

House Bill 65

By: Representative Thomas of the 65<sup>th</sup>

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1 To amend Part 16 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia  
2 Annotated, the "Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia's Economy Act," so  
3 as to provide for a pilot program to provide grants for up to six local school systems to  
4 develop learning recovery programs for at-risk students to mitigate COVID-19 related lost  
5 instructional time and to prevent long-lasting effects on student achievement, future earnings  
6 of impacted students, and the state economy as a whole; to provide for selection criteria; to  
7 provide for temporary waivers and variances of state rules and statutory provisions; to  
8 provide for reports; to provide for automatic repeal; to provide for related matters; to repeal  
9 conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

11 **SECTION 1.**

12 Part 16 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, the  
13 "Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia's Economy Act," is amended by  
14 adding a new Code section to read as follows:

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15 "20-2-328.1.

16 (a)(1) Subject to appropriations by the General Assembly, the State Board of Education  
17 shall establish a pilot program to provide grants for up to six local school systems to  
18 develop learning recovery programs for at-risk students to mitigate COVID-19 related  
19 lost instructional time and to prevent long-lasting effects on student achievement, future  
20 earnings of impacted students, and the state economy as a whole. The state board shall  
21 establish program requirements and criteria for selecting local school systems to  
22 participate in the pilot program in accordance with the provisions of this Code section.

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

27 (3) The State Board of Education shall be authorized to establish reporting requirements  
28 on the local school systems participating in the pilot program.

29 (4) The State Board of Education shall monitor and annually assess the status of the pilot  
30 program with cooperation and input from the local school systems participating in the  
31 pilot program.

32 (5) The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary to  
33 carry out the provisions of this Code section.

34 (b)(1) The Department of Education shall develop an evidence based model learning  
35 recovery program for local school systems participating in the pilot program pursuant to  
36 this Code section for addressing at-risk students, which shall include various programs  
37 and curricula that have proven to be effective for at-risk students focusing on:

38 (A) Identification of students at risk for being significantly impacted by extended  
39 school closures and lost instructional time; and

40 (B) Improving students' academic performances and grade-level achievements to levels  
41 comparable to their levels prior to March, 2020, when school closures and lost  
42 instructional time due to the COVID-19 pandemic commenced.

43 (2) The model learning recovery program for at-risk students shall include:

44 (A) A process for identifying at-risk students, closely monitored by the Department of  
45 Education in collaboration with participating local school systems to ensure that  
46 students are being properly identified and provided appropriate assistance; and

47 (B) An evaluation component to measure program success and identify areas of needed  
48 improvement in the program.

49 (3) The model learning recovery program for at-risk students may include various  
50 components designed to result in more students improving their academic performances  
51 and grade-level achievements to levels comparable to their levels prior to March, 2020,  
52 when school closures and lost instructional time due to the COVID-19 pandemic  
53 commenced, such as:

54 (A) Utilizing nontraditional scheduling for students whose academic performances and  
55 grade level achievements are deficient to increase time designed to address and  
56 eliminate such deficiencies;

57 (B) Developing tutor clusters led by experienced teachers to provide specialized  
58 academic assistance before, during, and after school for small groups of students  
59 dealing with similar challenges; and

60 (C) Assigning students to a teacher mentor who will meet with them and their families  
61 to monitor student progress and identify opportunities for improvement.

62 (c)(1) The Department of Education shall develop an application process and seek  
63 applications from local school systems for the pilot program no later than January 1,  
64 2024. The pilot program shall be implemented as soon as practicable, but in no event  
65 later than the 2024-2025 school year.

66 (2) The Department of Education shall evaluate applications from local school systems  
67 to be selected by the State Board of Education to participate in the pilot program;  
68 provided, however, that priority for selection for grant awards shall be given to local  
69 school systems with significant populations of at-risk students facing challenges resulting  
70 from extended school closures and lost instructional time beginning in March, 2020, and  
71 continuing due to COVID-19.

72 (d) To participate in the pilot program, a local school system shall be a strategic waivers  
73 school system.

74 (e) This Code section shall be subject to appropriations by the General Assembly.

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

76 **SECTION 2.**

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