A constitutional amendment on November’s ballot would allow the state to take over local schools based on unreliable standardized testing results. If it passes, the state could manage a struggling school directly, work with the local school board, convert the school to a charter school or close the school altogether.

State takeover of troubled schools has failed miserably in other states. There is no supporting evidence or data that the state takeover will be successful; efforts in Louisiana, Tennessee and Michigan failed.

The proposed state takeover is based on standardized testing, when the focus should be on educating, not teaching to tests. Schools would be selected solely on the basis of the state’s College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI score), an unreliable index that has changed several times in recent years.

The school takeover plan would allow the state to fire local teachers for no reason. The state would have the power to close down any school, reorganize staff, fire and replace teachers and principals and transfer any school to a charter school.

The state takeover provides NO additional funding or resources to struggling schools. In fact, the takeover plan takes resources from schools and allows corporations to run schools instead of locally elected school boards.

A takeover of local schools ignores the proven solution: investing in local schools and the communities around them. All of us need to work together to help schools become anchors of the community by providing the resources students need including quality teachers, small class sizes, afterschool programs and health services.

The state takeover is a long-term sentence; schools could be under state control for as long as 10 years. Schools will be added to the takeover list as early as January 1, 2017. Once selected, a school will remain under state control for at least three consecutive years.

Parents and educators will lose their voice in local school affairs. The takeover plan seizes authority and resources from the local school board, leaving the voters with no say in their local school.

The state takeover plan adds yet another level of bureaucracy to our local schools. In controlling these schools, the state is not required to or expected to work in together with the current elected State Superintendent of Schools.

Now is the time to talk to your friends, neighbors and family about this vote. The question on the ballot is worded to confuse voters; make sure your community members know the facts about the state school takeover!

“Amendment #1: provides greater flexibility and state accountability to fix failing schools through increasing community involvement. Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended to allow the state to intervene in chronically failing public schools in order to improve student performance?”

READ THE FINE PRINT BEFORE YOU VOTE!