



2025-2026

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**LEGISLATIVE
WRAP-UP**



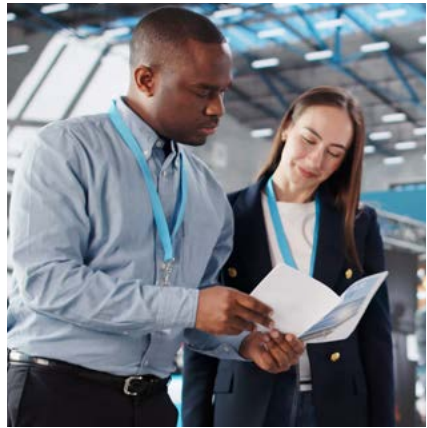
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55 PARK PLACE
8TH FLOOR
ATLANTA, GA 30303

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BUDGET

BUDGET PROCESS

Each year, Georgia is required to set a balanced budget for the fiscal year, which runs from July 1 to June 30. The budget process begins in the fall, when the governor sends out guidelines for submitting budget requests to all state agencies. In September, all agencies must submit their budget requests to the Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) for review. Agencies submit their specific funding needs along with a strategic plan outlining how their use of funds will reflect their outlined objectives and state priorities. The governor sets a revenue estimate each year outlining the amount of money that can be spent in the fiscal year, which OPB then uses to analyze agency budget requests on cost-effectiveness. The governor reviews these requests and the recommendations of OPB to outline a proposed budget in the Governor’s Budget Report. This report then goes to the General Assembly within five days of the start of the legislative session.

The General Assembly is responsible for appropriating funding. The legislative appropriations process begins when the legislature reviews the governor’s proposed budget and drafts an appropriations bill, which is introduced in the House of Representatives. The House Appropriations Committee holds hearings to review the bill and make amendments. Once the bill is passed in the House it crosses over to the Senate where the same committee process takes place. The Senate then adopts a substitute bill that the House can accept or reject. If the House rejects the substitute bill, a conference committee is convened in which members from both chambers meet to develop a final appropriations bill to be voted on. The governor then has 40 days to sign the bill into law following the passage of the bill by both chambers. The governor is also able to veto specific line items within the budget. Agencies operate under their new budget starting at the beginning of the fiscal year on July 1.

FY 2025 AMENDED BUDGET

HB 67 Supplemental appropriations; state fiscal year July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025
Status: Signed by governor on March 6, 2025

Highlights

- **Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities**
 - About \$44 million to support reimbursement rate increases for home and community-based providers and to open additional slots for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities to receive services through the New Option Waiver (NOW) Program and Comprehensive Support Waiver Program (COMP) waivers
 - \$6,003,921 to annualize funding for community-based facilities that provide services to child and adolescent, forensic, and intellectually and developmentally disabled populations
 - \$4,757,076 for 67 new forensic beds at three regional state hospitals
- **Department of Community Health**
 - \$324,308,015 for Medicaid and PeachCare, including \$7,154,914 for skilled nursing centers to reflect 2023 cost reports, \$28,578,100 for the Medicare Part D clawback, \$36,555,208 for new high-cost drugs, and \$22,806,215 for 12 months of continuous eligibility for children under the age of 19
 - \$150,000 for the Georgia Board of Dentistry and the Georgia State Board of Pharmacy for new licensing software to enhance efficiency in licensure review
- **Department of Human Services**
 - \$1,719,204 for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) to replace federal funds deemed ineligible by the U.S. Administration for Children and Families
 - \$60,899 to expand participation in the Child Support Lien Network to include real property and lump-sum payment matching services
- **Department of Public Health**
 - \$3,758,239 to expand the maternal health home visiting program to 75 counties and increase access to maternal-fetal medicine in rural communities
- **Department of Early Care and Learning**
 - \$4 million added to fund 500 more slots in the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program for families with low incomes
- **Department of Education**
 - \$5 million to address the school social worker shortage

FY 2026 BUDGET

HB 68 General appropriations; state fiscal year July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026
Status: Signed by governor on May 9, 2025

Highlights

- **Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities**
 - \$19.5 million to establish student mental health support grants to schools
 - \$3.5 million for 150 new NOW and COMP waiver slots
 - \$1.7 million for 100 vouchers for the Georgia Housing Voucher Program

- **Department of Community Health**

- \$1.14 million for the Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) program
- \$300,000 to submit a State Plan Amendment to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to use Medicaid funding for medical residency slots
- \$250,000 for telecare and maternal health programs
- \$3 million to match funds for behavioral and mental health services stabilization and augmentation

- **Department of Human Services**

- \$7,240,358 to integrate the Georgia Access state-based health insurance exchange into the Gateway eligibility system and maintain software applications on the Georgia Technology Authority mainframe
- \$1,719,204 for CASA to replace federal funds deemed ineligible by the U.S. Administration for Children and Families

- **Department of Public Health**

- \$600,000 to increase the number of birthing facilities with verified maternal and neonatal levels of care
- \$551,000 for the retention and recruitment of Babies Can't Wait service coordinators

- **Department of Early Care and Learning**

- \$7,422,147 to provide salary parity between prekindergarten teachers and K-12 teachers by moving to the State Board of Education salary schedule
- \$100,000 to provide startup grants of as much as \$10,000 per provider to establish additional Summer Food Service Program meal sites in areas with high rates of child food insecurity

FY 2026 AMENDED BUDGET

HB 973 Supplemental appropriations; state fiscal year July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026

Highlights

- **Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities**
 - \$409 million to begin design and construction of a new 300-bed Regional Hospital in Atlanta to address mental health and forensic bed availability
 - \$21.6 million increase to provide one-time \$2,000 salary increases for full-time Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) employees
 - \$20.7 million increase for the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission to fund a 40-bed forensic restoration facility in Augusta
 - \$500,000 in one-time funds for a behavioral rate study to address the abandonment of patients with intellectual or developmental disabilities in community hospitals
- **Department of Community Health**
 - \$4.8 million to establish a new grant program to support new rural medical and dental clinics
 - \$3 million to increase nursing home quality-incentive payments at skilled nursing facilities
 - No-cost authorization to submit a waiver for approval to CMS to cover services within the Therapeutic Care Model

- **Department of Corrections**
 - \$32.9 million for physical, mental, dental, and residential substance abuse treatment services for inmates
- **Department of Public Health**
 - \$150,000 to provide dental services at no cost to patients
- **Department of Early Care and Learning**
 - \$17.2 million to provide a \$2,000 pay supplement to all teachers and assistant teachers
- **Department of Human Services**
 - \$8.8 million for technology projects including child support case management system maintenance and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program error reduction
 - \$15 million for an integrated child welfare reporting system
 - \$82.7 million to fund the deficit in Division of Family & Children Services prioritizing reunification services, assessments, and specialized service for high-acuity youth
 - \$1.6 million to restore four foster care support contracts
- **Department of Education**
 - \$43.9 million to the Department of Education for the Quality Basic Education (QBE) midterm adjustment to reflect current enrollment numbers
 - \$1.4 million to fully fund grants for social work services
 - \$750,000 for a pilot program to assist districts in maximizing reimbursement for mental health services

FY 2027 BUDGET

HB 68 General Appropriations; state fiscal year July 1, 2026–June 30, 2027

Highlights

- **Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities**
 - \$11,592,520 to provide 900 additional NOW and COMP slots for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities
 - o \$9,274,016 withheld
 - o Department instructed to utilize \$2,318,504 for 100 slots
 - \$284,380 to increase funds for NOW and COMP administration
 - o Disregarded by Governor
 - \$500,000 for positions and development of resources to include behavioral health trainings to 300 high-needs school pursuant to HB 268
 - o \$500,000 withheld
 - \$9,324,320 for the Georgia Housing Voucher Program for 404 additional housing vouchers to achieve compliance with and termination for the behavioral health requirements of the U.S. Department of Justice Olmstead Settlement Agreement
- **Department of Community Health**
 - \$2.4 million to provide funding for behavioral and mental health services stabilization
 - o Disregarded by Governor
 - \$2,075,940 for 17 positions to support the department through the Rural Health Transformation Program
 - o Disregarded by Governor



- \$20,222 to increase funds for a \$3,000 salary enhancement for Katie Beckett Medicaid caseworkers for parity with Department of Human Services caseworkers
 - o \$20,222 withheld; salary increase implemented using existing department funds
 - \$250,000 for telecare and maternal health programs
 - o Disregarded by governor
- **Department of Early Care and Learning**
 - \$12,001,234 for Year 3 of a four-year phase-in to reduce classroom size from 22 to 20 students to improve instructional quality
- **Department of Education**
 - \$70,416,120 to provide literacy coaches in schools per HB 1193
 - \$2.7 million to provide one-time grants to school systems to purchase vision and auditory screening equipment
 - o Disregarded by governor
 - \$1 million to administer a summer nutrition program for eligible students in coordination with the Department of Human Services
 - o Disregarded by governor
- **Office of the Governor, Governor’s Office of Student Achievement**
 - \$150,000 for professional learning and development for current teachers, literacy coaches, and administrators
 - \$330,000 to support review and recommendations of high-quality instructional literacy materials
 - \$96,000 to provide funds for the review and recommendations of universal reading screeners
 - \$250,000 to increase funds for a director of literacy
- **Department of Human Services**
 - \$1.5 million to support reunification, youth exiting foster care, and families at risk of child welfare involvement
 - o Disregarded by governor
 - \$800,000 to expand autism pilot for foster children
 - o Disregarded by governor
- **Department of Public Health**
 - \$3,715,800 to expand the maternal home visiting program to an additional 33 counties to increase access to maternal-fetal medicine in rural communities

UNDER THE GOLD DOME

GEORGIA LEGISLATURE 101

Role of the Legislature

The legislature plays a crucial role in shaping state policy and governance by passing laws and resolutions that directly impact citizens and government operations. In addition to lawmaking, it is responsible for approving the state budget, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively to meet the needs of the state. To make informed decisions, the legislature also conducts hearings and fact-finding activities, gathering essential information to guide policy development and legislative action.

The Georgia Legislature meets for a total of 40 nonconsecutive days, starting on the second January and lasting typically through late March early April. Crossover Day, which occurs on the 28th day, is the deadline for bills to move from one chamber to the other. The final day of the legislative session, known as Sine Die, marks the end of the legislative session and the last opportunity for bills to be voted on before the session concludes. The Georgia General Assembly runs on a two-year cycle.

LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Legislation Is Drafted

Every bill begins as an idea or concept, often inspired by a need for change or improvement in existing laws. Advocates can bring their ideas to a legislator and request sponsorship, or they can support a bill already proposed by a legislator. Once a legislator agrees to sponsor a bill, they work with legislative counsel to refine and finalize the draft. To strengthen the bill’s chances of success, the sponsor may also seek co-signers to demonstrate broader legislative support.

Bill Is Prefiled or Filed

When a bill is introduced, it is first presented in either the House or the Senate, depending on the chamber of the sponsoring legislator. Once introduced, the bill is assigned a unique number, with Senate bills (SBs) and Senate resolutions (SRs) originating in the Senate, while House bills (HBs) and House resolutions (HRs) originate in the House. This numbering system helps track the bill as it moves through the legislative process.

Referred to Committee

Once introduced, the bill is read on the floor of the House or Senate and then assigned to a committee for further review. The committee chair has the authority to decide whether a hearing will be held. If a hearing takes place, the bill’s sponsor presents the legislation, and committee members have the opportunity to propose amendments or substitute the bill with a revised version. In some cases, the bill may first be referred to a subcommittee for more in-depth evaluation before proceeding further in the legislative process.

Rules Committee

After a bill passes out of committee, it moves to the Rules Committee, which decides whether it will be scheduled for a vote on the floor of the House or Senate. The bill’s sponsor typically attends the Rules Committee meeting to advocate for the bill’s placement on the legislative calendar, ensuring it has the opportunity to be debated and voted on by the full chamber.

Vote on the Floor

On the floor, further changes or amendments to the bill can be made, depending on the rules of the calendar. Once the bill passes out of its chamber of origin, it moves to the other chamber, where the process is repeated from the beginning. To stay on track, bills must “cross over” to the opposite chamber by crossover day, ensuring they have the opportunity to be considered and voted on in both chambers before the legislative session ends.

Vote to “Agree”

If the other chamber makes changes to a bill before passing it, those changes must be approved by the chamber of origin. If the chamber of origin disagrees with the changes and the other chamber insists on its position, the bill is sent to a conference committee. This committee works out the differences between the two versions of the bill. Once a revised version of the bill is agreed upon in the conference committee, it is sent back to the floor of both chambers for a final vote.

Signed by Governor

Once a bill passes both chambers, it is sent to the governor’s office, where the governor has several options:

- The bill can be signed into law within 40 days;
- The governor can veto the bill; or
- The bill can become law without the governor’s signature if not acted upon within the 40-day window.

Signed bills typically become effective on July 1, unless the bill specifies a different effective date.

2025–2026 LEGISLATION

This document represents a high-level list of legislation tracked during the 2025–2026 Georgia legislative session that was identified as having potential implications for the Georgia System of Care. The legislation is organized by the Mindworks implementation workgroups to align with key priority areas. Bill numbers highlighted in green passed, while those in orange did not pass during the session. For additional details, including bill language, sponsor, and assigned committees, click on the corresponding bill number. This overview reflects key areas of legislative relevance; it is intended to support general awareness, planning, and decision-making.

GREEN: PASSED ORANGE: DID NOT PASS

WHOLE-PERSON HEALTH

Whole-person health involves looking at the health of an individual holistically, including both their mind and body, as well as looking at health-related social factors such as transportation, housing, nutrition, and other whole-person supports. Several bills were introduced this legislative session to address whole-person health, including bills related to behavioral health, infant and maternal health, and family and child welfare.

Behavioral Health

HB 109	Five-year pilot program for the purpose of creating emergency psychiatric assessment, treatment, and healing units or EmpATH units in hospitals
HB 584	Reassign licensing and oversight of certain treatments and programs from the Department of Community Health to the DBHDD
HB 943	Establishes a pilot program to provide screenings, evaluations, training, services, and resources for autism spectrum disorder for youth in foster care
HB 677	Establishes procedures for placing children who remain in hospitals or psychiatric residential treatment facilities after being medically cleared for discharge when their parent, guardian, or legal custodian does not resume custody within 48 hours. Requires the creation of a task force — including a care coordinator, a licensed psychiatrist, and representatives from the Department of Human Services, DBHDD, the child’s health insurer, and Medicaid care management organizations — to facilitate timely placement in a suitable environment.

Behavioral Health

SB 5	Each insurer that utilizes prior authorization requirements shall implement and maintain a program that allows for the selective application of reductions in prior authorization requirements based on the stratification of health care providers' performance and adherence to evidence-based medicine. Such program shall promote quality, affordable health care and reduce unnecessary administrative burdens for both the insurer and the health care provider.
SB 30	Prohibits prescribing or administering certain treatment and puberty-blocking medications for certain purposes to minors
SB 269	Adds nurse examiners at emergency receiving, evaluating, or treatment facilities to the list of professionals authorized to assess and certify whether a patient requires involuntary treatment for mental illness and to discharge patients who meet outpatient care criteria. Establishes guidelines for recommending outpatient treatment, requiring that the referring facility receive written notice within three days. This notice must include the service plan, details on the consequences of nonadherence, and any other relevant clinical information.

Infant and Maternal Health

HB 89	Expands the responsibilities of the Maternal Mortality Review Committee to include reviewing psychiatric and clinical records from health care facilities and pharmacies. Creates the Regional Perinatal Center Advisory Committee to advise the commissioner of public health on perinatal centers and the effectiveness of the regional perinatal system. Establishes guidelines for hospitals seeking designation as regional perinatal centers and permits the release of records of deceased patients to the Maternal Mortality Review Committee.
HB 149	Healthy Mothers Now Act; creates a three-year pilot program to provide postpartum care program through mobile health clinics in counties that do not have hospitals or birth centers offering obstetric care or fewer than 60 obstetric providers per 10,000 births
HB 263	Creates a three-year pilot program to provide Medicaid coverage for doula care for pregnant Medicaid recipients. Reimbursements may include as many as five doula visits for each Medicaid recipient.
HB 649	Provides insurance coverage for comprehensive maternal mental health screening and care
HB 308	Mandates Medicaid coverage for postpartum mental health care services for mothers, including screenings for depression and anxiety, and mental health support for one year after pregnancy

Family and Child Welfare

HB 1	Pediatric Health Safe Storage Act; establishes new legal requirements for firearm storage to prevent children from accessing them
HB 2	Safe Storage Tax Credit Act; establishes a tax credit for Georgians who purchase firearm safe-storage devices
HB 36	Revises the list of providers authorized to participate in the process of guardian appointment for an adult, as well as modify and terminate guardianship and emergency appointment of guardianship. Additionally, revises the list of providers authorized to participate in the process of conservator appointment for an adult, as well as modify and terminate conservatorship and emergency conservatorship.
HB 79	Firearm Safe Handling and Secure Storage Tax Credit Act; establishes a tax credit for Georgians who purchase firearm safe-storage devices or complete firearm safe-handling instructional course
HB 177	Provides protection for household pets in both family violence and dating violence protective orders
HB 689	Establishes a flexible local grant program within the Georgia Department of Community Affairs State Housing Trust for the homeless to support short-term emergency rental and utility assistance, eviction-prevention services such as legal representation and mediation, and other homelessness-prevention efforts
HB 1238	Directs the state to seek federal approval for Medicaid to pay for respite care services for families caring for children under 21 with serious behavioral health conditions who are at risk of going into foster care
HB 256	Adds fictive kin and relative caregivers to the Foster Parents Bill of Rights as well as allows the right to a fair, timely, and impartial investigation of licensing complaints, including due process and the option to have a certified volunteer advocate present
HB 350	Amends Georgis's Safe Place for Newborns Act to expand the locations and methods for safely surrendering newborns
HB 435	Expands statute to include employees of Division of Family & Children Services in the exclusions and protects the procurement of sexual exploitation of children when completed in the capacity of their official job duties
HB 465	Enacts the Autism Missing Person Alert System Act
HB 689	Establishes a homelessness-prevention program within Georgia's housing trust fund; provides emergency rental assistance and supports housing stability
HB 1138	Enacts the Increasing Access to Contraceptives Act; requires pharmacists to refer any patient who may be experiencing abuse to the appropriate agency



Family and Child Welfare

HB 1283	Authorizes the creation of Family Justice Centers to streamline services for victims of family violence, sexual assault, and child abuse
SB 6	Clarifies that the use of drug analysis equipment to determine whether a controlled substance has been adulterated is not a drug-related object under the Georgia Controlled Substance Act
SB 85	Georgia Foster Care Scholarship Act; establishes the Georgia Foster Care Scholarship and requires the Georgia Student Finance Authority to administer the program
SB 110	Revises the definition of neglect and provides for new definitions in the juvenile code relating to reckless conduct as it relates to permitting children to engage in independent activities
SB 132	Requires a hearing before a court orders an evaluation of the mental competency of an accused person to stand trial, as well as establish-es evaluation procedures in cases where a person is accused of one or more nonviolent misdemeanor offenses
SB 159	Requires the accused to submit a pretrial notice of intent stating whether they have an intellectual disability. If the court confirms the diagnosis, the state will not pursue the death penalty.
SB 170	Creates the Georgia Interagency Council for Homelessness
SB 259	Establishes the right to a pediatric specialty consultation in suspected cases of abuse or neglect
SB 277	Revises the definition of drug to include alcohol and other related substances regarding drug abuse treatment and education programs
SB 428	Directs the Department of Community Health to submit waivers to CMS authorizing funding through Medicaid reimbursement for certain home- and community-based services

SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE

Addressing Georgia’s health care workforce shortage is key to ensuring that families have access to timely, quality care regardless of where they reside in the state. Several bills aimed at increasing the workforce and building workforce capacity were introduced this session.

Licensing and Credentialing

HB 34	The secretary of state shall create a professional licensing board tracking solution that will track the compliance of all licenses and continuing education requirements for license renewal beginning on Jan. 1, 2026.
HB 291	Creates a standardized certification process to support and expand Georgia’s community health workers (CHWs) workforce
HB 322	Allows for dentists from other states, countries, and territories to apply to the Georgia Board of Dentistry to receive an instructor’s license that would allow them to teach at accredited dental programs in Georgia
HB 1097	Provides for criminal background checks, license status checks, and registry checks for owners and employees of certain mental health facilities
SB 130	Allows certain CMS medical facilities to offer Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)–approved residency or fellowship programs and authorize resident and fellowship physicians to qualify for service
SB 162	Requires the Georgia Composite Medical Board to implement a data management software system to automate the credentialing process of physicians, advanced practice registered nurses, licensed physician assistants, and anesthesiologist assistants by no later than Jan. 1, 2026
SB 427	Provides limited provisional licenses and a pathway to licensure for certain internationally trained physicians
SB 500	Expands the Behavioral Health Care Workforce Data Base to include data from licensed health care professionals

Building Workforce Capacity

HB 81	Directs Georgia to join the Interstate Compact for School Psychologists, the state pathway that allows school psychologists to obtain and practice in schools in any member state
HB 219	Authorizes various professional boards, including those for counselors, social workers, marriage and family therapists, and nurses, to establish professional recovery health programs
HB 1374	Expands payment methods to health care providers by health insurance plans, avoiding additional fees
SB 113	Establishes a professional health program to provide for monitoring and rehabilitation of impaired health care professionals

EQUITABLE ACCESS

Equitable access involves ensuring that families have access to preventive and integrated care without barriers such as insurance coverage, income, or other factors. Several bills were introduced this session related to increasing access to care, including strengthening common entry points to behavioral health care such as educational settings.

Early, Elementary, and Secondary Education

HB 173	Provides parents and guardians of students entering sixth grade information regarding adolescent vaccinations in print and electronic form
HB 175	Requires the Georgia Department of Education to receive applications for comprehensive records check determinations for employees of programs that receive federal funds for the care of children, as well as updating the requirements for a comprehensive records check determination and requiring relevant personnel to submit information for determining suitability for child care employment
HB 340	Distraction Free Education Act; requires local school systems and public schools to enact policies and procedures for using personal electronic devices at school and school-sponsored events. K–eighth-grade students
HB 1123	Requires schools that offer after-school programs to make programs available to pre-K students
HB 1193	Requires a hearing before a court orders an evaluation of the mental competency of Enacts the Georgia Early Literacy Act of 2026 to promote and advance literacy and provide funding for school-based literacy coaches in public schools K-3; establishes the Georgia Literacy Coordinating Committee
HB 1396	Creates content standards for digital literacy, financial literacy, and cursive; requires schools to provide personnel with wearable panic-alert devices, to procure mapping data, and to install weapon detection systems
SB 22	Requires the Department of Education to publish relevant federal guidance documents on a dedicated webpage
SB 74	Removes an exemption for libraries and librarians relating to selling or distributing harmful materials to minors, creating a misdemeanor for violations
SB 93	Georgia Early Literacy Act; prohibits the use of the three-cueing system, with one exception. Would require the Professional Standards Commission to establish core curricula criteria.
SB 120	Prevents public schools, local education agencies, and public postsecondary institutions from promoting, supporting, or maintaining programs or activities that advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion
SB 123	Updates and revises provisions of the state’s compulsory school attendance laws and provides that no student be expelled by a public school due solely to absenteeism

Early, Elementary, and Secondary Education

SB 148	Authorizes the Georgia Department of Education to establish a pilot outdoor learning program on elementary and secondary school property, as well as increases the amount of accumulated sick leave school personnel may use for personal use
SB 152	Amends the Georgia Promise Scholarship Act so that the biological or adopted children of individuals who are foster parents and who meet certain conditions shall qualify for promise scholarship accounts
SB 589	Enacts the Quality Basic Education Act to update eligibility for kindergarten and first grade; requires public schools to include 988 information on student ID badges
SB 179	Requires that the academic and disciplinary records of transferring students shall be provided by the previous school to the students’ receiving school within five days

School-Based Mental Health (School Safety)

HB 20	Requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules requiring all certificated public school personnel to receive annual training in depression and suicide awareness and prevention
HB 26	Requires DBHDD to establish a school-linked behavioral health grant program to identify early interventions in K-12 schools for students who may have mental health or substance use disorders
HB 59	Provides state funding for one school counselor for every 250 full-time equivalent students
HB 268	Requires public schools to implement a mobile panic-alert system capable of connecting disparate emergency services technologies to ensure real-time coordination between multiple state and local first responder agencies in the event of a school security emergency. Additionally requires public schools to procure school mapping data, with the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA) providing rules and regulations for procuring such data. GEMA would be responsible for creating a statewide threat alert system for individuals who make verified threats against the safety of a school.
HB 335	Addresses mental health risks for student athletes
HB 554	APEX Now Program; to provide for a 24-hour online and telephonic hotline for mental health services to students and school personnel
HB 564	Requires the Department of Education to develop a mental health crisis plan to rapidly provide mental health services to students experiencing incidents of violence, threats of violence, natural disasters, or other crisis situations
SR 217	Establishes a Senate Study Committee on Combating Chronic Absenteeism in Schools

Access to Care

HB 54	Authorizes licensed physician assistants to order home health care services to patients of licensed home-health agencies
HB 178	Requires the Department of Community Health to submit a Section 1115 waiver to provide treatment services under Medicaid to persons in Georgia living with HIV
HB 500	Increases access and amount of benefits for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program
HB 506	Provides Medicaid coverage for tobacco-cessation treatments
HB 657	Designates one statewide recovery community organization; provides for certification of peer specialists and approval of certification training bodies
HB 1262	Raises the maximum penalties the commissioner of insurance can impose on insurance companies for violating mental health parity requirements
SB 95	Provides an exemption from certificate of need requirements concerning life plan communities
SB 205	Requires coverage for health care services for pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders
SB 535	Restructures community service boards so that the executive directors become DBHDD employees and report to the DBHDD commissioner
SB 556	Requires Georgia’s university and technical college systems to possess opioid antagonists, ensuring emergency overdose medication is available on campus

SYSTEM EVALUATION

System evaluation emphasizes the importance of evidence-informed decision-making as it relates to making system improvements. Several bills were introduced this session related to improving system and program monitoring and evaluation.

HB 102	Establishes the Georgia Quality Reporting Project, which would gauge the quality of treatment for opioid use disorder and health care overall, improve the quality of care to Georgia residents, reduce the overall cost of medical treatment and care, and foster clinical research
HB 332	Creates an advisory workgroup to update, amend, or develop tools and protocols for screening children for trauma within the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) Program
HB 612	Adds the state’s commissioner of insurance to the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council and establishes a parity compliance review panel under the Behavioral Health Coordinating Council

SYSTEM EVALUATION

SB 158	Creates a Commission for Blind and Visually Disabled Persons
SB 188	Creates the Georgia Adult and Aging Services Agency
SB 233	Extends the Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission until Dec. 31, 2026. Officially changes Involuntary Commitment subcommittee to an Addictive Diseases subcommittee, and Workforce and System Development to Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities subcommittee.

STUDY COMMITTEES

Legislative study committees are temporary groups established by the General Assembly to examine specific issues in greater depth outside of the regular legislative session. They are used to gather information, hear from stakeholders and subject matter experts, and analyze data to better understand complex policy challenges.

These committees are important because their findings and recommendations often shape future legislation, inform budget priorities, and build consensus around key issues. As a result, their work can significantly influence the system of care by identifying gaps, proposing solutions, and setting the stage for policy changes that affect service delivery, funding, and outcomes.

Georgia legislative study committees meet during the interim between legislative sessions and produce their final reports with recommendations prior to the start of the next legislative session.

2025

[House Study Committee on Abandoned Child Placement Following Hospital Discharge](#)

Provide a gap analysis of community services and resources provided by the public, nonprofit, and private sectors to better support minors being discharged from psychiatric hospitalization and acute hospital emergency rooms, as well as examine the availability of step-down services, community-based support services, and evidence-based prevention and treatment services to identify shortfalls in such services. [Final Report](#)

[House Study Committee on Affordability & Accessibility of Georgia’s Legitimation Process](#)

Will examine whether the legitimation process in Georgia may be improved in a way that makes it more affordable and accessible, particularly for those biological fathers with limited financial resources. [Final Report](#)

[House Study Committee on Evaluating Funding for Public Health](#)

Will study how Georgia’s public health system is structured and funded and evaluate what services such system currently provides to determine whether action by the state is necessary. [Final Report](#)

[House Study Committee on Reducing and Prioritizing Mandates for Public School Administration](#)

Will conduct a review of existing mandates relating to public school administration and evaluate best practices for reducing and prioritizing mandates for public school administrators and recommend legislative and policy initiatives to that end. [Final Report](#)

2025

[House Study Committee on Student Attendance in PreK-12 Education](#)

Will provide a comprehensive review of student attendance in prekindergarten through grade 12 to examine the root causes of chronic absenteeism, evaluate best practices for improving student attendance and engagement, and recommend legislative and policy initiatives to improve student attendance and engagement. [Final Report](#)

[Senate Study Committee on the Impact of Social Media and Artificial Intelligence on Children and Platform Privacy Protection](#)

Will evaluate the impact social media usage and artificial intelligence have on children and determine how existing online privacy protections may be improved and strengthened to ensure safer access. [Final Report](#)

[Senate Study Committee on Additional Services and Resources for Transition Age Youth in Foster Care](#)

Will determine what resources and services are currently being provided for transition age-youth in this state and what additional services and resources may be or should be available in order to ensure their success in adulthood. [Final Report](#)

[Senate Study Committee on Combating Chronic Absenteeism in Schools](#)

Will assess factors that contribute to absenteeism as well as early intervention and targeted support programs that can reduce chronic absenteeism and its negative effects. [Final Report](#)

[Senate Study Committee on Improving Family Caregiver Services](#)

Will determine policy goals and identify legislative actions to improve family caregiving. [Final Report](#)

2026

[House Blue-Ribbon Study Committee on Community Health and Healthcare Oversight](#)

Will evaluate Georgia's overall health care landscape to improve access, strengthen patient protections, and identify practical policy solutions to enhance outcomes, efficiency, and accountability across the state.

[House Blue-Ribbon Study Committee on Youth Exposure to Kratom and Retail-Available Substances](#)

Will evaluate the impact of these products on minors to strengthen protections, reduce access, and create healthier outcomes for Georgia's youth.

[House Blue-Ribbon Study Committee on Education Performance Metrics and Workforce Stability](#)

Will evaluate Georgia's education evaluation measures to strengthen accountability, improve student success, and strengthen teacher recruitment and retention.

[House Blue-Ribbon Study Committee on the Impact of Online Platforms on Georgia Youth](#)

Will evaluate the effects of online platforms on minors to strengthen safety protections, address mental health concerns, and promote age-appropriate access to online content.

[Joint Study Committee on Evaluating Escalating Costs in Georgia's Foster Care System](#)

Will examine the existing framework of the delivery of out-of-home care services, wraparound services, and all related costs to determine future availability of resources and leverage efficiencies to achieve the best possible outcomes for foster children.



**MINDWORKS GEORGIA CONNECTS THE DOTS OF THE
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEM TO IMPROVE ACCESS
AND OUTCOMES FOR GEORGIA'S CHILDREN.**



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