

AGENDA

The Newsletter of the
Georgia School Boards Association
Volume 6, Number 4
Special Capitol Watch Issue

We Believe in Public Education



A Review of the 2001 Session

The 2001 session of the Georgia General Assembly ended precisely at midnight on Wednesday, March 21st. Compared to recent sessions, this one seemed to move at a more measured pace (up until the final days, anyway), considered fewer education-related bills, and passed a reform bill much smaller in pages and scope than the one in the 2000 session. However, legislators did adopt two budgets (FY 01 Amended, \$15.2 billion and FY 02, \$15.4 billion); appropriated the largest single sum ever for capital outlay (\$468 million); passed a reform bill that will end so-called “social promotion;” increased the exclusions from the open records act for certain school personnel records; and provided for health insurance for school board members within the employees pool.

Bills that passed both the House and the Senate now rest on the Governor’s desk for further action – or no action. The Governor may either sign a bill into law, veto a bill, or permit it to become law without his signature. It is not known whether the Governor will exercise his option to veto any of the passed bills.

Bills that did not pass both chambers are not necessarily dead. A large



number of education-related bills that did not win approval in both chambers this session will carry over to the 2002 session and face the possibility of approval at that time.

GSBA has reviewed bills that passed and those that will carry over. A review of the actions taken by the 2001 General Assembly is presented in two sections below.

Bills That Passed

HB 16 was “The Flag Bill.” This legislation not only changed the flag, but it also requires that “any agency

which is eligible to receive appropriated state funds shall be required to display the Georgia state flag....” The effective date is January 31, 2001.

HB 65 adds teachers and other public school employees to the list of persons for whom certain records would be exempted from public disclosure. Under provisions of this bill, records of teachers and employees of a public school that would reveal the home address or telephone number, social security number, or insurance or medical information are not subject to public disclosure (open records). The effective date is upon approval by the Governor or upon becoming law without such approval.

HB 110 amends the election code to provide that if a candidate pays his or her qualifying fee with a check that is subsequently returned for insufficient funds, such candidate would automatically be found to have not met the qualifications for hold the office being sought. This provision would not apply if the financial institution certifies in writing by an officer’s or director’s oath that it erred in returning the check. The effective date is upon approval by the Governor or upon becoming law without such approval.

HB 139 was a special appropriation for capital outlay. The General Assembly appropriated \$468 million to the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission to help meet classroom needs created by HB 1187. During the legislative process, it was determined that \$100 million of the

Contents

• From the President.....	page 2
• From the Executive Vice President.....	page 4
• A Closer Look at the 2001 Education Reform Act.....	page 12
• Gary Ashley Honored.....	page 12
• Delegate Assembly Rules and Procedures.....	page 13
• Association News.....	page 15

continued on page 5...

From the President...

As I look back upon the 2001 Georgia General Assembly...

... and consider its impact upon public education, I find myself experiencing a myriad of emotions. The most overwhelming is a feeling of relief, relief that we did not see huge changes in the 2000 Education Reform Act. Another feeling was one of gratitude because the governor listened to educators and tweaked the previous legislation making change more workable. There was even a tiny bit of regret that more wasn't done to improve education. I will always remember the excitement about, and the focus on, our public schools during the 2000 Georgia General Assembly. Everyone was talking about educational improvement and there was even consideration of – dare I say it? – making parents more accountable for the behavior and education of their own children!

Were I to choose significant legislation from this year's session, three things stand out in my mind. One, the generous new funding for construction of classrooms, 768 million dollars, is unprecedented. Governor Barnes and our legislators found the money to help us get our class sizes down; the money followed the mandate. And the second significant change was addressing the end of social promotion. I personally never understood how social promotion was a benefit so am glad to see it ending. Teachers and administrators must be more resourceful and creative in helping some of our students prepare for promotion to the next grade. Yes, it will be hard in many instances but I hope there will be

pride in doing the right thing for students who are more disadvantaged than advantaged. Third, the funding of paraprofessionals in our kindergarten classes. Thank goodness our governor and legislature realized that teachers need assistance with six-year

All in all, the 2001 General Assembly was kind to public education, offering much more support than change.

olds – and an occasional break. It was imprudent to expect teachers to take a duty free lunch with no one to watch the students in the cafeteria. Teachers also need, at the very least, a bathroom break once or twice a day. Imagine being told you could not use the restroom during the day at work unless someone came in to relieve you at your desk! Because the state will pay for Kindergarten aides next year my local school system can now afford to have roving paraprofessionals in all of the schools to assist teachers in grades 1-5. I am sure other systems are finding the same financial help a welcome relief.

All in all, the 2001 General

Assembly was kind to public education, offering much more support than change. As I observe the educational winds of change on the federal level, I am grateful that we are implementing many of the changes President Bush is proposing to improve schools: annual assessment tests, an emphasis on reading, accountability, and assistance for our failing schools. I firmly believe that a day will come when many people involved in public education will thank Governor Roy Barnes and the Georgia General Assembly for caring enough to start this movement to drastically improve this state's public schools.

I am confident that ten years from now, our parents, educators, and other constituents will be proud of the improvements in our public schools. We will look back in amazement that we had ever set such mediocre standards for our children and teachers and fought education reform so vociferously. I hope and pray I am right or our boys and girls will again be the victims of opportunity lost. ▲



Tricia Smith
GSBA President

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From the Executive Vice President...



Gary Ashley
GSBA Executive
Vice President

Although education often took a back seat to other issues during the 2001 Georgia General Assembly, a lot of good work was accomplished this year. With legislation amending the A Plus Education Reform Act of 2000 and other bills, GSBA's job now is to communicate what all of this means to our members and other interested parties. Of course, we communicate constantly through our website the daily action of General Assembly and other issues of importance. With that done, we turn our

attention to developing the programs and services needed to assist in implementing new laws, rules and regulations. Our communication focus moves to building understanding of what the roles and responsibilities are for all those in education regarding new legislation.

GSBA does this in a variety of ways. First, our staff works to turn often lengthy and "lawyerly" language of legislation into useable information. Much of this is accomplished during the session, harnessing the power of the Internet to inform our members and others. We also spend a great deal of time determining the policy implications of new legislation. In developing our professional development programs as a follow up to the General Assembly, we are sure to provide the appropriate workshops and information so that school board members are well-versed and trained in existing and emerging issues. And, it is at the end of the legislative season in Georgia that we begin to look to GSBA's Delegate Assembly season.

Under the leadership of our

Governmental Operations Committee and with input from our member boards, GSBA revises its legislative positions in line with legislation passed during the session. Then we plan the Delegate Assembly itself, which has proven to be a more and more lively exchange over the years. It's during this meeting (and the planning that goes into it beforehand) that our member boards can have direct impact on GSBA's legislative initiatives.

An added bonus of attending the Summer Conference and Delegate Assembly is that we offer pre-conference training opportunities so that school board members can 1) be in compliance with the law regarding school board member training; and 2) gain a new understanding of what school boards and school systems need to do to be in compliance with state laws and state board rules and regulations.

I hope you all make plans to join us for this event which will serve to take us a few steps further in meeting the challenge of improving public education. ▲



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appropriation could be used for other capital outlay needs. The effective date is upon approval by the Governor or upon becoming law without such approval.

HB 164 prohibits deduction of the first seven days of sick leave for teachers and others if the absence is due to injury by a physical assault while in the performance of duties. Nor shall such personnel be required to pay for a substitute or have pay reduced. The effective date is July 1, 2001.

HB 176 mandates high school diplomas be awarded to certain WW II veterans. Veterans must apply, must have served in WW II between September 16, 1940, and December 31, 1946, must have been honorably discharged, must have not graduated, and must have been in attendance in high school ranging from 1937-1950 with graduation class years ranging from 1941-1950. Diplomas may be awarded posthumously and those veterans with GEDs are also eligible. Local boards are encouraged to award such diplomas on or near Veterans' Day. The effective date is July 1, 2001.

HB 228 requires publishers of adopted textbooks to provide to the State Board of Education an electronic format version of such textbooks. The effective date is July 1, 2001.

HB 299 requires the Secretary of

State to call a special election on the date of the November, 2002, state-wide election. The election would be to determine whether to change the state-wide \$10,000.00 homestead exemption from all school district ad valorem taxation for educational purposes for persons 62 years of age or older by changing the \$10,000.00 gross household income limitation to a \$10,000.00 net income. Net income would exclude income received as retirement, survivor, disability benefits under the federal Social Security Act or under any other public or private retirement, disability, or pension system, except such income which is in excess of the maximum amount authorized to be paid to an individual and his or her spouse under the federal Social Security Act. The effective date is January 1, 2003.

HB 372 requires school administrators to give 18-year-old students an opportunity to register to vote during the month of April each year. The effective date is July 1, 2001.

HB 651 increases the length of time school systems may lease schoolhouses and other property to any person or group from 15 years to 50 years. The effective date is July 1, 2001.

HB 656 is the Governor's Education Reform Package of 2001. This bill provides for – among other things – extending the Early Intervention Program to grades 4 & 5; clarifying middle school requirements regard-

ing when remediation may be offered; extra funding for National Board Certified teachers; raising the capital outlay funding cap and lowering the minimum local participation percentage; ending so-called social promotion; creating a commission called the Georgia Closing The Achievement Gap Commission to study ways to increase achievement among disaggregated groups; funding for kindergarten aides; including sales tax potential along with property wealth to calculate the local wealth factor; making clear that the expenditure control for the 20 additional days of instruction is system wide; and lowering the overall cumulative postsecondary grade from 3.2 to 3.0 for the PROMISE teacher's scholarships. The effective date is July 1, 2001.

HB 724 allows local school board members to be included in the health benefit plan provided for school employees as well as the flexible employee benefits provided to employees of the state. The effective date is July 1, 2001.

HB 725 allows state employees and public school employees to purchase for personal purposes computer equipment offered through any official employee purchase program through the authority of the Georgia Technology Authority. Payroll deductions for this purpose are allowed (but not mandated). The effective date is upon signature by the

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The following boards of education have verified their compliance with the "Standards for Local Boards of Education."

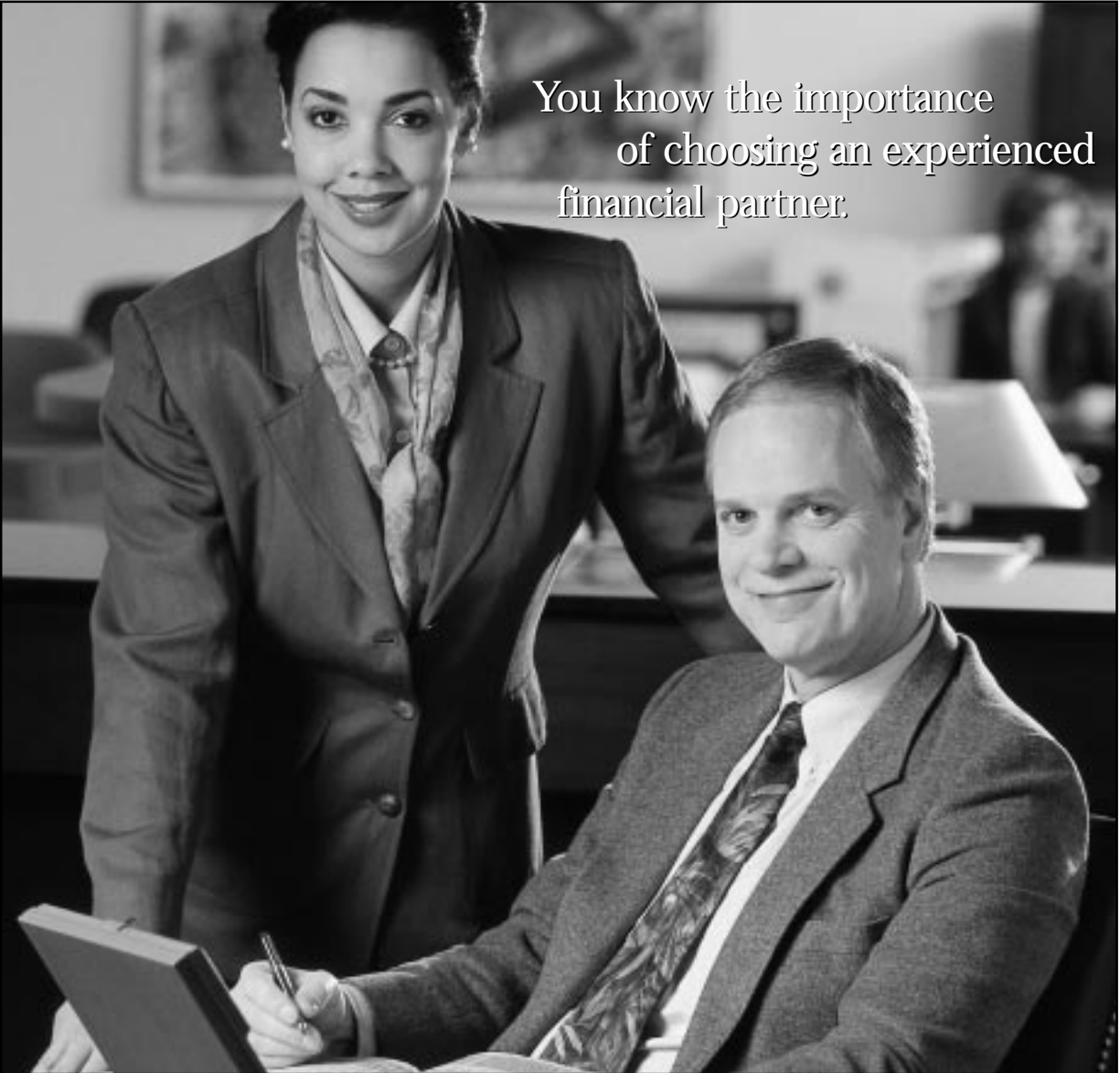
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Governor or upon becoming law without such signature.

HR 410 creates the House Study Committee on Technology Education. It is assumed that the Committee will study emerging technology's impact on Georgia's economic growth; the demand for well-trained workers for high tech jobs; and development of a skilled workforce to ensure continued economic growth. The effective date is July 1, 2001, and the Committee shall stand abolished on December 31, 2001.

HR 500 creates the House Study Committee on Universal School Breakfast. The Committee will examine the effects of school breakfast programs and whether they should become a component of early academic programs at no charge to all students without regard to economic need. The effective date is July 1, 2001; the Committee will be abolished December 31, 2001.

ished December 31, 2001.

SB 14 raises the state minimum wage from \$3.25 to \$5.15. All current exemptions to this requirement remain, and one relating to employees of nonprofit child-caring institutions or long-term care facilities serving children or mentally disabled adults has been added (with certain other requirements). The state minimum wage remains unaffected by increases to the minimum wage which may be made by Congress. The effective date is July 1, 2001.

SB 205 adds the following to the list of items that are exempt from public disclosure (public records): Mother's birth name, credit card number, birth date, debit card number, bank account number information, and financial data. The effective date is July 1, 2001.

SB 274 requires a local unit of administration to pay beginning classroom teachers the first salary

payment for the number of days worked at the end of the first month of the school year in which service is rendered. The State Board of Education must develop rules and procedures for implementing this law by July 1, 2001. The effective date is upon approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.

SR 217 creates the Senate Study Committee on Technology Education. The study will include the demand for well-trained workers, the fact that technology has sparked Georgia's economy, and effective technology in Georgia's schools. The effective date is July 1, 2001, and it will be abolished on December 31, 2001.

SR 252 creates the Joint Study Committee On Physical Activity In Georgia Schools. This Committee will address concerns related to obesity in children, Georgia's mortality

Continued on page 8...



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Continued from the page 7...

rate from cardiovascular disease, the incidence of chronic disease linked to sedentary life style, and the relationship between reduction in physical activity in schools and overall increases in academic performance. The effective date is July 1, 2001, and the Committee will stand abolished on December 15, 2001.

Bills That Will Carry Over To The 2002 Session

HB 136 would authorize (not require) RESAs to sell or provide at a reasonable cost goods to private schools located in the state.

HB 161 would require persons who are neither students nor employees to inform school administrators upon

entering the premises of a school.

HB 217 would allow certain "black-board teachers" to return to service. One year must elapse before return, the teachers must teach the subjects of mathematics, science, special education, or technology, and return to service could be for no more than three years. NOTE: A number of bills similar to this one carry over but are not included here, including HB 210, HB 508, and HB 934.

HB 234 would require some schools to close on election day. If local boards authorize a school building as a polling place during an election, all schools in the school system would be forced to close that day.

HB 380 would restrict the authority

of principals regarding loitering. The bill would require that a person on school premises engage in conduct which impairs a school function or materially and substantially interferes with the requirements of appropriate discipline in the operation of the school before a principal could have them removed.

HB 473 would greatly expand the report on the Georgia Education Workforce. It would provide that each local board of education file a report by October 1 of each year with the DOE and the Office of Education Accountability regarding numerous personnel actions taken by the local board or its designees during the previous 12 months. Personnel actions

Continued on page 9...

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Continued from the page 8...

would be categorized by type of action, gender, race, and certificate level.

HB 476 would prohibit expulsion of students under age 16. The bill would disallow permanent expulsions for any reason, though expulsions beyond the current semester or quarter – with written explanation – would be permitted.

HB 554 would provide for payment for advanced placement tests for students in private schools. The DOE would be allowed to pay fees charged for advanced placement tests taken by private school students after successful completion of an advanced placement course.

HB 592 would alter procedures now found in complaints policies. The bill would require the local board to hear level III complaints from the beginning and in person. Administrators could dismiss no complaint without first holding a hearing.

HB 618 would make changes regarding students subject to disciplinary orders (suspensions or expulsions). The bill would provide that students subject to disciplinary orders would apply not only to students entering from other public school systems but also to students entering from private schools and home study programs.

HB 619 would make changes to the tribunal process. The legislation would do four things: First, reduce notice of a tribunal's written decision from ten to five days; second, allow the local board to designate an appeal committee or appellate hearing officer; thirdly, reduce the time within which an appeal may be filed from 20 days to ten days; and fourthly, increase the time the decision of an appeal must be given to all parties from ten to 20 days. A local board of education could also designate an appeal committee or appellate hearing officer.

HB 718 would require annual school air quality inspections by county boards of health. Notice to employees and parents of students would be

required for schools with a significant problem regarding indoor air quality.

HR 126 calls for a Constitutional amendment to declare certain persons ineligible to hold any public office. Persons could not hold public office if they are a defaulter for any federal, state, county, municipal, or school system taxes.

HR 223 would create a joint study committee on school size. The resolution asserts that Georgia's schools are among the largest in the country and states that smaller school size creates increased student achievement, higher attendance, greater parental involvement, etc.

HR 456 would create a study committee to study whether to exempt educators from the state income tax. The committee would address a growing problem – recruiting and retaining enough personnel to staff positions.

Continued on page 10...

Staff Listing

Gary Ashley, Executive Vice President - gashley@gsba.com
Gil Parrish, Deputy Executive Director - gparrish@gsba.com
Vescia DeMeritte, Policy Analyst - vdemeritte@gsba.com
Lee Gaby, Director of Finance and Risk Management - lgaby@gsba.com
Pam Harrison, Staff Assistant - pharrison@gsba.com
Karen Hodges, Staff Assistant - khodges@gsba.com
Elaine Horne, Risk Services Manager - ehorne@gsba.com
Billy Johnson, Professional Development Specialist - bjohnson@gsba.com
Esther Mays, Database Administrator - emays@gsba.com
Karen Palmer, Front Office Assistant - kpalmer@gsba.com
Laura Reilly, Communications Specialist - lreilly@mindspring.com
Don Rooks, Legislative Specialist - drooks@gsba.com
Jeanette Shelnett, Administrative Assistant - shelnett@gsba.com
John Shore, Risk Information Manager - jshore@gsba.com
Catrina Tillis-Gilbert, Staff Assistant - ctillis@gsba.com
Debbie Tweedell, Bookkeeper - tweedell@gsba.com
Sandy Vanags, Policy Coordinator - svanags@gsba.com
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Pre-Conference Training Opportunities

New Board Member Orientation (June 20-21) *A review of educational laws, rules, regulations and boardsmanship skills.*
 Communications Workshop (June 21) *Featuring in-depth sessions on public engagement and local school councils.*
 Policy Workshop (June 21) *An update of new laws, rules and regulations affecting local school district policy.*

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SB 42 would allow private and home study program students to participate in public school extracurricular programs. Such students would be required to meet the same requirements established for public school students in that program, other than school attendance.

SB 171 would alter the nominating process for school council elections. Under this bill, there is a provision for nominations of eligible individuals in writing or by making an oral

motion which is seconded by another member of the electing body.

SB 226 would provide for a pay increase for national certified school counselors. The bill mandates a five percent increase in state salary, two days of approved paid leave to prepare documentation, and fee reimbursement upon certification.

SB 247 would provide a 10 percent rate increase in state salary for any school speech-language pathologist

or audiologist who has earned national certification.

SB 291 dictates three levels of punishment for physical violence against a teacher – suspension, assignment to an alternative school, or expulsion. Physical violence is defined in the bill as “contact of an insulting or provoking nature with the person of another, whether intentionally or due to acting in a conscious disregard of a substantial and foreseeable risk.” ▲

Wachovia full page ad

A Closer Look at the 2001 Education Reform Act

The 2001 Education Reform Act provides amendments to the Education Reform Act of 2000, including restoring funding for kindergarten aides, replacing the remedial program in grades 4 & 5 with the EIP program, raising the regular capital outlay entitlement to \$200 million, adds sales tax revenues as a factor in calculating local wealth, changes the range of required local participation in capital outlay projects to 8 percent to 20 percent (was 10 percent to 25 percent), extends the low wealth capital outlay program to 2009, sunsets the exceptional growth capital outlay program in 2009, and adds a new section calling for the elimination of social promotion. The bill includes the following seven major areas:

1. Expanding the Early Intervention Program
2. Education Funding Initiatives
3. Middle School Program Clarifications
4. National Board Certification Initiative
5. Capital Outlay for School Construction
6. Ending Social Promotion
7. HOPE Scholarship Eligibility

The Bill Will Impact the Following:

- Local boards of education
- State Board of Education
- School system personnel
- Students
- Parents
- Persons appointed to the Georgia Closing the Achievement Gap Commission

Consider These Points Regarding the Bill:

- Amendments are made to some of the Education Reform Act of 2000
- The EIP is extended to grades 4 & 5
- Remediation is removed from grades 4 & 5
- Paraprofessionals are funded at the kindergarten level
- 20 additional days of instruction

are added to expenditure controls, but are system-wide

- It is no longer required to pay principals' supplements in one check
- Five hours of academic instruction in middle grades programs may include remediation
- Middle grades programs are required to provide interdisciplinary teams of academic teachers with common planning time of a minimum of 55 minutes
- The regular capital outlay construction program funding level is raised to \$200 million and the required local participation may range from 8 percent to 20 percent (was 10 percent and 25 percent)
- Low-wealth systems may get a 95% state grant by complying with certain conditions (prototypical design and direction by GSFIC)
- There will be a state-mandated end to "social promotion" which requires achieving an acceptable level on tests
- A new commission – the Georgia Closing the Achievement Gap Commission – is created and charged to find ways to narrow the achievement gap among various disaggregated groups
- Retest of students who fail the first assessment is required

The Bill Puts Forth the Following Requirements:

- The 20 additional days of instruction must come under system expenditure controls
- Five hours of academic instruction in middle grades programs (may include remediation)
- Interdisciplinary teachers in middle grades programs must be given 55 minutes of common planning time
- "Social promotion" must end by school year 2005-2006
- The SBOE must require promotion standards by local boards
- Local boards must adopt a placement and promotion policy by July 1, 2001
- Students failing to achieve the promotion standard must be retested
- Local boards must adopt a policy

- on how the CRCT administered in grades one through eight will be weighted or utilized by July 1, 2001
- An appeals committee (called placement committee) must be provided for
- The Georgia Closing the Achievement Gap Commission must be created
- The commission must make recommendations and reports to the ECC ▲

Gary Ashley Honored by Georgia Senate and Georgia House of Representatives

Gary Ashley, GSBA executive vice president, was honored by Georgia senators and representatives with resolutions from their respective houses of the legislature. Ashley, who will retire August 31 from GSBA after serving the association for 23 years, was cited for the outstanding leadership he has provided to the governance structure of education.

House Resolution 608 was sponsored by Rep. Smith of the 175th, Rep. Jamieson of the 22nd, Rep. Porter of the 143rd, Rep. Taylor of the 134th, Rep. Coleman of the 80th, and other state representatives. The resolution focused on Ashley's 45 years of service to public education in various positions ranging from teacher, principal and superintendent to directing state and national educational associations.

Senate Resolution 246, sponsored by a number of leading senators, expressed appreciation to Ashley for "bringing together local school board members and members of the Georgia Senate."

Both resolutions ended with thanking Ashley for his dedication and, quoting HR608, working for "the betterment of public education so that children can reap the full benefits of a sound, high quality educational system..."

Ashley announced in January that he would retire as GSBA's executive vice president in August to devote time to personal and professional interests. ▲

Georgia School Boards Association
Annual Business Meeting of the Delegate Assembly
Friday, June 22, 2001
2:45 p.m.
Official Business Session

Rules/Procedures

1. The Delegate Assembly will consist of one voting member (delegate from each local board of education.) Other board members are welcome to attend and participate in the discussion of issues, but only the official delegate may make or second motions and vote.
2. The chairman of the Governmental Operations Committee will explain the role of the Committee and procedures that have been followed. The chairman will move the adoption section by section of the 2001 GSBA Legislative Positions (no second is required since the recommendation comes from the Governmental Operations Committee). Specific items may be pulled for a separate vote upon the request of a delegate from the floor. Delegates may propose amendments or changes in the recommendations of the Governmental Operations Committee by adhering to the rules and procedures outlined below. Additionally, at the conclusion of the consideration of the Governmental Operations Committee's recommendations in each section, delegates may introduce from the floor any proposed legislative position or amendment not previously considered by adhering to the following procedures:
 - A. The president will recognize any delegate who wishes to propose a new legislative position or amend an existing legislative position if the proposal has been presented in writing to the GSBA Registrar (located at the GSBA Registration Desk) no later than noon on June 22. Forms for submitting new proposals or amendments will be available at the GSBA Registration desk.
 - B. The chair will call for a second to the motion and discussion of the motion.
 - C. If the motion receives a majority vote of all delegates present and voting, the motion passes. In calling for a vote, the chair shall call for those voting for the motion, and those voting against the motion.
3. Resolutions will be voted on by the Assembly.

Important Reminders

As there will not be a meeting of the Governmental Operations Committee during the Conference/Delegate Assembly, the only opportunity that members of the Delegate Assembly will have to propose new positions or amendments will be the Official Business Session at 2:45 p.m. on Friday in accordance with the procedures listed above.

- All motions must receive a majority vote of all certified delegates present and voting at the assembly in order to pass.
- Once recognized by the Chairman to speak, delegates are requested to give their name, and identify their local school system prior to addressing the assembly. Only certified delegates can make or second motions.
- All delegates **MUST** wear a delegate ribbon in order to be recognized from the floor of the assembly and be allowed to make a motion.

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GEORGIA POWER-ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS' HOMEWORK HOTLINE (M-F: 3PM-7PM): 404-827-8620

Association News

Georgia Board of Education and GSBA Hold Historic Meeting

In a historic and significant fashion, the Georgia Board of Education and the Georgia School Boards Association's Board of Directors met March 7, in an informal setting to dialogue about the common goals the respective entities hold for moving public education forward. Teaming up by their correlating Congressional/GSBA District areas, GSBA board members dialogued individually with each other prior to a more general discussion led by State Board Chair Otis Brumby and GSBA President Tricia Smith.

Chairman Brumby stressed his intentions to strengthen local control and help local boards have as much flexibility as possible. He also championed the flow of less paperwork. GSBA President Tricia Smith stressed GSBA's desire to work cooperatively with the state board while helping local boards improve measures to enhance student achievement. State board Vice Chair Cathy Henson complimented GSBA on its work with the state board in the rule-making process.

The joint meeting came about as a result of a special Liaison Committee established by the two entities to improve the working relationship between the two governance bodies. GSBA Executive Vice President Gary Ashley has long supported such a regular dialogue. The liaison committee from both boards along with Gary Ashley and State School Superintendent Linda Schrenko will meet quarterly to discuss goals, proposed policies and updated analysis of the education reform effort to determine the progress being made in the improvement of schools and student achievement. Prior to establishing these regular meetings and the liaison committee, the two full entities had met only on a very irregular basis.

GSBA Nominating Committee Selects Slate of Officers

Chairman Y. N. Myers, Jr., GSBA's past president, presided over the meeting in which the Association's 2001 slate of officers was developed.

The committee selected:

President Elect	Brad Bryant, DeKalb County
Vice President:	Deloras Moon, Jones County
Treasurer:	D. Smith Pass, Coweta County

These individuals will be presented by the Nominating Committee at the June 22, 2001, Delegate Assembly in Savannah, Georgia.

The following served on the 2000-2001 GSBA Nominating Committee: Marjorie Washington (McIntosh County), Sammie Lee Knight (Washington County), Y. N. Myers, Jr., Chair (Richmond County), Svea Bogue (Clarke County), Betty J. Phillips (Bibb County), Shirley Brooks (Ben Hill County), Joe B. Crane (Valdosta City), Myrlene Sheffield (Baker County), Robert P. Jones (Harris County), Frances Edwards (DeKalb County), Emmett D. Johnson (Atlanta City), Alfred McNair (Troup County), Sandra Burk (Rome City), Jimmy Coffel (Camden County) and Richard Martin (Habersham County).

School Board Member Health Coverage May Be Available Soon

School board members will be eligible to enroll themselves and their eligible dependents in the School Employee Health Fund if Governor Barnes signs House Bill 724. This legislation eliminates the current provision for a separate health fund for school board members. GSBA will not serve as a contract administrator under provisions of this legislation. The Department of Community Health is responsible for all administration of the School Employee Health Fund (and the Teachers Health Fund)

and is authorized to develop rules for school board member participation. Rates for coverage would be the same for school board members as they are for other eligible school employees. The Federal COBRA provisions will apply to board members who retire and wish to extend participation in the School Employee Health Fund.

If your system has adopted the State Flex Benefits Plan, HB724 also allows board members to be enrolled for the coverages offered. O.C.G.A. 20-2-55 authorizes your board to make an employer contribution for board member medical and dental insurance. This statute enables each local system to use local funds to make an employer contributions as long as the amount does not exceed, the percent specified by law.

The Department of Community Health should be able to provide an interpretation of the provision governing the maximum employer contribution by your board of education. Board members will have to pay some or all of the premiums for their coverage, depending on the amount of employer contribution and the amount of their regular board compensation.

Your system will receive information directly from the Department of Community Health concerning benefits available, enrollment procedures and all other details of plan administration. Please be sure your system benefits coordinator/staff knows to be alert for upcoming announcements from the Department of Community Health. GSBA will keep board chairs and superintendents apprised of developments regarding this issue. The GSBA web site at www.gsba.com is also a good resource to check for the latest developments.

University Honors Board Member

Pam Nutt, a Henry County school board member, was honored by the College of Education at the University of West Georgia. The University's Media and Instructional Technology Department selected Ms. Nutt as the "Outstanding Specialist in Education Student in Media." ▲

Publication Policy

Agenda is published six times a year by the Georgia School Boards Association as a service to its member school boards. GSBA is a nonprofit organization for the state's 180 local school boards, which have joined together voluntarily to improve public education through cooperative effort. The articles published in each issue represent the ideas or beliefs of the writers and are not necessarily the views of GSBA, except where specifically stated.

You are invited to submit articles of 1,500 to 2,000 words dealing with topics of current interest to school board members. The editor reserves the right to determine whether the article is appropriate for the readership. Send manuscripts to Laura Reilly, *Agenda* Editor, Georgia School Boards Association, 5120 Sugarloaf Parkway, Lawrenceville, GA 30043.

Gary Ashley, Executive Editor
Gil Parrish, Managing Editor
Laura Reilly, APR, Editor

Georgia School Boards Association
5120 Sugarloaf Parkway
Lawrenceville, GA 30043
Phone: 770 962-2985
Toll Free: 800 226-1856
FAX: 770 962-5392
FAX: 770 962-1546

GSBA's Web Site: www.gsba.com

**Make Sure To Put
These Dates on Your
Calendar!
The Georgia
School Boards
Association/Georgia
School Superintendents
Association Annual
Conference will be held
November 30 -
December 1, 2001, at
the Atlanta Renaissance
Waverly Hotel.**

Mark the Dates

GEORGIA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION CALENDAR

April 2001:

26 GSBA Governmental Operations Committee, Macon
29-30 Leadership GSBA, Crowne Plaza, Macon

May 2001:

9 GSBA Executive Committee, GSBA Offices, Lawrenceville
10-11 GSBA Board of Directors' Retreat, GSBA Offices, Lawrenceville
16 Georgia Council of School Board Attorneys School Law Workshop
(Attorneys Only), Mercer Law School, Macon

June 2001:

20-21 GSBA New Board Member Orientation, Hyatt Regency, Savannah
21 GSBA Communications Workshop, Hyatt Regency, Savannah
21 GSBA Policy Workshop, Hyatt Regency, Savannah
22-23 GSBA Summer Conference and Delegate Assembly, Hyatt Regency, Savannah

July 2001:

16-19 NSBA Southern Region Conference, Biloxi, Mississippi

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5120 Sugarloaf Parkway
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