

There are problems with Senate Bill 233, as written, the main ones of which relate to:

- the lack of stringent requirements for the financial viability of a private school that would be eligible for the public funds, as provided for in the bill.
- the lack of accreditation requirements for private schools that would be eligible for the public funds, as provided for in the bill.
- The lack of clarity and certainty regarding which schools from which students would be able to exit and be eligible for the \$6,500.
- The lack of certainty, as the bill is written, regarding the number of students who might qualify for the funds.
- The funding for the legislation is tied to the full funding the Quality Basic Education (QBE), as it would need to be. However, the funding of the QBE is always dependent on the state revenues during any fiscal year. When there are significant drops in state revenues, as we have seen on at least two occasions during my time in the House, it becomes problematic if not impossible for full funding. During the "Great Recession" the state budget was cut from \$24b to \$17b, and education funding was cut at a much lower rate (8% for education compared to 19% for other agencies, but it still could not be fully funded. See section 3 of the bill.

I have reviewed the schools in HD44, parts of Cobb and Cherokee and there are no failing schools listed by the Office of Student Achievement. Therefore, as the bill was presented by the House sponsors, no students in this district would qualify for the account. However, a careful reading of the bill indicates that qualification for the account would not require attendance in a failing school, but rather attendance in a school in the bottom 25% of schools. The list of the bottom 25% of schools referred to in the bill has not been formulated. Therefore, there is no telling what schools would qualify students for the voucher.

The bill is not dead. There was a vote for reconsideration of the measure after it failed to receive the number of votes needed for a constitutional passage on the bill itself. That means the bill is still active and will be back in the House Education Committee in January 2024. It is my hope that at that time significant improvements will be made to the bill.

I have made a podcast describing the bill in greater detail. You can access it at: <https://donparsons.substack.com/p/georgia-state-rep-don-parsons-speaking?sd=pf>

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