



DOAA

Georgia Department
of Audits & Accounts

Greg S. Griffin
State Auditor

January 6, 2025

Honorable Imani Barnes
State Representative
507-B Coverdell Legislative Office Building
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note
House Bill (LC 52 0596)

Dear Representative Barnes:

This bill, known as the “Safe Teens Act”, would authorize local boards of education and other public school governing bodies to offer driver education as an elective course worth one-half of an elective credit for students. This would be executed using funding from one or more of the following: local funds, student fees, or state funding. The driver education training courses would need to be approved by the Department of Driver Services (DDS) and executed under the instruction of a driver training instructor licensed by DDS.

As shown in **Table 1**, the bill would have one-time and annual costs for DDS and the Department of Education. We also noted the cost of providing the training in all school system high schools. DDS would have \$359,040 in one-time costs and \$279,134 in annual costs. Additional information about the expenditure categories is below the table.

Table 1: Projected Cost of LC 52 0596

	One-Time Cost	Annual Cost
Department of Driver Services		
Computerized Application System	\$305,280	
Staffing		\$268,270
Transportation	\$53,180	
Technology	\$580	\$6,864
Miscellaneous		<u>\$4,000</u>
Total	\$359,040	\$279,134
Department of Education		
Student Cost (if appropriated)		\$15,155,500

- *Computerized Application System* – This system would allow schools to submit their applications electronically.
- *Staffing* – This includes four new staff positions for DDS: two analysts for the Regulatory Compliance headquarters team and two analysts for the Regulatory Compliance field team.

- *Transportation* – The two field analysts would each have an automobile.
- *Technology* – The field analysts would each be equipped with mobile printers and cell phones, while desk phones would be provided for the headquarters analysts. A computer and VPN would be provided for all four analysts.
- *Miscellaneous* – The program would have several miscellaneous costs, such as travel, supplies, and training.

The bill notes that the training may be funded through multiple sources, including state funding if appropriated.

- *Student Cost* – The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) based this estimate off the average percentage of students in districts who received credit for a driver education course in the past 7 years (6.23%). For school systems that do not yet offer the course, this percentage was applied to their estimated grade 9-12 enrollment to calculate the estimated total number of students that would take the course in a year. When combined with the estimate of the schools who already offer the course, the total number of students expected to take the course in a year is 30,311. The estimated cost per student is \$500. Since the bill expands both access to and funding opportunities for driver education, the actual percentage of students who would earn driver education credit may exceed the 6.23% achieved through the current model.

Respectfully,



Greg S. Griffin
State Auditor



Richard Dunn, Director
Office of Planning and Budget

GSG/RD/ew