Legislation That Did Not Pass

SB 48

Georgia Senate Bill 48 (SB48) represents a promising opportunity to better serve students with dyslexia. While SB48 is a significant development, it is also a first step and not a comprehensive solution. It will be successful if it is implemented with fidelity and integrated into other interventions.

The bill creates a three-year pilot program to identify students with dyslexia before they enter kindergarten through the use of a statewide dyslexia screener. The legislation also requires that the State Department of Education create a dyslexia handbook to help local school systems and local school districts adopt formal dyslexia policies.

Also incorporated into this legislation is the creation of a three-year pilot program, starting in the 2023-2024 school year, to assess the effectiveness of early reading assistance programs for students with risk factors for dyslexia. The pilot program will be implemented in five local school systems, representative of urban, suburban, and rural communities. The General Assembly has allocated $100,000 in the FY 2020 budget to fund the first year of the pilot.

SB 137

To promote health and well-being for Georgia’s school children, HB 137 requires 30 minutes of daily recess for all public elementary schools on days with no scheduled physical education or structured activity. It is estimated that 5-10 percent of the population has a language-based learning disability, of whom 80 percent are likely to have some form of dyslexia. Early identification and intervention of a reading disorder increase chances for a child to become a fluent reader. Adequate recess can provide children with that accelerated path to support and diagnosis.

Research shows a strong positive relationship between physical fitness and academic achievement. Physical activity brings several benefits to children, including increased alertness, improved learning capacity, and enhanced social skills.

Daily exercise challenges the brain so it can grow; incorporating just 30 minutes of physical activity a day into the school routine without altering the academic schedule every day can make children more alert and ready to learn.

Georgia’s “Move on When Ready” dual-enrollment program allows public, private, or home study high school students to take up to 15 hours (per term) of postsecondary coursework that counts toward both high school graduation and postsecondary credit.

Additionally, HB 137 requires 30 minutes of daily recess for all public elementary schools on days with no scheduled physical education or structured activity.

For more information or questions regarding the Georgia Grantmakers Alliance, please contact GGA staff liaison, Dialyn Lummus, dialyn@gga.org.