

Senate Bill 211

By: Senators Hickman of the 4th, Dixon of the 45th, Kennedy of the 18th, Gooch of the 51st,  
Anavitarte of the 31st and others

**AS PASSED**

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to education, so as to  
2 establish the Georgia Council on Literacy; to provide for definitions; to provide for members  
3 and officers; to provide for meetings, agendas, quorum, and compensation; to provide for the  
4 council's duties and powers; to provide for consultation with subject matter experts; to  
5 provide for automatic repeal; to replace the Education Coordinating Council with the  
6 Alliance of Education Agency Heads; to provide for related matters; to make conforming  
7 changes; to provide for legislative findings; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other  
8 purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 **SECTION 1.**

11 The General Assembly finds that:

12 (1) Current Georgian literacy rates are not where they need to be to support the workforce  
13 needs of our growing economy, and it has been many years since there has been a  
14 systematic study of Georgia's efforts to support student and adult literacy efforts;

15 (2) A comprehensive study of all state resources and activities that are funded to support  
16 improved literacy outcomes is needed. This study should also set recommended priorities  
17 for future investments and strategies; and

18 (3) Georgia must have a very specific goal that sets clearly defined measures for third,  
19 fifth, and eighth grade reading outcomes.

20 **SECTION 2.**

21 Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to education, is amended in  
22 Chapter 1, relating to general provisions, by adding a new article to read as follows:

23 "ARTICLE 4

24 20-1-40.

25 As used in this article, the term:

26 (1) 'Council' means the Georgia Council on Literacy established under this article.

27 (2) 'Evidence based literacy instruction methods and curricula' means instructional  
28 materials, instructional practices, and curricula that are scientifically based reading  
29 instruction, or multisensory language instruction, including oral language development,  
30 phonological awareness, and phonics instruction that includes decoding and encoding,  
31 fluency, writing, vocabulary, reading, and comprehension.

32 20-1-41.

33 There is established the Georgia Council on Literacy for the purpose of conducting  
34 comprehensive reviews of birth to postsecondary programs, the alignment of state support  
35 for such programs, and other issues related to improving the literacy outcomes of Georgia  
36 students.

37 20-1-42.

38 (a) The council shall be composed of 30 members as follows:

39 (1) The following members appointed by the Governor:

40 (A) A representative from the Sandra Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and  
41 Literacy;

42 (B) A representative from the Office of Public Library Services of the Board of  
43 Regents of the University System of Georgia;

44 (C) A representative from the State Board of Education;

45 (D) Two individuals with knowledge, skills, and experience in birth to five-year-old  
46 early learning; and

47 (E) Seven individuals with knowledge, skills, and experience in literacy or dyslexia  
48 education;

49 (2) The following members appointed by the President of the Senate:

50 (A) The chairperson of the Senate Education and Youth Committee;

51 (B) The chairperson of the Senate Higher Education Committee;

52 (C) The chairperson of the Senate Appropriations Committee;

53 (D) Two members of the Senate from the minority caucus; and

54 (E) Four individuals to include a teacher, a local board of education member, a local  
55 school superintendent, and a literacy advocate; and

56 (3) The following members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives:

57 (A) The chairperson of the House Committee on Education;

58 (B) The chairperson of the House Committee on Higher Education;

59 (C) The chairperson of the House Committee on Appropriations;

60 (D) Two members of the House of Representatives from the minority caucus; and

61 (E) Four individuals to include a teacher, a local board of education member, a local  
62 school superintendent, and a literacy advocate.

63 (b) Each nonlegislative member of the council shall be appointed to serve until his or her  
64 successor is duly appointed. Legislative members of the council shall serve until  
65 completion of their current terms of office. Any member may be appointed to succeed  
66 himself or herself on the council. If a member of the council is an elected or appointed  
67 official, such member, or his or her designee, shall be removed from the council if such  
68 member no longer serves as such elected or appointed official.

69 (c) The Governor shall designate one of the members appointed pursuant to subsection (a)  
70 of this Code section the chairperson of the council. The council may elect other officers  
71 as it deems necessary. The chairperson of the council may designate and appoint  
72 committees from among the membership of the council as well as appoint other persons  
73 to perform such functions as he or she may determine to be necessary as relevant to and  
74 consistent with this article. The chairperson shall only vote to break a tie.

75 (d) The Governor shall direct the Alliance of Education Agency Heads provided for in  
76 Article 1 of Chapter 14 of this title to work with members of the council.

77 (e) The council shall be attached for administrative purposes only to the Office of Student  
78 Achievement. The Office of Student Achievement shall provide staff support for the  
79 council and shall hire an individual to serve as Georgia Literacy Coach who shall be  
80 responsible for coordination of such staff support and for working in coordination with the  
81 literacy related efforts of the Alliance of Education Agency Heads. The Office of Student  
82 Achievement shall use any funds specifically appropriated to support the work of the  
83 council for such purpose.

84 20-1-43.

85 (a) The council may conduct meetings at such places and times as it deems necessary or  
86 convenient to enable it to fully and effectively exercise its powers, perform its duties, and  
87 accomplish the objectives and purposes of this article; provided, however, that the council

88 shall meet not less than four times per year. The council shall hold meetings at the call of  
89 the chairperson.  
90 (b) A quorum for transacting business shall be a majority of the members of the council.  
91 (c) Legislative members of the council shall receive the allowances provided for in Code  
92 Section 28-1-8. Nonlegislative members of the council shall receive a daily expense  
93 allowance in the amount specified in subsection (b) of Code Section 45-7-21 as well as the  
94 mileage or transportation allowance authorized for state employees. Members of the  
95 council who are state officials, other than legislative members, or state employees shall  
96 receive no compensation for their services on the council, but shall be reimbursed for  
97 expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties as members of the council in  
98 the same manner as they are reimbursed for expenses in their capacities as state officials  
99 or state employees. The funds necessary for the reimbursement of the expenses of state  
100 officials, other than legislative members, and state employees shall come from funds  
101 appropriated to or otherwise available to their respective departments. All other funds  
102 necessary to carry out the provisions of this article shall come from funds appropriated to  
103 the Senate and the House of Representatives.

104 20-1-44.

105 (a) The council shall have the following duties:

106 (1) Work in partnership with the State Board of Education and the Department of  
107 Education to implement the requirements of the Georgia Early Literacy Act as provided  
108 for in Code Section 20-2-153.1;

109 (2) Review the conditions, needs, issues, and problems related to state literacy outcomes;  
110 make recommendations for legislation and appropriations to support improving such  
111 outcomes; and provide by November 30 of each year a report of such review and  
112 recommendations to the Governor, the Office of Planning and Budget, the Speaker of the  
113 House of Representatives, and the President of the Senate;

- 114 (3) Evaluate and consider the best practices, experiences, and results of legislation in  
115 other states with regard to literacy improvements for students;
- 116 (4) Research and make recommendations on improving literacy rates for low-income  
117 students;
- 118 (5) Research and make recommendations on improving literacy rates for minority and  
119 English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) students;
- 120 (6) Research and make recommendations on improving literacy rates for students with  
121 characteristics of dyslexia;
- 122 (7) Monitor state-wide literacy goals and measures set by the State Board of Education  
123 in consultation with the Department of Education and the Office of Student Achievement  
124 and provide by October 31 of each year a report to the State Board of Education of the  
125 conclusions reached through such monitoring regarding the status and effectiveness of  
126 policy initiatives;
- 127 (8) Review changes or updates to QBE funding to enhance literacy instruction;
- 128 (9) Review and make recommendations on the alignment of teacher certifications to  
129 include evidence based literacy instruction and education degree program requirements;
- 130 (10) Review and make recommendations for the professional development needed by  
131 current teachers for improving literacy instruction in pre-kindergarten through third  
132 grade;
- 133 (11) Review state-wide birth to age five initiatives and suggest policy and appropriation  
134 changes; and
- 135 (12) Review best practices for community based literacy programs and make  
136 recommendations for improvement.
- 137 (b) The council shall be authorized to:
- 138 (1) Request and receive data from and review the records of appropriate state agencies  
139 to the greatest extent allowed by state and federal law;
- 140 (2) Seek and accept public or private grants, devises, and bequests;

141 (3) Enter into contracts or agreements through the council's chairperson necessary or  
 142 incidental to the performance of its duties;

143 (4) Establish rules and procedures for conducting the business of the council;

144 (5) Conduct studies, hold public meetings, collect data, or take any other action the  
 145 council deems necessary to fulfill its responsibilities; and

146 (6) Retain the services of attorneys, consultants, subject matter experts, economists,  
 147 budget analysts, data analysts, statisticians, and other individuals or organizations as  
 148 deemed appropriate by the council. Such services may be obtained through a request for  
 149 proposal process conducted through the Office of Planning and Budget; provided,  
 150 however, that any final selection shall be approved by the council.

151 20-1-45.

152 The council shall be abolished and this article shall stand repealed on December 31, 2026."

153 **SECTION 3.**

154 Said title is further amended in Article 1 of Chapter 14, relating to general provisions for  
 155 education accountability, by revising Code Section 20-14-8, relating to general powers and  
 156 duties, as follows:

157 "20-14-8.

158 The council alliance shall have the following general powers and duties, in addition to any  
 159 and all other powers enumerated in this article, any or all of which may be exercised by the  
 160 council alliance directly or by the Office of Student Achievement under the direction and  
 161 supervision of the council alliance:

162 (1) To foster coordination and cooperation among the chief officers of the departments,  
 163 boards, and offices represented on the council alliance;

164 (2) To develop a seamless and integrated public education system;

- 165 (3) To require the shared and efficient expenditures for and utilization of facilities,  
166 personnel, and other resources;
- 167 (4) To require the seamless coordination of curriculum among the departments, boards,  
168 and offices represented on the ~~council~~ alliance;
- 169 (5) To require reasonable ease of transition for students among the educational  
170 institutions represented on the ~~council~~ alliance;
- 171 (6) To establish and require high and necessary levels of student achievement at all  
172 levels of education;
- 173 (7) To exercise oversight of accountability systems that are within or among the  
174 departments, boards, and offices represented on the ~~council~~ alliance and develop overlay  
175 accountability systems through the Office of Student Achievement;
- 176 (8) To exercise supervision and oversight over the Office of Student Achievement  
177 created in Part 2 of Article 2 of this chapter;
- 178 (9) To coordinate the activities of state, regional, and local cooperative public education  
179 agencies, offices, or councils, including, but not limited to, the state's regional educational  
180 service agencies or other such groups that may be created in addition or in their place;
- 181 (10) To focus on literacy improvements for Georgia students;
- 182 (11) To work with the Georgia Council on Literacy to ensure the availability and quality  
183 of the education ~~work force~~ workforce through preparation, professional development,  
184 and nontraditional routes to employment;
- 185 ~~(11)~~(12) To oversee the development and implementation of a comprehensive  
186 system-wide education student information system that will support the implementation  
187 of an education accountability system and improve the seamless operation of public  
188 education;
- 189 ~~(12)~~(13) To simplify rules and regulations by all departments, boards, and offices  
190 represented on the ~~council~~ alliance;



191 ~~(13)~~(14) To develop a state-wide mentoring program that enhances student achievement  
 192 at all levels of public education;

193 ~~(14)~~(15) To establish and coordinate a school safety collaborative with representation  
 194 from agencies and organizations designated by the ~~council~~ alliance to improve the school  
 195 climate and enhance school safety; and

196 ~~(15)~~(16) To mediate disputes among the Department of Education, the University  
 197 System of Georgia, the Technical College System of Georgia, the Professional Standards  
 198 Commission, the Department of Early Care and Learning, and the Office of Student  
 199 Achievement in matters regarding accountability or education system seamlessness."

200 **SECTION 4.**

201 Said title is further amended by revising subsection (d) of Code Section 20-14-35, relating  
 202 to office powers, on-site audits, reporting findings and recommendations, and authorization  
 203 of other school audits, as follows:

204 "(d) The auditors shall report to the local board of education, the local school council, and  
 205 appropriate school administrators and shall report findings and recommendations  
 206 concerning any necessary improvements or intervention strategies. School audit reports  
 207 shall be provided to the ~~council~~ alliance and the State Board of Education."

208 **SECTION 5.**

209 Said title is further amended by replacing "Education Coordinating Council" and "council"  
 210 with "Alliance of Education Agency Heads" and "alliance", respectively, wherever the  
 211 former terms occur in:

212 (1) Code Section 20-2-271, relating to development of regional improvement plan,  
 213 introduction of core services, instructional care teams, and establishment of alternative  
 214 methods of teacher certification;

- 215 (2) Code Section 20-2-320, relating to state-wide comprehensive educational information  
216 system and identification of data to implement Quality Basic Education Program;
- 217 (3) Code Section 20-14-1, relating to responsibility of council;
- 218 (4) Code Section 20-14-2, relating to creation of council;
- 219 (5) Code Section 20-14-3, relating to membership, officers, and meetings;
- 220 (6) Code Section 20-14-4, relating to quorum and committees;
- 221 (7) Code Section 20-14-5, relating to annual reports;
- 222 (8) Code Section 20-14-6, relating to selection of personnel to support council;
- 223 (9) Code Section 20-14-7, relating to powers of council;
- 224 (10) Code Section 20-14-9, relating to access to records or data;
- 225 (11) Code Section 20-14-10, relating to decisions or actions by council directing action by  
226 department, board, or office;
- 227 (12) Code Section 20-14-11, relating to appointment by Governor of study commissions,  
228 findings and recommendations, and staff and expenses;
- 229 (13) Code Section 20-14-20, relating to definitions;
- 230 (14) Code Section 20-14-25, relating to creation, director, authority, seal, and  
231 administrative assignment;
- 232 (15) Code Section 20-14-26, relating to duties; and
- 233 (16) Code Section 20-14-27, relating to required report and publication format.

234 **SECTION 6.**

235 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.