



Georgia PTA Summary Legislative Report 2024

How to use this document

The following summaries include Georgia PTA's position on each bill, based on Georgia PTA's and National PTA's previously adopted positions and resolutions.

Identify the bills that matter most to you. Use the link to a bill to find out its status and whether it currently sits in the House or Senate. Bills must pass both the Senate and the House. When a bill passes one chamber, it crosses over to the other chamber. This is the second year of a two-year cycle. Any bill not passed by both chambers within the two years dies and is not sent to the governor's desk for a signature. Use the links to our positions to guide your contact with your state senator or representative.

Contact legislation@georgiapta.org if you need any support.

HIGHEST PRIORITY

HB 3 The "Support for Students Living in Poverty Act" creates a new weight in the QBE funding formula that would add money for school districts with a large number of students who are living in poverty. It provides education grants to schools that must be spent on programs for students living in poverty. Georgia PTA adopted a position statement in support of an opportunity weight for students in poverty being included in the funding formula.

PTA supports this bill.

Status: Still in the House.

SB 233 This voucher bill would provide \$6,000 to every student to attend private school – regardless of income or other need. There is no limit on how many families could take advantage of this, and provides a discount to rich families while not solving any of the challenges facing public education.

PTA opposes all forms of diverting public funds to private entities.

Status: Passed Senate, Failed in the House, but can be reconsidered by the House this year.

SB 88 The “Parents and Children Protection Act of 2023.” Adults acting in “loco parentis” -including public and private school teachers, administrators and staff - may not discuss topics of a sensitive nature, including sexual orientation and gender identity, with minors under the age of 16 without written permission from a parent or legal guardian. No adult may engage in instruction, education, or training of a minor while dressed in a “sexually provocative” manner. PTA opposes this bill. PTA supports legislation that creates a safe, supportive and accepting environment in schools, specifically with training for educators and other school related professionals to support all students, updated health education standards that deal with the issues of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

PTA opposes this bill.

Status; Stuck in the Senate. Partially due to our efforts, this bill never came out of committee.

HB 520 This bill focuses on expanding the behavioral health workforce to meet the increasing demand for mental health services, particularly in under-served and rural areas. This is a crucial step in improving access to care and reducing disparities in mental health outcomes.

PTA supports this bill.

Status: Passed the House, currently sits in the Senate.

HB 54. This is another voucher bill. Last year, lawmakers tried to double the state's existing tax break for donors to private schools. The bill failed due to lobbying against it by education groups. HB 54 doubles the tax break, which will cost the state \$200 million each year, about a billion dollars over the next 10 years. The current voucher program lacks transparency and accountability, according to a recent state audit. Currently, parents who take voucher money do not have to prove that they spent the money on their child's education. Recommended financial reforms regarding current vouchers have not been enacted.

PTA opposes all forms of diverting public funds to private entities.

Status: Currently still in the House.

BILLS RELATED TO GUN SAFETY – SUPPORT

PTA **supports** legislation that requires knowledge of appropriate firearms use and safety practices, including safe gun and ammunition storage. The following bills relate to responsible practices with regard to gun ownership:

HB 135 establishes the offense of failure to adequately secure a firearm.

SB 75 establishes the offense of making a firearm accessible to a child and requires that firearm dealers post a notice about the law.

SB 269 prohibits gun sales and transfers in school safety zones.

Status: All of these bills are still in their originating chamber.

BILLS RELATED TO THE HOPE SCHOLARSHIP - SUPPORT

PTA **supports** legislation and programs intended to increase post-secondary participation and supports legislation and programs that increase financial aid to students and that simplify the application process for applying for all forms of aid, including the following bills:

HB 157 expands HOPE Eligibility to include study for certificate, diploma, or associate degree including remedial and developmental courses.

HB 310 Removes the ACT/SAT requirement for students to access HOPE scholarship.

Status: Both bills are still in the House.

BILLS RELATED TO DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES – SUPPORT

SB 169 limits the extension of hearing dates for student discipline tribunals; and requires that students subject to in-school suspension, short-term or long-term suspension, or pending completion of the student discipline tribunal process be provided with appropriate grade-level instructional materials. PTA **supports** policies where exclusionary discipline practices are only used in schools as a last resort effort to preserve the safety of students and staff.

Status: This bill was passed by the Senate and is currently in the House.

HB 356 prohibits the use of corporal punishment by school administrators, teachers, and other school personnel. PTA **supports** efforts to abolish corporal punishment and efforts to develop alternative discipline programs to provide an orderly climate for learning.

Status: This bill is still in the House.

BILLS RELATED TO TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AND RETENTION

PTA **supports** the teaching profession and encourages appropriate funding authorities to establish salaries commensurate with the professional preparation and dedication necessary for effective teaching.

HB 297 establishes minimum salaries for certificated (teachers) and non-certificated (para-pros) education personnel.

SB 207 increases the minimum base salary for certified teachers to \$49,000.

Status: Both of these bills are still in their originating chamber.

OTHER BILLS RELATED TO EDUCATION – SUPPORT

HB 127 The Department of Education (DOE) will set up rules so that parents and guardians are provided information regarding English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs. DOE will establish Standards for foreign language interpreters working with students in educational settings. Georgia PTA **supports** policies that improve academic achievement and funding for all education, counseling, and support services for students with limited English proficiency.

Status: This bill is still in the House.

HB 510 provides breakfast and lunch programs for all public-school students at no cost to students who qualify for reduced price meals. PTA **supports** food service programs that promote the well-being of students by serving good nutritious meals year round; contribute to nutrition education; and reflect the diversity of the community.

Status: This bill is still in the House.

HB 81 Grants will be provided to school systems with relatively low tax bases to help them fund school construction programs. These school districts fall in the bottom 25% of districts based on sales and property tax revenue. PTA **supports** all children receiving the chance for a quality education in facilities that are safe, well-equipped, and sufficiently maintained.

Status: This bill was passed by the House and is currently in the Senate.

HB 320 requires all certificated personnel to receive training in depression and suicide awareness and prevention. PTA **supports** robust state and local policies that provide mental health services to all children, youth, and their families so that every child can reach their fullest potential.
Status: This bill is still in the House.

SB 82 prohibits discrimination based on protective hairstyles associated with race, color, or national origin and to allow for civil action against discrimination. PTA **supports** this bill as it stands firmly against racism in all forms. As an association that represents all children, we must listen, educate, and advocate beyond rhetoric and rise to correct all inequities and injustices.
Status: This bill is still in the Senate.

HB 173 provides for mandatory pre-kindergarten and kindergarten for all children prior to entering into first grade and lowers the age of compulsory school attendance from six years old to four years old. PTA **supports** effective early education development programs for children from birth to age five that are adequately funded, developmentally appropriate, and coordinate comprehensive services for young children and their families.
Status: This bill is still in the House.

OTHER BILLS RELATED TO EDUCATION – OPPOSE

SB 96 mandates that the Professional Standards Commission's standards and procedures for certification programs shall be neutral with respect to whether such programs are provided by for profit or not for profit entities and shall consider teacher programs outside of this state. PTA **opposes** this bill because we support high standards for teacher preparation, licensing, hiring, and professional development for educators, particularly for beginning teachers, to promote the achievement of all students. This bill undermines the ability of the PSC to ensure that Georgia's teachers meet their high standards of quality.
Status: This bill is still in the Senate.

SB 141 prohibits health care providers from performing specified practices on minors relating to altering a person's appearance relating to gender, and prohibits school personnel from engaging in certain conduct relating to a minor's perception of their gender. PTA **opposes** this bill. PTA supports legislation that creates a safe, supportive and accepting environment in schools, specifically with training for educators and other school related professionals to support all students, updated health education standards that deal with the issues of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.
Status: This bill is still in the Senate.

SB 154 removes an exemption for school libraries relating to the sale or distribution of harmful materials to minors, which is considered a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature. PTA **opposes** removing the exemption. PTA believes that students need access to information in order to explore and experience the diversity of ideas in a pluralistic society. PTA recognizes and supports the rights of parents to guide their children in choosing appropriate reading and educational materials.
Status: This bill is still in the Senate.