



## **Report of the Study Committee on the Role of Federal Government in Education**

Honorable Brooks Coleman, Co-Chair  
Representative, District 97

Honorable Carl Rogers, Co-Chair  
Representative, District 29

Honorable Rick Jasperse  
Representative, District 11

Honorable Buzz Brockway  
Representative, District 102

Honorable Mike Glanton  
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Robert Avossa  
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Butts County Schools, Teacher

Sarah Ballew Welch  
Fannin County Schools, Teacher

Beth Blankenship  
Webster County Schools, Teacher

Misty Skedgell  
Cobb County, Parent

Hubert Parker  
Gilmer County, Grandparent

Eric Johnson  
Lowndes County, Parent

Helen Rice,  
State Board of Education, Chair

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## **I. Introduction**

House Resolution 550, passed during the 2014 Legislative Session, created the Federal Government's Role in Education Study Committee. The composition of the committee included the House Education Committee Chair and the House Higher Education Committee Chair. It also included three additional House members, a State Board of Education member, three local superintendents, three teachers, and three parents or grandparents. The purpose of the committee was to study the federal government's role in public education and whether a recommendation should be made that the United States Department of Education be abolished.

Representative Brooks Coleman and Representative Carl Rogers served as the study committee's co-chairmen. Other members of the committee included: Representative Rick Jasperse, Representative Buzz Brockway, Representative Mike Glanton, Superintendent Robert Avossa, Superintendent Charles Wilson, Superintendent Mark Scott, Justin Adams (teacher), Sarah Ballew Welch (teacher), Beth Blankenship (teacher), Misty Skedgell (parent), Hubert Parker (grandparent), Eric Johnson (parent), and State Board Chair Helen Rice.

The committee met five times with the first meeting taking place on Wednesday, July 30<sup>th</sup> in Atlanta. The committee also met at Georgia Gwinnett College on August 25<sup>th</sup>, at Georgia College in Milledgeville on September 24<sup>th</sup>, at the University of North Georgia in Gainesville on October 21<sup>st</sup>, and concluded its study back in Atlanta on November 20<sup>th</sup>. Topics of discussion included the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, Title 1 grants, Special Education grants, and School Nutrition funding and mandates.

## **II. History of Common Core State Standards**

The first meeting was spent hearing presentations on the history of the standards from the Department of Education, Governor's Office of Student Achievement, and the State Board of Education. Georgia was involved in development of the standards from inception.

In 2009, representatives from UGA and Emory served on English Language Arts teams to draft college- and career-readiness standards followed by K-12 standards. Multiple drafts were released to the public for comment and feedback was requested from educators at varying levels.

In 2010, the proposed standards were "cross-walked" with Georgia's current performance standards and the crosswalk was sent to representative educators from multiple levels across the state. The Georgia Department of Education hosted multiple webinars and conference calls with educators to discuss the crosswalk and standards. The Board of Regents Advisory Committee on English (BoR ACE) was asked to participate in reviews, discuss the standards and research, and develop a response. The Common Core State Standards and the report of the validation committee were released.

In 2011, Georgia began the process of reviewing and adopting the standards. Georgia sent educator representatives to participate in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and

Career (PARCC). Representatives included educators from K-12, the Technical College System of Georgia, and the University System of Georgia, as well as the Georgia Department of Education. Reviews took place at multiple points throughout the year and developments were communicated to stakeholders, such as members of the BoR ACE to receive feedback and for communication to others. Developed draft materials were revised and released for comment. Notice went out to educators at all levels encouraging them to visit the websites and provide feedback and commentary. BoR ACE members were informed and urged to share the information and links with faculty at their schools. Feedback was requested and collected. Members of the BoR ACE re-iterated previous support for the standards and their emphasis on the importance of assessment. The participation in PARCC has been discontinued as a result of Governor Deal's decisive action.

The Georgia DOE developed and deployed webinars and telecasts for teachers regarding the performance standards. Educators across levels were invited to attend these. The DOE developed and deployed a spectrum of materials to assist educators and the public with matters related to the standards.

The Georgia State Board of Education adopted the standards for kindergarten through high school in English/Language Arts and Mathematics on July 8, 2010. Governor Nathan Deal directed the Georgia State Board of Education to oversee a review and evaluation of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards August, 15<sup>th</sup> 2013.

### **III. Findings and Recommendations**

The majority of the study committee members expressed concern over regulations that come attached to accepting federal grant money for programs such as Title 1 grants, Special Education grants, and School Nutrition but realized that Georgia cannot provide these needed services effectively without the additional funding the federal government provides. That decision, however, rests with the federal Department of Education. The members would like the Congressional Delegation to pursue block grants in these areas so that more funding for these programs can be spent on the students and not on required administrative paperwork.

Turning from the federal to the local level, the committee emphasizes the importance of the ongoing partnership between parents and local education leaders in curriculum development and materials adoption. The committee members agree that collaboration and accountability at the local level yields the best results for students, families and educators.

In regards to the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, after hearing hours of testimony, committee members recommend the State Board of Education continue its current process of adopting and administering state standards. The committee offers thanks to Governor Deal for his decisive Executive Order which makes clear that Georgians remain in control of educational standards in our state. A few committee members would even like to see the Executive Order codified by the legislature. And while some members believe legislative action may be needed in the future to preserve the state's ability to determine and adjust its own standards, the committee does

not believe it is the proper role of the state legislature to create state education standards or curriculum.

However, the study committee recognizes the need for ongoing legislative oversight of education policy and recommends the State Board of Education, through policy, include the education chairs of both the House of Representatives and the Senate, or their designees, in future review committees. A continuing working relationship between the legislative branch and the State Board will allow for issues to be quickly detected, discussed and addressed as necessary.

The committee expressed confidence in the ability of the State Board of Education to examine and develop standards for our schools. The committee was satisfied that the board has found the flaws in the current Common Core Georgia Performance Standards and is working to correct them as their process for community review continues. A few members think that reviewing the standards should continue to be an ongoing process that involves more parents as well as educators.

It is important for the State Board of Education and the local school systems to work with their information offices to ensure that data collected on students is limited to only the information necessary to improve educational outcomes for students.

**MEMBER APPROVAL**

By my signature below, I indicate my approval of the findings and recommendations contained within this report.

*Brooks P. Coleman Jr.*  
Honorable Brooks Coleman, Co-Chair

1/21/2015  
Date

*Carl Rogers*  
Honorable Carl Rogers, Co-Chair

1/20/15  
Date

*Rick Jasperse*  
Honorable Rick Jasperse

1-27-15  
Date

*Buzz Brookway*  
Honorable Buzz Brookway

1/21/15  
Date

*Mike Glanton*  
Honorable Mike Glanton

1/22/15  
Date

*Justin Adams*  
Justin Adams

2-10-15  
Date

*Beth Blankenship*  
Beth Blankenship

1-29-2015  
Date

*Hubert Parker*  
Hubert Parker

2-5-15  
Date

*Helen Rice*  
Helen Rice

1-29-2015  
Date

*Charles Wilson*  
Charles Wilson

2/5/15  
Date

*Mark Scott*  
Mark Scott

01/28/2015  
Date

*Robert Avossa*  
Robert Avossa

1/29/2015  
Date

*Sarah Ballew Welch*  
Sarah Ballew Welch

January 29, 2015  
Date

*Misty Skedgell*  
Misty Skedgell

2-8-15  
Date

*Eric Johnson*  
Eric Johnson

1/28/2015  
Date