

Senate Bill 169

Timely Disciplinary Hearings & Instructional Materials for Students

Issue:

Each year, Georgia schools suspend and expel over 118,000 children. Under Georgia law, when a school wants to suspend a student for over 10 days, the school must first hold a disciplinary hearing called a tribunal. The school must schedule the tribunal within 10 days of the student's alleged offense. In practice, schools often extend hearings well after the 10-day window, and the law does not require any timeframe for rescheduling. **Kids often miss weeks of school as they wait for the school to reschedule a tribunal to determine whether the child violated a school rule in the first place.**



While children wait for a hearing, school districts provide no instructional material. State law does not require them to. **Without learning materials, these children fall behind in school before a school even determines whether they are innocent or considers whether the child's alleged offense was dangerous.** When these children return to school, teachers must divert classroom time and resources to help them catch up on the work they missed while they were out.

Solution:

Georgia should revise O.C.G.A. 20-2-754 of the Public School Disciplinary Tribunal Act to require timely disciplinary hearings (and limit rescheduling) and provide course materials to students waiting for disciplinary proceedings to end.

These revisions will:

- increase due process.
- make discipline proceedings more efficient.
- prevent learning loss.
- reduce the strain on overburdened teachers tasked with catching students up when they return to the classroom.

What the Data Shows

Learning Loss

The 216 students served by Georgia Appleseed's School Justice initiative averaged **18 days (sometimes as many as 55 days) before their school disciplinary hearing. Almost none of these children received instructional materials** during that period, leading to significant learning loss.

Increased Drop-Out

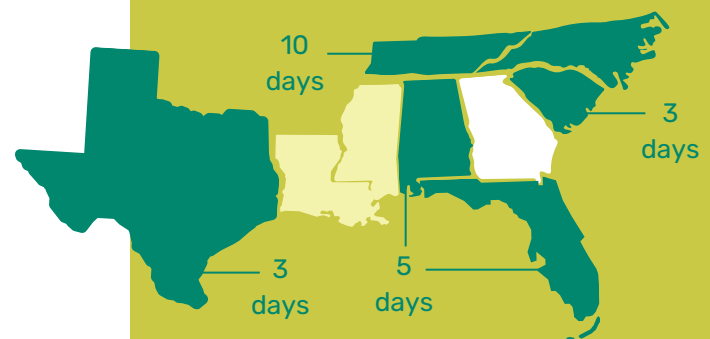
A Georgia Department of Education study found that for students in 8-10th grade, **missing just 11-14 days of instruction in a school year decreased their odds of graduating by over 25%.**

Economic Costs

School suspensions cost the U.S. more than \$35 billion in economic costs, over \$11 billion in fiscal costs, and \$24 billion in additional social costs. Lowering the suspension rate by only 1% could lead to more than \$2.2 billion in social benefit nationwide. (UCLA)

Neighboring Models

Nearby States Require Timely Hearings and Opportunities to Complete Schoolwork



Many states require timely disciplinary proceedings within a few days of a disciplinary incident.

Many states also provide students with instructional material while they are out of school. For example, North and South Carolina provide materials and allow students to complete assignments while they are serving suspensions.

