if they were on a school field trip.

Deaf Child’s Bill of Rights established and requires that all methods of assistance, including enrollment in the Georgia School for the Deaf, be considered in the creation of a hearing impaired student’s IEP.

American Sign Language to be counted as a foreign language credit.

Board of Regents urged to include more instruction in classroom management in the required curriculum for teacher education.

Students attending schools within a system that has lost accreditation remain eligible to receive the HOPE Scholarship as long as the school system was accredited by SACS within the previous seven years.

Defeated the BRIDGE Bill which would have established a curriculum and a checks and balance system for students who may not have been on a college preparatory track. This legislation encouraged the notion that some children learn differently from others and that all students do not desire to become physicians or attorneys.

“Move on When Ready Act” - public school students, in grades 11 and 12, given the option to attend a community college or technical school while working to complete their high school diploma. Student allowed to attend any accredited public or private college that accepts him/her and agrees to the state funding as full payment.

Legislation adopted basing school calendar on a 180-day school year or the equivalent of such. Revised provision for full-day kindergarten program. Also beginning with school year 2010-2011, all public elementary and secondary schools may be closed for instruction on November 11 each year to enable students, teachers, and administrators to participate in Veterans Day programs.

School systems allowed to conduct an annual fitness assessment program one time each school year for students in grades 4-12.

Public school student allowed to attend another school within the district provided permanent classroom space available and parents assume responsibility and cost for transportation. Charter schools and newly opened schools with available classroom space for a period of four years after school opens are exempt from this law.

Adopted BRIDGE (Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia’s Economy Act) Bill. Individual graduation plans developed detailing the courses necessary for a high school student to graduate and successfully transition to postsecondary education and the workforce.

Expanded the definition of “textbook” to include digital materials, which include any computer hardware, software, and technical equipment necessary to support said material.

Georgia Student Finance Commission is required, beginning school year 2010-2011, to provide students in grades 6 through 12 with web based counseling advisement, career awareness and information to assist them in evaluating their academic skills and career interests and students in grades 8 through 12 will be provided a web based resource to develop a graduation plan detailing necessary course work for graduation and transitioning to postsecondary education and the workforce.
2011…….Provides for and expands career pathway options for high school students ensuring career and college readiness; minimizes the need for college remedial course work, core academic standards required to be embedded in career, technical, and agricultural education courses, and enables high school students to attain soft skills certification

2012…….Implementation of the career pathways program rolled back a year

2012…….State Board of Education directed to maximize the number of students, beginning with students entering ninth grade in the 2014-2015 school year, to take online courses and by the 2015-2016 school year, the State Board of Education make all end-of-course assessments available online and maximize the number of students and school systems utilizing such online assessments

2013…….Performance data of students in certain placements (i.e., Department of Juvenile Justice or the Department of Human Services, or Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities) to be included in resident school system data and are eligible for enrollment in educational programs of that local school system

2013…….Legislation defeated that would have mandated teaching to the U.S. Constitution, the Declaration of Independence and many other U.S. historical documents the week of September 17 each year

2013…….Legislation defeated allowing Georgia’s participation in Common Core Standards Curriculum and Race To The Top

2014…….Defeated legislation that would have disannulled the state’s participation/partnership in the Race To The Top federal program and Common Core Standards

2014…….Defeated legislation that would have opened the door for businesses and municipalities to create their own charter schools with employees of the businesses and residents of the municipalities having priority attendance to those schools

2014…….Governing board of nonprofit organizations which are charter school petitioners and charter schools required to participate in governance training to be provided by the State Charter Commission and State Board of Education. Law will apply to both state and local charter schools

2015…….Allows students that did not pass some element of the High School Graduation Test (or even Basic Skills Test) to now be granted a diploma by their school system

2015…….Allows students to be dually enrolled in secondary and postsecondary schools. Students may leave high school after the 10th grade (after receiving two units each of science, math, social studies, and language arts) and enroll in any postsecondary institution in the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) or the University System of Georgia (USG) for which they can gain admission. If the student completes an associate degree or two certificate programs carrying industry certification, the student will be awarded a diploma by his/her home high school with no further coursework or testing

2015…….Once the State Department of Education has granted an occupancy certificate to a school or school system, locals agencies may not prevent building from being occupied or impose fees

2015…….Senate Study Committee created to study the costs and process of school construction

2016…….State approval of school instructional material and content made optional

2016…….Any school employer or agent of a public or private school who has completed training in recognizing the symptoms of respiratory distress and the correct method of administering the levalbuterol sulfate may: provide levalbuterol sulfate to any student such employee or agent believes in good faith is experiencing a perceived respiratory distress for immediate self-administration; and administer leval sulfate to any student who employee believes in good faith is experiencing a perceived respiratory distress, regardless of whether the student has a prescription for levalbuterol sulfate.

2016…….Resolution encouraging local boards of education to build more recess time in daily school schedule

2016…….Allows for a seal of bi-literacy on high school diplomas
2016……. High schools receiving state monies cannot participate in athletic associations which prohibit religious expression on the clothing of student athletes other than to protect the safety of the participants. High schools are also prohibited from participating in athletic associations that do not allow member schools to organize and play scrimmage matches, games or other athletic competitions with nonmember schools.

2016…….Title 20 Cleanup Bill vetoed. Legislation to clarify conflicts of interest of local boards of education such as making an inquiry for information on behalf of a constituent, discussing any non-confidential matter with a constituent, town hall, or talking with the media. HB 959 also states that students enrolled in a dual credit course program (postsecondary) earning a grade of A, B, or C in a core subject shall be exempt from taking the end-of-course assessment for such core subject courses.

2016…….Permits the Department of Education to establish a pilot program for video cameras in special education classrooms.

2016…….Vetoed expanded provisions of receiving a high school diploma based on certain dual credit coursework.

2016…….Provides virtual instruction for students enrolled in a local school system who resides in another school system. This does not include virtual instruction received through the Georgia Virtual School Program or the clearing-house, or through a state charter school which provides virtual instruction. Also this provision is not subject to waiver for strategic waivers school systems, nor charter systems or charter schools.

2016…….Provides that work based learning students are covered under workers' compensation insurance whether in a paid or unpaid position.

2017…….A grant provided to low performing schools, “Public Education Innovation Fund Foundation.” This tax credit program has a $5 million cap, sunsets in three years and overseen by the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (GOSA).

2017…….Comparability study to check national assessments (like SAT and ACT) against Georgia standards in order to determine if those national tests can be used instead of state tests. Local school districts are also mandated to consider dual enrolled students for valedictorian and salutatorian unless they transferred after their sophomore year and have taken no courses on campus.

2017…….Jointly established code of principles and standards by State Board of Education and State Charter Schools Commission for local charter schools. Department of Education to provide a funding mechanism by which local charter schools receive from their local school systems a proportionate amount of federal funds under each federal program. Annual facilities grants in an amount of $100,000.00 provided to eligible charter school applicants. Funds contingent upon appropriations by the General Assembly.

2017…….House Study Committee on civics education created.

2018…….Creates an innovative student assessment pilot program allowing up to ten local school systems to focus on ongoing formative assessments as opposed to year-end Milestones tests. Program to commence with the 2018-2019 school year.

2018…….Enacted the “Creating Opportunities Needed Now to Expand Credentialed Training (CONNECT) Act.” Career oriented learning for students in grades 6 through 12. Age lowered to 15 for a student to enroll in a work based learning program.

2018…….Additional transparency and accountability added to the growing dual enrollment program. It also requires career oriented aptitude assessments in school counseling considerations/graduation plans and mandates a survey by the Department of Education on school counselor roles. Students in grades K-9 to receive annual age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention instruction.
KINDERGARTEN & EARLY LEARNING

1970........ No funding
1975........ $8 million for handicapped
1977........ 25% funding
1978........ 50% funding
1979........ 100% funding
1986........ Full-day mandatory kindergarten (100% state funding)
2001........ Paraprofessionals funded for all kindergarten classes
2005........ Created Joint Early Learning Initiative Commission to review & recommend education available to three- and four-year-old at-risk children
2007........ Legislation requiring schools, upon parents request, to place twins or other multiples in the same class
2015…….All child care facilities required to conduct background checks on all employees
2018…….Revises provisions relating to the Georgia Commission on Hearing Impaired and Deaf Persons or Hard of Hearing to create a multi-agency task force for the purpose of improving coordination between state agencies in the provision of services to hearing impaired and deaf children from birth through literacy

CLASS SIZE/PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO

1970........ 25/1 ADA (Average Daily Attendance) in grades 1-3; 28/1 ADA in grades 4-7; 25/1 ADA in grades 8-12
1975........ 25/1 ADA in grades 1-12
1979........ 20/1 ADA in grades 1-2; option to utilize aides
1985........ New formula based on ADM (Average Daily Membership)
1996........ Reduced the QBE funding class size in kindergarten from 20 to 15; in grades 1-3 from 23 to 17.125; and in remedial education from 20 to 15 via redirection of funds
2000........ Maximum pupil/teacher ratios will be phased in over a four-year period until the following grade class sizes are met:
            • Kindergarten: 18 with no paraprofessional; 20 with a paraprofessional
            • Grades 1-3: 21
            • Grades 4-5: 28 in English, math, science, & social studies
            • Grades 6-8: 28
            • Grades 9-12: 28 in English, math, science, social studies & foreign language
            • Grades 9-12: 35 in all other subject areas
            • Vocational Labs: 24
            • Remedial: 18 with no paraprofessional; 24 with a paraprofessional (Grades 4-5 & 9-12)
2001........ Funding changes to phase in class size reduction in academic classes:
            • Grades K-3: 17- cannot use paraprofessionals to reduce class sizes
            • Grades 4-12: 23
2003........ Requirements for local boards of education to continue reducing class sizes in grades K-3. Class size reductions in grades K-12 will be delayed until at least the ’04-05 school year. To meet the system-wide average maximum class size, school system may add up to two students in a class only if another class is reduced by two
2004........ Class size reductions in K-12 delayed again for another year, but defeated efforts to permanently eliminate last phase of reduction
2004........ Defeated efforts to permanently allow system wide class-size averaging
2005........ Class-size reduction requirements (from 2000) for grades 4-12 postponed for two years, until 2007-’08 school year
• State board to adopt rules for system average maximum class-size limits (not to exceed funding class size by more than 20% in core subjects)
• Use of system average class-size set throughout the Code; number of students per instructional period not to exceed system maximum class size by more than two students

2006 ....... System-wide averaging of class size ended for grades K-8, and maximum class size is reduced in grades 4-8, ending a three-year delay of further reductions beyond third grade that were mandated by HB 1187 in 2000
2007 ....... Flexibility in class sizes permitted. Allows class sizes in grades 9-12 to be 39% over the funding level of one teacher for every 23 students, which means in core curriculum courses teachers can have up to 32 students per class

ADEQUATE PROGRAM FOR EDUCATION IN GEORGIA (APEG)

1974 ....... APEG replaced the MFPE as the foundation legislation for education
1983 ....... Governor's Review Commission to study education

QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION (QBE) ACT

1985 ....... QBE replaced APEG as the foundation law for education
1986 ....... Weighted funding formula (based on student needs) funded; Equalization funded; Art, Music, P.E. instructors in elementary grades funded
1987 ....... Funding formula revised to increase funds for Special Education
1987 ....... Funding of professional development stipends
1987 ....... Funding of Middle School Incentive Grants
1987 ....... Partial funding of Special Instructional Assistance Program
1988 ....... Full funding of professional development stipends
1988 ....... Full funding of Middle School Incentive Grants
1988 ....... Beginning funding of In-School Suspension Program
1988 ....... "Snow Bill" adopted. Forgives up to 4 days of school lost due to "acts of God"
1988 ....... Defeated legislation subjecting teachers to GBI investigations and criminal penalties if suspected of "teaching the standardized tests" to students
1989 ....... Full funding of Special Instructional Assistance Program
1989 ....... Funding for one teacher for each high school for In-School Suspension Program
1989 ....... Funding of English to Speakers of Other Languages Program
1989 ....... $165 million (new dollars from one cent sales tax increase) increase in QBE funding formulas
1989 ....... Required that educator’s children be allowed to attend the school where parent works
1989 ....... Legislation making the verbal abuse of teachers, administrators and school bus drivers a misdemeanor
1989 ....... Legislation creating a minority educator study committee
1990 ....... Beginning funding for elementary and middle school counselors at a ratio of 1:1500 FTE counts in grades 6, 7, and 8
1990 ....... Funding for one teacher in every middle school for In-School Suspension Program
1990 ....... Funding ($10.9 million) to maintain Equalization Grant at FY 90 millage level
1991 ....... Reduced the number of student standardized tests mandated by the state
1991 ....... Decreased mandatory minimum school enrollment age from 7 to 6 years of age
1991 ....... Resolution adopted commending the GAE Restructuring of Schools Task Force Report
1991 ....... Created an employer tax credit up to $150 for each employee who completes basic skills education program
1991 ........ Expanded remedial education services from students in grades 2-5 and 9 to students in grades 2-5 and 9-12
1991 ........ $6 million added for Middle School Incentive Grants
1991 ........ $8.9 million to fund middle school counselors in grades 6-8 at a ratio of 1:624 FTEs
1991 ........ $7.6 million to fund preschool handicapped program 1991
1991 ........ $600,000 to fund scholarships for all public high school valedictorians, salutatorians, and STAR students
1991 ........ $3 million to fund pilot pre-kindergarten programs for at-risk four-year olds (deleted in '91 Special Session FY 92 budget cuts)
1991 ........ Legislation to secure 30-minute duty-free lunch period for K-5 teachers and $1.7 million to begin state funding (funds deleted in '91 Special Session FY 92 budget cuts)
1992 ......... Mandatory duty-free lunch period for K-5 teachers
1992 ......... Restored 2.5% funding for local school systems (funds deleted in '91 Special Session FY 92 budget cuts)
1992 ......... Funding for at-risk four-year old pilot programs
1992 ......... Funding for elementary school foreign language pilots
1992 ......... Funding for hearing-impaired portion of Good Touch-Bad Touch Program
1992 ......... Funding for satellite classes in critical subjects to remote areas
1992 ......... Established Governor’s Leadership Institute to train school administrators
1993 ......... Established Charter Schools to enable school faculties and administrations the opportunity to determine the total school operation free from state policies and regulations
1994 ......... Legislation adopted mandating summer school programs for at-risk students in grades K-8 to be state funded (partial funding in 1994)
1994 ......... Legislation adopted requiring all school systems to establish school breakfast programs by 1996 if 25% of K-8 students and 40% of 9-12 students qualify for free and reduced lunch
1994 ......... Funding for minimum of 1 counselor per system in grades 4-5 at 1:624 FTE counts
1995 ......... Redirected $15.6 million in QBE funding for local systems’ central office administration to classroom funding
1995 ......... Funding for 1 technology specialist in each school
1995 ......... Legislation adopted providing a Georgia High School Graduate Warranty guaranteeing student competencies in reading, math, and writing
1995 ......... Improved Charter Schools Act by increasing length of charters to five years, reducing the percentage of votes required to approve charter, adding a $5,000 incentive grant for ten schools and preferential treatment for available grants
1995 ......... Legislation adopted permitting educators and local school systems to add textbooks to state approved textbook list
1995 ......... Legislation adopted extending 15 model elementary foreign language programs to third grade
1995 ......... Funding to operate nine technology centers
1995 ......... Funding for National Geographic Geography Program
1995 ......... Funding for 30 new programs and 50 new planning grants for development of statewide Youth Apprenticeship Program
1996 ......... Secured state funding of employer’s share of teachers’ Medicare coverage
1996 ......... Increased maintenance & operation funds from $236 to $261 per FTE
1996 ......... Amended QBE to provide for revision of the Quality Core Curriculum and the development of Criterion Referenced Tests to measure QCC (prohibited attempts to replace existing state mandated student testing program with all norm-referenced testing program)
1996 ......... Amended QBE funding to allow state dollars to follow special needs students when enrolled in a regular classroom
1998 ........ Improved the Charter School Law to encourage educators, private individuals, and state agencies to initiate a charter school designed to increase student performance
1998 ........ Permitted boards of education to provide one-half Carnegie unit credit for driver’s education
1998 ........ Required 100% of funds allocated for purchase of media materials to be spent only on those materials
1998 ........ Expanded funding to offer after school programs for high school dropouts
1999 ........ Added the legal consequences of parenthood to sex education curriculum
1999 ........ Provided teachers the authority to remove from class any student disrupting the learning of others or interfering with the teacher’s ability to teach; Faculty empowered to elect a placement review committee to settle student placement disputes between the principal and teacher
1999 ........ Doubled funding for alternative schools
1999 ........ Established the Governor’s Education Reform Commission to review and recommend changes in the Quality Basic Education Act
1999 ........ Local boards of education may offer a course in preparation for the SAT exam for ½ Carnegie credit
1999 ........ Legislation adopted allowing local boards of education to include nonprofit organizations in liability insurance coverage
2003 ........ Local boards of education get flexibility in expenditure of funds for 2003-04
2003 ........ Local boards of education required to conduct a performance audit for SPLOST capital outlay project expenditures
2003 ........ Local boards of education permitted to spend up to 15% of funding for 20 extra instructional days on student transportation
2003 ........ Approved Georgia’s accountability plan to identify Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and student testing program to meet federal guidelines
2004 ........ Local boards of education permitted flexibility in spending state funds for the 2004-05 school year, but attempts to make provision permanent defeated
2005 ........ Protected school media funds: 100% of must be spent on at the system level
2005 ........ Insured public school students have priority access to newly created Georgia Virtual School, which offers free online courses to all state students under 22 years old. (Systems lose QBE funds for those students during class segments.)
2005 ........ Increased slightly instructional program weights in all programs except vocational lab (9-12), which was slightly lowered
2005 ........ Required systems to publicize individual school site budgets and expenditures and to include site average class sizes by grade (as accountability measure for again extending expenditure control flexibility for 2005-06 school year)
2005 ........ Retained community-level approval of charter applications as part of major revision of charter school law
2005 ........ Created Joint Agricultural Education Study Committee (result of DOE proposal to transfer some of agriculture ed funds to core curriculum areas, specifically science)
2006 ........ Provided remediation for grades 6-8 students (previously only for 9-12), with a $3.8 million appropriation
2006 ........ “High Performance Principals” grant provides certain meritorious principals a salary supplement (see under Student Achievement/School Improvement)
2006 ........ Exemption from bill’s penalties allowed (for making AYP and for “extraordinary” circumstances) in “Classrooms First – 65% Solution” bill. Otherwise, all systems must spend 65% of entire budget on “direct classroom expenditures,” as narrowly defined by the law. (“An anti-public school wolf in sheep’s clothing,” GAE protested, citing exclusion of critical support systems and personnel from the arbitrary formula.)
2006 ........ Children in the custody of Department of Juvenile Justice placed in residential homes are to be enrolled immediately with the local school system
2007 ....... Allows the creation of Charter School Systems. Up to five school systems can become a charter system and receive a grant from the state. The local school board is required to hold at least two public hearings for teachers, parents, and the community to give their feedback about becoming a charter system

2008 ....... $50 million restored in QBE cuts
2008 ....... Redirected over $1.5 million from the foreign language program for elementary students to austerity reductions
2008 ....... $218.1 million to fully fund QBE enrollment growth
2008 ....... $548.5 million to fully fund the growth in equalization grants
2008 ....... $1.8 million to provide an additional 2,500 slots in the Georgia Virtual School, bringing the total number of slots funded to 6,500
2008 ....... $200,000 to create a new Mentor Teacher program to provide stipends for highly effective teachers who mentor new teachers

2011…….Established the State Education Finance Study Commission to evaluate the Quality Basic Education Formula and undertake a comprehensive study of the method of funding schools in Georgia

2012…….Resolution that places an amendment on the November 6, 2012 ballot clarifying the authority of the state to establish special schools, which include the ability of the state to approve charter schools bypassing the local school board. Ballot language reads, “Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended to allow state or local approval of public charter schools upon the request of local communities?” This legislation was in response to the Supreme Court ruling in 2011 that rendered the state Charter School Commission unconstitutional; essentially the state had no right to approve special charter schools that move local public education dollars without local board of education approval. GAE opposed this legislation

2012…….Enabling legislation that becomes effective on January 1, 2013 only if a constitutional amendment authorizing the General Assembly to create charter schools as special schools passes. Legislation establishes the State Charter Schools Commission as an authorizing entity for charter schools and provides for the appropriation of funds for the state charter schools. Additionally it provided $24 million in the 2013 budget in addition to the Governor’s $8 million

2012…….Legislative revising the method of calculating equalization grants under QBE
2012…….Clean-up legislation for some Title 20 codes: repealed school-wide group pay for performance, which has been transposed by Race to the Top; repealed a prohibition against students using personal electronic communication devices enabling local school systems to set policies allowing students to use smart phones to assist in learning

2013…….Re-establishment of the Career and Technical Education Advisory Commission. The commission will conduct periodic reviews and issue an annual report to the Georgia General Assembly

2013…….Continuation of work of Education Study Finance Commission to delete obsolete, unused, and unnecessary provisions of Title 20. It also revised the Quality Basic Education formula program weights
2013…….Defeated legislation, “Flexibility and Accountability Act for Student Achievement.” It would have given local school systems flexibility in relaxing some Title 20 provisions such as certification, class size caps, and the state salary schedule based on system-wide College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) results

2014…….Created a House Study Committee to Review the Role of the Federal Government in Georgia’s Education

2014…….Renamed the Youth Apprenticeship Act to Work Based Learning Act which allows the partnering of businesses and schools offering students an opportunity to work and learn in a real-world environment and prepare them for future careers. The program would be open to students as early as 16 years old and older
2014…….High schools receiving funding under the Quality Basic Education Act are prohibited from participating in/or sponsoring interscholastic sport events conducted by any athletic association unless the association publishes annual financial reports.

2014…….Legislation creating the High School Athletics Overview Committee, which shall periodically inquire into and review the operations of high school athletic associations.

2014…….Defeated Anti-Common Core legislation.

2015…….Fourth Title 20 Cleanup bill which eliminated outdated terminology and updated wording “curriculum to content standards.” Additionally changed names of school systems:
- Flexibility System Models to Charter School Systems
- IE2 Systems to Strategic Waivers Systems
- Status Quo School Systems to No Waivers Systems


2015…….Implementation of policies and requirements with respect to the collection and disclosure of student data was established.

2015…….Reorganized dual enrollment and payment for such placed under the Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC).

2015…….School systems encouraged to adopt Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) as an adjunct to their discipline and school climate improvement efforts.

2015…….Charter schools permitted to give priority to disadvantaged students in admissions if a lottery system is used.

2017…….Establishes “Educating Children of Military Families Act.” Department of Education authorized to create a unique identifier for each military student in a manner that will allow disaggregation of data for each category (active duty and reserve).

2017…….Allows students of military families living in military housing to attend any school in the local school system that has capacity. Parent are responsible for transportation and cost to and from school.


2018…….Certain students’ absences excused whose parents are serving in the armed forces of the United States, the Reserves, or the National Guard, or veterans of the same for the purpose of attending military affairs sponsored events, provided the student provides documentation prior to the absence. The student can be excused up to a maximum of five school days per school year, not to exceed two school years. School systems are not required to revise policies on excused/nonexcused absences.

2018…….State charter schools included in statute to receive services from regional educational service agencies. Provided funding mechanism for state chartered special schools and local charter schools based on their projected enrollment—projected student growth of two percent.

2018…….Student, enrolled in and attended a public school for more than half of school year, allowed to attend another public school within the attendance school zone to continue to be enrolled in and attend the initial public school through the completion of the school year. This does not apply to students with chronic disciplinary or attendance problems. Parents assume transportation and costs to and from school.

2018…….Allows student funding to follow a child placed in a psychiatric residential treatment facility by his or her parents or legal guardian on a doctor’s order so that the facility may not charge tuition.

2018…….Cited as the “Georgia Agricultural Education Act,” agricultural education program provided to students in grades 6 through 12 based on the nationally recognized three-component model of school-based agricultural education. Program to be piloted beginning school year 2019-2020. By July 1, 2019, the Professional Standards...
Commission shall extend in-field certification for agricultural education to include kindergarten through grade 5

EDUCATION REFORM COMMISSION

2015…….Governor announced creation of the Commission during his January 2015 State of the State Address. The Commission will study the state’s education system, including its funding formula and provide recommendations intended to improve the system, increase access to early learning programs, recruit and retain high quality teachers, and expand school options for Georgia’s families.

2016…….Governor’s Deal’s Education Reform Commission (ERC) presented a slate of recommendations to radically change the very face of public education in Georgia. Many expected to see corresponding legislation to these recommendations in the 2016 session. GAE was very vocal about the ERC’s proposals and the need to slow the implementation process for further vetting. Additionally, GAE expressed concerns that the Commission membership did not include an active educator. Governor Deal postponed these efforts until 2017 and announced the creation of a Teacher Advisory Committee.

CHILD PROTECTION – SCHOOL SAFETY

1986........ Legislation to allow criminal record check on persons supervising children
1986........ Creation of a Missing Children Information Center
1987........ Legislation reconstituting the House Study Committee on School Completion
            (dropouts, teenage pregnancy, child labor laws to be studied)
1987........ Established Governor's Task Force on Adult Illiteracy
1987........ Legislation increasing penalties for illegal drug use by students (teacher-student
            relationship protected)
1992........ Established legal right of school systems to provide child care programs before and
            after school and during vacation periods
1994........ Adopted “Safe Schools Act” including mandatory local school safety plans, increasing
            penalties for weapons on school properties, mandatory reporting of student criminal
            acts to law enforcement, etc.
1995........ Legislation adopted mandating one-year expulsion of students possessing weapons on
            school grounds
1995........ Legislation adopted requiring written corrective plans for chronic disciplinary problem
            students and conferences with parents
1995........ Legislation adopted authorizing local boards of education to refuse admittance to
            students expelled by other school systems
1995........ Funding to expand the Crossroads Alternative Program for disruptive students
1997........ Established legal right of school systems to provide academic, enrichment, and other
            types of programs for middle school students during non-school hours (beginning
            funding appropriated)
1997........ Legislation adopted requiring local boards of education to adopt Student Codes of
            Conduct and file the codes with State BOE by August 15, 1997; requires disciplinary
            action against students violating codes; mandates Superior Courts to notify local school
            superintendent of students convicted of felonies and requires administrators to inform
            teachers to whom students are assigned
1997........ Increased the penalties that can be imposed against juveniles who physically attack
            school employees; a juvenile 13 years of age or older who commits a battery against a
school employee engaged in official duty or while on school property may be
imprisoned for one to five years or fined up to $10,000

1997........Expanded local boards of education authority to refuse enrollment to students
transferring from another school system; expanded requirements on transferring
students in grade six or higher; mandates transferring school system to provide
complete information on student to requesting schools; requires courts to notify schools
of adjudications against students and requires administrators to inform teachers of
students assigned to them who are convicted felons

1997........Created Class D Drivers License for teenagers 16-18 years old; prohibits school
dropouts under 18 from receiving a driver’s license with a few exceptions; suspends
licenses of students suspended from school for ten or more days, who threaten to
physically harm or harms a school employee, or who possess drugs, alcoholic
beverages, or weapons on school property, etc.

1998........Adopted Peach Care for Kids Act that provides health insurance, vision and dental
coverage to children whose family’s income is two times the poverty level or less

1999........Legislation adopted requiring students to adhere to an age-appropriate Code of
Conduct, including mandatory penalties for verbally or physically assaulting other
students or school employees

1999........Bullying prohibited; students violating the policy three times are required to attend an
alternative school; added razor blades as prohibited weapons within the school safety
zone

1999........All school safety officers permitted to carry a registered handgun if certified by the
Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council

1999........Legislation passed that each school must adopt a school safety plan to prepare for
natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and violence

2001........Strengthens laws for teen drivers with curfews and passenger limitations

2001........Electronic textbooks must be provided to visually impaired students

2002........Visitors to public schools must sign in and will be removed from premises if they do
not have a legitimate reason to be on campus

2002........All K-12 public schools will receive a list of registered sexual offenders from the
Department of Education, and childcare facilities will receive a list from the Office of
School Readiness

2002........Students approved to use asthma medication may self-administer the medication
without liability to the school district

2003........Local boards of education permitted to adopt policies allowing students to possess
electronic devices and cellular telephones; however the policy must prohibit the use of
these devices during classroom instruction

2004........Discipline code applied to buses and bus stops

2004........Penalties for assault on students and employees strengthened

2005........Required state board to develop single, comprehensive, pre-participation physical
examination form; strengthened requirement on who can conduct physical

2006........Child abuse reporting law strengthened: Oral report of suspected abuse required within
24 hours; reporter’s notification report protected from alteration.

2008........Local boards of education required to provide the Department of Transportation
information regarding the lack of safety devices at railroad crossings

2008........Public high schools with interscholastic athletic programs required to have at least one
life-saving defibrillator on campus in case of emergency

2009......Certain information about Meningococcal Meningitis Disease and its vaccine required
to be disclosed to parents

2009......School systems required to adopt policy authorizing the carrying and administration of
auto-injectable epinephrine prescriptions. System, employees, and agents shall not
incur any liability other than willful or wanton misconduct for injury to a student caused by use of the injectable

2010……Sexual encounters between school staff and students criminalized. Sexual assault defined within the educational setting

2010……DOE required to provide each school system access to the Sex Offender Lists. It no longer has to be mailed

2010……Local school boards permitted to refurbish buses rather than purchase new ones. Refurbished buses, however, must meet safety standards

2010……Definition of bullying expanded. State Board of Education will be required to create a model policy and place on the Department of Education’s website no later than January 1, 2011, and no later than August 1, 2011 each local board of education will be required to adopt a policy prohibiting bullying. Parents/guardians are to be notified if their child is a victim of bullying or the one who commits a bullying offense

2010……Zero Tolerance Policy was amended to provide school administrators discretion when addressing weapon offenses on school grounds/school functions…language now reads “a child who violates this subsection may be subject to the provision of this code section

2010……Legislation requiring all state funded K-12 and other educational institutions to verify certification of a motor carrier or contract carrier by the Public Service Commission or any other similarly required certifying agency before contracting with them to carry students. All parties to the agreement are to receive a copy of the carrier’s proof of legally required minimum insurance coverage and a valid certification number

2010……Revises current law and defines auto injectable epinephrine as a disposable drug delivery device that is easily transportable and contains a premeasured single dose of epinephrine used to treat life-threatening allergic reactions

2011……Legislation granting excused school absences to foster care students to attend court proceedings relating to such students’ foster care. Students will be counted as present

2011……School Bus Safety Study Committee formed to look at the overall conditions, needs, issues, and problems impacting school bus safety and recommend any action or legislation which the committee deems appropriate or necessary

2011……Motorists can be charged with a civil monetary violation if found guilty of duty when meeting and overtaking a school bus as recorded on a video recording device mounted on a school bus with a clear view of vehicles passing the bus on either side and showing the date and time the recording was made and an electronic symbol showing the activation of amber lights, flashing red lights, stop arms, and brakes

2012……Anyone employed or serves as a volunteer in the education sector (private and/or public from the pre-k level through all higher education institutions)—including recreational organizations—are mandated to report within 24 hours of acquiring child abuse information. Legislation further expands the list of adults required to report abuse and mandates that all employees and volunteers at hospitals, schools, and social agencies report suspected abuse or face criminal penalties

2013……Requires students in grades 9 through 12 to be trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of an automated external defibrillator

2013……Created Joint Study Committee on Mental Health and School Violence. Study committee will focus on conditions, needs, issues, and problems associated with mental health and school violence

2013……”Return to Play Act” Public and private schools that offer youth athletic activities/programs required to provide information to parents on the nature and risk of concussion and head injuries and to establish concussion management and return to play policies
2013…….Schools to designate an employee trained in the possession and administration of auto-injectable epinephrine to be responsible for the storage and maintenance and distribution of the auto-injectable epinephrine stocked by the school
2013…….Legislation defeated that would have allowed local school boards to designate personnel to be armed in and on school property as well as on school buses and at school events
2014…….School buildings code changed to allow public school buildings to be built from wood so long as they’re in compliance with state minimum standard codes
2015…….School personnel required to report child abuse shall be notified by child protective agency (DFACS) upon receipt of report and completion of investigation
2015…….Cyber bullying, on or off school campuses impacting school climate, added to the list of bullying offenses
2015…….State Department of Education to develop a suicide prevention protocol and make available to all schools
2015…….Albuterol may be administered by qualified school staff to students suffering an asthma attack
2016…….Resolution encouraging local boards of education and others to provide instructions on dugout safety to youth athletes participating in the sport of baseball and to construct protective dugout coverings
2016…….Resolution encouraging local boards of education to guarantee certain safety rights to youth athletes in sports competition
2017…….”Best practice” for a school resource officer to complete a 40-hour training course to be provided by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards & Training Council
2017…….Local school systems required to provide parents of students in grades 6-12 information on influenza and its vaccine whenever other health information is provided
2017…….Code section 20-2-149.1 cited as “Cory Joseph Wilson Act,” relating to instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and use of automated external defibrillators
2018…….Provides that no student in Pre-K through grade three can be expelled or suspended from school for more than five consecutive or cumulative days during a school year without first receiving a multi-tiered system of supports. The exception to this would be if the student possessed a weapon, illegal drugs, or other dangerous instrument or behavior endangering the physical safety of other students or school personnel
2018…….Expanded the student attendance protocol committees to include school climate and also provided coordination with local law enforcement agencies and the juvenile court system in school safety plans, which shall include drills with students, teachers, and other school personnel. Guidance shall come from the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency
2018…….Both the Senate and House created Study committees on school safety (SR 935—Senate School Safety Study Committee and HR 1414—House Study Committee on School Security). To stand abolished on December 1, 2018

**FINANCE – TAXATION**

2005…….Delayed proposal to prohibit local property taxes for schools and replace with statewide education sales tax (requires constitutional amendment)
2005…….Created House Education Funding Study Committee to study possibility of replacing local school system’s *ad valorem* (property) tax for education with a statewide and state-distributed 3% sales tax
2006…….House Comprehensive Tax Reform Study Committee formed, with seven meetings authorized and end date set by House Speaker
2006 ....... House Tag Tax Study Committee formed to consider removing this tax, whose revenues provide about $500 million annually to local governments and school districts.

2006 ....... Senate Study Committee on Comprehensive Tax Reform formed by Pres. Pro Tempore.

2006 ....... Senate Study Committee on Limited Taxation formed by Pres. Pro Tempore to consider tax and expenditure limiting legislation, such as TABOR (“Taxpayer Bill of Rights”)

2007 ....... Defeated legislation that would limit expenditures allowed for in the state budget (TABOR or Taxpayers Bill of Rights). This type of legislation is bad public policy and harmful to public schools and other vital local and state government programs. It also requires a constitutional amendment.

2008 ....... Defeated a property tax reform proposal (also known as the GREAT Plan) eliminating all property taxes and funds for schools, etc. would be funded through sales tax.

2009 ....... Tightened definition of redevelopment area associated with Tax Allocation Districts (TADs) – eliminated vague, overbroad, and undefined terms. TADs limited to “urbanized” areas according to the US Census.

2010 ....... Legislation establishing the Special Council on Tax Reform and Fairness for Georgians and the Special Joint Committee on Georgia Revenue Structure. The committee is mandated to conduct a thorough study of the state’s current revenue structure and make a report of its findings and recommendations for legislation to the Speaker and Lt. Governor no later than January 10, 2011.

2010 ....... State will be required to provide a report detailing the tax incentives that are awarded by the state.

2012 ....... A ten-year projection of costs of revenues or expenditures required of any new education program at the Georgia Department of Education.

2013 ....... Authorizes the State Board of Education to transfer any donations, gifts, devises, or bequest of real, personal, mixed properties of any kind and character held in trust by the State Board to the Georgia Foundation for Public Education to be managed and administered.

2013 ....... Public school systems exempt from paying motor fuel excise taxes for transportation purposes from July 1, 2013 and ending July 30, 2015.

2014 ....... Legislation creating a Joint Study Committee to Review the Impact of Property Tax Digest on Education Funding. Study will include evaluation of equalization and the five mill share.


2014 ....... Ballot initiative that is the first step toward the so-called “fair tax,” which is the first step toward drastically reducing or eliminating Georgia’s income tax in favor of a vastly expanded sales tax. The Constitutional Amendment will read: “Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended to prohibit the General Assembly from increasing the maximum state income tax rate?” A NO vote supports public education.

2015 ....... Transportation legislation amended in order that there would be no impact on the Education Local Option Sales Tax (ELOST) or on the state’s education budget.

2016 ....... Defeated legislation proposing to cut the state’s income tax, which could have had eroded revenue for the state’s education budget.

2016 ....... Provides for a back-to-school sales tax holiday, which commences at 12:01 a.m. on July 30, 2016 and concludes 12:00 midnight July 31, 2016 and an energy efficient products tax free holiday on items of $1500 or less for home or personal use occurring during the period of 12:01 a.m. on September 30 and concluding at 12:00 midnight on October 2, 2016.
1989 ....... Legislation requiring each member of the Georgia Board of Education to hold annual district public hearings
1991 ....... Resolution adopted mandating a referendum on a constitutional amendment to require members of all local boards of education to be elected by the voters and the appointment of local school superintendents by elected boards
1992 ....... Affirmed the legal right of local boards of education to grant payroll deduction privileges to employees for GAE dues
1993 ....... Legislation enacted to implement new Georgia Constitutional Amendment requiring members of local boards of education to be elected and local school superintendents to be appointed
1995 ....... Legislation adopted requiring school systems to advertise and post professional staff vacancies
1999 ....... Legislation adopted requiring that all public records be available for inspection within three business days of the request and limiting copying fees
1999 ....... Funding to low wealth school systems for their top construction projects if they increase their millage rates and pay a portion of the construction cost
1999 ....... Permitted boards of education to provide health insurance coverage for members in the State Health Insurance Program, however premiums include both the employer and employee share of the coverage and the coverage may not be provided at state expense
1999 ....... Provided that construction contracts over $100,000 must be advertised and bid upon
1999 ....... Boards of education limited to discussing only announced agenda items in executive session
1999 ....... Boards of education meeting agendas must be posted for public knowledge at least two weeks prior to the meeting
2000 ....... Creation of charter schools by the State Board of Education
2000 ....... School councils will be established and make recommendations for the operation and management of schools
2001 ....... Required systems to provide 18 year-old students the opportunity to register to vote
2001 ....... Boards of education shall provide all public school employees the opportunity to purchase computers through payroll deduction
2002 ....... Revision of the Charter School Act including local boards must act on petition for charter school within 60 days and if petition is denied they must give reasons; religious, for profit, home schools, or other private for profit schools cannot receive charter status; faculty and parents/guardians must vote to approve conversion to a charter school; faculties and parents/guardians may vote to withdraw the charter; funding will be equalized for charter schools; discrimination in student enrollment is prohibited; and educators can transfer to charter schools without reprisals
2002 ....... School construction funds of $620,730,000 to build new schools, renovate older schools, and build new classrooms to help with class size reductions
2004 ....... Local boards must develop policy to allow or prohibit recess for grades K-8
2005 ....... Created House Local School District Development Impact Fees Study Committee to consider school system impact fee on development construction as a way to address funding needs created by growth. (Only cities and counties may use this presently)
2007 ....... Permissive legislation allowing not requiring school systems to hire a business manager by using state funds allocated for assistant principals
2007 ....... Parents required to be the majority on school councils and a parent serves as the chairperson of the council. This is a reversal from what is currently required in the law that teachers and parents have equal numbers on the council. GAE worked hard in the A+ Education Reform Act to ensure they have equal numbers
2010…….Sunset date extended to June 30, 2015 for provisions relating to advance funding, exceptional growth, and low-wealth capital outlay grants

2010…….Contracts for certified personnel must be made by May 15 for school years through 2012-2013 only. Certified personnel not accepting employment for the ensuing school year must notify local school board not later than May 1 or June 1 for school years through 2012-2013 only

2010…….Legislation denying superintendents and administrative personnel the right to receive bonuses or raises when public school personnel are being furloughed. Local school boards are required to provide notice and a hearing if local or private funds are intended to be used for such salary increases. This does not apply to step increases on the salary schedule

2010…….Local school boards given authorization to solicit and accept donations for field trips and other educational purposes

2010…….Provisions revised relative to eligibility for local school board elections – among the revisions was limiting the size of local boards

2011…….Extends the date to June 30, 2015 school systems must notify DOE of their intention to request flexibility—temporarily extends expenditure waivers for cost of direct instruction, media center, staff and professional development and additional days of instruction; temporarily extends flexibility in maximum class size and certain deadlines relative to annual teacher contracts

2011…….Effective January 1, 2012, members of local boards of education will be elected to a term of office of not less than four years unless a local act or constitution amendment provides a longer term. On/after January 1, 2013, counties that collect a homestead option sales and use and county tax for educational purposes will be required to have a seven-member local board of education. School systems that are on the verge of losing accreditation or lose accreditation because of local governance reasons and do not regain it by July 1, 2011, the State Board of Education shall conduct a hearing in not less ten days and not more than 30 days and recommend to the governor whether all members of the local board of education should be suspended with pay. If the State Board of Education makes such recommendation, the governor may in his/her discretion suspend all board members with pay and in consultation with the State Board of Education appoint temporary replacement members

2011…….Defeated legislation that would have required local boards of education to rewrite their RIF policies

2012…….Local school board’s RIF policies mandated to use job performance as the primary factor in determining a reduction in force and student performance “may” be one such performance measure. Local boards prohibited from using length of service as the primary measure to identify employees for RIF. Legislation also created a Professional Learning Rules Task Force for the purposes of reviewing professional learning and making suggestions to improve professional learning

2012…….Removes barriers for transfer and re-enrollment for children of military families

2013…….Provides for a recreational joint-use agreement, which is a written agreement between the governing authority of a school and a public or private entity authorizing that entity access to the school’s facilities for the purpose of conducting or engaging in recreational, physical, or performing arts activities

2013…….Continuation of State Board of Education hearing, upon petition by a majority of local board members, when a local school system is place on the level of accreditation preceding loss of accreditation for school board related issues

2013…….Defeated legislation requiring school superintendents to be elected rather than appointed

2013…….Legislation defeated that would have allowed the creation of more local school systems
Local school districts and charter schools required to hold two open meetings regarding their proposed budgets and electronically post their budgets.

Vetoed legislation requiring school systems, school boards, and schools to provide transparency of financial information to the greatest extent practicable, including school level budget and expenditure data, and to provide certain information on their websites. It also included a requirement that state officials and agencies notify the General Assembly’s education committees when applying for a competitive grant of $20 million or more.

Training for finance directors of each charter school in the areas of payroll, purchasing, government accounting, financial policies, internal controls and budgeting. Training for charters schools that are college and career academies will be provided by State BOE in conjunction with the Technical College System of Georgia.

Department of Education required by October 31, 2018 to have schools and local school systems site budget and expenditure information downloaded to its website for public consumption. Schools with a website are also required to post a link of their financial efficiency ratings and other financial documentation.

Joint Study Committee on the Establishment of a State Accreditation process created. Committee abolished December 1, 2018. (related resolutions HR 898 & HR 1162)

FUNDING (BUDGETS)

Restoration of 29% of public education austerity cuts, which allowed some school systems to return to 180 days of student instruction eliminating the need for furlough days.

Defeated legislation that would have had an impact on local school funding with the expansion of virtual schools; charter schools without parity and/or oversight; online learning programs without the Department of Education’s oversight; and created a fourth 501 (c) 3 for private dollars impacting public policy without transparency.

K-12 budget received $288 million in austerity restoration reducing FY 2016 budget cut to $466 million.

Defeated the Governor’s proposal to eliminate health insurance coverage in the State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) for part-time, non-certified school workers. Local systems and employees though will receive no help from the state and will bear the full 100% cost of the premiums.

Creates a House study committee on equitable local education funding.

$167 million added to the FY ’19 budget fully funding public education since 2002.

VOUCHERS – SCHOOL CHOICE

Defeated proposed constitutional amendment (‘‘Families & Faith-based Initiative’’) that would open the door for publicly funded vouchers for private and religious schools draining precious dollars from our public schools.

Defeated proposed constitutional amendment resolution that would remove barrier to publicly funded vouchers for private and religious schools.

Defeated proposed constitutional amendment resolution that would remove barrier to publicly funded vouchers for private and religious schools.

Special Needs voucher legislation allowing public tax dollars to be used for public school students with disabilities to attend other public or private schools with virtually no accountability and quality control measures required. Passage of legislation required.
Speaker of the House to cast the deciding vote. Legislators understand that this is bad public policy and will unnecessary shift public taxpayer dollars to private schools.

2008........Defeated legislation that would have created a voucher system for a public school or school system that loses accreditation, fails to gain accreditation, or appears on the Needs Improvement list for at least six years. Parents would have been offered other options, including the ability to enroll their child in another school within their district, enroll the child in a school in another district (at the discretion of the other district), or provide the child with a voucher to attend a private school. Legislation would not have done anything to rehabilitate the public school

2009.......Defeated legislation that would have amended the 2008 tax credit program for Student Scholarship Organizations (SSOs). These tax shelters were created to funnel public tax dollars from public schools to allow students to receive a taxpayer funded scholarship to attend private pre-kindergarten, primary, or secondary schools.

2009.......Defeated legislation that would have allowed students to attend private schools funded by a public taxpayer voucher

2010.......Successfully lobbied and stopped legislation from moving forward that would have repealed the Blaine Amendment to the Constitution. If repealed, it would have allowed religious and faith-based organizations to secure public funding for social services—opening the door for vouchers

2011.......Defeated attempt to expand the Scholarship Program for Special Needs Students program by authorizing State Board of Education to waive prior school year requirement on a case-by-case basis for specific medical needs of student upon request by parent/guardian

2011.......Defeated attempt to expand Special Needs Scholarship program to students: Section 504; foster care; and military families

2011.......Defeated attempts to increase the current limit of $50 million for Student Scholarship Organizations

2013........Amends language allowing the State Board of Education to authorize a local board of education to expedite a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) and to waive the prior school year requirement in its sole discretion on a case by case bases. This waiver would be based on specific medical needs of students

2013.......Defeated “Parent Trigger” legislation (also known as Parent and Teacher Empowerment Act). Allows for a petition submitted by a majority of parents/guardians to a local school board to impose changes on a low achieving school. Changes could include school being converted to a charter school or impose turnaround models. Petitions could have also been brought by a majority of the faculty and instructional staff

2014.......Expansion of private school voucher thwarted. Legislation would have created a taxpayer funded scholarship for ‘low income students’ to attend private schools

2015.......Military parents of students utilizing the special needs scholarship now qualify for an expedited IEP and no longer required to spend one year in a regular Georgia public school

2015.......Requires written notification of special needs scholarship qualification at initial IEP meeting and each year thereafter via electronic or other means

2015.......State Charter School Commission given authority to create a non-profit foundation enabling it to receive donations

2015.......Defeated legislation that would have created an Education Savings Account Act allowing state funds, which would have been used by the student if enrolled in public school, to be deposited in a savings account for qualifying educational expenses

2016.......Defeated legislation that would have siphoned off public school dollars via use of a tax credit for corporate donors and legislation allowing religious or faith-based organizations to receive public taxpayer dollars
2017…….Defeated efforts to establish an individual student education account known as “Education Savings Accounts”
2018…….Annual cap raised on voucher program which allows citizens and corporations to receive dollar-for-dollar tax credits for donations to private organizations which in turn provide scholarships for students to attend private schools. Raised from $58 million to $100 million
2018…….Defeated legislation that would have created “Education Savings Accounts (ESA)”

2018…….Defeated legislation that would have provided a one-time waiver of the requirement of public school attendance the prior year in order for special education students who previously qualified for the special education scholarship to receive the voucher

**LOTTERY-FUNDED EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

1993 ........ To initiate implementation of pre-kindergarten program
1993 ........ To establish HOPE Scholarship Program to enable all Georgia high school seniors with at least a B average to attend college
1993 ........ To purchase computer hardware/software for classrooms
1993 ........ To establish Educational Technology Centers
1993 ........ To equip each school with a satellite dish
1993 ........ To fund Next Generation School Project
1993 ........ To provide tuition for post-secondary options students (SB 417 adopted in 1992 session)
1994 ........ To provide funds to expand Pre-K Program for at-risk four-year olds to every county and to increase the number of children and families served
1994 ........ To provide funds for Educational Technology Centers and four mobile units for teacher training
1994 ........ To provide funds for drug and anti-violence education in local schools
1994 ........ To provide equipment for Applied Technology Labs, Next Generation Schools, and Alternative Schools
1994 ........ Established model technology grants
1994 ........ To provide funding to install security fences for satellite dishes
1994 ........ Expanded HOPE Scholarship availability for all four years of college
1994 ........ Increased eligibility for annual adjusted family income for HOPE recipients from $66,000 to $100,000
1995 ........ Funding up to $100 per quarter for textbooks and payment of student fees for HOPE recipients
1995 ........ Removed family income cap as eligibility requirement for HOPE Scholarship
1995 ........ Authorized students who lose HOPE Scholarship because of grades to qualify for readmission
1995 ........ Established HOPE scholarships of up to $10,000 annually for 1000 Georgia teachers to complete advanced degrees
1995 ........ Expanded voluntary Pre-K Program for at-risk four year olds to all four-year olds
1995 ........ Funded model technology grants for gifted students
1995 ........ Funded an additional Learning Logic site in each Congressional district
1996 ........ Pre-K Program enrollment expanded to serve 58,000 four-year olds
1996 ........ Funded capitol outlay for fast growing school systems
1996 ........ Increased classroom technology funding ($20 per student)
1996 ........ Funded 11 new Alternative Schools
1997 ........ Pre-K Program enrollment expanded to serve 60,000 four-year olds
1997 ........ Increased classroom technology funding from $20 to $27.485 per FTE with a minimum grant per school of $53,000
1997 ....... Funding for assistive technology for special needs students
1997 ....... Increased funding for Postsecondary Options Program based on student needs
1997 ....... HOPE Scholarship expanded to include college students maintaining a “B” average during their freshman year; currently students must earn a “B” average for two years to earn the scholarship while in college
1998 ....... Authorized a constitutional amendment to protect the Pre-K, Hope Scholarship, and technology programs to supplement; Lottery funds may only supplement – not supplant – existing education programs. Amendment subsequently approved by voters
2008 ....... $6.4 million provided in lottery funds to provide 1,000 additional Pre-K slots, bringing the total number of slots funded to 79,000
2009......Relative to the HOPE Scholarship – grades for coursework classified as advanced placement or international baccalaureate allowed to be weighted by the Georgia Student Finance Commission in calculating the overall grade point averages for students
2011......Amended Comprehensive Revisions to HOPE legislation; reinstated full-day Pre-K program but shortened school year to 160 days
2013......FY 14 Budget increased funding to add days to Pre-K school year from 170 days to 180 days. Funds were also added to transportation
2013......Defined and provided for “Dual Credit Course” which is any arrangement whereby an eligible student takes one or more courses, including virtual courses, at or through an eligible institution while still enrolled as a public high school student and receives credit both at the high school and at the eligible institution
2013......Student seeking a diploma or certificate at a branch of the Technical College System of Georgia must earn at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average at the end of the quarter or semester in order to qualify for a HOPE grant
2014......Schools required to provide 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students their Georgia Student Finance Commission calculated grade-point average for HOPE eligibility at the conclusion of each school year
2016......Computer science coursework included as optional rigor requirement regarding HOPE scholarship. Beginning with school year 2017-2018, the cumulative grade point average shall include weighted grades for STEM college courses by increasing the grade assigned by the instructor to the student for any such course by an additional 0.5 point if such grade is a B, C, or D
2017......Students who earned a high school diploma through dual credit coursework are eligible for HOPE grants toward an associate degree

SEX EQUITY

1983 ....... Legislation passed which removes the legal assumption that the male is the head of household

A+ EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 2000 (HB 1187)

- The “A+ Education Reform Act of 2000” replaced the Quality Basic Education Act
- Students tested annually in grades 1-8 in English, language arts, mathematics, and reading; and in grades 3-8 in science and social studies. Promotion to the next grade level will be based on successful passage of the tests
- Established an Office of Educational Accountability (OEA), which began on July 1, 2000, and functions independently from the Department of Education (DOE). OEA will adopt standards
for the grading of schools, and a bonus will be paid to the staff in schools earning either an “A” or “B” grade. Penalties will be assessed to school staffs earning either a “D” or “F” grade

- Mandatory school age changed to 6-16 years of age
- Provided for an accountability system, seamless education system, safe school environment, access to nursing services, academic intervention programs, alternative education environment, student assistance and advice in planning their careers and academic goals, an evaluation system for all school personnel, and an environment where parents and community participate in the establishment of school activities and programs
- Replaced the SIA program in grades 1-3 with Early Intervention programs
- Reduced the common planning time from 85 to 55 minutes and increased the instructional day from 4 ½ to 5 hours for middle schools performing below the 65%
- Funded more counselors, school social workers, psychologists, technology specialists, and nursing services
- Encouraged teacher/parent/student compacts
- Established required local school council that will recommend policies, rules, and regulations for the operation of each public school to the local board of education for consideration and adoption. Council members will be two teachers elected by the faculty, two parents elected by parents and guardians of children attending the school, two business leaders, and the school principal, who shall serve as chairperson

**SCHOOL REFORMS**

2015……Constitutional amendment on November 2016 ballot to allow the Governor’s office to take over schools the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement identified as failing. Ballot language “Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended to allow the state to intervene in chronically failing public schools in order to improve student performance?”

2015……Enabling legislation to support the takeover of public schools deemed as failing (Opportunity School District or OSD)

2017……Known as “The First Priority Act,” creates a legislative process for the state to assist struggling schools and students. “Turnaround eligible schools” will be offered amended flexibility contracts allowing them to accept additional state resources. Such schools will undergo comprehensive evaluations to develop strategic improvement plans and each school will have three years to show improvement pursuant to that plan before state intervention is a possibility. Legislation also calls for assistance for “low performing students.”