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## Update on Governor Deal's Education Reform Commission



In January, Governor Nathan Deal established a 34-member Education Reform Commission (ERC) made up of legislators, school administrators, business leaders, charter school representatives, and community members. The Commission's role is to comprehensively review the state's education system and QBE funding formula in order to provide recommendations on possible executive, legislative, and agency fixes. There are five subcommittees:

1. Funding
2. Teacher Recruitment, Retention, and Compensation
3. Move On When Ready
4. Early Childhood Education
5. Expanding Educational Options for Georgia Families/School Choice

The Commission was originally supposed to bring back final recommendations in August but has had to push the deadline back to mid-December. You can find a schedule of the commission meetings [here](#). GAE has been monitoring the Education Reform Commission since its inception.

We will not know the final recommendations until we get closer to December, and we will provide our membership regular updates as we move through the fall. Once the Commission makes its recommendations, it will be up to the Governor, the General Assembly, and agencies to decide whether they will adopt them. Most of the changes will have to be made through the legislative process.

Opportunities for public comment at the Commission meetings have been limited. As we reported in the spring, they held one meeting to get input from teachers and GAE President Sid Chapman and about fifteen of our members attended the meeting to share our ideas. In fact, at the inception of the Commission, GAE released a joint statement with other education organizations to highlight the lack of educators on the Commission. There is one retired teacher and one former Teacher of the Year, who to our knowledge no longer teaches in the classroom, on the Commission.

TRAGIC organized a week of action to organize calls and emails to the Governor, the Education Reform Commission, and other state legislators to show opposition to one of the ideas the ERC

is considering. One proposal they are considering is eliminating state funding for educator T & E (Teaching and Experience). The Governor's office argues that there is no evidence that advanced degrees or teaching experience positively affect student performance except in areas of advanced science and math. GAE encourages our members to join in the week of action. We will work to keep the pressure on in the weeks ahead.

At the Teacher Recruitment, Retention, and Compensation subcommittee meeting this week, Commission members did reference the numerous phone calls that were being made on this issue. They discussed many different models to consider under their three main topics.

### **Compensation Model**

- Clarified that the new T & E policy would impact new educators but not the current ones that have higher pay through the program now. It did not appear they backed off their plan to recommend the policy change.
- Discussed other compensation models including Fulton County model, extra pay for working in poverty schools, signing bonuses, differentiated pay based on subject, along with other ideas



### **Recruitment Model**

- New model should not be as an add on but redefining program (look at nursing model)
- 4th year practicum model
- Work on extra incentives for extra jobs
- Require a district to have a mentoring program
- Five-year induction model
- Entry level salary should go up
- Move up on the salary schedule quicker
- Differential percentage of raise for teachers as opposed to bus drivers – value of classroom teacher focal point of new model
- If we get compensation right in the new model it will impact recruitment and retention
- Student loan forgiveness
- Clinical practicum rather than student teacher model for entering profession

### **Retention Model**

- Mentoring
- Compensation
- Protective planning time (many concerns were voiced about planning time and the lack thereof especially in the elementary grades)
- Local school program protecting planning time (principals need to do a better job in this area)
- Moratorium on changes in education ... classrooms, standards – everything
- Better communications and time frame regarding school schedule [time frame in bringing about changes]
- Sunset on some legislation impacting educators
- Reimburse students who take GACE

Please look for future updates.

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