

House Bill 238

By: Representatives Bruce of the 61st, Bazemore of the 69th, Gilliard of the 162nd, Miller of the 62nd, Naghise of the 68th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1 To amend Part 5 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia
2 Annotated, relating to program weights and funding requirements under the Quality Basic
3 Education Act, so as to provide for the State Board of Education to establish a five-year pilot
4 program to incentivize qualified local units of administration to utilize school bus monitors
5 to promote and enhance student safety and appropriate student conduct as part of the local
6 unit of administration's transportation program and to study the impacts of such utilization;
7 to require the State Board of Education to promulgate rules and regulations to implement the
8 program; to provide for grants to participating local units of administration; to provide for
9 program requirements; to provide for applications and selection to participate in the program;
10 to provide for assessment and reporting requirements; to provide for waivers and variances
11 of state rules, regulations, policies, and procedures as necessary to meet the goals of the pilot
12 program; to require the Department of Education to develop model school bus monitor
13 duties, protocols, and procedures for local units of administration participating in the pilot
14 program; to provide for program implementation; to provide for an automatic repealer; to
15 provide for effectiveness; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for
16 other purposes.

17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

18 **SECTION 1.**

19 Part 5 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
20 relating to program weights and funding requirements under the Quality Basic Education
21 Act, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

22 "20-2-188.1.

23 (a) As used in this Code section, the term 'school bus monitor' means a person employed
24 or used pursuant to a contract by a qualified local unit of administration who is assigned
25 to monitor student safety during the transportation of students on school buses to and from
26 public schools and to and from places for the purpose of work experiences, training in
27 instructional laboratories outside the assigned schools, and other such field trips required
28 of or integral to the various instructional components of the educational program.

29 (b)(1) The State Board of Education is authorized to establish a pilot program to
30 incentivize qualified local units of administration to utilize school bus monitors to
31 promote and enhance student safety and appropriate student conduct as part of such local
32 unit of administration's transportation program and to study the impacts of such
33 utilization.

34 (2) Subject to appropriations by the General Assembly, the pilot program shall include
35 funding for up to \$3 million in grants each school year, for up to five school years starting
36 with the 2023-2024 school year, to qualified local units of administration for the
37 utilization of school bus monitors.

38 (3) The State Board of Education shall establish program requirements and criteria for
39 selecting qualified local units of administration to participate in the pilot program in
40 accordance with the provisions of this Code section.

41 (4) The State Board of Education shall be authorized to establish reporting requirements
42 on the qualified local units of administration participating in the pilot program.

43 (5) To implement the pilot program, notwithstanding any other provision of law to the
44 contrary, the State Board of Education shall be authorized to waive or provide variances
45 to state rules, regulations, policies, and procedures and to provisions of this chapter that
46 may be reasonably necessary to meet the goals of the pilot program.

47 (6) The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary to
48 carry out the provisions of this Code section, including requiring local matching funds
49 from qualified local units of administration to demonstrate their commitment to
50 promoting and enhancing student safety and appropriate student conduct in their
51 transportation programs and waiving such matching funds requirement for qualified local
52 units of administration that demonstrate financial need.

53 (c)(1) By August 1, 2023, the Department of Education shall develop model school bus
54 monitor duties, protocols, and procedures for qualified local units of administration
55 participating in the pilot program pursuant to this Code section which shall include, but
56 shall not be limited to:

57 (A) Working in coordination with school bus drivers, school administrators, and other
58 school personnel;

59 (B) Effectively monitoring student behavior;

60 (C) Assisting students to enter and exit school buses, including providing special
61 assistance to students with disabilities;

62 (D) Providing assistance to students during emergencies;

63 (E) Using age and ability appropriate methods of promoting and enhancing student
64 safety, including intervention methods to prevent or minimize behaviors that
65 compromise student safety;

66 (F) Properly enforcing student conduct rules, including documentation of infractions
67 of such rules; and

68 (G) Maintaining confidentiality.

69 (2) The Department of Education shall develop an application process and seek
70 applications from qualified local school systems for the pilot program no later than
71 September 1, 2023. The pilot program shall be implemented as soon as practicable, but
72 in no event later than January 1, 2024.

73 (3)(A) The Department of Education shall monitor and annually assess the status of the
74 pilot program with cooperation and input from the qualified local units of
75 administration participating in the pilot program. Such assessment shall include
76 whether the utilization of school bus monitors:

77 (i) Improves student safety on school buses;

78 (ii) Improves student conduct on school buses;

79 (iii) Reduces transportation delays due to student conduct-related issues;

80 (iv) Improves bus driver retention;

81 (v) Reduces instances of moving traffic violations involving school buses; and

82 (vi) Reduces instances of motor vehicle accidents involving school buses
83 disaggregated by accidents not involving collisions, accidents involving collisions
84 with property damage, accidents involving collisions with personal injury, and
85 accidents involving collisions with both property damage and personal injury.

86 (B) Beginning no later than June 1, 2024, and by each June 1 each year thereafter, the
87 Department of Education shall provide to the State Board of Education a report of the
88 annual assessment provided for in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph.

89 (d) This Code section shall stand repealed in its entirety on July 1, 2028."

90

SECTION 2.

91 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
92 without such approval.

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SECTION 3.

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