



DOAA

Georgia Department
of Audits & Accounts

Greg S. Griffin
State Auditor

January 3, 2024

Honorable Viola Davis
State Representative
404-D Coverdell Legislative Office Bldg.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note
House Bill (LC 49 1549)

Dear Representative Davis:

This bill would establish Quality Basic Education (QBE) funding for services related to the Refugee and International Students Equalization (RISE) program beginning in the 2025-2026 school year. Additionally, it provides that the RISE program weight would be 1.2 with a teacher-student ratio of 1 to 7.

As shown in **Table 1**, Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) data indicates that the bill would reduce state spending by \$62.2 million because students would be moved from QBE segments with higher program weights (e.g., Kindergarten, Grades 1-3 Early Intervention Program) into the RISE program. This amount is based on the student population of 57,309 full-time equivalents (FTEs) during state fiscal year 2024 meet RISE program criteria.

Table 1. RISE QBE weight reduces state costs

	FTEs	Average Funding per FTE	QBE System Earnings
Current Statute	57,309	\$4,712.68 ⁽¹⁾	\$270,079,996
LC 49 1549	57,309	\$3,626.95	\$207,857,929
Difference			-\$62,222,067

(1) Funding based on a combination of QBE weights tied to the variety of students

Additional Considerations

The estimate does not consider the proposed teacher-student ratio of 1 to 7. If the legislative intent is to fund the RISE program with a teacher-student ratio of 1 to 7, the QBE earnings for RISE would cost the state approximately \$277.1 million more than current QBE earnings. GaDOE noted the teacher-student ratio for the RISE program cannot be 1 to 7 and also have a program weight of 1.2 because the resulting QBE earnings would be more than 3 times (not about 1.2 times) greater than the base earnings.

Programs with a smaller teacher-student ratio and more specialized services have higher weights than that found in the bill. For example, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) has a teacher-student ratio of 1 to 7 and a statutory program weight of 2.5892. In contrast, the Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education Program has a ratio of 1 to 20 and a statutory program weight of 1.1830.

Respectfully,



Greg S. Griffin
State Auditor



Richard Dunn, Director
Office of Planning and Budget

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