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FINAL REPORT OF THE SENATE STUDY COMMITTEE ON EVALUATING THE SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR OF GEORGIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS (SR 1068)

Committee Members

Senator Steve Gooch, Chair
District 51

Senator Mike Dugan
District 30

Senator John Wilkinson
District 50

Senator Jack Hill
District 04

Grier Todd
Lake Lanier Islands Resort

Jay Markwalter
Georgia Association of Convention and Visitors

Michael Owens
Tourism Leadership Council

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Kevin Langston
Georgia Department of Economic Development

Scott Johnson
State Board of Education

Kelsey Moore
Georgia Travel Association

Prepared by the Senate Research Office, 2018

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COMMITTEE FOCUS, CREATION, AND DUTIES

The Senate Study Committee on Evaluating the School Year Calendar of Georgia Public Schools (Committee) was created with the adoption of Senate Resolution 1068 during the 2018 Legislative Session. The Committee was charged with undertaking a study of the varied school start dates to determine its economic impact to the travel and hospitality industry.

The following individuals were appointed pursuant to the resolution to serve as members of this Committee:

- Senator Steve Gooch of the 51st, Chair
- Senator Mike Dugan of the 30th
- Senator John Wilkinson of the 50th
- Senator Jack Hill of the 4th
- Grier Todd, President of the Senate Appointee, Lake Lanier Islands Resort
- Jay Markwalter, Executive Director, Georgia Association of Convention and Visitors
- Michael Owens, Georgia Chamber of Commerce Designee, President, Tourism Leadership Council
- Camila Knowles, Governor Appointee, Cornerstone Government Relations
- Kevin Langston, Deputy Commissioner for Tourism, Georgia Department of Economic Development
- Scott Johnson, State Board of Education
- Kelsey Moore, Executive Director, Georgia Travel Association

The following legislative staff members were assigned to this Committee: Ms. Ines Owens of the Senate Press Office; Mr. Ryan Bowersox of the Senate Research Office; Ms. Betsy Howerton of the Office of Legislative Counsel; and Ms. Sydney Wilkins, Legislative Assistant to Senator Gooch.

BACKGROUND AND REGULATORY OVERVIEW

Authority for State to Control Local School Calendars

Under the Georgia Constitution, Article VII, Section I, 'the General Assembly may by general law provide for the establishment of education policies.' Georgia code itself is silent as to which issues fall within local control and which fall under state control. However, state law calls upon the State Board of Education to define a school year.¹ The State Board defines a school year as 'a minimum of 180 school days or its equivalent' but is silent as to specific start or end dates.²

State Board rules provide that the local education agencies, such as the local board of education, must establish and approve the school day and school year for K-12 students.³ The local education agency (LEA) is required under rules and regulations to submit an annual school calendar to the Department of Education (DOE) by May 31st each year. If the LEA amends the calendar after May 31st, the amendments must be submitted to DOE within 30 days.

It is important to note, that in 2008, the General Assembly passed legislation to provide increased flexibility to local school systems.⁴ Currently, 178 of the 180 school districts have entered into performance contracts with the State Board. These contracts provide them significant flexibility from state law and State Board rules/regulations in exchange for increased accountability for student performance. There are certain laws that cannot be waived under contract including any rules, regulations, court orders, and statutes regarding:

- Civil rights;
- Insurance;
- The protection of the physical health and safety of school students, employees, and visitors;
- Conflicting interest transactions;
- The prevention of unlawful conduct;
- Any laws relating to unlawful conduct in or near a public school;
- Any reporting requirements pursuant to Code Section 20-2-320 regarding the collection of student data or Chapter 14 of this title related to education accountability;
- The requirements of Code Section 20-2-210 regarding the annual performance evaluation of personnel;
- The requirements of Code Section 20-2-211.1 regarding background checks for educators; or
- The requirements in subsection (c) of Code Section 20-2-327 requiring school to assist students in preparing an Individual Graduation Plan.⁵

¹ O.C.G.A. § 20-2-168

² State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.02

³ State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.02

⁴ O.C.G.A. § 20-2-80

⁵ O.C.G.A. § 20-2-82(e)

Instructional Time Requirements

Under state law, schools that receive federal funding must provide at least 180 school days of education each year, or its equivalent.⁶ Specific start/end dates are not discussed in code.

The State Board provides that local boards must schedule the school year for students for at least 180 school days or its equivalent. A 'school day' consists of the following:

- Grades K-3: At least an average of 4.5 hours of instructional time per day for 180 days
- Grades 4-5: At least an average of 5 hours of instructional time per day for 180 days
- Grades 6-12: At least an average of 5.5 hours of instructional time per day for 180 days⁷

Students who are enrolled in a dual or joint enrollment program are exempt from the required average instructional time. If a local board of education's calendar contains less than 180 school days, they must submit the number of daily instructional minutes that the schools will follow.

Georgia Milestones

School districts select a local testing window within their school calendar to administer Milestone assessments, this testing window must also fall within a state-designated testing window.⁸

In 2017, the Georgia Senate requested the State Board to make an adjustment to the 'End of Grade' Milestones testing window in grades 3-8. Previously, the testing window for Milestones was April 3rd-May 5th. In 2018, the testing window was moved to April 9th-May 18th. In 2019, the testing window will be April 8th-May 17th. School districts have set an end date to their school year anywhere from May 9th-May 31st.

The 'End of Course' Milestones exams occur upon the completion of certain high-school level courses and occur for the Fall term during November 27th-January 5th and for the Spring term during April 23rd-June 1st. These assessments must also be completed by middle school students completing a course associated with the Georgia Milestones exams.⁹

The following table provides a summary of the testing windows for the 2017-2018 school year.

| | 2017 Fall Term | 2018 Spring Term |
|--|--|--|
| End of Grade Assessment (Grades 3-8) | One exam- April 9-May 18 | |
| End of Course Assessment (High school level, course specific) | November 27 th -January 5 th | April 23 rd -June 1 st |

⁶ O.C.G.A. § 20-2-168

⁷ State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.02

⁸ State Board of Education Rule 160-3-1-.07

⁹ http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Documents/Milestones/EOC-Resources/Georgia_Milestones_TCM_17-18.pdf

Comparison of State School Calendars

A state by state comparison of regulations regarding required school days and school calendar options was provided to help assist in a representation of other states' action in this area.¹⁰ These findings reflect that in total, thirteen states impose guidelines on public school calendars, while thirty-seven states allow the school calendar to be a complete district option.

The following states, to some level, impose a guideline as to when public schools can start:

- Arkansas – Start on or after the Monday of the week in which 8/19 falls; no earlier than 8/14 or no later than 8/26;
- Florida – District option, but school must start no earlier than 14 days before labor day;
- Iowa – Start no earlier than a day of the week in which 9/1 falls. If 9/1 falls on Sunday, school may begin on a day of the week immediately preceding 9/1;
- Michigan – Start no earlier than Labor Day;
- Minnesota – Start no earlier than Labor Day;
- Missouri – District option, but no later than 10 days prior to the first Monday in September;
- North Carolina – District option, but start no earlier than Monday closest to 8/19 with approval, otherwise Monday closest to 8/26. Finish no later than Friday closest to 6/11;
- Oregon – District option, but no fewer than 265 consecutive calendar days between the first and last instructional day;
- South Carolina – District option, but start no earlier than third Monday in August;
- Tennessee – District option, but start no earlier than 8/1;
- Texas – Start no earlier than the fourth Monday in August, unless waiver is granted;
- Virginia – District option, but start after Labor Day, unless waiver is granted; and
- Wisconsin – Start no earlier than 9/1.

¹⁰ A complete table reflecting this data can be found in Appendix A. Data Provided by the National Center for Education Statistics as of the 2014-2015 School Year.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Meeting 1 – October 9, 2018

The first meeting was held on October 9th at the Georgia State Capitol. Testimony was presented by the following individuals:

- **Mr. Matt Cardoza, Mr. Allan Meyer, and Ms. Kerry Pritchard**, Georgia Department of Education
- **Mr. Matthew Pence**, Professional Association of Georgia Educators
- **Ms. Charlotte Booker**, Georgia Association of Educators
- **Ms. Diane Jacobi**, Georgia Parent Teacher Association
- **Ms. Connie Jackson**, President, Cobb Association of Educators

During the Committee's first meeting individuals representing the educational field were invited to present information on the current status of public school calendars within the state. Mr. Matt Cardoza and Mr. Allan Meyer presented on behalf of the Georgia Department of Education (DOE), with assistance from Ms. Kerry Pritchard. First, DOE presented information regarding how local school calendars are determined. DOE presented that currently school calendars are a matter of local control. Local school superintendents and their boards of education choose the school calendar with a great deal of input from the local community. Typically, school districts consult with many community members and organizations to create draft calendars which are then voted on by school board members. While this is not a mandated process, it is the one most typically followed within the state. DOE does not have any control over developing school calendars but is of the opinion it should remain a local issue. Historically school districts have started school years between July 10 and September 8 and ended the years between May 3 and June 16. DOE also presented information regarding Georgia Milestone testing windows. DOE presented that in 2018 the Georgia Milestones testing window ran from April 9 through May 18. Finally, DOE discussed performance contracts, stating that 178 of Georgia's 180 schools had signed performance contracts allowing greater decision making at the local level with increased accountability for student performance. This program has resulted in very positive performance thus far.

Mr. Matthew Pence with the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE) presented at the meeting a survey conducted on the idea of school calendar changes and control. The survey showed that a slight majority was against a state-mandated school start date after Labor Day, and a large majority was supportive of local school districts retaining control of the calendar. The survey was mainly answered by PAGE members and particularly, classroom instructors.

Next, Ms. Charlotte Booker, President of the Georgia Association of Educators presented the organization's support for school calendars remaining in local control with input from the community. Diane Jacobi, representing the Georgia Parent Teacher Association, expressed the organizations support for school calendars remaining a local issue. Finally, Ms. Connie Jackson, President of the Cobb County Association of Educators also expressed support for local control over school calendars, citing previous issues in Cobb County.

Meeting 2 – November 14, 2018

Meeting 2 was held on September 14th at the Georgia State Capitol. Testimony was presented by the following individuals:

- **Mr. Matt Cardoza and Mr. Allan Meyer**, Georgia Department of Education
- **Ms. Polly McKinney**, Advocacy Director, Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network
- **Ms. Lyndsy Greene**, Associate Executive Director, After-School All-Stars Atlanta
- **Mr. Jake Carter, President**, Southern Belle Farms

During the Committee’s second meeting, Mr. Matt Cardoza and Mr. Allan Meyer Georgia’s DOE returned to present answers to questions posed at the previous meeting. DOE presented figures on retesting and remediation within the state. DOE also shared that parent input is not taken into account to determine Milestone testing dates, nor are other national tests, such as AP or SAT, considered when setting Milestone dates. Information on dual enrollment within the state and Technical College System of Georgia calendars were also presented. Finally, DOE provided figures regarding equipping buses with air conditioning units in efforts to keep students comfortable while traveling to school in hot summer months. There are currently approximately 20,000 buses in Georgia, and it would cost approximately \$7,500 to place an air conditioning unit on a bus. DOE shared that approximately between 60-75% of new buses purchased have air conditioning.

Ms. Polly McKinney, representing the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network, presented information on the “summer slide” and the importance of enrichment activities over breaks. Ms. Lyndsy Greene, representing the After-School All-Stars Atlanta, shared information on the organization and their summer programs. Finally, Mr. Jake Cater, President of Southern Belle Farms, discussed his experiences with tourism and seasonal workers while operating a farm offering agriculture tourism.

Meeting 3 – December 20, 2018

The Committee held a third meeting on December 20th at SunTrust Park in the Kinoca Minolta Conference Room. Testimony was presented by the following individuals:

- **Representative Erica Thomas**, State Representative, District 39
- **Mr. Derek Schiller**, President, Business, Atlanta Braves
- **Mr. William “Bill” Doyle**, President and CEO, Callaway Gardens
- **Mr. Dale Kaetzel**, Park President, Six Flags over Georgia White Water
- **Mr. Michael Dombroski**, Vice President and General Manager, Stone Mountain Park

The Committee met for a third time in the Kinoca Minolta Conference Room at SunTrust Park. Representative Erica Thomas of Georgia’s 39th District presented to the Committee regarding her experiences in her district and as a parent. Representative Thomas stressed the wide-reaching impact of the school calendar on students, faculty, parents, and the surrounding community. She discussed the strain that multiple scattered breaks place financially on parents, and the risk they present to student’s well-being and nutrition. Representative Thomas expressed support for a later start date to the school year, citing it to be in the best interest of the children.

The Committee next heard from Mr. Derek Schiller, representing the Atlanta Braves, expressing the organization's support for a later start date to the school calendar. Mr. Schiller discussed the park's family-oriented experience and the large attendance from out of state visitors, bringing a valuable economic boost to the area, specifically Cobb County and its school system. Mr. Schiller also discussed the surge in attendance the organization experienced when local schools were not in session. Finally, Mr. Schiller explained that a large portion of the organization's workforce was comprised of students working during the summer break from school and emphasized the importance of these jobs for the development of student's work and life skills.

The Committee heard testimony from Mr. William "Bill" Doyle, representing Callaway Gardens. Mr. Doyle provided a brief history of the Gardens before explaining their emphasis on outdoor education as a non-profit organization. Mr. Doyle continued on to present an overview of the Garden's "Summer Family Adventure" and its origin, providing a beach vacation to families in the southeast. He explained the program originally lasted eleven weeks but has since been reduced to seven weeks to reflect diminished demand resulting from a shortened summer break. Mr. Doyle cited that the loss of these four weeks resulted in \$895,000 in direct revenue lost. Mr. Doyle emphasized the importance of summer to their organization, explaining that 27% of the total Resort and Garden's business occurs in the summer season. Summer now only consists of the months of June and July, as reduced hours begin to occur in August.

The Committee next heard testimony from Mr. Dale Kaetzel, representing Six Flags over Georgia and White Water, to present information demonstrating how the summer school schedule impacts their workforce, with a special focus on the benefits of youth employment. Mr. Kaetzel explained that employees from nine counties had seven different school start dates. During the organization's peak summer season, it employs over 2,600 employees but is forced to drop that employment 58% on August 1st. Mr. Kaetzel continued on to emphasize the real and tangible benefits of youth summer employment such as, the development of soft skills, increased opportunity for upward mobility, and income for necessities. Mr. Kaetzel explained that summer jobs compliment traditional education by helping develop social and professional skills necessary for later employment. He continued on to share several success stories of individuals who began their careers as seasonal employees within the parks. Finally, Mr. Kaetzel discussed the organization's impact and involvement on the local school districts, including its economic impact and support programs. The organization expressed its support of a longer summer with a later school start date.

The Committee then heard testimony from Mr. Michael Dombroski, representing Stone Mountain Park. Mr. Dombroski provided a general overview of the park and the significant tourism revenue it generates for the surrounding area and the state as a whole. Stone Mountain Park is the most visited attraction in the state with over 4 million visitors a year, and approximately 40% of those visitors traveling from outside of the state. Mr. Dombroski informed the Committee that Stone Mountain Park is one of Dekalb's largest employers with over 2,000 employees. Over 1,500 of these positions are part time or seasonal jobs largely filled by students. Mr. Dombroski emphasized the benefits of youth employment, including the development of soft skills and life skills and access to the Park's development and educational programs. Mr. Dombroski cited the importance of these teen employment opportunities, as teen employment has been declining in the United States. According to the Pew Research Center, in 2000 51.7% of 16 to 19-year old individuals had summer

employment compared to 35% in 2017. Mr. Dombroski explained that the Park's full attractions are open 197 days but due to the decreasing summer calendar, the Park has been forced to close for an additional 17-full operating days, or approximately 9% of their operating days. Mr. Dombroski and Stone Mountain Park are in support of a longer and well defined summer break for students.

COMMITTEE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through its investigation into issues surrounding the local school calendars in Georgia, this Committee has attempted to fully understand all competing considerations while balancing the numerous interests involved. Local school calendars have a tremendous impact on all parties involved including students, parents, educators, and the local community as a whole. This Committee has attempted to look at the benefits of a more unified calendar statewide, balanced with the positive impact gained from local control, while placing a priority on student well-being. Through its investigation, this Committee found no evidence to suggest that a more congruent school calendar or a later start date to the school year statewide could have a negative impact on education. Following the above summarized meetings, the Committee adopted the following findings and recommendations:

1. The Committee recommends guardrails be instituted around school start dates that preserve local control while providing consistency for Georgia students and parents.
 - The Committee recognizes that local education leaders want local control and flexibility, which is an important consideration. However, it can't be ignored that widely varying school start dates and volatile break schedules often come at a cost to our students, families, and communities.
 - The Committee recommends that “guardrails” around the school start date be put in place that protect summers for Georgia children and families and provide local education systems the flexibility they need while providing the benefits of more consistent school start dates.
 - Guardrails are similar in nature to existing federal and state mandated windows and scheduling parameters by which each school system currently uses to set their local calendars.
 - Additional consideration and study should be given to impact on the wellbeing of students as it relates to ancillary issues related to mid-summer school start dates in Georgia, such as unconditioned school buses, sports practices schedules, etc.
 - The Committee recommends that local school calendars across the state of Georgia be required to start no earlier than approximately 7 to 10 days prior to the first Monday in September and end on or about June 1, to encourage local school systems to avoid extending the school year into June.
2. The Committee recommends that the guardrails placed on local school calendars aim to provide a more congruent school calendar statewide, including a longer summer break with less sporadic intermediate breaks throughout the year.
 - More congruent calendars ensure that students and parents are better able to access summer experiences, educational opportunities and assistance programs.
 - More congruent school start dates across Georgia help facilitate greater educational experiences for Georgia's children, promote the ease of transferability between school systems, and create additional time for families to be together.
 - The impact of frequent, in some instances monthly, breaks on parents should be more fully considered. With the high cost of childcare, limited availability of mid-year camps and work schedules for one or both parents, inconsistent school calendars create significant difficulties, financial and otherwise, for Georgia parents

- A more congruent and consistent school calendar creates a more manageable break schedule for parents, and helps parents with finding child care, especially for children in different school systems.
 - School nutrition is an issue for short and intermittent breaks throughout the year. Students reliant on school breakfast and lunch do not have an easy and reliable source of nutrition during week-long breaks like they do during the summer break.
 - Childcare is a challenge for short and intermittent breaks and, when available, often is not priced competitively with whole summer childcare rates.
 - Summer feeding programs and enrichment opportunities, such as those presented by the “Georgia After School Network,” are crucially important to some of Georgia’s most vulnerable populations. Inconsistency in school calendars makes planning, staffing and funding these programs difficult, resulting in reduced access for Georgia’s students and parents.
 - The Committee recommends exploring the possibility of opening up certain schools within each district at earlier dates for “Vacation Academy” programs, where students can receive nutrition, remediation if needed, soft skills training, and educational field trips.
3. The Committee recommends testing dates and requirements must be evaluated when considering the implementation of guardrails on local school calendars to determine the appropriate dates statewide.
 - Many school systems begin their school calendar decisions by first determining when state-mandated testing must occur. There is a desire by school systems to provide as many instructional days as possible prior to the testing dates and also provide time for remediation and retesting prior to the end of the school year.
 - This Committee recommends that the State Board of Education explore ways to delay end of course and milestone tests in an effort to maximize classroom instruction days.
 - This Committee recommends eliminating any requirements that state mandated tests be scored prior to the end of the school year.
 4. The Committee recommends that school systems statewide be required to survey parents and stakeholders about school calendars.
 - While some school systems survey parents and stakeholders regarding potential school calendars, not every system does so.
 - The methods by which school systems seek community, teacher and parent input to calendars is widely varied, and may provide parents limited options for input.
 - These surveys should be required to include options beyond simply multiple choice.
 5. The Committee recommends that the State Board of Education coordinate start date calendars with local districts to coincide more with the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia due to increasing participation of students in dual enrollment programs.
 6. The Committee finds that shortened summer vacation and inconsistent school start dates have a negative impact on Georgia’s youth development by restricting access to summer programs and employment.

- Inconsistent school start dates cause many camps and summer educational experiences, such as 4H camps, summer sports, and religious camps, to drastically shorten their seasons, reducing the number of students able to participate.
 - Opportunities for summer employment provide Georgia students immersive soft skills and life skills training, arming them with the necessary skill sets for future success in the workforce.
 - Early August school start dates and end-of-school-year exams in June reduce the time high school students have for meaningful work and intern opportunities or to pursue extracurricular academic studies and activities over the summer.
 - This schedule also reduces the days to earn income for college savings or contributing to their families.
 - Participation in summer jobs also shows higher education admissions professionals a level of dedication, maturity, and time management skills, and summer work experiences increase noncognitive skills such as responsibility, positive work habits, motivation, self-confidence, and interpersonal interaction.
 - Preparing Georgia's students for the jobs of tomorrow starts with workforce readiness. Summer jobs are often the first place where students begin to learn the real-life importance of the soft skills they need to succeed; showing up for work on time, appropriate dress and mannerisms, taking directions and incorporating feedback, personal responsibility, and fiscal responsibility.
 - To truly develop these skills, Georgia's students need hands-on real world experiences. Consistent school start dates helps Georgia employers create these sorts of opportunities our students need, and provide students the time to fully access experiences where they can develop these skills.
 - The need for soft skills development for Georgia's future workforce dominates conversations among employers. Summer jobs provide unique opportunities for students to develop these skills and incorporate them into their ongoing education.
 - The tourism & hospitality industry is uniquely able to provide ongoing employment opportunities to students throughout high school and post-high school education. These employment opportunities are widely recognized as providing crucial life skills development and leadership opportunities for students. As such, these employers and these employment opportunities are an important component of the educational ecosystem.
7. The Committee finds that inconsistent school calendars have a significant detrimental impact, particularly on the tourism and hospitality industry.
- The tourism and hospitality industry is Georgia's fifth largest employer and an industry critical to Georgia's economic competitiveness.
 - The direct, indirect, and induced spending that occurs as leisure and business travelers explore Georgia's richly diverse communities fuels the State's economy in ways that benefit all Georgians and provides memorable experiences and an enhanced quality of life for citizens.
 - The tourism & hospitality industry has an economic impact of \$60+ billion on the state of Georgia, and generates \$3+ billion in tax revenue for state and local communities.

- Inconsistent school calendars have hindered the tourism industry's ability to thrive, thereby affecting the 450,000+ Georgians employed in the industry. Without these tax revenues, the average Georgia household would pay an additional \$900 annually in state and local taxes.
 - State-based regional tourist attractions rely on high school and college-aged employees and adjust hours of operation based on availability of those students to work.
 - Economic impact studies by neighboring states demonstrate mid-summer school start dates are costly to the state as a whole.¹¹
 - Nearby states that have instituted guardrails around the school start date have seen a considerable increase in economic activity for the state. This economic activity and increase in tax dollars helps state and local communities put additional funding toward their schools, local services and projects.¹²
 - Additional consideration should be given to the economic impact (wages, tax revenue, employment) of inconsistent school calendars on communities and families in rural areas, and on border communities competing with neighboring states.
8. The Committee finds that an extended summer would directly impact our business economy, but more importantly, allow for the vocational growth of our students and workforce in one of Georgia's leading industries.

¹¹ An economic impact report in Alabama found the total economic cost of shortened summer on the State of Alabama, on a per day basis, to be approximately \$26 million. The report concludes by saying that the researchers estimate that if Alabama schools could re-arrange 10 school days currently scheduled in August to other months of the year (excluding July), the economic gain is expected to be \$300 million in additional revenues for all constituents in the state. [An Economic Analysis of Early School Start Dates in Alabama, February 2009](#); South Carolina legislators pushed back the school start date many years ago after learning the August creep was costing the state \$180 million in total economic impact and over \$6 million in state tax revenues. [South Carolina Early School Start Dates and the South Carolina Travel and Tourism Industries: An Analysis of Economic & Tax Revenue Impacts, August 2002](#).

¹² In Texas, starting school the fourth Monday in August has produced over \$823 million in additional annual economic activity for Texas and generated an additional \$43 million each year in state tax revenues. Texas has increased K-12 public school funding by \$4 billion and schools are spending 20 percent more per student.

Respectfully Submitted,

**FINAL REPORT OF THE SENATE STUDY COMMITTEE ON
EVALUATING THE SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR OF GEORGIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



Honorable Steve Gooch, Chair

Senator, District 51

APPENDIX A

| State | School Days | Calendar Guide |
|----------------------|--|---|
| Alabama | 180 or hourly equivalent | District Option |
| Alaska | 180 | District Option |
| Arizona | 180 | District Option |
| Arkansas | 178 | Start on or after the Monday of the week in which 8/19 falls; no earlier than 8/14 and no later than 8/26 |
| California | 180 | District Option |
| Colorado | 160 | District Option |
| Connecticut | 180 | District Option |
| Delaware | No Requirement | District Option |
| District of Columbia | 180 | District Option (Single District) |
| Florida | 180 | District Option but school must start no earlier than 14 days before labor day |
| Georgia | 180 | District Option |
| Hawaii | 180 | District Option (Single District) |
| Idaho | No Requirement | District Option |
| Illinois | 180 | District Option |
| Iowa | 180 | Start no earlier than a day of the week in which 9/1 falls. If 9/1 falls on a Sunday, school may begin on a day of the week immediately preceding 9/1 |
| Kansas | Kindergarten - Grade 11: 186; Grade 12: 181 | District Option |
| Kentucky | 170 | District Option |
| Louisiana | 177 | District Option |
| Maine | 175 | District Option (Required to coordinate with career and technical center units in region) |
| Maryland | 180 | District Option |
| Massachusetts | 180 | District Option |
| Michigan | 180 | Start no earlier than Labor Day |
| Minnesota | 165 (Except Grade 12) | Start no earlier than Labor Day |
| Mississippi | 180 | District Option |
| Missouri | 5-day week: 174; 4-day week: 142 | District Option, but start no later than 10 days prior to the first Monday in September |
| Montana | No Requirement | District Option |
| Nebraska | No Requirement | District Option |
| Nevada | 180 | District Option |
| New Hampshire | 180 | District Option |
| New Jersey | 180 | District Option |

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|--|
| New Mexico | No Requirement | District Option |
| New York | 180 | District Option |
| North Carolina | 185 | District option, but start no earlier than Monday closest to 8/19 with approval, otherwise Monday closest to 8/26. Finish no later than Friday closest to 6/11 |
| North Dakota | 175 | District Option |
| Ohio | No Requirement | District Option |
| Oklahoma | 180 | District Option |
| Oregon | No Requirement | District option, but no fewer than 265 consecutive calendar days between first and last instructional day |
| Pennsylvania | 180 | District Option |
| Rhode Island | 180 | District Option |
| South Carolina | 180 | District option, but start no earlier than third Monday in August |
| South Dakota | No Requirement | District Option |
| Tennessee | 180 | District Option, but start no earlier than 8/1 |
| Texas | 180 | Start no earlier than the fourth Monday in August (unless waiver granted) |
| Utah | 180 | District Option |
| Vermont | 175 | Determined Regionally |
| Virginia | 180 | District option, but start after Labor Day (unless waiver granted) |
| Washington | 180 | District Option |
| Wisconsin | No Requirement | Start no earlier than 9/1 |
| Wyoming | 175 | District Option |