

SB 167

An Act to Restore Educational Authority to Georgia Citizens and Ensure Student Right to Privacy

SB 167 (Student Right to Privacy Act) and SB 203 (An Act to Restore Educational Authority to Georgia Citizens) have been combined into one bill – SB 167 entitled An Act to Restore Educational Authority to Georgia Citizens and Ensure Student Right to Privacy.

The overall purpose of the bill is to provide an orderly process for Georgia to end its experiment with national standards, currently known as the "Common Core" or also called the "College and Career Ready" standards, and to limit the collection and sharing of student data. The bill also provides new protections for the privacy of students in order to prevent life-long data tracking. The sponsor of the bill is Sen. William Ligon (R) Brunswick, GA.

The primary features of the bill that pertain to restoring educational authority to Georgia citizens:

- Approximately 80 percent of the bill language establishes a public and transparent process for adopting education standards so that control is returned to Georgia citizens for all core curriculum decisions.
- Priority is given to revising the current math standards so that revisions would be complete within one year's time.
- As part of the new process, the bill language provides for a Content Standards Advisory Council that would require participation from the different congressional districts throughout the state. The council would be comprised of parents, university professors, and other citizens. This council could appoint additional sub-committees to work on curriculum standards at the various grade levels, and through a detailed public process, the council would receive public comments statewide and make recommendations to the State Board of Education on revisions to the core curriculum content standards.
- The remaining 20 percent of the bill language allows local school districts a choice to return to curriculum and instruction that aligns with the former Georgia Performance Standards or other standards, including the flexibility to use discreet math, while the statewide revision process occurs; ensures that local school districts still have flexibility for establishing local courses; requires that all statewide tests and assessments be solely controlled by the State of Georgia and align with the new revised standards; requires the Department of Education to inform the General Assembly of the long-term effects of any federal grant; and prohibits State officials from ceding any measure of the people's constitutional authority to third parties.

The primary features of the bill that pertains to student right to privacy:

- The bill prohibits the collection of noncognitive emotional and/or psychological characteristics, attributes, or biometric records.
- It prohibits the collection of data concerning students and their families' political affiliation or religious affiliation.
- It prohibits the use of funds for constructing and maintaining any data system that is designed to systematically collect records on students beyond their K-12 and college education.
- It requires all state agencies, local districts, and education institutions to publicly and conspicuously disclose on their websites the existence and character of any personally identifiable information that they maintain or contract out to third parties.
- It prohibits testing that collects psychological data on students.
- It prohibits the use of any student records for commercial purposes.
- It prohibits education agencies from sharing student data with other state or federal agencies such as the Labor Department, with limited exceptions, in which case parents would be notified of the mandated disclosure and be provided with the contact information of the federal bureaucrat and office responsible.
- It provides penalties for violations.

HB 897

Rep. Mike Dudgeon and Rep. Brooks Coleman's Rebranding Legislation

- Leaves Georgia shackled to the grossly deficient Common Core math and English language arts standards and aligned national tests.
- Includes no language to protect student privacy.
- Merely seeks to rename (*i.e.*, rebrand) the Common Core standards for math and English language arts under the umbrella term, "state mandated content standards," which will include content standards for math, language arts, writing, science and social studies, in addition to 16 new career pathway state-mandated standards.
- Shows intent to proceed with testing instruments aligned to national standards
- Mentions briefly the use of a task force to review standards, but provides neither details on how the task force will be established nor any transparency on how the standards review process will work, a parody of the more robust process detailed in SB 167.