Senate Bill 364
By: Senators Tippins of the 37th, Sims of the 12th, Wilkinson of the 50th, Shafer of the 48th, Cowsert of the 46th and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

To amend Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the "Quality Basic Education Act," so as to revise provisions relating to annual teacher, principal, and assistant principal evaluations; to revise provisions relating to student assessment; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

"Quality Basic Education Act," is amended by revising subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-210, relating to annual performance evaluations, as follows:

"(b)(1) No later than the 2014-2015 school year, each local school system and all charter schools shall implement an evaluation system as adopted and defined by the State Board of Education for elementary and secondary school teachers of record, assistant principals, and principals. The evaluation system shall be developed by the department in consultation with stakeholders, such as teachers and principals. The evaluation system shall use multiple measures, prioritizing growth in student achievement. For purposes of the evaluation system established pursuant to this subsection, the state board shall define and designate teachers of record, assistant principals, and principals; provided, however, that growth in student achievement shall not include the test scores of any student who has not been in attendance for a specific course for at least 80 percent of the instructional days for such course.

(2) Teachers of record, assistant principals, and principals shall be evaluated using multiple, rigorous, and transparent measures. Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, teachers of record, assistant principals, and principals shall be given written notice in advance of the school year of the evaluation measures and any specific indicators that will be used to evaluate them. Evaluation For local school systems that are not under a flexibility contract, evaluation measures shall include the following elements:
(A) For teachers of record who teach courses that are subject to annual state assessments aligned with state standards and the principals and assistant principals of elementary or secondary schools that are subject to such assessments, growth in student achievement on such assessments shall count for at least 50 percent of the evaluation, using the student growth and academic achievement measures identified in the evaluation system;

(B) For teachers of record who teach courses not subject to annual state assessments, growth in student achievement shall be assessed through measures of student achievement growth developed at the school system level and approved by the Department of Education. When sufficient data becomes available from the department to calculate student achievement growth measures, such measures of student achievement growth shall count for at least 50 percent of the evaluation, using student growth and academic achievement measures developed by the school system in a process approved by the State Board of Education;

(C) For teachers of record, the annual evaluation shall also include multiple additional measures that shall be correlated with impacts on student achievement results. These measures shall include multiple classroom observations each year by appropriately trained and credentialed evaluators, using clear, consistent observation rubrics, and supplemented by other measures aligned with student achievement, including student perception data and documentation of practice; and

(D) For assistant principals and principals, the annual evaluation shall also include multiple additional measures that shall be aligned with impacts on student achievement results. These measures shall include multiple school observations each year by appropriately trained and credentialed evaluators. When sufficient data becomes available from the department to calculate performance measures, these measures shall also include the principal's ability to attract and retain highly effective teachers, effectively manage the school, and establish a positive climate for learning, and other measures aligned with student achievement for students in all subgroups.

(3) Teachers of record, assistant principals, and principals shall be evaluated using multiple, rigorous, and transparent measures. Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, teachers of record, assistant principals, and principals shall be given written notice in advance of the school year of the evaluation measures and any specific indicators that will be used to evaluate them. For local school systems that are under a flexibility contract, evaluation measures shall include the following elements:

(A) For teachers of record who teach courses that are subject to annual state assessments aligned with state standards, growth in student achievement on such assessments shall count for at least 30 percent. The student growth measure shall be
composed of a minimum of 20 percent based on the state assessment and the remaining
10 percent may utilize multiple measures as determined by the local school system's
flexibility contract;
(B) For teachers of record who teach courses not subject to annual state assessments,
growth in student achievement shall count for at least 30 percent. The student growth
measure shall utilize at least one growth measure, but may utilize multiple measures as
determined by the local school system's flexibility contract;
(C) For teachers of record, an additional 20 percent measure will be based on the
achievement of the performance indicators, including goals informed by multiple
student growth measures, the results of the teacher evaluations, observations, and
standards of practice, and any additional measures included in the local school system's
flexibility contract. The remaining 50 percent shall count for teacher evaluations,
observations, and standards of practice. For teachers of record, the annual evaluation
shall include multiple classroom observations each year by appropriately trained and
credentialled evaluators, using clear, consistent observation rubrics, and supplemented
by other measures aligned with student achievement, including student perception data
and documentation of practice. A local school system may include in its flexibility
contract a provision that for a teacher with three or more consecutive years of
experience with a rating level of 'Exemplary' or 'Proficient' pursuant to paragraph (4)
of this subsection, the evaluator may, in his or her discretion, reduce the number of
classroom observations for any such teacher; and
(D) For principals and assistant principals, growth in student achievement shall count
for at least 40 percent. The student growth measure shall be composed of a minimum
of 30 percent state assessment with the remaining 10 percent utilizing multiple student
growth measures as determined by the local school system's flexibility contract. An
additional 10 percent shall be based on achievement gap closure; 10 percent on school
climate; 10 percent on Beat the Odds or CCRPI data, as determined by flexibility
contract; and 30 percent on leader evaluations, observations, and standards of practice.
(3)(4) The evaluation system adopted by the State Board of Education shall give every
teacher of record, assistant principal, and principal one of four rating levels that are
designated as 'Exemplary,' 'Proficient,' 'Needs Development,' or 'Ineffective,' as further
defined by the State Board of Education. A rating of 'Ineffective' shall constitute
evidence of incompetency as provided by paragraph (1) of subsection (a) of Code Section
20-2-940.
(4)(5) All teachers of record, assistant principals, and principals shall have a
pre-evaluation conference, midyear evaluation conference, and a summative evaluation
conference, in accordance with state board rules. All teachers of record, assistant
principals, and principals shall be notified of and have access to the results of the annual
summative performance evaluation and any formative observations conducted throughout
the school year pursuant to this subsection within five working days of such evaluation
or observations. A teacher of record, assistant principal, or principal, or an evaluator of
any such individuals, may request a conference within ten working days of notice of
results of a formative observation and such conference shall be provided within ten
working days of the request. Conferences shall include the individual being evaluated,
his or her supervisor, and the evaluator, unless otherwise agreed upon.

(5) In order to ensure proper implementation of the evaluation system developed
pursuant to this Code section, the Department of Education shall:

(A) Establish processes and requirements to determine the teacher of record for
purposes of assigning student achievement scores to a teacher in evaluating the
teacher's performance;

(B) Establish processes for roster verification and student teacher linkages in order to
assign the student's achievement scores to the teacher for the purposes of evaluating the
teacher's performance;

(C) Establish minimum training and credentialing requirements for evaluators of
teachers and principals; and

(D) Provide data systems to support the professional growth of teachers and leaders
and facilitate human capital management.

(7) As used in this subsection, the term 'flexibility contract' means a charter for a charter
system or a contract entered into with the State Board of Education for a strategic waivers
school system."

SECTION 2.

Said article is further amended by revising Code Section 20-2-281, relating to student
assessments, as follows:

20-2-281.

(a) The State Board of Education shall adopt a student assessment program consisting of
instruments, procedures, and policies necessary to implement the program and shall fund
all costs of providing and scoring such instruments, subject to appropriation by the General
Assembly. The student assessment program shall include a comprehensive summative
assessment program for grades three through 12. In addition, each local school system
shall administer, with state funding, a research based formative assessment with a
summative component that is tied to performance indicators in English and language
arts/reading in grades one and two, subject to available appropriations. Each local school
system may elect to administer, with state funding, nationally norm-referenced instruments
in reading, mathematics, science, or social studies in grade three, four, or five and in grade
six, seven, or eight, subject to available appropriations, with assistance to such school
systems by the State Board of Education with regard to administration guidance, scoring,
and reporting of such instruments. Further, the State Board of Education shall adopt a
school readiness assessment for students entering first grade and shall administer such
assessment pursuant to paragraph (2) of subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-151. Each
local school system is strongly encouraged to develop and implement a program of
multiple formative assessment and intervention assessments in reading and mathematics
for kindergarten through third grade and mathematics for kindergarten through fifth grade
to ensure that students are on track to meet grade-level expectations, including mastery in
reading by the end of third grade to prepare for the infusion of literacy in subsequent grades
and mastery in basic mathematics skills by the end of fifth grade and in accordance with
the local school system's five-year strategic plan, performance indicators, and, if applicable,
flexibility contract. The State Board of Education shall periodically review, revise, and
upgrade the content standards. Following the adoption of such content standards, the State
Board of Education shall contract for development of end-of-grade assessments to measure
the content standards. Such as part of the comprehensive summative assessment program,
end-of-grade assessments in English, language arts/reading, and mathematics shall be
administered annually to students in grades three through eight, and such tests in science
and social studies shall be administered annually to students in grades three through five
and eight; provided, however, that for local school systems that have a program of multiple
formative assessments during the course of the academic year that result in a single
summative score that is valid and reliable in measuring student achievement or growth,
such local assessments may take the place of an end-of-grade assessment, if provided for
in terms of a flexibility contract. These tests shall contain features that allow for
comparability to other states with whom establishing such comparison would be
statistically sound; provided, however, that no such comparison shall be conducted which
would relinquish any measure of control over assessments to any individual or entity
outside the state. This action shall be completed according to a schedule established by the
State Board of Education. Further, as part of the comprehensive summative assessment
program, the State Board of Education shall adopt and administer, through the Department
of Education, end-of-course assessments for students in grades nine through 12 for all core
subjects, as determined by the state board. Writing performance shall be assessed, at a
minimum, for students in grades three, five, eight, and 11 and may be assessed for students
in additional grade levels as designated by the State Board of Education. Such required
writing performance assessment may be embedded within the assessments included in the
comprehensive summative assessment program. Writing performance results shall be
provided to students and their parents. As used in this subsection, the term ‘flexibility contract’ means a charter for a charter system or a contract entered into with the State Board of Education for a strategic waivers school system.

(b) The nationally norm-referenced instruments provided for in subsection (a) of this Code section shall provide students and their parents with grade equivalencies and percentile ranks which result from the administration of such instruments. End-of-grade assessments shall provide for results that reflect student achievement at the individual student, classroom, school, system, state, and national levels. The State Board of Education shall participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and may participate in any other tests that will allow benchmarking this state's performance against national or international performance. The results of such testing shall be provided to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the State Board of Education and shall be reported to the citizens of Georgia. Further, the state board shall adopt a school readiness assessment for students entering first grade and shall administer such assessment pursuant to paragraph (2) of subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-151. One of the components in the awarding of salary supplements as part of a pay for performance or related plan under this article may be assessments of student achievement.

(b.1) The State Board of Education shall notify local school systems and individual schools of the results of the assessment instruments administered under this Code section at the earliest possible date determined by the state board, but not later than the beginning of the subsequent school year. In the event the state board is unable to provide timely results in the first year of implementation of a substantially new assessment instrument, the provisions in paragraphs (2) and (3) of subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-283 shall not apply.

(c) The State Board of Education shall have the authority to condition the awarding of a high school diploma to a student upon achievement of satisfactory scores on end-of course assessments and other instruments adopted and administered by the state board pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code section and the end-of-course assessments adopted and administered by the state board pursuant to subsections (f) and (h) of this Code section. The state board is authorized and directed to adopt regulations providing that any disabled child, as defined by the provisions of this article, shall be afforded opportunities to take any test adopted by the state board as a condition for the awarding of a high school diploma. Such regulations shall further provide for appropriate accommodations in the administration of such test. Such regulations shall further provide for the awarding of a special education diploma to any disabled student who is lawfully assigned to a special education program and who does not achieve a passing score on such test or who has not...
completed all of the requirements for a high school diploma but who has nevertheless completed his or her Individualized Education Program.

(d)(1) The State Board of Education shall develop or adopt alternate assessments to be administered to those students with significant cognitive disabilities, receiving special education services pursuant to Code Section 20-2-152, who cannot access the state adopted content standards without appropriate accommodations to those standards and for whom the assessment instruments adopted under subsections subsection (a) and (f) of this Code section, even with allowable accommodations, would not provide an appropriate measure of student achievement, as determined by the student's Individualized Education Program team. Such alternate assessments shall be aligned with alternate academic achievement standards that have been adopted through a documented and validated standards-setting process, for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, provided those standards are aligned with the state standards established pursuant to Code Section 20-2-140 and promote access to the general education curriculum, consistent with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The State Board of Education shall ensure that any alternate assessments developed or adopted pursuant to this subsection are in compliance with applicable federal law, but do not impose requirements in excess of such federal law in a manner that unduly burdens a local school system or that does not benefit students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

(2) A student's Individualized Education Program team shall determine appropriate participation in assessment and identify necessary accommodations in accordance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and state board regulations.

(e) The State Board of Education is authorized to adopt rules, regulations, policies, and procedures regarding accommodations and the participation of limited-English-proficient students, as defined in Code Section 20-2-156, in the assessments described in this Code section.

(f) The State Board of Education shall adopt end-of-course assessments for students in grades nine through 12 for all core subjects to be determined by the state board. For those students with an Individualized Education Program, each such student's Individualized Education Program team shall identify necessary accommodations in accordance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and state board regulations.

(g) Under rules adopted by the State Board of Education, the Department of Education shall, subject to appropriations by the General Assembly, release some or all of the questions and answers to each end-of-grade assessment and each end-of-course assessment administered under subsection (a) of this Code section and each end-of-course assessment.
administered under subsection (h) of this Code section after the last time such assessment is administered for a school year.

(h) The State Board of Education, through the Department of Education, shall administer the end-of-course assessments for core subject areas as defined by state board policy. By the 2015-2016 school year, the State Board of Education shall make all end-of-course assessments available for administration online and shall establish rules and regulations to maximize the number of students and school systems utilizing such online assessments.

(i) The Department of Education shall develop study guides for the end-of-grade assessments and end-of-course assessments administered pursuant to subsections (a) and (h) of this Code section. Each school system shall distribute the study guides to students who do not perform satisfactorily on one or more parts of an assessment instrument administered under this Code section and to the parents or guardians of such students.

(j) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules and regulations requiring the results of core subject end-of-course assessments to be included as a factor in a student's final grade in the core subject course for which the end-of-course assessment is given.

(k) In addition to the assessment instruments adopted by the State Board of Education and administered by the Department of Education, a local school system may adopt and administer criterion-referenced or norm-referenced assessment instruments, or both, at any grade level. Such locally adopted assessment instruments may not replace the state's adopted assessment instruments for purposes of state accountability programs. A local school system shall be responsible for all costs and expenses incurred for locally adopted assessment instruments. Students with Individualized Education Programs must be included in the locally adopted assessments or provided an alternate assessment in accordance with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

(l) In adopting academic skills assessment instruments under this Code section, the State Board of Education or local school system shall ensure the security of the instruments in their preparation, administration, and scoring. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, meetings or portions of meetings held by the state board or a local board of education at which individual assessment instruments or assessment instrument items are discussed or adopted shall not be open to the public, and the assessment instruments or assessment instrument items shall be confidential.

(m) The results of individual student performance on academic skills assessment instruments administered under this Code section shall be confidential and may be released only in accordance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. Section 1232g.
(n) Overall student performance data shall be disaggregated by ethnicity, sex, socioeconomic status, disability, language proficiency, grade level, subject area, school system, and other categories determined by policies established by the Office of Student Achievement.

(o) Student performance data shall be made available to the public, with appropriate interpretations, by the State Board of Education, the Office of Student Achievement, and local school system. The information made available to the public shall not contain the names of individual students or teachers.

(p) Teachers in kindergarten through grade 12 shall be offered the opportunity to participate annually in a staff development program on the use of tests within the instructional program designed to improve students' academic achievement. This program shall instruct teachers on curriculum alignment related to tests, disaggregated student test data to identify student academic weaknesses by subtests, and other appropriate applications as determined by the State Board of Education.

(q) The State Board of Education shall consider the passage by a student of an industry certification examination or a state licensure examination which is approved by the State Board of Education or a COMPASS or ACCUPLACER score approved by the State Board of Education when considering whether to grant such student a variance or a waiver of one or more end-of-course assessments or other instruments required by the State Board of Education pursuant to subsection (c) of this Code section in order to obtain a Georgia high school diploma; provided, however, that the state board shall not grant a variance to a student unless the student has attempted and failed to pass the relevant end-of-course assessment or assessments at least four times.

(r) Local boards of education shall have the flexibility to administer state required assessments on any dates within the testing window established by the Department of Education; provided, however, that local boards of education are strongly encouraged to administer any such state required assessments within the last week of the school system's midyear semester, for assessments administered at the end of a midyear semester, and within the last two weeks of the school year for the school system, for assessments administered at the end of the academic year.

SECTION 3.
Said article is further amended by revising Code Section 20-2-283, relating to specific requirements for students in grades three, five, and eight, as follows:
"20-2-283.

(a) No later than January 1, 2002, the State Board of Education shall adopt criteria for the development of a placement and promotion policy by each local board of education consistent with the Georgia Academic Placement and Promotion Policy.

(b) Such criteria as adopted by the State Board of Education shall require the following for students in grades three, five, and eight:

(1) No student shall be promoted, except as provided in this Code section, to:

(A) The fourth grade program to which the student would otherwise be assigned if the student does not achieve grade level as defined by the Office of Student Achievement in accordance with Code Section 20-14-31 on the third grade end-of-grade reading assessment developed in accordance with subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-281 or on locally implemented multiple formative assessments that result in a single summative score that is valid and reliable in measuring student achievement or growth and meet the promotional standards and criteria established by the State Board of Education and by the local school board for the school that the student attends;

(B) The sixth grade program to which the student would otherwise be assigned if the student does not achieve grade level as defined by the Office of Student Achievement in accordance with Code Section 20-14-31 on the fifth grade end-of-grade mathematics assessment and fifth grade end-of-grade reading assessment developed in accordance with subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-281 or on locally implemented multiple formative assessments that result in a single summative score that is valid and reliable in measuring student achievement or growth and meet the promotional standards and criteria established by the State Board of Education and by the local school board for the school that the student attends; or

(C) The ninth grade program to which the student would otherwise be assigned if the student does not achieve grade level as defined by the Office of Student Achievement in accordance with Code Section 20-14-31 on the eighth grade end-of-grade mathematics assessment and eighth grade end-of-grade reading assessment developed in accordance with subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-281 or on locally implemented multiple formative assessments that result in a single summative score that is valid and reliable in measuring student achievement or growth and meet the promotional standards and criteria established by the State Board of Education and by the local school board for the school that the student attends;

(2) When a student does not perform at grade level on any end-of-grade assessment specified in paragraph (1) of this subsection then the following shall occur:

(A) The parent or guardian of the student shall be notified in writing by first-class mail by the school principal or such official's designee regarding the student's performance...
below grade level on the assessment instrument, the retest to be given the student, the
accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction program to which the student is
assigned, and the possibility that the student might be retained at the same grade level
for the next school year;
(B) The student shall be retested with an end-of-grade assessment or locally
implemented multiple formative assessments that result in a single summative score
that is valid and reliable in measuring student achievement or growth or an alternative
assessment instrument that is appropriate for the student's grade level as provided for
by the State Board of Education and the local board of education. The local board of
education shall be authorized to establish other indicators for purposes of promotion,
placement, or retention of a student, in accordance with the terms of the charter, for a
charter system, or the terms of a contract, for a strategic waivers school system; and
(C) The student shall be given an opportunity for accelerated, differentiated, or
additional instruction in the applicable subject; and
(3) When a student does not perform at grade level on any end-of-grade assessment
specified in paragraph (1) of this subsection and also does not perform at grade level on
a second additional opportunity as provided for in paragraph (2) of this subsection then
the following shall occur:
(A) The school principal or the principal's designee shall retain the student for the next
school year except as otherwise provided in this subsection;
(B) The school principal or the principal's designee shall notify in writing by first-class
mail the parent or guardian of the student and the teacher regarding the decision to
retain the student. The notice shall describe the option of the parent, guardian, or
teacher to appeal the decision to retain the student and shall further describe the
composition and functions of the placement committee as provided for in this
subsection, including the requirement that a decision to promote the student must be a
unanimous decision of the committee;
(C) If the parent, guardian, or teacher appeals the decision to retain the student, then
the school principal or designee shall establish a placement committee composed of the
principal or the principal's designee, the student's parent or guardian, and the teacher
of the subject of the assessment instrument on which the student failed to perform at
grade level and shall notify in writing by first-class mail the parent or guardian of the
time and place for convening the placement committee;
(D) The placement committee shall:
(i) Review the overall academic achievement of the student in light of the
performance on the end-of-grade assessment and the standards and criteria as adopted
by the local board of education and make a determination to promote or retain. A
decision to promote must be a unanimous decision and must determine that if promoted and given accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction during the next year, the student is likely to perform at grade level as defined by the Office of Student Achievement in accordance with Code Section 20-14-31 by the conclusion of the school year; and

(ii) Prescribe for the student, whether the student is retained or promoted, such accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction as needed to perform at grade level by the conclusion of the subsequent school year, prescribe such additional assessments as may be appropriate in addition to assessments administered to other students at the grade level during the year, and provide for a plan of continuous assessment during the subsequent school year in order to monitor the progress of the student;

(E) For students receiving special education or related services, the Individualized Education Plan Committee shall serve as the placement committee; and

(F) The decision of the placement committee may be appealed only as provided for by the local board of education.

(c) This Code section does not preclude the retention by the school principal or the principal's designee of a student who performs satisfactorily on the end-of-grade assessments specified in paragraph (1) of subsection (b) of this Code section as provided for by the local board of education.

(d) This Code section does not create a property interest in promotion.

(e) The State Board of Education shall establish policies and procedures for implementation of this Code section."

SECTION 4.

Said article is further amended by revising Code Section 20-2-284, relating to criteria for local boards of education and model placement and promotion policy, as follows:

"20-2-284.

(a) No later than July 1, 2003, each local board of education shall develop and adopt a placement and promotion policy in accordance with the criteria established by the State Board of Education as provided in Code Section 20-2-283 and consistent with the Georgia Academic Placement and Promotion Policy.

(b) Except for those end-of-grade assessments specified in Code Section 20-2-283, the placement and promotion policy as developed and adopted by each local board of education shall state how the end-of-grade assessments administered under Code Section 20-2-281 for grades one through eight or the locally implemented multiple formative assessments that result in a single summative score that is valid and reliable in measuring
student achievement or growth will be weighted or otherwise utilized by the school principal or the principal's designee in determining the overall academic achievement of a student and an appropriate plan of accelerated, differentiated, or additional instruction, placement, promotion, or retention of a student.

(c) To assist each local board of education, the State Board of Education shall develop a model placement and promotion policy which may be utilized by a local board of education."

SECTION 5.

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