



# DOAA

Georgia Department  
of Audits & Accounts

**Greg S. Griffin**  
State Auditor

January 27, 2025

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

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note  
House Bill (LC 56 0224)

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 2026-2027 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 \$91.1 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 76,491 full-time equivalents (FTEs) during FY 2025 who meet RISE program criteria.

**Table 1. RISE QBE weight reduces state costs**

|                        | FTEs   | Average Funding per FTE | QBE System Earnings  |
|------------------------|--------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Current Statute</b> | 76,491 | \$5,012.67 <sup>1</sup> | \$383,424,933        |
| <b>LC 56 0224</b>      | 76,491 | \$3,821.60              | \$292,318,964        |
| <b>Difference</b>      |        |                         | <b>-\$91,105,969</b> |

(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. 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 per pupil would be more than 3 times (not about 1.2 times) greater than base student QBE costs.

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 has a teacher-student ratio of 1 to 7 and a statutory program weight of 2.6313. In contrast, the Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education Program has a ratio of 1 to 20 and a statutory program weight of 1.1762.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Greg S. Griffin in blue ink.

Greg S. Griffin  
State Auditor

Handwritten signature of Richard Dunn in blue ink.

Richard Dunn, Director  
Office of Planning and Budget

GSG/RD/mb