Creates the Georgia Endowment for Teaching Professionals. The purpose of the endowment is to receive and distribute funds to support outstanding teaching professionals in high-demand fields within the Technical College System of Georgia.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. Assigned to Senate Higher Education Committee.

HB 504 (Hatchett-155th) Bill Link
Amended with provisions allowing rural freestanding emergency departments to be eligible for the rural hospital tax credit and allows an individual rural hospital organization to keep contributions even if such contribution would cause the rural hospital organization to exceed its maximum amount of contributions for that year. The bill also increases by $5 million the public education foundation tax credit. Another provision excludes amounts attributable to level 1 freeport exemptions for purposes of calculating local five mill share for public school funding.

Status: PASSED HOUSE. Recommended Do Pass by the Senate Finance Committee. The bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor for either today (MONDAY) or this WEDNESDAY.

HB 538 (Ballard-147th) Bill Link
"Georgia Early Literacy Act" - Beginning July 1, 2025, the department shall require teachers in all programs licensed or commissioned by the department to receive training on developmentally appropriate evidence-based literacy instruction. Such training shall be aligned with content standards promulgated the department in collaboration with the Office of Student Achievement. The state Board of Education, in consultation with the department and the Office of Student Achievement, shall establish such policies, rules, and regulations as necessary to implement uniform grade-appropriate metrics for measuring literacy. They shall approve high-quality instructional materials to be used for teaching students in kindergarten through third grade to read and establish a procedure for each public school and local school system to annually certify to the department that such school or school system's locally approved instructional materials and content constitute high-quality instructional materials. By January 1, 2024, the department shall establish submission procedures for education service providers to submit one or more universal reading screeners to be considered for inclusion on the board’s list of approved universal reading screener providers. By July 1, 2024, the board would approve the list of screeners. GaDOE shall, in consultation with the University System of Georgia, the Professional Standards Commission, the Office of Student Achievement, Georgia’s Regional Education Service Agencies, and literacy experts, develop or procure one or more training programs for kindergarten through third grade teachers on the science of reading, structured literacy, and foundational literacy skills that enable students to develop reading skills required to meet state standards in literacy. Beginning April 1, 2026, the department shall provide an annual report on the impacts of the implementation of the provisions of this Code section. Local boards of education shall, by December 1, 2024, approve high-quality instructional materials for students in kindergarten through third grade, and by December 15, 2024, and by August 1 each year thereafter, certify to the department that its locally approved instructional materials and content constitute high-quality instructional materials. Each public school and local school system shall provide instructional support for kindergarten through third grade teachers. Any public school or local school system claiming that a lack of sufficient funding prevents them from providing instructional support as shall promptly and in writing notify the Department of Education and shall describe all efforts they’ve made to secure sufficient funding from local, state, federal, and private sources. GaDOE shall provide technical assistance and other guidance to public schools and local schools systems in identifying local, state, federal, and private funding sources to provide for instructional supports. Three times each school year each public school and local school system shall administer a universal reading screener to each student in kindergarten through third grade, with the first administration occurring within 30 days of the beginning of the school year and report the results to parents and guardians and to GaDOE. Starting August 1, 2024, public schools and local school systems shall implement tiered reading intervention plans for public school students in kindergarten through third grade who at any time during the school year exhibits a significant reading deficiency, as measured by performance on universal reading screener. Each such tiered reading intervention plan shall be implemented no later than 30 days after a student has been identified for intervention and plans may be incorporated into and included as part of the school’s existing multi-tiered system of supports or response to intervention frameworks. Each student who has been identified as exhibiting a significant reading deficiency shall receive intensive reading intervention until such student is no longer identified as exhibiting a significant reading deficiency.