

# PTA Takes Action

## Advocating for every child

Georgia PTA's weekly update on legislative activity – April. 18, 2010

Only four days left in this legislative session and legislation is moving very fast. Bills are being amended as they fly back and forth between the two chambers so it has been critical to have observers in both chambers to monitor how a bill changes as it is passed. The language of a bill may still be appended to another bill (as long as it pertains to the same area of Georgia Code) so it is very important to watch for substitute language now as bills move. The legislature will meet on Tuesday, April 20 and Wednesday, April 21 for two of the final days. If you're interested, join us at the Capitol to see the legislature in session and see what happens to the bills in committee hearings.

## Common Core State Standard Initiative (CCSS)

Thank you to all of you, especially our teachers, who reviewed the draft of the Common Core State Standards and provided feedback. They received almost 10,000 comments nationwide on the draft and are working to incorporate those comments and suggestions before a final version is completed. The final version is expected to be published at the end of May. Georgia, if it agrees with that version, is targeting adopting the Standards in July. GA PTA supports this voluntary state initiative and encourages its members to read more about it. The standards can be found at [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org).

## Legislation to Watch

Every week we will report on legislation that we believe is critical to you. Please note, if PTA has an established position, a local unit cannot take an opposing position.

**Action Alert: SB 308:** Concealed guns permitted in bars, public buildings, sporting events, churches and college campus except within 1000 feet of dorms. The bill prohibits guns only from K-12 schools (but removes restriction forbidding guns within 1000 feet of school), government buildings, jails, prisons, and mental institutions. Private property owners may determine if guns are allowed on their property but ban does not have weight of law. Shifts issuance of weapons permits to the Secretary of State rather than the local probate judge. **Current law forbids guns at school functions and within the 1000 ft school safety zone around a school. ACTION ALERT: SB 308 expands the places where concealed weapons may be carried and can include some school events. Please contact the House Judiciary Committee, Non-Civil Committee and ask them not to pass the bill. A 30-second call to each, plus one to the committee aide, will only take you 11 minutes – you can do it while your morning coffee brews. Here's the link to the committee members: [http://www.legis.ga.gov/legis/2009\\_10/house/Committees/judiciaryNonCivil/gahjudync.htm](http://www.legis.ga.gov/legis/2009_10/house/Committees/judiciaryNonCivil/gahjudync.htm) You can click on each member's name to get their contact info. Please start with the officers.**

**HB 400:** BRIDGE, *Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia's Economy Act*. Department of Education is to develop programs so a student can get courses at the home school, a technical college, a two or four year college, a work site as an apprentice, and other approved settings. Middle grades advisement shall provide counseling, advisement, career awareness, career interest inventories to evaluate each student's academic skills and career interests. In grade 8, students shall select a preferred focused program and study and develop an individual graduation plan (IGP) with parents. High school students shall have annual reviews of the IGP which are to include academic core subjects and course work in math and science OR humanities, fine arts, and foreign language, OR sequenced career pathway courses; include IEP components if applicable. *Senate amends:* Individual Graduation Program is for all students. *The Individual Graduation Plan will be a lot of work but may be very beneficial in tracking every student's achievement in attaining graduation credits. This bill was VETOED in 2009 when it was attached to SB 178 and is back as a stand alone bill.* **PASSED House PASSED S. Education & Youth**

**HB 908:** Local school systems will be exempted from meeting the QBE expense controls (OCGA 20-2-167) and allowed options to use 20 Additional Days of Instruction (OCGA 20-2-212) during the school year for extra instruction to students who need it through June 30, 2013. *Senate adds:* local school systems may operate with a system average relative to class size. *If there are two or more classrooms serving the same grades, the system stays in compliance as long as the average of the all the classrooms for that grade have the same number of students as the individual class size itemized for that grade and program in the bill.* **PASSED House PASSED Senate DV**

**HB 1307:** Waives for 5 years the Professional Standards Commission requirement for 10 Professional Learning Units, PLUs, for teacher recertification. **PASSED House PASSED in S. Education & Youth**

**SB 392:** Elementary and secondary schools, child care learning centers, any institution of higher learning shall verify that a motor carrier or contract carrier which transports students shall be certified by the Public Service Commission or the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. *Relevant to those systems considering privatizing school bus services* **TGIS**

**HR 1203:** CA, and the enabling legislation, to expand the Educational Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) to be used for educational annual budgets (instead of just Capitol projects as it is now) with equivalent tax millage reduction. This purpose and the expected amount to be applied would be on the project list with all other projects.

**SB 496:** Creates a new HOPE college opportunity grant for students from low income families if money appropriated from the lottery. Has all the requirements of the current HOPE scholarship except for the B average. About 97% of those receiving PELL grants have family incomes of less than \$40,000; 80% have family incomes of less than \$30,000. GA Student Finance Commission will administer the program, and use the PELL grant process as a basis for evaluating students. As with the other HOPE, students must be a graduate from a GA high school and a legal resident for 12 months, or if not a graduate from a GA high school, they must be a resident for 24 months. **PASSED Senate PASSED in H. Higher Education**

**HB 938:** No use of wireless communication while operating a vehicle, except for communications with emergency responders. Citizens band radios, citizens band radio hybrids, commercial two-way radio devices, subscription-based emergency communications, in-vehicle security, navigation, and remote diagnostics systems or amateur or ham radio devices are excluded from this prohibition. Drivers license will be suspended if accident caused by driver on the first offense for 90 days or until age 18, whichever

occurs first; on the second offense, 6 months or until age 18. Fines are between \$50 and \$100, double if the operator caused an accident. Restoration of the drivers license will be \$60. Those under age 18 also get 2 points on the drivers license

**SB 458:** Safety belts must be used in all passenger vehicles including pickups for drivers under age 18, and for older drivers if pickups driven on public roads. **PASSED Senate PASSED H.Health and Human Services**

**HB 1200:** Local school boards can solicit and accept donations for field trips and any other educational purpose.

**SB 250 added the language from HB 927: Anti-bullying:** Expands the definition of ‘bullying’ to include electronic bullying that physically harms a person or damages the property of another, has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s education, creates an intimidating or threatening education environment, or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school. DOE is required to develop a model policy and make it available on the department’s web site for use by local school systems. **PASSED Senate PASSED House DV**

**SB 319:** Money appropriated for ‘textbooks’ can also be used to purchase computer hardware and software. **TGFS**

**SB 206:** Office of Planning and Budget to include tax expenditure reviews as part of the budget document. Three year history to be included – last year, this year to date, and next year. Also to include an analysis if the tax expenditure is meeting its objective. *Senate:* Removes the requirement for the analysis if meeting its objective. **SUPPORT PASSED Senate PASSED House DV**

**SB 299:** Juvenile judges given discretion about incarcerating a child with a weapon in school, on school grounds, or at a school function on the first offense unless the weapon is a firearm or machine gun or is used with an assault. *Essentially, knives and other items used as weapons excluding firearms are removed from the zero tolerance law for children on the first offense. Schools are not required to change their behavioral codes* **PASSED Senate DO PASS in H.Judiciary Non Civil**

*Key: HR- House Resolution, HB – House Bill, SR – Senate Resolution, SB– Senate Bill  
CA – Constitutional Amendment TGIS – To Governor for signature DV – Differing versions*  
The House has passed out the FY11 budget. The Senate is expected to adopt its version this coming week. The budget is the only constitutional requirement for the General Assembly.

## FY 11 Budget

**The entire K-12 budget has been reduced by \$408 million by the House which the governor recommended be cut by \$437 million. Local school boards will have to implement these cuts. All numbers shown reflect the dollar amount cut.**

Selected items in the K-12 budget.

FY11	FY11	Description
<u>Governor’s Rec.</u>	<u>House</u>	
- 341,541	- 2,279,817	Academic Coaches for local schools *

- 875,712	- 707,346	Agriculture Education
- 327,421	- 327,421	Charter School Grants, facility, planning, implementation
- 230,330	- 1,015,647	Curriculum Development
- 3,571,841	- 1,500,000	Edu. Tech Training Ctrs, <u>eliminate</u> *
- 46,095	- 278,128	GA Virtual School (high school)
- 299,733	- 300,442	Gov.'s Honors Pgm, Chg to 4 weeks
- 6,921,107	- 7,209,486	Nat'l Board Certification, <u>eliminate</u>
- 440,000	- 500,000	Nat'l Science Center, <u>eliminate</u>
- 2,657,539	- 6,687,773	Non QBE Grants, <u>eliminate</u> Sparsity Grants
- 1,308,782	- 2,202,025	Pre School Handicapped
- 24,699,141	- 29,009,534	Pupil Transportation *
	No change	QBE Equalization Grants
<b>-527,023,763</b>	<b>-262,922,773</b>	<b>QBE Program</b>
- 12,093,399	- 2,776,770	Reg'l Education Svc Agcy, <u>eliminate</u> *
- 514,766	- 2,577,554	School Improvement
<b>- 1,600,500</b>	<b>- 1,600,000</b>	<b>School Nurses</b>
- 1,473,240	- 3,546,860	Severely Emotionally Disturbed
- 1,633,454	- 1,541,659	Technology/Career Education
- 615,384	- 9,086,407	Testing, <u>eliminate</u> some tests *

\* Notes:

- Academic coaches and Technology Training Centers were transferred from Department of Education, DOE, to Regional Education Service Agencies, RESAs.
- New buses to be purchased with bonds, \$24,699,141.
- Includes \$272 million in federal stimulus funds, and \$100 million in state funds added back.
- RESAs to be \$6.5 million for basic services, plus Academic Coaches and Technology Centers.
- Testing eliminates the CRCT in G.1 & G.2, writing test in G.3 & G.5, Iowa Test of Basic Skills, SAT prep (use GACollege 411 for SAT prep). Reduces funding for PSAT by \$815,000 and AP exams by \$4,200,000 and pays for these tests for only students on FRL.