



DEPARTMENT OF AUDITS AND ACCOUNTS

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Greg S. Griffin
STATE AUDITOR
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January 6, 2017

Honorable Keisha Waites
State Representative
509-E Coverdell Legislative Office Bldg.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note
House Bill 16 (LC 33 6698)

Dear Representative Waites:

The bill would modify the existing definition of bullying in public schools and add a definition for harassment. The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) would be required to adopt a model policy regarding bullying and harassment, and local school systems and state charter schools would be required to adopt their own policies that prohibit those activities. School systems will report the number of disciplinary actions taken against students for bullying or harassment, and GaDOE would report statewide statistics. Finally, the bill would require GaDOE to investigate school systems suspected of violating the state law.

The bill would result in both one-time and recurring costs. Existing GaDOE policies would be updated, and GaDOE responsibilities would be increased. To collect, investigate, and provide public reporting on complaints against school systems failing to comply with law, GaDOE anticipates needing one full-time staff member at an annual cost of \$115,000 in salary and benefits. In addition, one-time costs of \$37,500 would be incurred for IT contractors to update materials on GaDOE's website (\$7,500) and adjust the annual reporting instrument to include bullying data fields as defined in this bill (\$30,000). Using existing resources, GaDOE staff would modify existing policies and procedures on bullying, create new procedures for monitoring local school system compliance, and train local school systems in both the new policies and the modified reporting instrument.

Costs incurred by local school systems as a result of this bill are not included in this fiscal note.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Greg S. Griffin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Greg S. Griffin
State Auditor

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Teresa A. MacCartney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Teresa A. MacCartney, Director
Office of Planning and Budget

GSG/TAM/irm