



DOAA

Georgia Department
of Audits & Accounts

Greg S. Griffin

State Auditor

January 2, 2026

Honorable Debra Bazemore
State Representative
507-D Coverdell Legislative Office Building
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note
House Bill 200 (LC 62 0204S)

Dear Representative Bazemore

The bill would require the State Board of Education to amend minimum facility requirements for public schools to include design standards for playgrounds at newly constructed elementary schools. The bill would also establish a pilot program for immersive writing that would serve to improve literacy skills of elementary school students and motivate them to engage in writing projects. The bill would provide, subject to appropriations, up to \$2 million each school year for grants to participating public elementary schools. The funding would be available up to three years beginning with the 2026-2027 school year. The bill also encourages local school systems to permit the use of their facilities by patriotic societies (e.g., youth groups such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts).

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) indicated that two new positions would be needed to 1) establish new guidelines for playgrounds, review plans and specifications for compliance, and conduct post construction walk throughs, and 2) implement, monitor, and report the results of the pilot program. GaDOE estimated costs totaling \$230,000, including salary, benefits, and travel (**Table 1**). There is no fiscal impact to the state associated with the use of school systems' facilities by youth groups.

Table 1: Estimated Costs of HB 200 (LC 62 0204S)

	Annual Cost
Grants to Schools	Up to \$2,000,000
Personnel and Travel	
Playground Construction Standards	\$125,000
Immersive Writing Pilot Program	\$105,000
Total Personnel Costs	\$230,000

Additional Information

Playground Standards - GaDOE noted its concerns about the possible financial burden for lower wealth systems. GaDOE provided the example of Jackson County, whose plans for a new elementary

school include a 15,000 square foot playground that will cost around \$53 per square foot (nearly \$800,000), but would not meet the new requirements specified in the bill.

Respectfully,



Greg S. Griffin
State Auditor



Richard Dunn, Director
Office of Planning and Budget

GSG/RD/ay