

O.C.G.A. Section 20-2-690.2

Establishment of student attendance and school climate committee; membership; summary of penalties for failure to comply; review and policy recommendations; reporting

(a) The chief judge of the superior court of each county shall establish a student attendance and school climate committee for such county. The purpose of the committee shall be to ensure coordination and cooperation among officials, agencies, and programs involved in compulsory attendance issues, to reduce the number of unexcused absences from school, to increase the percentage of students present to take tests which are required to be administered under the laws of this state, and to improve the school climate in each school. The chief judge is responsible for ensuring that all members of the committee are notified of their responsibility to the committee and shall call the first meeting of the committee in each county. The committee shall elect a chairperson and may elect other officers.

(b) Each local board of education shall participate in, consider, and make publicly available, including, but not limited to, posting in a conspicuous location, its decision regarding the recommendations of the committee as provided in this Code section. Independent school systems may participate in the committee in the county where the system is located. Independent school systems whose geographic area encompasses more than one county may select one of such counties in which to participate. An independent school system that elects not to participate in the committee of the county where it is located shall request that the chief judge of the superior court of a county encompassed by its geographic area establish an independent student attendance and school climate committee in the same manner as established for the county school system.

(c) Each of the following agencies, officials, or programs shall designate a representative to serve on the committee:

- (1) The chief judge of the superior court;
- (2) The juvenile court judge or judges of the county;
- (3) The district attorney for the county;
- (4) The solicitor-general of state court, if the county has a state court;
- (5) The Department of Juvenile Justice, which may include representatives from area juvenile detention facilities as defined in Code Section 49-4A-1;
- (6) The superintendent, a certificated school employee, and a local school board member from each public school system in the county and a certificated school social worker from each public school system, if any are employed by the school system;
- (7) The sheriff of the county;
- (8) The chief of police of the county police department;
- (9) The chief of police of each municipal police department in the county;
- (10) The county department of family and children services;
- (11) The county board of health;
- (12) The county mental health organization;
- (13) The county Family Connection commission, board, or authority, or other county agency, board, authority, or commission having the duty and authority to study problems of families, children, and youth and provide services to families, children, and youth; and
- (14) The court approved community based risk reduction program established by the juvenile court in accordance with Code Section 15-11-38, if such a program has been established.

(d) The committee thus established may appoint such additional members as necessary and proper to accomplish the purposes of the committee.

(e)

(1) Each committee shall, by June 1, 2005, adopt a written student attendance protocol for its county school system and for each independent school system within its geographic boundaries which shall be filed with the Department of Education. The protocol shall outline in detail the procedures to be used in identifying, reporting, investigating, and prosecuting cases of alleged violations of Code Section 20-2-690.1, relating to mandatory school attendance. The protocol shall outline in detail methods for determining the causes of failing to comply with compulsory attendance and appropriately addressing the issue with children and their parents or guardians. The protocol shall also include recommendations for policies relating to tardiness. The Department of Education shall provide model school attendance protocols, if requested by the committee.

(2) A copy of the protocol shall be furnished to each agency, official, or program within the county that has any responsibility in assisting children and their parents or guardians in complying with Code Section 20-2-690.1.

(3) The committee shall write the summary of possible consequences and penalties for failing to comply with compulsory attendance under Code Section 20-2-690.1 for children and their parents, guardians, or other persons who have control or charge of children for distribution by schools in accordance with Code Section 20-2-690.1. The summary of possible consequences for children shall include possible dispositions for children in need of services and possible denial of a driver's license for a child in accordance with Code Section 40-5-22.

(f) The committee shall review and make recommendations for policies relating to school climate for the purpose of promoting positive gains in student achievement scores, student and teacher morale, community support, and student and teacher attendance, while decreasing student suspensions, expulsions, dropouts, and other negative aspects of the total school environment. Such review may include school climate ratings established pursuant to Code Section 20-14-33 for each school in the county school system and any independent school systems, if applicable. The committee may review, if available, nonidentifying data from student health surveys, data on environmental and behavioral indicators, data on student behavioral and school-based reactions, and teacher and parent survey instruments. The committee may recommend the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports and response to intervention, trauma informed care training, and the optimization of local resources through voluntary community, student, teacher, administrator, and other school personnel participation.

(g) The chief judge of the superior court of each county shall ensure that the committee meets at least twice annually to evaluate compliance with the protocol, effectiveness of the protocol, and appropriate modifications and to review and revise, if necessary, recommendations relating to school climate.

(h) Each local board of education shall report student attendance rates and aggregated student discipline data to the committee and the State Board of Education at the end of each school year, according to a schedule established by the State Board of Education.

History

Code 1981, Section **20-2-690.2**, enacted by Ga. L. 2004, p. 107, Section 11; Ga. L. 2013, p. 294, Section 4-35/HB 242; Ga. L. 2015, p. 60, Section 3-3/SB 100; Ga. L. 2018, p. 753, Section 1/HB 763.

