

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

January 21, 2025

To be clear, I am not a Mets, Astros or Yankees fan, but for some reason at this time of year, I find myself thinking of [Yogi Berra](#), the famous baseball catcher and coach who was known for fine ballplaying, participating in battles at Omaha and Utah beaches in WWII, and calling it like he saw it, even if how he called it was kind of inside out. While any legislative session worth its salt is like a game of pickle, an amphibious battle, and sometimes a no-hitter, I think Yogi comes to mind mostly for his sayings. When I walk through the metal detector for the 72nd billionth time, I hear “It’s déjà vu all over again.” When a meeting with a lawmaker gets delayed for the 7th time, I hear “Slump? I ain’t in no slump...I just ain’t hitting.” Crowded in the ultra-toasty committee room, 132 Cap, “It ain’t the heat, it’s the humility.” Lost in the Coverdell Legislative Office Building (or the Pete Hackney parking deck!), “If you don’t know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else.” And I am sure when I watch the budget hearings this week, I’ll hear “A nickel ain’t worth a dime anymore.” Why, it’s as if Yogi lobbied the Georgia statehouse for a living!

Speaking of budget, a few days after Monday’s start of the 2025 legislative session Governor Brian Kemp delivered his annual State of the State (SOTS) address laying out his priorities for the state. You can read the [SOTS text here](#), and watch the [SOTS video here](#) (as Yogi would say, “You can observe a lot by watching.”).

Shortly thereafter, Kemp’s budget recommendations for the [Amended FY25](#) (this current’s year’s budget “true-up”) and the [FY26](#) budgets were released. Remember that the only thing required of the GA General Assembly by the [Georgia Constitution](#) is to pass a balanced budget - which means that all those other bills are just for fun....but not actually what normal people, or even Yogi, would call “fun.” Read below for our summary of things we find important or interesting about the governor’s recommendations, from behavioral and physical health (“Baseball is 90 percent mental. The other half is physical.”) to school construction (“Nobody goes there anymore. It’s too crowded.”) to new school buses (“I’m not going to buy my kids an encyclopedia. Let them walk to school like I did.”).

Keep on reading if you want to check out legislation we are following, and then keep on reading again if you want to try your hand at an action alert or register for any of Voices’ or our partners’ events. And as I sign off for this week, I just want to say, “I want to thank everyone for making this night necessary.” And see you next week (and the weeks after that) because...

“It ain’t over ‘til it’s over.”

--Polly (and YB)

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Budget Information

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Amended Fiscal Year 2025 – Governor’s Recommendations

Dept. of Administrative Services

- **\$104 Million Added** to Payments to Georgia Technology Authority for DCH Integrated Eligibility System (IES) modernization, the DHS \$TARS modernization project, the Board of Dentistry licensing software, and the State Board of Pharmacy licensing software.

Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

Adult Developmental Disability Services

- **\$1.6 Million Reduced** to reflect the delayed start date of the Macon Crisis Stabilization and Diagnostic Center for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Adult Forensic Services

- **\$436,920 Reduced** to reflect the delayed start date of a 30-bed jail-based competency restoration program pilot in Dodge County.

Adult Mental Health Services

- **\$500,000 Transferred** from the Georgia State Investment and Financing Commission to the DBHDD for the planning, design, and land acquisition of a new behavioral health crisis center in North Metropolitan Atlanta.

Dept. of Community Affairs

- **\$250 Million Added** for the Georgia Fund to support water and wastewater infrastructure development through low-interest loans to local communities.
- **\$500,000 Added** for the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District to complete the state's five-year water plan update.
- **\$501.7 Million Added** to support the development and construction of additional surface water resources for Georgia's coastal region to meet growth in demand.
- **\$28 Million Added** for grants and loans for rural workforce housing
- **\$20 Million Added** for grants for rural site development.

Dept. of Community Health

GA Board of Dentistry

- *Budget Direction:* Utilize existing funds (\$83,100) for the implementation of new licensing software to enhance efficiency in licensure review.

GA State Board of Pharmacy

- *Budget Direction:* Utilize existing funds (\$192,566) for the implementation of new licensing software to enhance efficiency in licensure review.

Medicaid - Aged Blind and Disabled

- **\$46 Million Added** for growth in Medicaid based on projected utilization.
- **\$11.5 Million Added** for new high-cost drugs.
- *Budget Direction:* Replace \$4,703,106 in state general funds with hospital provider fees.
- *Budget Direction:* Replace \$6,731,771 in state general funds with nursing home provider fees.

Medicaid - Low Income

- **\$5.84 Million Added** for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requirement that the state provide 12 months of continuous eligibility for children under the age of 19 in Medicaid effective January 1, 2024.
- **\$85.33 Million Reduced** for Medicaid based on projected utilization.
- *Budget Direction:* Replace \$41,494,598 in state general funds with hospital provider fees.

PeachCare for Kids®

- **\$449,825 Added** for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requirement that the state provide 12 months of continuous eligibility for children under the age of 19 in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) effective January 1, 2024.
- **\$16.15 Million Reduced** for Medicaid based on projected utilization.

GA Board of Healthcare Workforce

- **\$120,000 Reduced** to reflect savings in the implementation of a Behavioral Health Care Workforce Database.
- **\$25 Million Added** to replace and expand the existing Mercer School of Medicine building.
- **\$25 Million Added** for a new academic building for the Morehouse School of Medicine.
- **\$250,000 Transferred** for the nursing faculty loan repayment program from the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Undergraduate Medical Education program to the

Dept. of Corrections**Administration**

- **\$5 Million Added** to develop a ten-year facility and population management plan, including target staffing ratios and classification review of offenders, to determine best future use of existing facilities and prioritize capital and security needs across the system.
- **\$2.8 Million Added** to develop and implement a statewide targeted marketing initiative to recruit and onboard new correctional officers.
- **\$900,000 Added** to develop and implement updated training curriculum for correctional officers.

Private Prisons

- **\$2.95 Million Added** to add 188 private prison beds at Coffee Correctional Institution and 258 private prison beds at Wheeler Correctional Institution.

State Prisons

- **\$10.43 Million Added** to add 330 correctional officer positions to improve staff to offender ratios.
- **\$37 Million Added** for project backlog and major maintenance and renovation projects at facilities.

- **\$35 Million Added** to address critical capital maintenance and repairs.
- **\$15.27 Million Added** for additional facility maintenance personnel and regional support staff to address critical facility maintenance needs.
- **\$93.2 Million Added** for sitework and construction of four 126-bed modular correctional units to facilitate offender population movement necessary for capital and security improvements.
- **\$34.26 Million Added** for design and construction to replace locking control systems at various facilities.
- **\$5.96 Million Added** for project management resources to oversee capital projects.
- **\$248,062 Added** for a "tiger team" to support existing GDC locking team to address repairs needed on facility locks, locking controls, and security electronics.
- **\$1.19 Million Added** for skilled craftsman "tiger teams" focused on HVAC, plumbing, electrical, and fabrication needs in facilities.
- **\$35.03 Million Added** to prevent contraband through the use of managed access and drone detection systems.
- **\$913,248 Added** to implement an off-site mail screening solution to inhibit contraband and ensure the safety of facility staff.
- **\$1.47 Million Added** to continue operating the digital forensics unit through a contract.
- **\$7.22 Million Added** to purchase 1,460 body cameras and 1,300 tasers for increased facility security.
- **\$2.51 Million Added** for hardware and software licenses for additional officer tablets to improve documentation and information sharing on offender management.
- **\$337,500 Added** to replace 750 Chromebooks for technical education programs.
- **\$662,700 Added** for Technical College System of Georgia vocational education contracts.
- **\$176,326 Added** for the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment program contract.
- **\$2.29 Million Transferred** from State Prisons program to Detention Centers (\$1,572,489) and Transition Centers (\$718,679) programs for ongoing capital maintenance and repairs.

Dept. of Early Care and Learning

- **\$100,000 Added** for startup grants of up to \$10,000 per provider to establish additional Summer Food Service Program meal sites in areas with high rates of child food insecurity.

Pre-K Program

- **\$7.42 Million Added** to provide salary parity between Pre-K teachers with K12 teachers by moving to the State Board of Education salary schedule.
- *Budget Direction:* Utilize existing funds (\$3,549,690) for development costs of the new Pre-K Management System.

Dept. of Education

Quality Basic Education Program (QBE) Equalization Grant

- **\$24.34 Million Reduced** to reflect a data correction for Gainesville City and Hall County Tax Digests.

QBE Local Five Mill Share

- **\$214,870 Reduced** to adjust funds for the Local Five Mill Share for two new State Commission Charter Schools.

Quality Basic Education Program

- **\$1.88 Million Reduced** for the Completion Special Schools Supplement.

- **\$114.94 Million Added** for a midterm adjustment based on enrollment growth.
- **\$267,110 Added** for a midterm adjustment to the charter system grant.
- **\$150,725 Added** for a midterm adjustment to the local charter school grant.
- **\$5.69 Million Added** for a midterm adjustment to the State Commission Charter School supplement for training and experience.
- **\$12.9 Million Added** for the State Commission Charter School supplement for a total supplement of \$248,482,930.
- **\$835,166 Added** to reflect a data correction for two locally approved charter schools, Drew Charter School (\$137,098) and The Kindezi School (\$698,068), in the Atlanta Public Schools system.
- **\$12.44 Million Added** to reflect growth in the Special Needs Scholarship.

School Security Grants

- **\$50 Million Added** for security grants in the amount of \$21,635 per school allowing local school systems to enhance security system-wide.

State Charter School Commission Administration

- **\$610,093 Transferred** from the Charter Schools program (\$265,501) and provide additional funds (\$344,592) to implement the provisions of HB 318 (2024 Session).

Technology/Career Education

- **\$95,859 Added** for two full-time and two part-time positions and operating costs to sustain Great Promise Partnership operations as a part of work-based learning programs for at-risk students at the Department of Education.

Employees' Retirement System of Georgia

- **\$500 Million Added** to strategically invest in increasing the funded ratio in order to improve long-term financial viability of the pension system and support state retirees.

Governor's Emergency Fund

- **\$150 Million Added** for Hurricane Helene emergency response expenses.

Governor's Office of Student Achievement

- **\$160,000 Added** for startup funds to establish a regional crisis recovery network in partnership with the Southern Regional Education Board to support student mental health in response to significant public safety or natural disaster incidents impacting schools or school systems.

Dept. of Human Services

Child Support Services

- **\$5.77 Million in one-time funds added** to maintain software applications on the Georgia Technology Authority mainframe.

Child Welfare Services

- **\$1.72 Million Added** for Court Appointed Special Advocates to replace federal funds deemed ineligible by the Administration for Children and Families.

Departmental Administration

- **\$1.09 Million Eliminated** for rent for a multi-service building in Coweta County.
- **\$1.47 Million Added** to integrate Pathways and Georgia Access into the Georgia Gateway integrated eligibility system.

Federal Eligibility Benefit Services

- *Budget Direction:* Utilize existing funds (\$133,763) to enhance Medicaid disability evaluation capacity.

Residential Child Care Licensing

- *Budget Direction:* Utilize existing funds (\$82,550) for one position and TRAILS electronic records management system enhancements to address new licensure and regulation responsibilities due to the creation of two new Child Caring Institution types in SB 377 (2024 Session) and HB 1201 (2024 Session).

Georgia Bureau of Investigation

- **\$221,866 Added** for the start-up cost for two crime scene technical leaders and three digital forensic investigators.
- **\$120,472 Added** for the start-up cost to establish a Strategic Threat Assessment Group responsible for addressing threats to public officials, investigating homeland security matters, and partnering with critical infrastructure partners to provide support during major events occurring in the state.
- **\$490,700 Added** to replace federal funds with state funds for three human trafficking positions.
- **\$101,076 Added** for continued operation of the End Human Trafficking Georgia 24/7 Hotline.

Dept. of Juvenile Justice**Secure Confinement (Residential Youth Detention Centers – RYDCs)**

- **\$3 Million Transferred** from Community Service program to Secure Detention (RYDCs) program to align budget with expenditures.

Dept. Of Law

- **\$187,036 Added** for six positions to expand the Human Trafficking Unit to the Macon and Augusta regions effective April 1, 2025.

Public Defender Council

- **\$226,517 Added** for the Juvenile Conflict Defender Division manager position

Dept. of Public Health**Epidemiology**

- **\$270,000 Added** to study the impacts of social media on mental health for children in Georgia.

Infant and Child Essential Health Promotion

- **\$437,000 Added** for the cost of mailing Low THC Oil Patient registry cards pursuant to SB 495 (2024 Session).

Dept. of Public Safety***Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council***

- \$246,000 Added to provide mandatory training for newly elected sheriffs.

Georgia Public Safety Training Center

- \$168,853 Added for additional training for jailers in accordance with SB 37 (2024 Session).
- \$316,996 Added for two training instructors and supplies for increased basic law enforcement training.

Office of Highway Safety: Georgia Driver's Education Commission

- \$522,437 Added for driver's education and training in accordance with FY 2023 Joshua's Law Collections.

University System of Georgia Board of Regents***Teaching***

- \$17.75 Million Added to reflect formula correction for FY 2025 cost-of-living adjustment in Teaching.

Dept. of Revenue

- *Budget Direction:* Utilize \$1,000,000,000 in prior year undesignated state funds surplus to provide a one-time additional refund for tax year 2024 of \$250.00 for single filers, \$375.00 for head of household filers, and \$500.00 for married filing jointly.

Georgia Student Finance Commission***Dual Enrollment***

- \$21.29 Million Added to meet projected enrollment.

HOPE Grant

- \$2 Million Added to meet projected enrollment.

HOPE Scholarships - Public Schools

- \$6.1 Million Added to meet projected enrollment.

Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission – Capital Projects Fund

- \$70 Million Added for capital projects statewide.
- \$500,000 Transferred for planning, design, and land acquisition for a new behavioral health crisis center in North Metropolitan Atlanta to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities.
- \$40 Million Added for GDC for design of new prison, statewide.
- \$3 Million Added for TCSG for One College and Career Academy.
- \$6.57 Million Added for GaDOE for Georgia School for the Deaf auditorium renovation and addition, Cave Spring, Floyd County.
- \$100 Million Added for debt defeasance to reflect the use of AFY 2024 and FY 2025 debt defeasance funds for Hurricane Helene relief.
- *Budget Direction:* Reflect the redirection of \$100,000,000 in funds appropriated for debt defeasance to be used to provide disaster relief financial support for farmers and debris cleanup for timber producers impacted by Hurricane Helene as approved by the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission on November 1, 2024.

Fiscal Year 2026 – Governor’s Recommendations

Total State Funds: \$40.55 Billion

Statewide

- **Increase funds** for the Teachers Retirement System to reflect an increase in the actuarially determined employer contribution from 20.78% to 21.91%.
- DBHDD, DCH, DHS, DPH - **Reduce funds** to reflect an adjustment in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) from 66.04% to 66.40%. (\$3,979,722)

Judicial Council

Council of Accountability Court Judges

- **\$158,750 Added** for personnel for one certification officer position.
- **\$159,375 Added** for personnel for one participant services statewide coordinator position.

Judicial Council

- **\$209,500 Added** for Civil Legal Services for families of indigent patients.
- **\$100,000 Added** for grants to legal self-help centers.
- **\$400,000 Added** to annualize the juvenile court case management contract.

Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

Adult Developmental Disability Services

- **\$2.33 Million Added** for 100 additional slots for the New Options Waiver (NOW) and the Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **\$2.33 Million Added** to annualize the cost of 100 New Options Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) slots for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **\$3.24 Million Added** to annualize the operations of the Macon Crisis Stabilization and Diagnostic Center for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **\$26.71 Million Added** to annualize the provider rate increases recommended by the New Options Waiver (NOW) and Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) provider rate study.

Adult Forensic Services

- **\$1.06 Million Added** to annualize the operations of a 30-bed jail-based competency restoration program pilot in Dodge County.
- **\$1.95 Million Added** to operationalize a new 17-bed forensic unit at the Central State Hospital Allen Building in Milledgeville.
- **\$1.19 Million Added** to operationalize a new 20-bed forensic unit at the Georgia Regional Hospital Skilled Nursing Facility in Atlanta.
- **\$1.62 Million Added** to operationalize a new 30-bed Project New Hope forensic step-down unit at the West Central Georgia Regional Hospital in Columbus.

Adult Mental Health Services

- **\$12.53 Million Added** to annualize the provider rate increases recommended by the Community Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Services (CBHRS) provider rate study.
- **\$1.13 Million Transferred** from the DCH to the DBHDD for four licensure programs to match agency roles and responsibilities.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

- **\$1.81 Million Added** to annualize the operations of the new Gateway child and adolescent crisis stabilization unit in Savannah.

Dept. of Community Affairs

- *Budget Direction:* Change program name from Coordinated Planning to Community Services to consolidate statewide community services under one program.
- **Recognize \$64.01 Million transferred of funds** and positions to consolidate statewide community services, align program structure with agency responsibilities, and reduce administrative burden.
- **Recognize \$162.83 Million transfer of funds** and positions to consolidate statewide housing initiatives, align program structure with agency responsibilities, and reduce administrative burden.
- *Budget Direction:* Change program name from Special Housing Initiatives to Housing Initiatives to consolidate statewide housing initiatives under one program.

Dept. of Community Health***Departmental Administration***

- **\$47,869 Added** for three Katie Beckett Medicaid program caseworkers and operating expenses to address increased workload.

GA Board of Dentistry

- **\$75,000 Added** for the operating expenses of new licensing software to enhance efficiency in licensure review.

GA Board of Pharmacy

- **\$75,000 Added** for the operating expenses of new licensing software to enhance efficiency in licensure review.

Medicaid - Aged Blind and Disabled

- **\$41.78 Million Added** for growth in Medicaid based on projected utilization.
- **\$36.56 Million Added** for new high-cost drugs.
- **\$7.15 Million Added** for skilled nursing centers to reflect 2023 cost reports.
- *Budget Direction:* Replace \$5,415,201 in state general funds with hospital provider fees.
- *Budget Direction:* Replace \$6,108,816 in state general funds with nursing home provider fees.

Medicaid - Low Income

- **\$188.64 Million Added** for growth in Medicaid based on projected utilization.
- **\$21.23 Million Added** for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requirement that the state provide 12 months of continuous eligibility for children under the age of 19 in Medicaid effective January 1, 2024.
- *Budget Direction:* Replace \$47,777,273 in state general funds with hospital provider fees.

PeachCare for Kids®

- **\$1.58 Million Added** for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services requirement that the state provide 12 months of continuous eligibility for children under the age of 19 in the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) effective January 1, 2024.
- **\$1.21 Million Reduced** for growth in Medicaid based on projected utilization.

State Health Benefits Plan

- *Budget Direction:* Increase the employer health care contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) for non-certified school employees to match the PMPM for certified school employees, effective July 1, 2025, to maintain the financial stability of the plan.
- *Budget Direction:* Recognize an increase in formula funds (\$177,130,676) in DECAL, and Georgia Military College, to reflect an increase in the employer healthcare contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees and lead and assistant teachers to \$1,885, effective July 1, 2025.
- *Budget Direction:* Reduce funds for interim one-time funding for a \$3 per prescription dispensing fee for independent pharmacists awaiting the outcome of an SHBP Prescription Benefit Manager (PBM) study.

Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Graduate Medical Education

- **\$1.51 Million Added** for 75 new residency slots in primary care medicine.

Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Mercer School of Medicine Grant

- **\$500,000 one-time matching funds eliminated** to recognize private fundraising for scholarships for year-four students committed to practicing primary care for five years in rural Georgia.
- **\$565,204 Added** for the sixth year of the seven-year plan for Mercer School of Medicine's medical school campus in Columbus.

Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Physicians for Rural Areas

- *Budget Direction:* Reflect a change in the program name to Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Healthcare Practitioner Loan Repayment.
- **\$250,000 Transferred** for the nursing faculty loan repayment program from the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Undergraduate Medical Education program to the Georgia Board of Health Care Workforce: Physicians for Rural Areas program to include all loan repayment funds under the same program.

Dept. of Corrections***Across the Agency***

- **Increase funds** for a 4% salary increase for education, chaplain, food service, and maintenance positions to align with statewide averages to improve recruitment and retention.
- **Increase funds** for a six month in-grade promotion step for correctional officer and CSM correctional officer 1 and 2 and to address salary compression to improve career path and retention opportunities.
- **Increase funds** to provide a 4% salary increase for all correctional officer staff in state and private prisons to improve recruitment and retention.

Detention Centers

- **\$219,573 Added** for an 8% salary increase for behavioral health counselor positions to align with statewide averages to improve recruitment and retention.
- **\$1.57 Million Transferred** from State Prisons program to Detention Centers program for ongoing capital maintenance and repairs.

Health

- **\$2.2 Million Added** for the dental health contract to support increased population.
- **\$8.08 Million Added** for the mental health contract to support increased population.
- **\$6.07 Million Added** for the pharmacy services contract to support increased population.
- **\$14.66 Million Added** for the physical health contract to support increased population.

Private Prisons

- **\$5.94 Million Added** to add 188 private prison beds at Coffee Correctional Institution and 258 private prison beds at Wheeler Correctional Institution.

State Prisons

- **\$20.19 Million Added** to add 330 correctional officer positions to improve staff to offender ratios.
- **\$15 Million Added** to address critical capital maintenance and repairs.
- **\$15.59 Million Added** for additional facility maintenance personnel and regional support staff to address critical facility maintenance needs.
- **\$1.02 Million Added** for a "tiger team" to support existing GDC locking team to address repairs needed on facility locks, locking controls, and security electronics.
- **\$2.6 Million Added** for skilled craftsman "tiger teams" focused on HVAC, plumbing, electrical, and fabrication needs in facilities.
- **\$3.37 Million Added** for ongoing support of body cameras and tasers for increased facility security.

- **\$1.83 Million Added** to implement an off-site mail screening solution to inhibit contraband and ensure the safety of facility staff.
- **\$2.46 Million Added** for software licenses for additional officer tablets to improve documentation and information sharing on offender management.
- **\$176,326 Added** for the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment program contract.
- **\$760,421 Added** for Technical College System of Georgia vocational education contracts.

Transition Centers

- **\$718,679 Transferred** from State Prisons program to Transition Centers program for ongoing capital maintenance and repairs.

Dept. of Early Care and Learning

Child Care Services

- **\$1.54 Million Added** to annualize state match for Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) reimbursement to the 60th percentile of market rates for childcare providers.
- **\$3.93 Million Added** to provide 500 additional state-funded slots in the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program.

Pre-K Program

- **\$5.26 Million Added** for annual update of teacher training and experience.
- **\$1.21 Million Added** to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified teachers at public Pre-K providers to \$1,885 effective July 1, 2025.
- **\$14.06 Million Added** for year two of a four-year phase in to reduce classroom size from 22 to 20 students to improve instructional quality.

Dept. of Education

Business and Finance Administration

- **\$200,000 One-time funds removed** from upgrade the Capital Outlay Program Software (COPS) to integrate public Pre-K classrooms pursuant to SB 233 (2024 Session).

Communities in Schools

- **\$1 Million in one-time funds removed** from leveraging matching grant funds for program expansion.

Curriculum Development-Special Project

- **\$339,799 Added** to sustain supplements for school literacy leads at all 1,343 K-3 schools.

Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS)

- **\$1.85 Million Reduced** to reflect a reduction in formula earnings based on enrollment and training and experience.
- **\$330,000 Added** to reflect an increase in the health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees to \$1,885 effective July 1, 2025.

Information Technology Services

- **\$3 Million Added** to sustain 400mbps of state-funded bandwidth for all systems through PeachNet.

Non-Quality Basic Education (Non-QBE) Formula Grants

- **\$5.92 Million Added** for Sparsity Grants based on enrollment data.
- **\$543,000 Added** for custodian supplement grants.

Nutrition

- **\$2.96 Million Reduced** for school nutrition due to a decrease in the number of meals served.

Preschool Disability Services

- \$3.48 Million Added based on formula earnings.
- \$793,919 Added to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees to \$1,885 effective July 1, 2025.

Pupil Transportation

- \$10.13 Million Added for pupil transportation formula grants to reflect updated bus counts and operating expenses.

Quality Basic Education Equalization

- \$112.93 Million Reduced for Equalization grants.

QBE Local Five Mill Share

- \$115.88 Million Reduced to adjust funds for the Local Five Mill Share.

Quality Basic Education Program

- \$305.9 Million Added for enrollment growth and training and experience.
- \$605,051 Reduced for differentiated pay for newly certified math and science teachers.
- \$34.12 Million Added for the State Commission Charter School supplement.
- \$1.83 Million Reduced for the Completion Special Schools supplement.
- \$313,627 Added for the charter system grant.
- \$172.6 Million Added to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees to \$1,885 effective July 1, 2025.
- \$872,333 Added to fully fund school psychologist ratio at 1:2,420 for all QBE student categories pursuant to HB 283 (2013 Session).

Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs)

- \$55,239 Added to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees to \$1,885 effective July 1, 2025.

State Charter School Commission Administration

- \$386,351 in transferred funds from the Charter Schools program (\$265,501) and provide additional funds (\$120,850) to implement the provisions of HB 318 (2024 Session).

State Schools

- \$135,151 Added for training and experience.

Technology/Career Education

- \$383,444 Added for 2 full-time and 2 part-time positions and operating costs to sustain Great Promise Partnership operations as a part of work-based learning programs for at-risk students at the Department of Education.
- \$1.25 Million Added to establish a high-demand equipment grant program for new and expanding career and technical education labs that support instruction for high-demand careers as identified by the State Workforce Board.

Governor's Office of Student Achievement

- \$10,000 Added to annualize state participation for newly established regional crisis recovery network at the Southern Regional Education Board to support student mental health in response to significant public safety or natural disaster incidents impacting schools or school systems.

Dept. of Human Services**Child Support Services**

- \$60,899 Added to expand participation in the Child Support Lien Network to include real property and lump sum payment matching services.

Child Welfare Services

- **\$1.5 Million Eliminated** in matching funds for the wraparound services pilot due to the denial of federal funds by the Administration for Children and Families.
- **\$1.72 Million Added** for Court Appointed Special Advocates to replace federal funds deemed ineligible by the Administration for Children and Families.

Residential Child Care Licensing

- *Budget Direction:* Utilize existing funds (\$46,550) for one position to address new licensure and regulation responsibilities due to the creation of two new Child Caring Institution types in SB 377 (2024 Session) and HB 1201 (2024 Session).

Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Children Fund Commission

- **\$120,110 Reduced** to reflect FY 2024 collections of financial penalties for sex trafficking and sexual offenses pursuant to O.C.G.A. 15-21-208 and adult entertainment establishment assessments pursuant to O.C.G.A. 15-21-209

Georgia Bureau of Investigation

- **\$390,789 Added** to establish a Strategic Threat Assessment Group responsible for addressing threats to public officials, investigating homeland security matters, and partnering with critical infrastructure partners to provide support during major events occurring in the state.
- **\$294,420 Added** to replace federal funds with state funds for three human trafficking positions.
- **\$400,312 Added** to offset the loss of ARPA funds to continue operations at the Receiving Hope Center.
- **\$421,608 Added** for two advocate positions and ongoing maintenance of the End Human Trafficking Georgia 24/7 Hotline.

Criminal Justice Coordinating Council - Council of Accountability Court Judges

- **\$512,544 Added** for new and existing accountability courts to support population growth.
- **\$17,250 Added** to implement Juvenile Treatment Courts per HB 873 (2024 Session).

Dept. of Juvenile Justice**Secure Confinement (Youth Detention Centers – YDCs)**

- **\$401,330 Added** to increase rates and hours for full-time and contracted psychologist and psychiatrist positions.

Secure Confinement (Residential Youth Detention Centers – RYDCs)

- **\$798,670 Added** to increase rates and hours for full-time and contracted psychologist and psychiatrist positions.

Dept. of Law

- **\$536,928 Added** for four positions to expand the Gang Prosecution Unit to the Savannah region.
- **\$748,143 Added** to annualize six positions to expand the Human Trafficking Unit to the Macon and Augusta regions.

GA Public Defender Council

- **\$226,517 Added** for a Juvenile Conflict Division manager position.

Dept. of Public Health**Adolescent and Adult Health Promotion**

- **\$100,000 Transferred** to support lupus research, data collection, awareness, and education from the DCH to the DPH.

Infant and Child Essential Health Treatment Services

- \$437,000 Added for the cost of mailing Low THC Oil Patient registry cards pursuant to SB 495 (2024 Session).
- \$2.98 Million Added to expand the pilot to provide home visiting in at-risk and underserved rural communities during pregnancy and early childhood to improve birth outcomes, reduce preterm deliveries, and decrease infant and maternal mortality.
- Budget Direction: \$778,239 Added plus existing funds (\$97,701) for a cardiac obstetric program to increase access to maternal fetal medicine.

Infant and Child Health Promotion

- Budget Direction: Utilize existing funds (\$1,007,109) for newborn screening to include one additional disorder that has been approved by the Georgia Newborn Screening Advisory Committee.

Dept. of Public Safety**GA Public Safety Training Center**

- \$253,202 Added for additional training for jailers in accordance with SB 37 (2024 Session).
- \$478,595 Added for two training instructors and supplies for increased basic law enforcement training.

Office of Highway Safety

- \$522,437 Added for driver's education and training in accordance with FY 2024 Joshua's Law Collections.

University System of Georgia Board of Regents**Across the System**

- Increase funds for the employer share of health benefits.
- In certain departments: Increase funds to reflect correction for FY 2025 employer share of health benefits.

Public Libraries

- \$1.84 Million Added to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees from \$1,580 to \$1,885.
- \$372,012 Added for the public libraries' formula based on an increase in the state population.

Teaching

- \$169.53 Million Added to reflect a 2.7% increase in enrollment (\$167,834,602) and a 0.5% increase in square footage (\$1,697,277).
- \$17.75 Million Added to reflect formula correction for FY 2025 cost-of-living adjustment.

Payments to Georgia Military College Preparatory School

- \$304,200 Added to reflect an increase in health insurance employer contribution per-member per-month (PMPM) rate for certified school employees to \$1,885.
- \$254,726 Added for enrollment, training, and experience.

Georgia Student Finance Commission**Dual Enrollment**

- \$21.44 Million Added to meet projected need.

HOPE Grant

- \$17.22 Million Added to meet projected need.

HOPE Scholarships – Private Schools

- \$3.31 Million Added to meet projected need.

HOPE Scholarships – Public Schools

- \$60.06 Million Added to meet projected need.

Promise Scholarships

- \$141.02 Million Added to fully fund the Promise Scholarship Program as established pursuant to SB 233 (2024 Session).

Technical College System of Georgia**Technical Education**

- \$33.49 Added to reflect a 10.6% increase in enrollment (\$33,486,954) and a 0.02% decrease in square footage ((\$13,581)).

Technical Education: High-Cost Programs - Special Project

- \$15.81 Million Added to reflect growth in aviation, commercial truck driving, and nursing program enrollment at targeted supplemental credit hour rates.
- \$8.47 Million Transferred from Technical Education program to recognize all state funds budgeted to fully fund supplemental earnings for high-cost programs.

Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission – Capital Projects Fund (a few highlights)

- \$150 Million Added for capital projects statewide.

Dept. of Education

- \$146.01 Million Added for Capital Outlay Program – Regular for local school construction, statewide.
- \$14.9 Million Added for Capital Outlay Project - Low Wealth for school construction, statewide.
- \$17.6 Million Added for Capital Outlay Project - Additional Low Wealth for local school construction, statewide.
- \$7.35 Million Added for Purchase vocational and agriculture education equipment, statewide.
- \$20 Million Added for Purchase school buses, statewide.

University System of Georgia Board of Regents

- \$4 Million Added for Construction of the renovation of the Harry Downs Building for Nursing and Dental Hygiene, Clayton State University, Morrow, Clayton County.
- \$9.7 Million Added for Construction of the renovation of the Lakeview Nursing and Dental Hygiene building, Georgia Highlands College, Rome, Floyd County.

Technical College System of Georgia

- \$13.44 Million Added for System-wide equipment refresh, statewide.

Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities

- \$10 Million Added to address Regional State Hospitals' significant capital needs according to the 2023 Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC) campus survey partially funded in House Bill 915 (2024 Session), statewide.

Dept. of Public Health

- \$1.17 Million Added for improvements and renovations to district offices and public health laboratories, statewide.

Dept. of Community Supervision

- \$6.8 Million Added for design and construct a new facility for the Columbus Day Reporting Center and Field Office, Columbus, Muscogee County.

Dept. of Corrections

- **\$6.2 Million Added** for design and construction of a long term, acute care unit at Johnson State Prison, Wrightsville, Johnson County.
- **\$15.5 Million Added** for additional construction at McRae State Prison, McRae-Helena, Telfair County.

Dept. of Juvenile Justice

- **\$3.5 Million Added** for additional construction funds for a 56-bed facility expansion, Columbus, Muscogee County.
- **\$82.7 Million Added** for Construction and additional design of a 80-bed facility expansion, Macon, Bibb County.
- **\$5 Million Added** for upgrades to safety and security systems at facilities, statewide.



Justice, Public Safety, & School Discipline

SB 25

(McLaurin-14th) Any offender being considered or considered for parole may request either a video conference 30 days before the parole date and/or written documentation of the decision of the delay or denial of parole.

STATUS: Senate Hopper



Child Welfare & Protection

HB 57

(Cameron-1st) Expands the definition of incest to include step-grandparents and step-grandchildren.

STATUS: House Judiciary Non-Civil Committee

SB 8

(Kirkpatrick-32nd) Adds juvenile court judges to the list of judges who may issue a warrant for the arrest of any offender against the penal laws, based on probable cause either on the judge's own knowledge or on the information of others given to the judge or officer under oath.

STATUS: Senate Children and Families Committee

SB 9

(Albers-56th) Prohibits distribution of computer-generated obscene material depicting a child and provides penalties and probation for such obscenities.

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee



Health & Behavioral Health

HB 19

(Scott-76th) Requires DBHDD to create an electronic inpatient psychiatric bed registry to identify availability for psychiatric beds for inpatient facilities. Additional data sharing shall be reviewed and set by the department.

STATUS: House Public Health and Community Health Committee

- HB 20** (Scott-76th) Requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules requiring all certificated public school personnel to receive annual training in depression and suicide awareness and prevention. The bill also establishes the Student Mental Health Screenings Grant Program, and requires GaDOE to develop a model policy for student depression and suicide awareness, plus help schools establish certain healthcare related partnerships to conduct mental health screenings.
- STATUS: House Education Committee
- HB 24** (Scott-76th) Establishes a school-linked behavioral health grant program under DBHDD to identify early interventions in K-12 schools for students that may have mental health or substance use disorders.
- STATUS: House Education Committee
- HB 25** (Scott-76th) Requires DBHDD to establish a school-linked behavioral health grant program to identify early interventions in K-12 schools for students that may have mental health or substance use disorders.
- STATUS: House Public Health and Community Health Committee
- HB 59** (Glaize-67th) Reduces the legal counselor ratio from 1 counselor to 450 students to 1 counselor to 250 students.
- STATUS: House Education Committee
- HB 81** (Ballard-147th) "Interstate Compact for School Psychologists"- Joins Georgia to state pathway that allows school psychologist to obtain and practice in schools in any member state. If passed, the Act would become effective once 7 states are in the compact.
- STATUS: House Education Committee
- HB 83** (Au-50th) Increases the taxes on packs of cigarettes from 37¢ to 57¢ per pack.
- STATUS: House Ways & Means Committee
- HB 84** (Au-50th) Increases the taxes on packs of vapor products from 7% of the wholesale price to 15%.
- STATUS: House Ways & Means Committee
- HB 87** (Clark-100th) Requires health insurance benefits to cover medically necessary orthotic devices and prosthetic devices for affected persons during a three-year period. Additionally, healthcare insurance beneficiaries are to be provided with at least two distinct healthcare professionals under their coverage for each issuance and renewal of their coverage.
- STATUS: House Health Committee
- HB 96** (Park-107th) Increases the taxes on packs of cigarettes from 37¢ to \$1.37 per pack.
- STATUS: House Hopper
- HB 97** (Park-107th) Provides the expansion of Medicaid for low income individuals making less than 138 percent of the (FPL).
- STATUS: House Hopper

- HB 100** (Douglas-78th) Requires that health insurers cost share the price of prescription drugs with enrollees, covering at least 80% of the rebates they receive or anticipate receiving for each drug.
STATUS: House Hopper
- HB 101** (Douglas-78th) Requires for the Board of Community Health to report annually the amount of prescription drug rebates and related concessions applied to the premium reductions for state health benefits plan participants.
STATUS: House Hopper
- HB 102** (Cooper-45th) Facilitates the establishment of the Georgia Quality Reporting Project in order to: gauge the quality of treatment for opioid use disorder and healthcare overall, improve the quality of care to Georgia residents, reduce the overall cost of medical treatment and care in this state, and foster clinical research.
STATUS: House Hopper
- HB 109** (Bonner-73rd) "EmPATH Georgia Act:" Creates a five-year pilot program for people experiencing psychiatric emergencies. This program will operate for adults 18 years or older seven days a week and provide intensive short- term noninstitutional treatment.
STATUS: House Hopper
- HR 8** (Schofield-63rd) Creates the "State Workgroup to Increase Chronic Disease Information and Screening in Communities of Color."
STATUS: House Public and Community Health Committee
- SB 5** (Kirkpatrick-32nd) Provides that each insurer that utilizes prior authorization requirements shall implement and maintain a program that allows for the selective application of reductions in prior authorization requirements based on the stratification of healthcare providers performance and adherence to evidence-based medicine. Such program shall promote quality, affordable healthcare and reduce unnecessary administrative burdens for both the insurer and the healthcare provider.
STATUS: Senate Insurance and Labor Committee



Maternal & Infant Care

- HB 25** (Scott-76th) Allows GA DHS to apply for a waiver allowing SNAP and WIC beneficiaries to purchase diapers and menstrual hygiene products with the benefit once the US Department of Agriculture makes such an application available.
STATUS: House Public Health and Community Health Committee
- HB 46** (Davis-87th) Ensures additional representation of healthcare and mental health experts, community members, and relevant nonprofits on the Maternal Mortality Review Committee. Also addresses Committee vacancies and establishes privacy protocols.
STATUS: House Public and Community Health Committee

HB 89 (Cooper-45th) Amends the duties of the Maternal Mortality Review Committee to review psychiatric or other clinical records provided by healthcare facilities. Additionally this bill establishes the "Regional Perinatal Center Advisory Committee" which shall advise the Commissioner of Public Health on related perinatal centers and adequacy of the regional perinatal system.

STATUS: House Ways & Means Committee

HB 94 (Lumsden-12th) Requires health insurance benefits to cover standard fertility preservation services when medically necessary treatments such as radiation therapy, and chemotherapy have potentially infertility side effects.

STATUS: House Hopper



Early Childhood Education & Out-of-School Time

HB 118 (Townsend-179th) Requires childcare learning centers and family child care learning homes maintain at least one portable airway clearance device and each employee that cares or supervises children be trained in CPR.

STATUS: House Hopper



K-12 Education

HB 12 (Cannon-172nd) Reduces the minimum required millage rate from 14 mills to 10 mills for a school system to qualify for equalization grants.

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 20 (Scott-76th) Requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules requiring all certificated public school personnel to receive annual training in depression and suicide awareness and prevention. The bill also establishes the Student Mental Health Screenings Grant Program, and requires GaDOE to develop a model policy for student depression and suicide awareness, plus help schools establish certain healthcare related partnerships to conduct mental health screenings.

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 23 (Scott-76th) Requires schools to provide progress reports to parents or legal guardians of students in the early intervention program, and requires the GaDOE to collaborate with the Professional Standards Commission to improve and update professional development opportunities for teachers that specifically relate to supporting limited-English-proficient students.

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 24 (Scott-76th) Establishes a school-linked behavioral health grant program under DBHDD to identify early interventions in K-12 schools for students that may have mental health or substance use disorders.

STATUS: House Education Committee

- HB 26** (Scott-76th) Requires DBHDD to establish a school-linked behavioral health grant program to identify early interventions in K-12 schools for students that may have mental health or substance use disorders.
STATUS: House Public Health and Community Health Committee
- HB 27** (Scott-76th) Provides for grants by the State Board of Education to local units of administration to support students living in poverty under QBE funding formula for schools.
STATUS: House Education Committee
- HB 37** (Leverett-123rd) Requires each school system to provide a notice of whether: 1. Social Security taxes will be withheld from the employee's pay, 2. The employee is eligible to be included in a plan with coverage for the benefits of Title II and, 3. if the employee is eligible to be included in one or more plans. This applies to new, current, and nearly new employees of local school systems.
STATUS: House Education Committee
- HB 42** (Davis-87th) Revises the calculation for student transportation programs and remove the requirement of regular transportation services to be funded prior to other transportation services. Requires the State Board of Education to collaborate to determine actualized costs for transportation programs.
STATUS: House Education Committee
- HB 59** (Glaize-67th) Reduces the legal counselor ratio from 1 counselor to 450 students to 1 counselor to 250 students.
STATUS: House Education Committee
- HB 81** (Ballard-147th) "Interstate Compact for School Psychologists"- Joins Georgia to state pathway that allows school psychologist to obtain and practice in schools in any member state. If passed, the Act would become effective once 7 states are in the compact.
STATUS: House Education Committee
- HB 104** (Cox-28th) Establishes regulations requiring that interscholastic sports competitions be categorized based on the student-athletes sex assigned at birth rather than gender. Sports are designated as male-men, or boys, and female-women, or girls, or coed, depending on the student-athletes actively participating in interscholastic competitions. Upholds guidelines for grievances made by parents through the discretion of the state board.
STATUS: House Hopper
- HB 105** (Wade-9th) Increases payment of indemnification for public school personnel in the event of death or disability from \$75,000 to \$150,000.
STATUS: House Hopper
- HB 47** (Davis-87th) Provides QBE funding to eligible public schools to enhance safety and infrastructure.
STATUS: House Education Committee
- HB 48** (Davis-87th) Establishes the Refugee and International Students Equalization (RISE) program to provide comprehensive wrap-around services for eligible K-12 students from other countries.
STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 106 (Barnes-86th) Authorizes local school boards and related bodies to offer driver education training courses as an elective to high school students.

STATUS: House Hopper

SB 1 (Dolezal-27th) "Fair and Safe Athletic Opportunities Act"- Establishes regulations requiring that interscholastic sports competitions be categorized based on the student-athlete's sex assigned at birth. Sports are designated as male, female, or coed, depending on the student-athletes actively participating in interscholastic competitions. Provides guidelines and restrictions for reasonable accommodations for student-athletes, including access to single-occupancy restrooms, changing areas, or sleeping quarters as needed. Extends the right to appeal decisions made by a covered entity to the superior court of the county where the local school is located for any student aggrieved by such decisions.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee

SB 4 (Dolezal-27th) Provides for public complaints against school board members and makes changes to required and prohibited topics for school board member training.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee

SB 17 (Anavitarte-31st) "Ricky and Alyssa's Law"- Requires local school systems to implement a mobile panic alert system capable of connecting directly to emergency services and first responders. The bill also authorizes the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency to adopt rules and regulations for the requirements for school mapping data.

STATUS: Senate Education and Youth Committee

SB 22 (Tillery-19th) Requires the DOE to publish federal guidance documents within 15 calendar days.

STATUS: Senate Hopper



Higher Education

HB 7 (Kendrick-95th) Provides for a \$4,000/year tax credit (3 year maximum) for workforce-ready graduates employed in high-tech full-time jobs in rural counties for at least 40 weeks during a 12-month period.

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee

HB 18 (Sainz-180th) States that eligible Dual Enrollment high school students must currently and remain legal residents of Georgia while in the program.

STATUS: House Higher Education Committee

HB 38 (Martin-49th) Alters the definition of an "eligible student" for a need-based financial aid program to include a person who has also completed 70% of the credit requirements for a four-year program instead of 80% and includes students who have completed 45% of the credit requirements for a two-year program.

STATUS: House Higher Education Committee

HB 56 (Petrea-166th) Expands tuition grants to include spouses of law enforcement officers, firefighters, and prison guards who were killed or permanently disabled in the line of duty.

STATUS: House Higher Education Committee



Environmental Safety

HB 1 (Au-50th) Establishes the offense of making a firearm accessible to a child (except where possession of a firearm by a child is lawful) by charging a person with criminal negligence when a child gains access to a readily dischargeable firearm, and such person failed to secure the firearm or left the firearm in a place to which the person knew or should have known the child could gain access. The bill also provides for an affirmative defense to prosecution in certain circumstances. The bill also requires gun dealers to post a sign saying, "IT IS UNLAWFUL TO STORE, TRANSPORT, OR ABANDON AN UNSECURED FIREARM IN A PLACE WHERE CHILDREN CAN OBTAIN ACCESS TO THE FIREARM."

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee

HB 2 (Au-50th) Provide a tax credit for firearm safe storage devices of up to \$300. This tax credit must be pre-approved and can only be applied once in a taxpayer's lifetime.

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee

HB 3 (Au-50th) Prohibits the transfer of firearms except when facilitated by a dealer and requires a universal background check for the transfer of firearms. Exceptions are made in certain circumstances.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee

HB 4 (Au-50th) Requires a three-day waiting period for the purchase or transfer of certain firearms.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee

HB 9 (Schofield-63rd) "Safer States Act" - Repeal and reduces the manufacturing and selling of chemical flame retardants or chemicals in such things as bedding, carpeting and certain children's products.

STATUS: House Natural Resources and Environment Committee

HB 63 (Oliver-84th) Any owner who fails to secure a loaded or unloaded firearm with knowledge that either a minor or any other person can possess such firearm will be guilty of a misdemeanor of when the firearm is obtained by a minor and exhibited in a public place or while making a threat of violence or by any individual, regardless of age, and used during the commission of a crime or during an act which results in the injury or death.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee

HB 64 (Oliver-84th) Requires assault weapon owners to maintain liability insurance in an amount not less than \$1 million for unintentional death, injury, or disability to a human being and for damage to property per incident arising out of the ownership, maintenance, operation, or use of an assault weapon. Failure to provide proof of minimum liability insurance will result in a misdemeanor. Exceptions or affirmative defenses may apply.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee

HB 79 (Newton-127th) Provides a tax credit for firearm safe handling instructional courses and firearm secure storage devices of up to \$300. This tax credit must be pre-approved and can only be applied once in a taxpayer's lifetime. The aggregate limit of tax credits is capped at \$10 million per year.

STATUS: House Ways & Means Committee

HB 80 (Westbrook-163rd) Permits law enforcement agencies the option to destroy or sell certain firearms if left unclaimed.

STATUS: House Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee

HR 9 (Moore-91st) Creates the "Safe Water and Toxic Enforcement Fund."

STATUS: House Natural Resources & Environment Committee

SB 19 (Lucas-26th) Requires a ten-day waiting period for the purchase or transfer of certain firearms.

STATUS: Senate Judiciary Committee



Shelter & Nutrition

HB 14 (Carpenter-4th) Designates cornbread as the official Georgia state bread.

STATUS: House Special Rules Committee

HB 21 (Scott-76th) "Healthy Food Access Tax Credit Act" - creates a tax credit of 15% of incurred expenses for the development or improvement of a property that sells healthy foods in a less developed area.

STATUS: House Ways and Means Committee

HB 60 (Barnes-86th) Ensures that all public school students have access to high-quality and high-nutrition free breakfast and lunch.

STATUS: House Education Committee

HB 65 (Moore-91st) Designates collard greens as the official Georgia state greens, and 'potlikka' as the official Georgia state dipping sauce of the official Georgia state bread. (See HB 14)

STATUS: House Special Rules Committee



Miscellaneous

HB 34 (Washburn-144th) The Secretary of State shall create a professional licensing board tracking solution that will track the compliance of all licenses and continuing education requirements for license renewal beginning on January 1st, 2026.

STATUS: House Regulated Industries Committee

HB 98 (Huguley-141st) Provides for a state income tax credit equal to 10% of the federal child tax credit.

STATUS: House Hopper

[HB 99](#) (Huguley-141st) Increases state income tax credit from 30% to 100% based on the federal child/dependent care tax credit. The bill also states that if the total amount of the tax credit exceeds the taxpayer's income tax liability for a taxable year, the excess funds shall be refunded to the taxpayer.

STATUS: House Hopper

[HB 107](#) (Ballard-147th) Permits the use and creation of digital verifiable licenses for spouses of servicemembers.

STATUS: House Hopper

[HB 111](#) (Hong-103rd) Reduces the income tax rate from 5.39% to 5.19% until January 1, 2026.

STATUS: House Hopper

[HB 112](#) (McDonald III-26th) Provides a one-time tax credit to individuals who filed on time tax returns for 2023 and 2024.

STATUS: House Hopper

[SB 21](#) (Tillery-19th) Requires sheriffs, jailers, and deputies to honor immigration detainer requests issued by the Department of Homeland Security.

STATUS: Senate Hopper



Advocacy Ask

[Ask #1: Get to Know Your Legislator](#)

[Ask #2: School Social Workers](#)

[Ask #3: Out-of-School Time Funds and Liaison](#)

[Ask #1: Get to Know Your Legislator](#)

The Ask:

Make sure you know who represents you at the Georgia General Assembly. Then start or build upon a relationship with your own state representative or senator by sending them a short note.

The Why:

Advocating is made easier by nurturing respectful but clear communications with elected officials.

The Message:

“Hi, My name is _____ and I live in your district. Issues such as child health, child welfare, juvenile justice, childcare, and learning are important to me. I am reaching out to you today to simply say hello and let you know that I may be contacting you through the session and after to share my thoughts on legislation before you. I appreciate your dedication to public service and look forward to more opportunities to work together for the children in our district and in our state.”

The How:

[Click here to find your elected officials](#) and then call or email them with the message above.

Ask #2: School Social Workers**The Ask:**

Ask members of the House Appropriations - Education Subcommittee to fund School Social Workers with an additional \$5 Million in the FY 2026 Budget (under the Dept. of Education).

What Do School Social Workers Do?:

School Social Workers (SSWs) are essential in managing issues such as truancy, bullying, mental health, and crises like family instability - all of which directly impact student performance and well-being. Social workers play a vital role in supporting students' mental health, addressing behavior issues, and connecting families with essential resources.

The Why:

- Georgia averages one SSW per 1,911 students!
- While Georgia has approximately 14,300 licensed social workers across various fields, a shortage exists in K-12 settings because many school districts are unable to meet the recommended social worker-to-student ratio of 1 for every 250 students. This limits the ability of social workers to provide individualized attention and comprehensive services and leaves students without sufficient access to mental health and social support.

The Message:

Dear Representative _____,

Please support this request for an additional \$5 million in the FY 2026 budget to fund School Social Workers under the Georgia Department of Education. School Social Workers play a critical role in promoting school safety by addressing truancy, bullying, mental health crises, and family instability—issues that can escalate into safety concerns if left unaddressed. Currently, Georgia averages only one School Social Worker per 1,911 students, far below the recommended ratio of 1:250. This shortage hinders the ability to identify and intervene in potential safety risks, leaving students and schools vulnerable. By increasing funding, we can ensure more robust support systems that contribute to safer and more secure learning environments for all.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests and thank you for all you do every day on behalf of Georgia's children and families.

The How (a.k.a. Who to Contact):

Call members of the House Appropriations Education Subcommittee:

Rep. Matt Dubnik, Chair	404-463-2246	matt.dubnik@house.ga.gov
Rep. Will Wade, Vice Chair	404-651-7737	will.wade@house.ga.gov
Rep. Kimberly Alexander	404-656-7859	kimberly.alexander@house.ga.gov
Rep. Robert Dickey	404-656-5099	robert.dickey@house.ga.gov

Rep. Chris Erwin	404-656-7850	chris.erwin@house.ga.gov
Rep. Leesa Hagan	404-656-0177	leesa.hagan@house.ga.gov
Rep. Edna Jackson	404-656-0265	edna.jackson@house.ga.gov
Rep. Jan Jones	404-656-5072	jan.jones@house.ga.gov
Rep. Todd Jones	404-656-9210	todd.jones@house.ga.gov

Ask #3: Out-of-School Time Funds and Liaison

The Ask:

Ask members of the House Appropriations - Education Subcommittee to:

1. Fund afterschool and summer learning programs by funding the Georgia Dept. of Education's BOOST 2.0 grants in the FY26 budget at \$20 million.
2. Create an Out-of-School Time liaison position to coordinate afterschool and summer learning policy across the state agencies that handle such programs: GaDOE, Dept. of Human Services, Dept. of Early Care and Learning.

What is BOOST?

For the last three years, GaDOE, in partnership with GSAN, used a total of \$85 Million in COVID relief funding to create the Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time (BOOST) grant program, which has funded evidence-based afterschool and summer learning programs. The federal funds for the program have expired, but the BOOST outcomes for kids have been amazing! (SEE THIS MEMO!) SW pls add that new memo Uzma did on the 3 year results *Therefore, in order to keep the progress for kids going*, Georgia needs to target dollars into more grants, which we are calling "BOOST 2.0".

The Why:

The BOOST 2.0 Grant Program, (housed at the Georgia Department of Education) will build off the existing infrastructure and partnerships of BOOST. This will:

- Create a statewide framework that expands access to and assures quality of afterschool and summer learning opportunities.
- Prioritize funding support to OST programs that serve vulnerable youth, such as those who are economically disadvantaged, have a disability, and English language learners.
- Use existing state infrastructure to provide training and technical assistance to OST providers fiscal administration, quality measurement, program effectiveness, and provider leadership.
- Leverage program evaluation and evidence collection strategies embedded within the BOOST grant to determine how to best serve current and prospective afterschool and summer learning providers in the future.

An Interagency Liaison can coordinate afterschool and summer programming between the Georgia DECAL, DHS/DFCS, and GaDOE. If such a liaison is placed in Georgia Department of Education (Office of Whole Child Supports), efficiencies and communications can be maximized in:

- Alignment and coordination of OST services provided to youth and families;
- Development of reliable protocols for interagency communication regarding implementation of similar youth enrichment programs;
- Streamlining of grant application and administration to help both large and small organizations; and
- Streamlining of training, technical assistance, and professional learning provided to organizations funded and/or licensed by the agencies.

For more on OST Funding and Programs in GA, [check out this Brief](#) from the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network!

The Message:

Dear Representative _____,

Please include funding in the FY26 budget to continue the BOOST (Building Opportunities in Out-of-School Time) grants, which have been critical to student success and are no longer supported by federal COVID relief dollars. These funds have supported afterschool and summer learning in 115 of Georgia's 159 counties and served about 80,000 kids K-12 year round. Additionally, please fund an interagency liaison to coordinate afterschool and summer programs across GaDOE, DHS, and DECAL. BOOST supports working parents while enhancing student literacy, mental health, and career-ready skills.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests and thank you for all you do every day on behalf of Georgia's children and families.

The How (a.k.a. Who to Contact):

Call members of the House Appropriations Education Subcommittee:

Rep. Matt Dubnik, Chair	404-463-2246	matt.dubnik@house.ga.gov
Rep. Will Wade, Vice Chair	404-651-7737	will.wade@house.ga.gov
Rep. Kimberly Alexander	404-656-7859	kimberly.alexander@house.ga.gov
Rep. Robert Dickey	404-656-5099	robert.dickey@house.ga.gov
Rep. Chris Erwin	404-656-7850	chris.erwin@house.ga.gov
Rep. Leesa Hagan	404-656-0177	leesa.hagan@house.ga.gov
Rep. Edna Jackson	404-656-0265	edna.jackson@house.ga.gov
Rep. Jan Jones	404-656-5072	jan.jones@house.ga.gov
Rep. Todd Jones	404-656-9210	todd.jones@house.ga.gov



Resources You May Find Helpful

- [Find Your Legislator](#)
- [Contact Your Legislator](#)



Upcoming Events

January 2025

Wednesday, January 22

- Behavioral Health Services Coalition: Mental Health Day at The Capitol
 - Time: 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM
 - Location: Georgia Freight Depot, 65 MLK Jr. Dr. SW, Atlanta, GA 30303
 - More Info: [Mental Health Day at the Capitol](#)

Thursday, January 23

- Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies: Maternal Health Awareness Day (MHAD) 2025
 - Time: 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
 - Location: Georgia State Capitol, 206 Washington Street SW, Atlanta, GA 30334
 - Register: [Maternal Health Awareness Day](#)

Saturday, January 25, Tuesday, January 28, or Friday, January 31

- Strolling Thunder™ (Part 1) – Virtual Training
 - January 25: 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM
 - January 28: 7:30 PM – 8:30 PM
 - January 31: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM
 - Register: [Strolling Thunder Training](#)

Wednesday, January 29th

- PAGE State Budget Education Webinar
 - Time: 5:00PM-7:00PM EST
 - Location: Virtual via Zoom
 - Register: [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)

February 2025

Thursday, February 6

- Strolling Thunder™ (Part 2)
 - Time: 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM
 - Location: The Freight Room at Georgia Freight Depot, 65 MLK Jr. Dr. SW, Atlanta, GA 30303

Tuesday, February 11

- Justice Reform Partnership: Talk Justice Tuesday – Caught In-Between Youth and Criminalization of Immigration
 - Time: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM (Virtual)
 - RSVP: [Talk Justice Tuesday](#)

Wednesday, February 12

- Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network: Afterschool Day at the Capitol 2025
 - Time: 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM

- More Info: [Afterschool Day at the Capitol 2025](#)
- Georgia Child Care Association: GCCA Day at the Capitol
 - Time: 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM
 - Location: 206 Washington Street, Atlanta, GA 30334
 - Register: [Event Registration](#)

Tuesday, February 18th

- PAGE: PAGE Day at the Capitol
 - Time: 8:00AM-2:00PM
 - Location: Sloppy Floyd Building - West Tower, 162 Jesse Hill Jr Dr SE, Atlanta, GA 30303
 - Register Here: [PAGE Events & Merchandise – Event Registration](#)

Thursday, February 20th

- Georgia Association of Educator: GAE Day at the Capitol
 - Time: 9:00 AM- 3:00 PM
 - More Info: [Events | Georgia Association of Educators](#)
- Legislative Reception for Children: Voices for GA Children
 - Time: 5:00PM-8:00PM
 - Location: City Hall
 - *More Information to Come*

Tuesday, February 25

- Justice Reform Partnership: Justice Day 2025
 - Time: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
 - Location: 201 Washington Street SW, Atlanta, GA 30303
 - Register: [Justice Day](#)

Tuesday, February 26

- Georgia ACT 2025 Housing Day at the Capitol
 - Time: 7:00AM - 3:00PM
 - Location: Central Presbyterian Church, 201 Washington St SW, Atlanta, GA 30303
 - Register here: [Georgia ACT 2025 Housing Day at the Capitol](#)

March 2025

First Week of March

- Pre-K Week Launch: Voices for GA Children
- *More Information to Come*

Thursday, March 6th

Crossover Day

Sunday, March 9th

- Atlanta Community Food Bank: Hunger Walk Run
 - Time: 12:00PM- 4:00PM
 - RSVP: [Hunger Walk Run 2025 General - Atlanta Community Food Bank](#)

Tuesday, March 11

- Justice Reform Project: Talk Justice Tuesday – Post Cross Over Review
 - Time: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM (Virtual)
 - RSVP: [Talk Justice Tuesday](#)

April 2025

Friday, April 4th

Sine Die (Last Day of Legislative Session)

Tuesday, April 8

- Justice Reform Project: Avoiding Burnout – Surviving Triumph
 - Time: 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM (Virtual)
 - RSVP: [Talk Justice Tuesday](#)