STOP
THE STATE TAKEOVER OF
OUR LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS!

Q: What is the proposed constitutional amendment that would allow takeover of our local schools?
A: A referendum on the November 8, 2016 ballot would allow the state to take over struggling schools as part of a so-called “Opportunity School District,” or OSD. The question on the ballot is worded to appeal to voters and to seem straightforward and sensible. “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?”

Q: Has this kind of takeover plan been used in other states?
A: There is no supporting evidence or data that a state takeover would be successful; efforts in Louisiana, Tennessee and Michigan failed. A recent study by Vanderbilt University showed that in Tennessee there has been no improvement at all in schools taken over by the state since 2010. In contrast, struggling schools targeted for reform by local districts did show measurable improvement.

Q: If the state takes over a school, who’s in charge?
A: The Governor would be empowered to appoint a superintendent of the OSD. This superintendent would be confirmed by the Senate but would report directly to the Governor.

The state would have the option of managing a struggling school directly, working with the local school board, converting the school to a charter school or closing the school altogether. 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.

Q: What will happen to local teachers?
A: 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 convert any school to a charter school.

Q: How are schools selected?
A: Schools would be selected on the basis of standardized test results that are used to create the state’s College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) score. Schools that score below 60, considered an “F” on the CCRPI, for three (3) consecutive years are eligible for takeover. As many as 20 schools could be taken over by the state each year, and the state could have up to 100 schools at any given time!

Q: What is the CCRPI?
A: The state’s College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI) is made up largely of the results on standardized testing in order to “grade” every school in the state. The test has been changed several times in recent years, and some schools have reported problems with the administration of state tests. In addition, the CCRPI undervalues the progress that many struggling schools are making.

Q: When would the takeovers start?
A: Schools would be added to the takeover list as early as January 1, 2017. More schools could be added each year.

Q: Do the struggling schools taken over by the state get additional funding?
A: The state takeover would provide NO additional funding or resources to struggling schools. In fact, the takeover plan takes resources from the targeted schools and allows corporations to run them instead of locally elected school boards.

Q: How long would schools stay under state management?
A: Schools could be under state control for as long as 10 years. Once selected, a school would remain under state control for a minimum of five consecutive years. However, if a school earns a grade above an F for three years in a row, it would be removed from state control. Schools would stay under state control no more than 10 years.