

Senate Bill 464

By: Senators Dixon of the 45th, Payne of the 54th, Still of the 48th, Echols of the 49th,  
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 revise the "Georgia Early Literacy Act"; to provide for five members of the Georgia Council  
3 on Literacy to be designated as voting members; to revise provisions for constituting a  
4 quorum for such council to conduct business; to provide for the identification of up to five  
5 universal reading screeners, one of which shall be a free universal reading screener, for use  
6 by public schools and local school systems; to provide for approval of a memorandum of  
7 agreement; to provide for the adoption, use, and administration of a universal reading  
8 screener; to establish the School Supplies for Educators Program, subject to appropriation  
9 by the General Assembly and the availability of other funds for such purpose; to provide for  
10 a short title; to require the State Board of Education to establish a program for the  
11 Department of Education to allocate funds for eligible educators to purchase school supplies  
12 online; to require the State Board of Education to establish policies, rules, and regulations;  
13 to provide for the State School Superintendent, in collaboration with the Department of  
14 Administrative Services, to identify one or more authorized software services providers to  
15 offer and support a user-friendly online ecommerce platform for educators to purchase school  
16 supplies; to require the Department of Education to establish processes for implementation  
17 of the program; to provide for educator eligibility to participate in the program; to provide  
18 for local school systems and public schools to certify educator eligibility; to provide for

19 definitions; to provide for related matters; to provide for an effective date; to repeal  
20 conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

21 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

22 **SECTION 1.**

23 Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to education, is amended in  
24 Article 4 of Chapter 1, relating to Council on Literacy, by revising subsection (b) of Code  
25 Section 20-1-43, relating to meetings, transacting business, and expenses, as follows:

26 "(b)(1) From among the members provided for in Code Section 20-1-42, five shall be  
27 designated as an executive committee of voting members of the council as follows:

28 (A) One designated by the Governor;

29 (B) One designated by the President of the Senate;

30 (C) One designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

31 (D) The member who is the representative of the State Board of Education appointed  
32 by the Governor as provided in subparagraph (a)(1)(C) of Code Section 20-1-42; and

33 (E) The chairperson of the council, who shall serve as the chairperson of such  
34 executive committee.

35 (2) A quorum for transacting business of the council shall be a majority of the voting  
36 members of the council provided for in paragraph (1) of this subsection."

37 **SECTION 2.**

38 Said title is further amended by adding two new paragraphs to subsection (b), revising  
39 subsection (c), and repealing and reserving subparagraph (d)(3)(B) of Code Section  
40 20-2-153.1, relating to Georgia Early Literacy, definitions, uniform grade appropriate metrics  
41 to measure literacy, role of school boards, and accommodations, to read as follows:

42 "(1.1) 'Center' means the Sandra Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and Literacy.

43 (1.2) 'Council' means the Georgia Council on Literacy."

44 "(c)(1) The board, in consultation with the department and the Office of Student  
45 Achievement, shall establish such policies, rules, and regulations as necessary to  
46 implement uniform grade-appropriate metrics for measuring literacy.

47 (2)(A) As soon as practicable but not later than January 1, 2024, the board shall:

48 (i)(A) Approve high-quality instructional materials to be used for teaching students in  
49 kindergarten through third grade to read; and

50 (ii)(B) Establish a procedure for each public school and local school system to annually  
51 certify to the department that such school or school system's locally approved  
52 instructional materials and content, as defined in subsection (a) of Code Section  
53 20-2-1017, constitute high-quality instructional materials.

54 (3)(A) As soon as practicable but not later than January 1, 2024, the department shall  
55 establish qualifications, time lines, and submission procedures for education service  
56 providers to submit one or more universal reading screeners to be considered for  
57 inclusion on the board's list of approved universal reading screener providers provided  
58 for in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph.

59 (B) As soon as practicable but not later than May 15, 2025, the board shall approve the  
60 memorandum of agreement between the council and the department, as provided for  
61 in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (4) of this subsection, for a list of no more than five  
62 universal reading screeners, one of which shall be a free universal reading screener, for  
63 use by public schools and local school systems as part of their comprehensive literacy  
64 programs which meet the following criteria:

65 (i) Capable of providing relevant information to assist teachers with targeting  
66 instruction based on student needs;

67 (ii) Capable of measuring foundational literacy skills;

68 (iii) Capable of identifying students who have a significant reading deficiency,  
69 including, but not limited to, identifying students with characteristics of dyslexia;

70 (iv) Prescribed parameters on the time required to administer a universal reading  
 71 screener with the primary objective of such prescription being to minimize impacts  
 72 on instructional time; and

73 (v) Capable of progress monitoring.

74 (4)(A) As soon as practicable but not later than ~~August 1, 2024~~ July 15, 2025, the  
 75 department shall publish on its public website ~~a list of board approved providers of~~  
 76 ~~universal reading screeners for use by public schools and local school systems,~~  
 77 ~~including the free universal reading screener provided by the department and the list of~~  
 78 other approved universal reading screeners, one of which each public school and local  
 79 school system shall adopt and administer in order to comply with the requirements of  
 80 subparagraph (d)(3)(C) of this Code section.

81 (B) ~~The department shall provide~~ council, in collaboration with the center and the  
 82 Office of Planning and Budget, shall identify a free universal reading screener that  
 83 meets the criteria established by the board as provided in subparagraph (B) of  
 84 paragraph (3) of this subsection. The council shall enter into a memorandum of  
 85 agreement with the department to make such ~~Such~~ universal reading screener ~~shall be~~  
 86 ~~made~~ available for use free of charge to public schools and local school systems ~~and~~  
 87 ~~shall be included on the list provided for in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph.~~

88 (5) The department shall, in consultation with the University System of Georgia, the  
 89 Professional Standards Commission, the Office of Student Achievement, Georgia's  
 90 Regional Education Service Agencies, and literacy experts, develop or procure one or  
 91 more training programs for kindergarten through third grade teachers on the science of  
 92 reading, structured literacy, and foundational literacy skills that enable students to  
 93 develop reading skills required to meet state standards in literacy. Such training  
 94 programs shall be developed or procured to promote teachers' knowledge and skills for  
 95 teaching all students to read, including students with dyslexia, and to ensure teachers

96 have the knowledge and skills necessary to use approved universal reading screeners and  
 97 to use assessment data to inform instruction based on student needs.

98 (6) The department shall provide technical assistance to aid public schools and local  
 99 school systems in implementing the provisions of this Code section.

100 (7) Beginning April 1, 2026, the department shall provide an annual report on the  
 101 impacts of the implementation of the provisions of this Code section, including, but not  
 102 limited to, reporting the results by school and school system of:

103 (A) The research based formative assessments with a summative component that is tied  
 104 to performance indicators in English language arts and reading in grades one and two  
 105 provided for in subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-281;

106 (B) The comprehensive summative assessment program for third grade students  
 107 provided for in subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-281;

108 (C) The nationally ~~norm-referenced~~ norm-referenced instruments in reading for third  
 109 grade students provided for in subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-281; and

110 (D) The formative reading assessments for first and second grade students provided for  
 111 in Code Section 20-2-280.

112 Such report shall also include analyses of the ~~the~~ impact of use of universal reading  
 113 screeners, the use of high-quality instructional materials, and instructional practices  
 114 grounded in the science of reading. Such report shall be provided to the Governor, the  
 115 President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the chairperson of  
 116 the House Committee on Education, the Senate Education and Youth Committee, the  
 117 House Committee on Higher Education, the Senate Higher Education Committee, and the  
 118 board, and shall be made available on the department's website for access by the public."

119 **SECTION 3.**

120 Said title is further amended in Article 17 of Chapter 2, relating to teachers and other school  
 121 personnel, by adding a new part to read as follows:

122 "Part 13

123 20-2-989.30.

124 This part shall be known and may be cited as the 'School Supplies for Educators Act.'

125 20-2-989.31.

126 As used in this part, the term:

127 (1) 'Authorized ecommerce vendor' means an ecommerce vendor that has been approved  
128 by the Department of Education in accordance with policies, rules, and regulations  
129 established by the State Board of Education.

130 (2) 'Ecommerce' means a commercial transaction, which may include the transmission  
131 of funds or data or both, conducted electronically via the internet.

132 (3) 'Eligible educator' means a teacher, paraprofessional, or school administrator  
133 employed in good standing at a public school in this state.

134 (4) 'School Supplies for Educators Program' or 'program' means the program established  
135 pursuant to this part to provide financial and technical assistance to eligible educators  
136 who purchase school supplies online as provided in this part.

137 (5) 'User' means an eligible educator who is certified by a participating local school  
138 system or public school as eligible to participate in the program and who has a user  
139 account.

140 (6) 'User account' means the unique platform account assigned by the Department of  
141 Education to each eligible educator.

142 20-2-989.32.

143 (a) The School Supplies for Educators Program is established to provide financial and  
144 technical assistance to educators who purchase school supplies online as provided in this  
145 part.

146 (b) The requirements of this part shall be subject to appropriation of funds by the General  
147 Assembly or the availability of other funds for such purpose.

148 20-2-989.33.

149 (a) The State Board of Education shall:

150 (1) Establish a program for the Department of Education to allocate funds for eligible  
151 educators to be used at the discretion of such educators for the online purchase of school  
152 supplies as provided in this part;

153 (2) Establish such policies, rules, and regulations as necessary for the implementation  
154 of this part; and

155 (3) Authorize the State School Superintendent, in collaboration with the Department of  
156 Administrative Services, to identify one or more authorized software services providers  
157 to offer and support a user-friendly online ecommerce platform that:

158 (A) Processes the allocation of funds by the Department of Education to the user  
159 accounts of eligible educators for the online purchase of school supplies from  
160 authorized ecommerce vendors; and

161 (B) Includes appropriate fiscal management and payment systems and reporting and  
162 training tools, as required by the State Board of Education.

163 (b) The Department of Education shall:

164 (1) Ensure that purchases using program funds are restricted to online purchases of  
165 school supplies from authorized ecommerce vendors;

166 (2) Promulgate guidelines and provide technical assistance to facilitate local school  
167 systems, public schools, and educators utilizing the program and to ensure program  
168 purchases are restricted to allowable expenses; and

169 (3) Establish processes as necessary for the implementation of the program consistent  
170 with the provisions of this part and with the policies, rules, and regulations of the State  
171 Board of Education.

172 (c) Each local school system or public school shall certify, as required by the Department  
173 of Education, the eligibility of each educator employed by such local school system or  
174 public school who requests a user account; provided, however, that to be eligible for a user  
175 account an educator shall be employed in good standing at a public school."

176 **SECTION 4.**

177 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law  
178 without such approval.

179 **SECTION 5.**

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