

GAE LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1970 – 2011

Historical Note: GAE was founded May 9, 1970, by a merger of the 100-year-old Georgia Education Association (GEA) and the 90-year-old Georgia Teachers and Education Association (GT&EA). Thus, the Georgia Association of Educators and its founding groups have advocated for the interests of Georgia education and educators with the Georgia General Assembly and other state bodies and policymakers for over 130 years.

Begun with the merger, this compilation of the GAE Legislative Accomplishments is a living history of our collective efforts on education’s behalf and the achievements enjoyed by all public school employees. It is also a testament to GAE members and staff who have worked to better the profession and public education in Georgia. Over the years, it has transformed into a microcosm of legislation passed and defeated during each session.

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SALARY

- 1970 T-4 beginning \$5,600
- 1985 T-4 beginning \$16,800- \$1200 increase
- 1983 16th step index salary schedule
- 1984 18th step index salary schedule
- 1985 New salary schedule 2.5%, true increment
- 1986 2.6% increment
- 1987 2.7% increment
- 1988 2.8% increment
- 1989 2.9% increment
- 1990 3% increment
- 1990 Funds applied to salary schedule to yield larger increases for veteran teachers
- 1991 Preserved increment salary increases on the state salary schedule
- 1992 2.5% salary increase applied to the state salary schedule – despite recession!
- 1993 Added L-5 step to state salary schedule
- 1994 5% salary increase applied to state salary schedule
- 1994 Legislation adopted prohibiting local boards of education from decreasing local salary supplements of educators or ESP without holding public hearings
- 1995 6% salary increase applied to state salary schedule
- 1996 6% salary increase applied to state salary schedule
- 1997 6% salary increase applied to state salary schedule
- 1998 6% salary increase applied to state salary schedule
- 1999 4% salary increase applied to state salary schedule
- 2000 3% salary increase applied to state salary schedule
- 2001 4.5% salary increase applied to state salary schedule
- 2001 Pay for beginning teachers at the end of the first month of work
- 2002 3.25% salary increase applied to the state salary schedule
- 2004 2% salary increase applied to state salary schedule (delayed until January 2005)
- 2004 Step added to top of salary scale
- 2005 2% salary increase applied to state salary schedule (Higher Ed salary raise delayed until January 2006)
- 2006 4% salary increase applied to state salary schedule (Higher Ed salary raise delayed until January 2007)
- 2006 Local boards required to have a *second* public hearing (one required previously) before the local teacher salary supplement can be lowered. New measures also require notifying teachers of hearings and holding hearings after school hours
- 2007 3% salary increase applied to state salary schedule (Higher Ed salary raise delayed until January 1, 2008)
- 2008 2.5% salary increase applied to state salary schedule (Higher Ed salary raise delayed until January 1, 2009)
- 2009 After July 1, 2010, an educator's placement on the salary schedule will not be based on a leadership degree, degree earned in conjunction with completion of an educator leadership preparation program approved by the Professional Standards Commission. Educator will be required to hold a leadership position in order to be placed on the salary schedule at that level

- 2011.....\$12.6 million appropriated in the Amended FY11 budget for differentiated pay for newly certified math and science teachers. Math and science teachers, grades 6-12, will be moved to the salary step on the state salary schedule that is applicable to six years of creditable service (which equates to salary step four), unless he or she is already on or above such salary step. Math and science teachers, grades K-5, who receive an endorsement in mathematics, science, or both from the PSC will receive a stipend of \$1,000 per endorsement for each year such endorsement is in effect, up to a maximum of five years
- 2011.....\$12.6 million appropriated in the FY12 budget for differentiated pay for newly certified math and science teachers

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

- 1970..... Vesting and disability benefits after 20 years; Retire after 35 years service (Formula = 1.75%)
- 1972..... Defeated efforts to put TRS funds under Department of Administration during reorganization
- 1973..... Vesting and disability benefits after 10 years
- 1974..... Retire with 31 years service
- 1975..... Formula = 1.76% and 3% cost of living; retire after 30 years' service with no age factor penalty
- 1976..... Formula = 1.78%
- 1977..... Formula = 1.80%; Improvement in the retirement formula retroactive to retired teachers
- 1978..... Formula = 1.84%; Enabling legislation to compute formula on the average of the highest two consecutive years' salary
- 1979..... Formula = 1.88%
- 1980..... Formula based on best two years of consecutive service
- 1981..... Formula = 1.92%. Retirement credit for periods of full-time graduate study under certain conditions
- 1982..... Formula = 2%, effective January 1, 1983
- 1984..... Retirement benefits increased for already retired teachers
- 1985..... Formula for PSERS (support personnel) increased by 7% (\$7.00-\$7.50)
- 1986..... 3% COLA for PSERS (support personnel)
- 1986..... Purchase maternity leave prior service to 1976 (rescinded in 1987 due to lack of funding)
- 1986..... Benefits increased for retired teachers
- 1987..... Tax sheltering of employee contributions to TRS
- 1987..... Formula for PSERS (support personnel) increased from \$7.50 to \$8.00 per month times number of years' service
- 1988..... Retirement benefits increased .5% to 12% for already retired teachers
- 1988..... Legislation allowing PSERS (support personnel) Board of Trustees to grant COLAs
- 1988..... Formula for PSERS (support personnel) increased from \$8.00 per month per year of service to \$10.00 (not funded)
- 1988..... Reduction in purchasing cost of creditable service in TRS for time lost due to pregnancy (rescinded in 1989 due to lack of funding)
- 1989..... Defeated legislation creating joint management of TRS and ERS investments
- 1990..... 1.75% one-time COLA for TRS members to help offset the loss of state income tax exempt status of pension benefits. Special COLA secured for current & future retirees. (COLA increased to 3% in 1991 by TRS Board)

- 1991 Added a classroom teacher member to TRS Board of Trustees to replace the State Insurance Commissioner
- 1992 25-year retirement with penalties
- 1992 Re-established credit in TRS via payments in intervals instead of one-time lump sum
- 1994 Reduced employee's TRS contribution rate from 6% of salary to 5%
- 1994 Reduced employee's contribution rate for members of the Board of Regents Optional Retirement Program
- 1994 3% COLA for already retired TRS members
- 1994 Increased exclusion amount on retirement income in the computation of Ga. taxable net income from \$10,000 to \$11,000 for 1994 tax year and \$12,000 for 1995 tax year
- 1994 Reduction in purchasing costs of creditable service in TRS for time lost due to pregnancy (not funded)
- 1995 Funded increase for PSERS (support personnel) formula from \$8 to \$9 per month times number of years of service
- 1996 25-year retirement at any age with 7% penalty (up to a maximum of 35%) for each year the retiree is under 30 years of service or age 60, whichever is less
- 1996 Reduction in purchasing cost of creditable service in TRS for time lost due to pregnancy (not funded)
- 1996 Increased PSERS benefit from \$9 to \$9.25 per month x number of years of service
- 1997 Increased PSERS benefit from \$9.25 to \$9.50 per month x number of years of service
- 1997 Created a Joint House and Senate Retirement Committee to study needed improvements in the retirement benefits of educational support personnel
- 1998 Established retirement credit for unused/unpaid sick leave based on a ratio of one-day retirement credit for each two days of unused/unpaid sick leave
- 1998 Increased PSERS benefit from \$9.50 to \$10 per month x number of years of service
- 1998 Provided state merit health insurance to PSERS members who retired prior to 1985
- 1998 Increased PSERS monthly benefit ceiling from \$10 to \$12(implemented as funded)
- 1998 Increased taxable ceiling exclusion for retirees from \$12,000 to \$13,000 from Georgia state income tax
- 1998 Allowed for transfer of TRS retirement benefits to secondary beneficiary if primary beneficiary does not survive TRS member by at least 32 days
- 1999 Fully funded TRS retirement credit for each unused, unpaid sick leave day
- 1999 Increased PSERS retirement benefit from \$10 per month to \$10.50 x years of creditable service
- 2000 Increased PSERS retirement benefit from \$10.50 to \$12 per year of service
- 2001 Included public school employees with other state employees who are allowed to participate in deferred compensation plans operated by the state
- 2002 Increased PSERS retirement benefit from \$12 per month to \$12.50 per year of service, with an increased benefit ceiling of \$15
- 2002 Allowed TRS members who retired prior to Dec. 31, 2001 to return to teaching in a "qualified" school system
- 2002 Created two study committees that include GAE representatives serving on the committee to look at ways to increase retirement benefits for TRS members and to protect the investments of TRS
- 2002 Allowed TRS members with 25 years of service to purchase up to an additional three years of credit in order to allow members to retire early without penalty
- 2002 Increased amount of tax-exempt retirement income to \$14,500 in 2002 and \$15,000 in 2003
- 2003 Increased PSERS benefit from \$12.50 to \$13 per month for each year of creditable service. Future benefit increases to be funded from PSERS assets, instead of only by the General Assembly

- 2004 Allowed TRS members who retired prior to Dec. 31, 2003, to return to teaching without penalties or loss of benefits
- 2004 Allowed TRS members a new option for lump sum payment upon retirement
- 2005 Increased PSERS benefit from \$13 to \$13.50 per month (multiplied by years of creditable service (Current law caps the benefit at \$15)
- 2005 Allowed investing in exchange-traded funds to allow for safer and more lucrative investing of some of the TRS assets.
- 2005 Improved 2004 “return-to-work” law to allow any TRS member who retired by December 31, 2003 to be re-employed in a full-time capacity by a local school system or RESA in virtually any position with no effect on retirement benefit.
- 2006 Increased benefit for those who retired with at least 20 years’ service *before July 1987*.
- 2006 Increased PSERS benefit from \$13.50 to \$14.00 per month for each year of creditable service
- 2007 Increased PSERS benefit from \$14.00 to \$14.25 per month for each year of creditable service
- 2007 Allowed TRS and ERS to increase the amount of money invested in foreign owned companies from the current 10 to 15%. This allows these retirement systems greater diversity in investing to increase the assets of their retirement funds
- 2008 Retired teachers who retired on a normal service retirement and have been retired for a minimum of 12 months allowed to return to work and continue receiving retirement benefits. “Normal service retirement” means the retiree must have retired on a service retirement with 30 years of service regardless of age or 10 years of service and at least age 60. Local school systems would be allowed to employ a retiree as a full-time classroom teacher, principal, superintendent, media specialist or counselor.
- 2008 Retiree who has elected one of the survivorship options and has named his or her spouse and one or more other persons as beneficiaries allowed to revoke the selection of the spouse as a beneficiary upon a final judgement of complete divorce. The retiree may then either allocate the spouse’s percentage to the other beneficiaries or keep their percentages the same. The retiree’s benefit will be recalculated to compensate for the remaining beneficiaries.
- 2008 Increased PSERS benefit from \$14.25 to \$14.75 per month for each year of creditable service
- 2009 Definition of a large retirement system revised. Investment in equities increased from 65% to 70% on and after July 1, 2010. After July 1, 2011, increased to 75%
- 2009 Georgia Retiree Health Benefit Fund divided into two funds by creating the Georgia State Retiree Health Benefit Fund and the Georgia School Retiree Health Benefit Fund. The Georgia School Retiree Health Benefit Fund is created to help pay for the cost of retiree post-employment health insurance benefits—mainly an accounting measure

HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS

- 1973 Passed first legislation (vetoed)
- 1975 Passed second legislation (signed)
- 1977 Legislation to allow local boards to purchase plan
- 1978 Health insurance funded
- 1980 **Dental and vision insurance added** to the statewide health insurance
- 1983 \$17 million to fund increasing costs
- 1984 Funding for health insurance for support personnel effective 1/1/85
- 1986 Constitutional amendment to provide retired support personnel health insurance
- 1987 Support personnel to be covered by state health insurance when funded
- 1988 \$16.5 million to fund increasing costs

- 1989 \$70 million to fund increasing costs
- 1990 \$46.3 million to fund increasing costs
- 1994 Legislation adopted allowing public school employees with 20+ years of service but who are ineligible for retirement benefits because of age to pay employer and employee premiums for state health insurance coverage
- 1996 Secured legislation allowing TRS retired members to pay state health insurance premiums monthly if TRS benefit is too small to allow automatic deductions
- 1998 Provided state merit health insurance to PSERS members who retired prior to 1985
- 1999 Combined all state agency health care benefit plans into a unified Georgia Department of Community Health maximizing services and efficiency
- 1999 Required health care plans to permit those insured to choose the doctor of their choice
- 2000 Added \$1,500 per employee to budget in order to reduce impact of rising health care costs
- 2001 Reduced the required number of creditable years of service to eight in order to purchase health insurance if the employee is not eligible for retirement
- 2005 Lowered the proposed increase in health insurance premium from 13% to 9.5% (each 1% reduction costs the state \$7 million)
- 2005 Increased employer contribution to premium nearly \$47 million (\$25+ million more than governor's recommendation), compared to FY 2005; overall appropriation was a \$181 million increase for employer-paid health insurance
- 2005 Cost-saving measures imposed in response to control runaway increases, including:
- New surcharges for spousal coverage if offered by spouse's employer and for tobacco users
 - four-tiered premium system (previously two)
- 2006 Premium increase for employees paid by state through \$138 million budget allocation, insuring no increase through 2007
- 2007 \$105.9 million to fund increasing costs (a 10% premium increase for employees beginning January 2008)
- 2007 House Study Committee created to review State Health Benefit Plan
- 2008 Charter school employees provided the opportunity to participate in the State Health Benefit Plan
- 2008 \$166 million to fund increasing costs (a 7.5% premium increase for employees beginning January 2009)
- 2010 10% employee premium increase beginning January 2011 (state will continue to pay 75% of the cost of coverage)
- 2011 10% employee premium increase beginning January 2012 (state will continue to pay 75% of the cost of coverage)
- 2011 Resolution adopted creating the House State Health Insurance Plan Alternative Funding Study Committee. Committee is charged with studying the needs, issues, and problems impacting coverage, premiums, and other costs of providing adequate and effective coverage for employees while ensuring actuarial soundness and budgetary responsibility

DUE PROCESS

- 1970 No due process procedure for non-renewed educators
- 1975 Due process including hearing, representation, and other protections after successfully completing three years of service
- 1975 All educators must be notified by April 15 of non-renewal
- 1982 Transfer of due process rights from one school system to another with a one-year probationary period

- 1986 All notices by certified mail, statement of rights, 20 days to respond
- 1987 10-day review of annual contracts by teachers prior to signing
- 1987 Protection of due process rights of teachers involved in the merger of school systems
- 1987 Legislative study committee created to investigate need for grievance procedure established by legislation for all public school employees
- 1988 Minimum standards established for local school board policies on grievance procedures for teachers (vetoed)
- 1988 Legislation guaranteeing all written personnel evaluations will be confidential and kept in the employee's personnel file
- 1989 Defeated legislation creating a data bank to store negative information on educators to be developed and administered by the PPC and used by potential employers
- 1990 Introduced a bill establishing minimum standards for local school board policies on grievance procedures for teachers that led to negotiations with the State Board of Education and the minimum standards being incorporated in SBE policy. Standards must be adopted by all local boards of education by July 1, 1990
- 1992 Legislation adopted and signed by Governor establishing minimum standards for local school board policies governing grievance procedures for professional personnel
- 1993 Legislation adopted protecting negotiated agreements between school boards and employees regarding references distributed to prospective employers
- 1993 Amended the Georgia Open Records Act to provide access to personnel records needed in the representation of school employees during hearings
- 1994 Legislation adopted prohibiting local boards of education to terminate an educator's employment contract for refusing to alter student grades
- 1995 Amended legislation abolishing administrative due process rights by permitting administrators to negotiate up to three-year contracts of employment with local boards of education and authorizing local boards to adopt due process policies for administrators
- 1995 Amended legislation creating the Office of State Administrative Hearings to ensure that PPC tribunals continue to make findings of fact and recommendations on certificate revocation proceedings
- 1997 Expanded maximum number of days from 120 to 200 that a local board of education can employ a newly hired teacher under a temporary contract to allow for the receipt of the results of a criminal records check
- 1998 Requirements added that educators under investigation will receive written notification of the complaint, limit investigation to 60 days, expunge records if educator is exonerated, and probable cause must be determined by an administrative law judge
- 2000 Requirement that any certificated employee receive written reason for termination. (Due process /fair dismissal rights eliminated for any person who first began teaching after July 1, 2000.)
- 2003 Reinstatement of fair dismissal rights equally for all teachers. This GAE legislative accomplishment reversed action in 2000 that eliminated fair dismissal rights for new teachers
- 2003 Local boards of education are required to include the salary and benefits in teacher employment contracts before requiring a signature. Letters of intent to return to the school district cannot be legally binding
- 2005 Protected due process rights for charter school employees in revision of charter school laws
- 2007 Senate Study Committee created to review the current grievance procedure law

- 2009.....Amended legislation that would have extended for two years the deadline date for teacher contract renewals and teachers electing not to accept employment for the ensuing school year. Amended legislation only allowed local boards school year 2009-2010 to extend contract renewals to May 15, 2009 and letters of resignation to be tendered no later than June 1, 2009
- 2010.....Defeated an amendment to the dual enrollment formula legislation. Amended language called for performance evaluations for teachers, assistant principals, and principals prior to July 1, 2011. Statewide instrument would have taken student achievement into consideration when assessing personnel

EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS (ESP)

(see also Retirement & Health Insurance sections)

- 1989..... Legislation introduced and studied during the interim mandating written contracts and job descriptions for educational support personnel
- 1990..... Created Senate study committee to conduct hearings on the employment status and needs of educational support personnel. (Study committee was not appointed by lieutenant governor, so it did not function)
- 1991..... Senate Education Committee agreed to conduct hearings on the employment status and needs of educational support personnel prior to '92 session (sub-committee met once and made no recommendations)
- 1991..... Legislation adopted which provides for increases in the state base salary of school bus drivers (not funded in FY '92 Budget)
- 1992..... Legislation mandating that ESP's children be allowed to attend the school where the parent works
- 1992..... Created Senate study committee to conduct hearings on the employment status and needs of educational support personnel
- 1993..... Legislation authorizing retired ESP to participate in state health insurance program by paying employee's share of premium on a quarterly basis to State Merit Personnel Board. (Currently only those school employees whose monthly retirement benefit is great enough to allow these costs to be deducted by PSERS or TRS may participate)
- 1994..... 4% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
- 1995..... 5% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
- 1995..... Increased food service managers' supplement from \$350 to \$400
- 1996..... 4% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
- 1997..... 4% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
- 1997..... Educational support personnel in all school safety legislation originally introduced to protect teachers
- 1998..... 4% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
- 1999..... 3% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
- 2000..... 3% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
- 2000..... Legislation providing bonuses to paraprofessionals in "A" and "B" rated schools
- 2000..... HOPE Scholarship extended to teacher assistants (most paraprofessional positions were eliminated in HB 1187)
- 2001..... 3.5% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
- 2001..... Protection of personal information (social security numbers, home addresses, and telephone numbers, etc.) for all public school employees
- 2002..... Legislation to require codes of conduct on school buses, including prohibition of cell phone & pager use; students and parents must sign that they received the bus code of

- conduct and grants discipline authority to all school employees to deal with student misbehavior
- 2002 Legislation to protect all school employees and students from verbal or physical assault, including the consequences for such actions
- 2004 2% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers
- 2004 School safety/discipline laws expanded to cover bus drivers and bus stops
- 2005 2% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers effective July 1
- 2006 4% salary increase for school lunchroom workers and bus drivers effective July 1
- 2007 3% salary increase for state paid paraprofessionals, bus drivers, and cafeteria workers
- 2008 2.5% salary increase for state paid paraprofessionals, bus drivers, and cafeteria workers effective July 1, 2008
- 2008 3rd week in October declared “School Bus Safety Week.”
- 2008 3rd Monday in October declared “Bus Driver Appreciation”

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS & BENEFITS

- 2005 Granted tax deduction to teachers for personal cost of certain school supplies, equipment, & materials for classroom use (retroactive to 2004)
- 2005 Defeated anti-public employee legislation that would have required stringent record keeping and limited the ability of public employees to participate in the political process
- 2005 Expansion of “Whistleblower protection” for state employees, but GAE proposal to include educators excluded
- 2005 Professional liability insurance provided free to all certificated personnel in local school systems and to student teachers (Widely viewed as administration’s effort to diminish value of employee organizations’ liability insurance coverage, and thereby to discourage membership in same. Not a real benefit, as it duplicates coverage already provided free by most school systems.)
- 2005 Amended bill intended to target and weaken education organizations’ member recruitment of college education majors, so that it applied evenly to *all* degree programs in university system
- 2006 Teacher “Purchase Card” provided free to all classroom teachers, allowing \$100 purchase of classroom supplies during tax-free holiday (\$10 million cost)
- 2007 Whistleblower protection law expanded to include public education employees from retaliation when they report waste, fraud, or abuse in public schools.
- 2007 “Grade Integrity Act” prohibits a teacher being forced, required, or coerced into changing a student’s grade. If an administrator or superintendent changes a student’s grade, his/her name must be noted in the student’s record. The teacher shall also not be required to grant a grade other than what the student earned.
- 2007 Teacher “Purchase or Gift Cards” in the amount of \$100 were provided to all full-time classroom teachers and one per school media center
- 2008 Teacher Protection Act established requiring students who accuse educators of misconduct to provide a statement in support of their claims
- 2008 Professional liability insurance reduced by \$600,000 (passed in 2005 – widely viewed as an attempt by Governor’s office to diminish value of employee organizations’ liability insurance coverage thereby discouraging membership in these organizations.)
- 2008 Teacher “Purchase Card” provided free to all classroom teachers and one per media center allowing \$100 purchase of classroom supplies—could also be used in conjunction with tax-free holiday

- 2010.....School employees email addresses added as an exemption to requirement for disclosure of public records. Also information relating to tests administered by the PSC was exempted from disclosure
- 2011.....Defeated legislation impacting membership in labor organizations

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES COMMISSION (PPC)

- 1973 Initial funding \$50,000
- 1974-97... Continued funding of PPC
- 1997 Legislation authorizing reappointment of PPC member to additional three-year term on hearing panel
- 1998 Combined Professional Practices Commission with the Professional Standards Commission to streamline services and decrease costs

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMISSION (PSC)

- 1976 Legislation establishing PSC, which should increase teacher participation in establishing standards for the teaching profession
- 1979 Legislation continuing PSC until 1982
- 1976-97... Continued funding of PSC
- 1982 Legislation continuing PSC
- 1991 Created new PSC in charge of teacher certification and composed of a majority of classroom teachers
- 1998 Combined services of the Professional Practices Commission with the PSC
- 2001 Protection of personal information for all public school employees
- 2002 Legislation providing educators an opportunity for a hearing if the PSC denies, suspends, or revokes a teaching certificate
- 2002 Notification of PSC action and findings of investigative officers must be sent to educators and their attorneys; also, an educator cannot be under investigation without notification from the PSC
- 2002 Minor misdemeanors no longer a part of the complaint process for reviewing an educator's certification. Allegations against an educator must be based on a felony, crime of moral turpitude, or violation of the professional code of ethics for educators. PSC must decide action within 60 days of receipt of the findings of the investigation
- 2008 PSC provided the ability to expedite investigations against certified educators accused of unethical conduct
- 2009.....Current holders of education leadership degrees and those who earn the degree prior to July 1, 2010 shall continue to be placed on the salary schedule based on the leadership degree, regardless if they are or are not working in a leadership position. On or after July 1, 2010, those earning the degree will only be placed on the salary schedule at education leadership step if they are actually employed in a leadership position as defined by the State Board of Education
- 2010.....Amended education leadership law stating that an educator must have begun the program by April 1, 2009 and completed Master by 2012; 6-year degree by 2013; and doctorate by 2014 in order to be paid on a leadership degree on the salary schedule but not yet working in a leadership position
- 2010.....Adopted legislation allowing the PSC to accept additional methods of payment for recertification including cashier's check, money order, credit card, debit card, or other approve method

- 2011.....PSC authorizing agent to adopt rules and regulations relative to criminal background checks—no longer the State Board of Education
- 2011.....PSC required to revise certification renewal rules based on impact of professional learning on educator’s performance and student learning effective July, 2015
- 2011.....PSC and DOE authorized to develop an online course on educator ethics with emphasis on best practices for administering state-mandated assessments
- 2011.....PSC allowed to expunge certain records
- 2011.....PSC commended for its support of the rule change on certification upgrades for advanced degrees coming from providers that meet established quality standards and for degrees that are in a field for which the PSC offers a certificate

LEAVE BENEFITS FOR PERSONNEL

- 1970 Three days personal and/or professional leave provided
- 1977 Clarification of personal leave law - personal leave cannot be denied for failure to give reason(s)
- 1977 Legislation allowing jury duty without loss of pay
- 2006 Sick leave bank provisions provided locally must allow participating employee to donate up to ten sick leave days to spouse employed in same system

CERTIFICATION

- 1980 Introduced constitutional amendment that requires State Board of Education to reimburse tuition for required courses
- 1986 Reimbursement of TCT registration fee (once)
- 1987 Legislative study committee created to examine the teacher certification process and the frequency and variety of standardized tests given to students and teachers
- 1988 Exempted teachers employed in Georgia schools or students graduating from Georgia teacher training programs from payment of newly created certification fees
- 1989 Legislation exempting certain educators from requirement to pass the Teacher Performance Assessment Instrument (TPAI)
- 1990 Legislation abolishing the TPAI and extending exemptions secured in 1988 to additional educators
- 1990 Funding to increase stipends paid to supervisors of student teachers from \$125 to \$250
- 1990 Created Senate Teacher Certification Study Committee to investigate certification conditions and problems
- 1990 Created Senate Study Committee on Minority Educators to investigate the declining number of minority students in teacher training programs
- 1991 Removed teacher certification from the domain of the State Department of Education and created a teacher certification board (Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC))
- 1992 Original T-5 or higher-level certificate granted based on highest degree held; degree need not be in "education"
- 1992 Made "special education" course prerequisite for certification less strict
- 1996 Special 5% salary increase and payment of fees (\$2,000) for teachers earning National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification
- 1996 Resolution honoring the four GAE members who were Georgia’s first and only teachers to be certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards

- 1997 Removed the legal requirement that candidates must have three years of practical teaching experience to qualify for the office of State School Superintendent; retained Constitutional requirements: U.S. citizen for 10 years; legal resident of Georgia for four years; 25 years old, four-year degree from accredited college or university; and no conviction for any crime of moral turpitude
- 2000 10% salary increase applied to the state salary schedule for teachers earning National Board certification
- 2000 Teachers earning National Board certification are re-certified in Georgia for the life of the NBPTS certificate
- 2000 Technology skills competency requirement added for re-certification
- 2000 Criminal background check required for re-certification
- 2000 Requirement that teachers receive a satisfactory evaluation in order to be re-certified
- 2000 School administrators required to work as a classroom teacher for at least five days annually in order to be recertified
- 2002 Funding correction for the salary increase for NBPTS-certified teachers: 10% supplement must be adjusted annually as salary increases, not frozen at initial level
- 2002 10% supplement funded when National Board Certificate is earned, ending the one-year delay
- 2003 Professional Standards Commission (PSC) permitted to adopt a policy granting certification reciprocity to teachers from other states. The policy may recognize the successful passage of a teacher certification test administered in another state
- 2004 Online courses approved for in-service and certificate renewal
- 2005 Master Teacher and Academic Coach programs created
- Master Teacher certificate to be created, but for recognition of excellence only (unfunded), certificate required to become an Academic Coach
 - Academic Coach program to provide some teachers an avenue for higher pay while remaining in teacher position (funding to be approved)
 - Academic Coach will mentor teachers in low-performing schools
- 2005 Newly-certified NBPTS-certified teachers must teach in a “high-needs school” to receive 10% increase, but maintained NBPTS bonus for teachers in “high-needs schools” after designation is lifted due to improvement
- 2006 Basic computer skills competency test (for recertification) must be made available at assigned school by school system.
- 2007 Graduation Coach Program expanded to middle schools. School systems will earn one coach per middle and high schools except for high schools with a graduation rate of 95% or higher. Local systems will allocate between middle and high schools depending on highest risk of dropout
- 2007 10% salary increase provided for teachers earning National Board Certification who teach in “high-needs schools”
- 2007 Local school systems allowed to create alternative certification programs for persons with a master’s, doctorate, or Juris Doctor degree to begin teaching and participating in a certification process. Applicant is not granted a clear renewable certificate until he/she has completed the program created by the local and approved by the Professional Standards Commission
- 2008 10% salary increase for National Board Certified teachers to local systems (jointly administered between the Department of Education and the Professional Standards Commission.)
- 2009 Original language in HB 243 repealed the law granting a 10% stipend for National Board Certified Teachers. Bill amended restoring the 10% stipend for teachers who have earned NBC and also included those enrolled in the program on/or before March 1, 2009, however the stipend is subject to General Assembly appropriations. The 10% will be based on the teacher’s current salary

- 2009.....Removed sunset provision for the Master Teacher Program
- 2010.....Requirement for professional learning units (PLUs) for certification renewal for clear renewable certification are waived from July 1, 2010 through July 1, 2015 including certificate renewals for paraprofessionals. Additionally the computer skill competency course was eliminated
- 2011.....Resolution adopted expressing House of Representatives intent to restore funding for National Board Certified teachers at the earliest possible date, as funding permits
- 2011.....Resolution adopted directing the State Board of Education to revise its professional learning rules, to establish a Professional Learning Rules Task Force and directing the PSC to establish certification renewal rules that require the impact of professional learning on educator performance and student learning

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT – SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

- 2006.....“High Performance Principals” grant program provides salary supplement for qualified principals selected to serve in “Needs-Improvement” schools. (Maximum 3-year supplement of up to \$15,000 per year). Future of grant dependent on continued funding.
- 2006..... “Graduation Specialist” position funded for every high school to improve graduation rate
- 2006..... Dropout Prevention measures require parent conference and permission before student between 16 and 18 years old is allowed to dropout.
- 2007..... Students who serve as pages at the General Assembly shall be counted present at school the same as if they were on a school field trip.
- 2007..... Deaf Child’s Bill of Rights established and requires that all methods of assistance, including enrollment in the Georgia School for the Deaf, be considered in the creation of a hearing impaired student’s IEP
- 2007..... American Sign Language to be counted as a foreign language credit
- 2008..... Board of Regents urged to include more instruction in classroom management in the required curriculum for teacher education
- 2008..... Students attending schools within a system that has lost accreditation remain eligible to receive the HOPE Scholarship as long as the school system was accredited by SACS within the previous seven years
- 2008..... Defeated the BRIDGE Bill which would have established a curriculum and a checks and balance system for students who may not have been on a college preparatory track. This legislation encouraged the notion that some children learn differently from others and that all students do not desire to become physicians or attorneys
- 2009.....”Move on When Ready Act” - public school students, in grades 11 and 12, given the option to attend a community college or technical school while working to complete their high school diploma. Student allowed to attend any accredited public or private college that accepts him/her and agrees to the state funding as full payment
- 2009.....Legislation adopted basing school calendar on a 180-day school year or the equivalent of such. Revised provision for full-day kindergarten program. Also beginning with school year 2010-2011, all public elementary and secondary schools may be closed for instruction on November 11 each year to enable students, teachers, and administrators to participate in Veterans Day programs
- 2009.....School systems allowed to conduct an annual fitness assessment program one time each school year for students in grades 4-12

- 2009.....Public school student allowed to attend another school within the district provided permanent classroom space available and parents assume responsibility and cost for transportation. Charter schools and newly opened schools with available classroom space for a period of four years after school opens are exempt from this law
- 2010.....Adopted BRIDGE (Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia's Economy Act) Bill. Individual graduation plans developed detailing the courses necessary for a high school student to graduate and successfully transition to postsecondary education and the workforce
- 2010.....Expanded the definition of "textbook" to include digital materials, which include any computer hardware, software, and technical equipment necessary to support said material
- 2010.....Georgia Student Finance Commission is required, beginning school year 2010-2011, to provide students in grades 6 through 12 with web based counseling advisement, career awareness and information to assist them in evaluating their academic skills and career interests and students in grades 8 through 12 will be provided a web based resource to develop a graduation plan detailing necessary course work for graduation and transitioning to postsecondary education and the workforce
- 2011.....Provides for and expands career pathway options for high school students ensuring career and college readiness; minimizes the need for college remedial course work, core academic standards required to be embedded in career, technical, and agricultural education courses, and enables high school students to attain soft skills certification

KINDERGARTEN & EARLY LEARNING

- 1970 No funding
- 1975 \$8 million for handicapped
- 1977 25% funding
- 1978 50% funding
- 1979 100% funding
- 1986 Full-day mandatory kindergarten (100% state funding)
- 2001 Paraprofessionals funded for all kindergarten classes
- 2005 Created Joint Early Learning Initiative Commission to review & recommend education available to three- and four-year-old at-risk children
- 2007 Legislation requiring schools, upon parents request, to place twins or other multiples in the same class

CLASS SIZE/PUPIL-TEACHER RATIO

- 1970 25/1 ADA (Average Daily Attendance) in grades 1-3; 28/1 ADA in grades 4-7; 25/1 ADA in grades 8-12
- 1975 25/1 ADA in grades 1-12
- 1979 20/1 ADA in grades 1-2; option to utilize aides
- 1985 New formula based on ADM (Average Daily Membership)
- 1996 Reduced the QBE funding class size in kindergarten from 20 to 15; in grades 1-3 from 23 to 17.125; and in remedial education from 20 to 15 via redirection of funds

- 2000 Maximum pupil/teacher ratios will be phased in over a four-year period until the following grade class sizes are met:
- Kindergarten: 18 with no paraprofessional; 20 with a paraprofessional
 - Grades 1-3: 21
 - Grades 4-5: 28 in English, math, science, & social studies
 - Grades 6-8: 28
 - Grades 9-12: 28 in English, math, science, social studies & foreign language
 - Grades 9-12: 35 in all other subject areas
 - Vocational Labs: 24
 - Remedial: 18 with no paraprofessional; 24 with a paraprofessional (Grades 4-5 & 9-12)
- 2001 Funding changes to phase in class size reduction in academic classes:
- Grades K-3: 17- cannot use paraprofessionals to reduce class sizes
 - Grades 4-12: 23
- 2003 Requirements for local boards of education to continue reducing class sizes in grades K-3. Class size reductions in grades K-12 will be delayed until at least the '04-05 school year. To meet the system-wide average maximum class size, school system may add up to two students in a class only if another class is reduced by two
- 2004 Class size reductions in K-12 delayed again for another year, but defeated efforts to permanently eliminate last phase of reduction
- 2004 Defeated efforts to permanently allow system wide class-size averaging
- 2005 Class-size reduction requirements (from 2000) for grades 4-12 postponed for two years, until 2007-'08 school year.
- State board to adopt rules for system average maximum class-size limits (not to exceed funding class size by more that 20% in core subjects)
 - Use of system average class-size set throughout the Code; number of students per instructional period not to exceed system maximum class size by more than two students
- 2006 System-wide averaging of class size ended for grades K-8, and maximum class size is reduced in grades 4-8, ending a three-year delay of further reductions beyond third grade that were mandated by HB 1187 in 2000.
- 2007 Flexibility in class sizes permitted. Allows class sizes in grades 9-12 to be 39% over the funding level of one teacher for every 23 students, which means in core curriculum courses teachers can have up to 32 students per class

ADEQUATE PROGRAM FOR EDUCATION IN GEORGIA (APEG)

- 1974 APEG replaced the MFPE as the foundation legislation for education
- 1983 Governor's Review Commission to study education

QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION (QBE) ACT

- 1985 QBE replaced APEG as the foundation law for education
- 1986 Weighted funding formula (based on student needs) funded; Equalization funded; Art, Music, P.E. instructors in elementary grades funded
- 1987 Funding formula revised to increase funds for Special Education
- 1987 Funding of professional development stipends
- 1987 Funding of Middle School Incentive Grants
- 1987 Partial funding of Special Instructional Assistance Program
- 1988 Full funding of professional development stipends

- 1988 Full funding of Middle School Incentive Grants
- 1988 Beginning funding of In-School Suspension Program
- 1988 "Snow Bill" adopted. Forgives up to 4 days of school lost due to "acts of God"
- 1988 Defeated legislation subjecting teachers to GBI investigations and criminal penalties if suspected of "teaching the standardized tests" to students
- 1989 Full funding of Special Instructional Assistance Program
- 1989 Funding for one teacher for each high school for In-School Suspension Program
- 1989 Funding of English to Speakers of Other Languages Program
- 1989 \$165 million (new dollars from one cent sales tax increase) increase in QBE funding formulas
- 1989 Required that educator's children be allowed to attend the school where parent works
- 1989 Legislation making the verbal abuse of teachers, administrators and school bus drivers a misdemeanor
- 1989 Legislation creating a minority educator study committee
- 1990 Beginning funding for elementary and middle school counselors at a ratio of 1:1500 FTE counts in grades 6, 7, and 8
- 1990 Funding for one teacher in every middle school for In-School Suspension Program
- 1990 Funding (\$10.9 million) to maintain Equalization Grant at FY 90 millage level
- 1991 Reduced the number of student standardized tests mandated by the state
- 1991 Decreased mandatory minimum school enrollment age from 7 to 6 years of age
- 1991 Resolution adopted commending the GAE Restructuring of Schools Task Force Report
- 1991 Created an employer tax credit up to \$150 for each employee who completes basic skills education program
- 1991 Expanded remedial education services from students in grades 2-5 and 9 to students in grades 2-5 and 9-12
- 1991 \$6 million added for Middle School Incentive Grants
- 1991 \$8.9 million to fund middle school counselors in grades 6-8 at a ratio of 1:624 FTEs
- 1991 \$7.6 million to fund preschool handicapped program 1991
- 1991 \$600,000 to fund scholarships for all public high school valedictorians, salutatorians, and STAR students
- 1991 \$3 million to fund pilot pre-kindergarten programs for at-risk four-year olds (deleted in '91 Special Session FY 92 budget cuts)
- 1991 Legislation to secure 30-minute duty-free lunch period for K-5 teachers and \$1.7 million to begin state funding (funds deleted in '91 Special Session FY 92 budget cuts)
- 1992 Mandatory duty-free lunch period for K-5 teachers
- 1992 Restored 2.5% funding for local school systems (funds deleted in '91 Special Session FY 92 budget cuts)
- 1992 Funding for at-risk four-year old pilot programs
- 1992 Funding for elementary school foreign language pilots
- 1992 Funding for hearing-impaired portion of Good Touch-Bad Touch Program
- 1992 Funding for satellite classes in critical subjects to remote areas
- 1992 Established Governor's Leadership Institute to train school administrators
- 1993 Established Charter Schools to enable school faculties and administrations the opportunity to determine the total school operation free from state policies and regulations
- 1994 Legislation adopted mandating summer school programs for at-risk students in grades K-8 to be state funded (partial funding in 1994)
- 1994 Legislation adopted requiring all school systems to establish school breakfast programs by 1996 if 25% of K-8 students and 40% of 9-12 students qualify for free and reduced lunch
- 1994 Funding for minimum of 1 counselor per system in grades 4-5 at 1:624 FTE counts

- 1995 Redirected \$15.6 million in QBE funding for local systems' central office administration to classroom funding
- 1995 Funding for 1 technology specialist in each school
- 1995 Legislation adopted providing a Georgia High School Graduate Warranty guaranteeing student competencies in reading, math, and writing
- 1995 Improved Charter Schools Act by increasing length of charters to five years, reducing the percentage of votes required to approve charter, adding a \$5,000 incentive grant for ten schools and preferential treatment for available grants
- 1995 Legislation adopted permitting educators and local school systems to add textbooks to state approved textbook list
- 1995 Legislation adopted extending 15 model elementary foreign language programs to third grade
- 1995 Funding to operate nine technology centers
- 1995 Funding for National Geographic Geography Program
- 1995 Funding for 30 new programs and 50 new planning grants for development of statewide Youth Apprenticeship Program
- 1996 Secured state funding of employer's share of teachers' Medicare coverage
- 1996 Increased maintenance & operation funds from \$236 to \$261 per FTE
- 1996 Amended QBE to provide for revision of the Quality Core Curriculum and the development of Criterion Referenced Tests to measure QCC (prohibited attempts to replace existing state mandated student testing program with all norm-referenced testing program)
- 1996 Amended QBE funding to allow state dollars to follow special needs students when enrolled in a regular classroom
- 1998 Improved the Charter School Law to encourage educators, private individuals, and state agencies to initiate a charter school designed to increase student performance
- 1998 Permitted boards of education to provide one-half Carnegie unit credit for driver's education
- 1998 Required 100% of funds allocated for purchase of media materials to be spent only on those materials
- 1998 Expanded funding to offer after school programs for high school dropouts
- 1998 Added the legal consequences of parenthood to sex education curriculum
- 1999 Provided teachers the authority to remove from class any student disrupting the learning of others or interfering with the teacher's ability to teach; Faculty empowered to elect a placement review committee to settle student placement disputes between the principal and teacher
- 1999 Doubled funding for alternative schools
- 1999 Established the Governor's Education Reform Commission to review and recommend changes in the Quality Basic Education Act
- 1999 Local boards of education may offer a course in preparation for the SAT exam for ½ Carnegie credit
- 1999 Legislation adopted allowing local boards of education to include nonprofit organizations in liability insurance coverage
- 2003 Local boards of education get flexibility in expenditure of funds for 2003-04
- 2003 Local boards of education required to conduct a performance audit for SPLOST capital outlay project expenditures
- 2003 Local boards of education permitted to spend up to 15% of funding for 20 extra instructional days on student transportation
- 2003 Approved Georgia's accountability plan to identify Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and student testing program to meet federal guidelines
- 2004 Local boards of education permitted flexibility in spending state funds for the 2004-05 school year, but attempts to make provision permanent defeated

- 2005 Protected school media funds: 100% of must be spent on at the system level
- 2005 Insured public school students have priority access to newly created Georgia Virtual School, which offers free online courses to *all* state students under 22 years old. (Systems lose QBE funds for those students during class segments.)
- 2005 Increased slightly instructional program weights in all programs except vocational lab (9-12), which was slightly lowered
- 2005 Required systems to publicize individual school site budgets and expenditures and to include site average class sizes by grade (as accountability measure for again extending expenditure control flexibility for 2005-06 school year)
- 2005 Retained community-level approval of charter applications as part of major revision of charter school law
- 2005 Created Joint Agricultural Education Study Committee (result of DOE proposal to transfer some of agriculture ed funds to core curriculum areas, specifically science)
- 2006 Provided remediation for grades 6-8 students (previously only for 9-12), with a \$3.8 million appropriation.
- 2006 “High Performance Principals” grant provides certain meritorious principals a salary supplement (see under **Student Achievement/School Improvement**)
- 2006 Exemption from bill’s penalties allowed (for making AYP and for “extraordinary” circumstances) in “Classrooms First – 65% Solution” bill. Otherwise, all systems must spend 65% of entire budget on “direct classroom expenditures,” as narrowly defined by the law. (“An anti-public school wolf in sheep’s clothing,” GAE protested, citing exclusion of critical support systems and personnel from the arbitrary formula.)
- 2006 Children in the custody of Department of Juvenile Justice placed in residential homes are to be enrolled immediately with the local school system.
- 2007 Allows the creation of Charter School Systems. Up to five school systems can become a charter system and receive a grant from the state. The local school board is required to hold at least two public hearings for teachers, parents, and the community to give their feedback about becoming a charter system
- 2008 \$50 million restored in QBE cuts
- 2008 Redirected over \$1.5 million from the foreign language program for elementary students to austerity reductions
- 2008 \$218.1 million to fully fund QBE enrollment growth.
- 2008 \$548.5 million to fully fund the growth in equalization grants
- 2008 \$1.8 million to provide an additional 2,500 slots in the Georgia Virtual School, bringing the total number of slots funded to 6,500
- 2008 \$200,000 to create a new Mentor Teacher program to provide stipends for highly effective teachers who mentor new teachers
- 2011 Established the State Education Finance Study Commission to evaluate the Quality Basic Education Formula and undertake a comprehensive study of the method of funding schools in Georgia

CHILD PROTECTION – SCHOOL SAFETY

- 1986 Legislation to allow criminal record check on persons supervising children
- 1986 Creation of a Missing Children Information Center
- 1987 Legislation reconstituting the House Study Committee on School Completion (dropouts, teenage pregnancy, child labor laws to be studied)
- 1987 Established Governor's Task Force on Adult Illiteracy
- 1987 Legislation increasing penalties for illegal drug use by students (teacher-student relationship protected)

- 1992 Established legal right of school systems to provide child care programs before and after school and during vacation periods
- 1994 Adopted “Safe Schools Act” including mandatory local school safety plans, increasing penalties for weapons on school properties, mandatory reporting of student criminal acts to law enforcement, etc.
- 1995 Legislation adopted mandating one-year expulsion of students possessing weapons on school grounds
- 1995 Legislation adopted requiring written corrective plans for chronic disciplinary problem students and conferences with parents
- 1995 Legislation adopted authorizing local boards of education to refuse admittance to students expelled by other school systems
- 1995 Funding to expand the Crossroads Alternative Program for disruptive students
- 1997 Established legal right of school systems to provide academic, enrichment, and other types of programs for middle school students during non-school hours (beginning funding appropriated)
- 1997 Legislation adopted requiring local boards of education to adopt Student Codes of Conduct and file the codes with State BOE by August 15, 1997; requires disciplinary action against students violating codes; mandates Superior Courts to notify local school superintendent of students convicted of felonies and requires administrators to inform teachers to whom students are assigned
- 1997 Increased the penalties that can be imposed against juveniles who physically attack school employees; a juvenile 13 years of age or older who commits a battery against a school employee engaged in official duty or while on school property may be imprisoned for one to five years or fined up to \$10,000
- 1997 Expanded local boards of education authority to refuse enrollment to students transferring from another school system; expanded requirements on transferring students in grade six or higher; mandates transferring school system to provide complete information on student to requesting schools; requires courts to notify schools of adjudications against students and requires administrators to inform teachers of students assigned to them who are convicted felons
- 1997 Created Class D Drivers License for teenagers 16-18 years old; prohibits school dropouts under 18 from receiving a driver’s license with a few exceptions; suspends licenses of students suspended from school for ten or more days, who threaten to physically harm or harms a school employee, or who possess drugs, alcoholic beverages, or weapons on school property, etc.
- 1998 Adopted Peach Care for Kids Act that provides health insurance, vision and dental coverage to children whose family’s income is two times the poverty level or less
- 1999 Legislation adopted requiring students to adhere to an age-appropriate Code of Conduct, including mandatory penalties for verbally or physically assaulting other students or school employees
- 1999 Bullying prohibited; students violating the policy three times are required to attend an alternative school; added razor blades as prohibited weapons within the school safety zone
- 1999 All school safety officers permitted to carry a registered handgun if certified by the Georgia Peace Officer Standards and Training Council
- 1999 Legislation passed that each school must adopt a school safety plan to prepare for natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and violence
- 2001 Strengthens laws for teen drivers with curfews and passenger limitations
- 2001 Electronic textbooks must be provided to visually impaired students
- 2002 Visitors to public schools must sign in and will be removed from premises if they do not have a legitimate reason to be on campus

- 2002 All K-12 public schools will receive a list of registered sexual offenders from the Department of Education, and childcare facilities will receive a list from the Office of School Readiness
- 2002 Students approved to use asthma medication may self-administer the medication without liability to the school district
- 2003 Local boards of education permitted to adopt policies allowing students to possess electronic devices and cellular telephones; however the policy must prohibit the use of these devices during classroom instruction
- 2004 Discipline code applied to buses and bus stops
- 2004 Penalties for assault on students and employees strengthened
- 2005 Required state board to develop single, comprehensive, pre-participation physical examination form; strengthened requirement on who can conduct physical
- 2006 Child abuse reporting law strengthened: Oral report of suspected abuse required within 24 hours; reporter's notification report protected from alteration.
- 2008 Local boards of education required to provide the Department of Transportation information regarding the lack of safety devices at railroad crossings
- 2008 Public high schools with interscholastic athletic programs required to have at least one life-saving defibrillator on campus in case of emergency
- 2009 Certain information about Meningococcal Meningitis Disease and its vaccine required to be disclosed to parents
- 2009 School systems required to adopt policy authorizing the carrying and administration of auto-injectable epinephrine prescriptions. System, employees, and agents shall not incur any liability other than willful or wanton misconduct for injury to a student caused by use of the injectable
- 2010 Sexual encounters between school staff and students criminalized. Sexual assault defined within the educational setting
- 2010 DOE required to provide each school system access to the Sex Offender Lists. It no longer has to be mailed
- 2010 Local school boards permitted to refurbish buses rather than purchase new ones. Refurbished buses, however, must meet safety standards
- 2010 Definition of bullying expanded. State Board of Education will be required to create a model policy and place on the Department of Education's website no later than January 1, 2011, and no later than August 1, 2011 each local board of education will be required to adopt a policy prohibiting bullying. Parents/guardians are to be notified if their child is a victim of bullying or the one who commits a bullying offense
- 2010 Zero Tolerance Policy was amended to provide school administrators discretion when addressing weapon offenses on school grounds/school functions....language now reads "a child who violates this subsection may be subject to the provision of this code section
- 2010 Legislation requiring all state funded K-12 and other educational institutions to verify certification of a motor carrier or contract carrier by the Public Service Commission or any other similarly required certifying agency before contracting with them to carry students. All parties to the agreement are to receive a copy of the carrier's proof of legally required minimum insurance coverage and a valid certification number
- 2011 Revises current law and defines auto injectable epinephrine as a disposable drug delivery device that is easily transportable and contains a premeasured single dose of epinephrine used to treat life-threatening allergic reactions
- 2011 Legislation granting excused school absences to foster care students to attend court proceedings relating to such students' foster care. Students will be counted as present
- 2011 School Bus Safety Study Committee formed to look at the overall conditions, needs, issues, and problems impacting school bus safety and recommend any action or legislation which the committee deems appropriate or necessary

- 2011.....Motorists can be charged with a civil monetary violation if found guilty of duty when meeting and overtaking a school bus as recorded on a video recording device mounted on a school bus with a clear view of vehicles passing the bus on either side and showing the date and time the recording was made and an electronic symbol showing the activation of amber lights, flashing red lights, stop arms, and brakes.

FINANCE – TAXATION

- 2005 Delayed proposal to prohibit local property taxes for schools and replace with statewide education sales tax (requires constitutional amendment).
- 2005 Created House Education Funding Study Committee to study possibility of replacing local school system’s *ad valorem* (property) tax for education with a statewide and state-distributed 3% sales tax
- 2006 House Comprehensive Tax Reform Study Committee formed, with seven meetings authorized and end date set by House Speaker
- 2006 House Tag Tax Study Committee formed to consider removing this tax, whose revenues provide about \$500 million annually to local governments and school districts
- 2006 Senate Study Committee on Comprehensive Tax Reform formed by Pres. Pro Tempore
- 2006 Senate Study Committee on Limited Taxation formed by Pres. Pro Tempore to consider tax and expenditure limiting legislation, such as TABOR (“Taxpayer Bill of Rights”)
- 2007 Defeated legislation that would limit expenditures allowed for in the state budget (TABOR or Taxpayers Bill of Rights). This type of legislation is bad public policy and harmful to public schools and other vital local and state government programs. It also requires a constitutional amendment
- 2008 Defeated a property tax reform proposal (also known as the GREAT Plan) eliminating all property taxes and funds for schools, etc. would be funded through sales tax
- 2009 Tightened definition of redevelopment area associated with Tax Allocation Districts (TADs) – eliminated vague, overbroad, and undefined terms. TADs limited to “urbanized” areas according to the US Census
- 2010.....Legislation establishing the Special Council on Tax Reform and Fairness for Georgians and the Special Joint Committee on Georgia Revenue Structure. The committee is mandated to conduct a thorough study of the state’s current revenue structure and make a report of its findings and recommendations for legislation to the Speaker and Lt. Governor no later than January 10, 2011
- 2010.....State will be required to provide a report detailing the tax incentives that are awarded by the state

LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION

- 1989 Legislation requiring each member of the Georgia Board of Education to hold annual district public hearings
- 1991 Resolution adopted mandating a referendum on a constitutional amendment to require members of all local boards of education to be elected by the voters and the appointment of local school superintendents by elected boards
- 1992 Affirmed the legal right of local boards of education to grant payroll deduction privileges to employees for GAE dues
- 1993 Legislation enacted to implement new Georgia Constitutional Amendment requiring members of local boards of education to be elected and local school superintendents to be appointed

- 1995 Legislation adopted requiring school systems to advertise and post professional staff vacancies
- 1999 Legislation adopted requiring that all public records be available for inspection within three business days of the request and limiting copying fees
- 1999 Funding to low wealth school systems for their top construction projects if they increase their millage rates and pay a portion of the construction cost
- 1999 Permitted boards of education to provide health insurance coverage for members in the State Health Insurance Program, however premiums include both the employer and employee share of the coverage and the coverage may not be provided at state expense
- 1999 Provided that construction contracts over \$100,000 must be advertised and bid upon
- 1999 Boards of education limited to discussing only announced agenda items in executive session
- 1999 Boards of education meeting agendas must be posted for public knowledge at least two weeks prior to the meeting
- 2000 Creation of charter schools by the State Board of Education
- 2000 School councils will be established and make recommendations for the operation and management of schools
- 2001 Required systems to provide 18 year-old students the opportunity to register to vote
- 2001 Boards of education shall provide all public school employees the opportunity to purchase computers through payroll deduction
- 2002 Revision of the Charter School Act including local boards must act on petition for charter school within 60 days and if petition is denied they must give reasons; religious, for profit, home schools, or other private for profit schools cannot receive charter status; faculty and parents/guardians must vote to approve conversion to a charter school; faculties and parents/guardians may vote to withdraw the charter; funding will be equalized for charter schools; discrimination in student enrollment is prohibited; and educators can transfer to charter schools without reprisals
- 2002 School construction funds of \$620,730,000 to build new schools, renovate older schools, and build new classrooms to help with class size reductions
- 2004 Local boards must develop policy to allow or prohibit recess for grades K-8
- 2005 Created House Local School District Development Impact Fees Study Committee to consider school system impact fee on development construction as a way to address funding needs created by growth. (Only cities and counties may use this presently)
- 2007 Permissive legislation allowing not requiring school systems to hire a business manager by using state funds allocated for assistant principals
- 2007 Parents required to be the majority on school councils and a parent serves as the chairperson of the council. This is a reversal from what is currently required in the law that teachers and parents have equal numbers on the council. GAE worked hard in the A+ Education Reform Act to ensure they have equal numbers
- 2010 Sunset date extended to June 30, 2015 for provisions relating to advance funding, exceptional growth, and low-wealth capital outlay grants
- 2010 Contracts for certified personnel must be made by May 15 for school years through 2012-2013 only. Certified personnel not accepting employment for the ensuing school year must notify local school board not later than May 1 or June 1 for school years through 2012-2013 only
- 2010 Legislation denying superintendents and administrative personnel the right to receive bonuses or raises when public school personnel are being furloughed. Local school boards are required to provide notice and a hearing if local or private funds are intended to be used for such salary increases. This does not apply to step increases on the salary schedule
- 2010 Local school boards given authorization to solicit and accept donations for field trips and other educational purposes

- 2010.....Provisions revised relative to eligibility for local school board elections – among the revisions was limiting the size of local boards
- 2011.....Extends the date to June 30, 2015 school systems must notify DOE of their intention to request flexibility—temporarily extends expenditure waivers for cost of direct instruction, media center, staff and professional development and additional days of instruction; temporarily extends flexibility in maximum class size and certain deadlines relative to annual teacher contracts
- 2011.....Effective January 1, 2012, members of local boards of education will be elected to a term of office of not less than four years unless a local act or constitution amendment provides a longer term. On/after January 1, 2013, counties that collect a homestead option sales and use and county tax for educational purposes will be required to have a seven-member local board of education. School systems that are on the verge of losing accreditation or lose accreditation because of local governance reasons and do not regain it by July 1, 2011, the State Board of Education shall conduct a hearing in not less ten days and not more than 30 days and recommend to the governor whether all members of the local board of education should be suspended with pay. If the State Board of Education makes such recommendation, the governor may in his/her discretion suspend all board members with pay and in consultation with the State Board of Education appoint temporary replacement members
- 2011.....Defeated legislation that would have required local boards of education to rewrite their RIF policies

VOUCHERS – SCHOOL CHOICE

- 2005 Defeated proposed constitutional amendment (“Families & Faith-based Initiative”) that would open the door for publicly funded vouchers for private and religious schools draining precious dollars from our public schools
- 2006 Defeated proposed constitutional amendment resolution that would remove barrier to publicly funded vouchers for private and religious schools
- 2007 Defeated proposed constitutional amendment resolution that would remove barrier to publicly funded vouchers for private and religious schools
- 2007 Special Needs voucher legislation allowing public tax dollars to be used for public school students with disabilities to attend other public or private schools with virtually no accountability and quality control measures required. Passage of legislation required Speaker of the House to cast the deciding vote. Legislators understand that this is bad public policy and will unnecessary shift public taxpayer dollars to private schools.
- 2008 Defeated legislation that would have created a voucher system for a public school or school system that loses accreditation, fails to gain accreditation, or appears on the Needs Improvement list for at least six years. Parents would have been offered other options, including the ability to enroll their child in another school within their district, enroll the child in a school in another district (at the discretion of the other district), or provide the child with a voucher to attend a private school. Legislation would not have done anything to rehabilitate the public school
- 2009.....Defeated legislation that would have amended the 2008 tax credit program for Student Scholarship Organizations (SSOs). These tax shelters were created to funnel public tax dollars from public schools to allow students to receive a taxpayer funded scholarship to attend private pre-kindergarten, primary, or secondary schools.
- 2009.....Defeated legislation that would have allowed students to attend private schools funded by a public taxpayer voucher

- 2010.....Successfully lobbied and stopped legislation from moving forward that would have repealed the Blaine Amendment to the Constitution. If repealed, it would have allowed religious and faith-based organizations to secure public funding for social services—opening the door for vouchers
- 2011.....Defeated attempt to expand the Scholarship Program for Special Needs Students program by authorizing State Board of Education to waive prior school year requirement on a case-by-case basis for specific medical needs of student upon request by parent/guardian
- 2011.....Defeated attempt to expand Special Needs Scholarship program to students: Section 504; foster care; and military families
- 2011.....Defeated attempts to increase the current limit of \$50 million for Student Scholarship Organizations

LOTTERY-FUNDED EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- 1993 To initiate implementation of pre-kindergarten program
- 1993 To establish HOPE Scholarship Program to enable all Georgia high school seniors with at least a B average to attend college
- 1993 To purchase computer hardware/software for classrooms
- 1993 To establish Educational Technology Centers
- 1993 To equip each school with a satellite dish
- 1993 To fund Next Generation School Project
- 1993 To provide tuition for post-secondary options students (SB 417 adopted in 1992 session)
- 1994 To provide funds to expand Pre-K Program for at-risk four-year olds to every county and to increase the number of children and families served
- 1994 To provide funds for Educational Technology Centers and four mobile units for teacher training
- 1994 To provide funds for drug and anti-violence education in local schools
- 1994 To provide equipment for Applied Technology Labs, Next Generation Schools, and Alternative Schools
- 1994 Established model technology grants
- 1994 To provide funding to install security fences for satellite dishes
- 1994 Expanded HOPE Scholarship availability for all four years of college
- 1994 Increased eligibility for annual adjusted family income for HOPE recipients from \$66,000 to \$100,000
- 1995 Funding up to \$100 per quarter for textbooks and payment of student fees for HOPE recipients
- 1995 Removed family income cap as eligibility requirement for HOPE Scholarship
- 1995 Authorized students who lose HOPE Scholarship because of grades to qualify for readmission
- 1995 Established HOPE scholarships of up to \$10,000 annually for 1000 Georgia teachers to complete advanced degrees
- 1995 Expanded voluntary Pre-K Program for at-risk four year olds to all four-year olds
- 1995 Funded model technology grants for gifted students
- 1995 Funded an additional Learning Logic site in each Congressional district
- 1996 Pre-K Program enrollment expanded to serve 58,000 four-year olds
- 1996 Funded capitol outlay for fast growing school systems
- 1996 Increased classroom technology funding (\$20 per student)
- 1996 Funded 11 new Alternative Schools
- 1997 Pre-K Program enrollment expanded to serve 60,000 four-year olds

- 1997 Increased classroom technology funding from \$20 to \$27.485 per FTE with a minimum grant per school of \$53,000
- 1997 Funding for assistive technology for special needs students
- 1997 Increased funding for Postsecondary Options Program based on student needs
- 1997 HOPE Scholarship expanded to include college students maintaining a “B” average during their freshman year; currently students must earn a “B” average for two years to earn the scholarship while in college
- 1998 Authorized a constitutional amendment to protect the Pre-K, Hope Scholarship, and technology programs to supplement; Lottery funds may only supplement – not supplant – existing education programs. Amendment subsequently approved by voters
- 2008 \$6.4 million provided in lottery funds to provide 1,000 additional Pre-K slots, bringing the total number of slots funded to 79,000
- 2009 Relative to the HOPE Scholarship – grades for coursework classified as advanced placement or international baccalaureate allowed to be weighted by the Georgia Student Finance Commission in calculating the overall grade point averages for students
- 2011 Amended Comprehensive Revisions to HOPE legislation; reinstated full-day Pre-K program but shortened school year to 160 days

SEX EQUITY

- 1983 Legislation passed which removes the legal assumption that the male is the head of household

A+ EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 2000 (HB 1187)

- The “A+ Education Reform Act of 2000” replaced the Quality Basic Education Act
- Students tested annually in grades 1-8 in English, language arts, mathematics, and reading; and in grades 3-8 in science and social studies. Promotion to the next grade level will be based on successful passage of the tests
- Established an Office of Educational Accountability (OEA), which began on July 1, 2000, and functions independently from the Department of Education (DOE). OEA will adopt standards for the grading of schools, and a bonus will be paid to the staff in schools earning either an “A” or “B” grade. Penalties will be assessed to school staffs earning either a “D” or “F” grade
- Mandatory school age changed to 6-16 years of age
- Provided for an accountability system, seamless education system, safe school environment, access to nursing services, academic intervention programs, alternative education environment, student assistance and advice in planning their careers and academic goals, an evaluation system for all school personnel, and an environment where parents and community participate in the establishment of school activities and programs
- Replaced the SIA program in grades 1-3 with Early Intervention programs
- Reduced the common planning time from 85 to 55 minutes and increased the instructional day from 4 ½ to 5 hours for middle schools performing below the 65%
- Funded more counselors, school social workers, psychologists, technology specialists, and nursing services
- Encouraged teacher/parent/student compacts
- Established required local school council that will recommend policies, rules, and regulations for the operation of each public school to the local board of education for consideration and adoption. Council members will be two teachers elected by the faculty, two parents elected by parents and guardians of children attending the school, two business leaders, and the school principal, who shall serve as chairperson