



**The American
Institute
of Architects**



AIA - Week 20

The country is beginning to open back up and Georgia is leading the way in those efforts. The state has seen tremendous success in protecting Georgians while getting back to business. We will continue to update you and stay up to date on all the resources available to you and your business and keep you apprised of legislative actions.

Executive Presentations

Governor Kemp held a press conference on Thursday, May 28th. To begin the conference, he announced that he would renew the state of emergency which is now set to expire July 12th. It was previously set to expire June 12th. This is important in that it allows for coordination between all levels of government. It allows for federal funding opportunities and the capacity for other grant opportunities. Governor Kemp said that we are seeing a slow, careful transition to a new normal.

Governor Kemp issued a new executive order with some additional guidelines on day camps, overnight camps and the opening of restaurants and stores. In the order, face masks are strongly encouraged. Effective June 1st, Kemp increased the gathering size from 10 to 25 people if you can maintain at least six feet between each person. This allows for weddings and other small recreational events to resume with a little more flexibility.

The Governor ordered live performance venues to remain closed for now. Bars and nightclubs can open on June 1st if they comply with 39 mandatory measures to ensure patron well-being. These include temperature checks of employees, drinks to seated patrons, limited party size and others. Banquet facilities are now added to the same category as restaurants. This has been a point of confusion.

Amateur and professional sports are allowed to practice and engage in operation as long as they are operating under their professional sports league guidelines. Amateur sports are also allowed to begin.

Beginning in June, schools and districts may hold summer school classes as long as they comply with eleven requirements. Specifically, they must be able to operate adhering to strict social distancing standards. Amusement parks may begin operations on June 12th.

The Governor addressed the continued fight against the virus. He applauded the increased testing capacity in Georgia over the past month yet indicated that catching up in testing can show false spikes in case numbers. Kemp noted that he has been working with the federal government to ensure funding and continued support in the fight. President Trump announced that he would be fully funding the national guard work through August.

Executive Orders

The orders released by the Governor on Thursday are the following:

Order relating to additional standards for reopening Georgia and order extending the public health state of emergency until July 12th. Both executive orders can be found here: <https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2020-executive-orders>.

Resuming the Legislative Session

There are mixed feelings about the legislature returning to work. Many folks are ready and willing to come back to Atlanta and finish the 2020 Legislative Session. Others are hesitant and do not trust that COVID-19 numbers are trending towards a safe environment. We have not heard of any change in the projected June 11th return date. This will be following the general primary election on June 9th. We expect that the legislature will return and complete the full eleven days they have remaining on the calendar. There are many rumors about which bills will cross the finish line this year and we will keep you posted as we confirm.

As we mentioned last week, here are the guidelines to be followed when the Capitol reopens.

http://www.house.ga.gov/Documents/Information/COVID-19/Finalized_Memo_for_Committee_Approval.pdf

City of Atlanta

This week, Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms announced the city's plan for Phase Two of reopening the city. In order to ease into phase two, the city had to see a 14-day downward trend in new cases and hospitalizations along with plenty of hospital bed and ventilator availability. Phase two is described as the "easing" phase. Individuals are asked to continue to stay home except for essential trips. Restaurants and retail shops are allowed to have to-go and curbside service. Non-essential city facilities will remain closed. The transition into phase two can begin immediately and should begin implementation by June 1st. If the city sees a continuing spike in new cases and the hospital capacity falls below 50%, the city will

revert back to plan one- the “Stay at Home” phase. This is only for the City of Atlanta and the state laws supersede the city’s. Many businesses have chosen to reopen in accordance with the state’s guidelines.

Education Budget

This week, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education met to discuss the potential changes in the education budget. They heard testimony on the FY 2021 from the Department of Early Care and Learning, the Teacher’s Retirement System, the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, the Professional Standards Commission, and the Department of Education.

Department of Early Care and Learning

The DECAL had proposed significant reductions to the budget in the case of decrease in funds. These reductions include an elimination of 4,000 Pre-K slots, which would cut 180 classrooms, 13 instructional days and reduce the number of teacher planning days from 10 to four. This would result in a 10% reduction in teacher salary because of the fewer instructional and planning days. The department also proposed the elimination of the summer transition program and the extended day program. They also proposed significant administrative cuts which included leaving two vacant positions unfilled. As a reminder, the Georgia Pre-K program is funded by the Georgia Lottery and these proposals are in case of a significant decrease in the lottery program funds. During this discussion, senators proposed the idea of asking Pre-K teachers to take a pay cut but continue to work the usual academic days so that students are still provided the instructional learning time. Commissioner Amy Jacobs, who spoke on behalf of DECAL, said she would not expect teachers to think favorably of that proposal.

Teachers Retirement System

Buster Evans, the Executive Director of the Teachers Retirement System, told the subcommittee that the total fund balance for the program is up 1%, even with a negative growth rate for FY 2020. Any impact from the current market will not be felt until FY 2023. Therefore, they have no significant reductions proposed.

Governor’s Office of Student Achievement

Executive Director Joy Hawkins outlined their proposal for budget cuts. The cuts included \$500,000 in administrative costs and a \$1.8 million cut to literacy grants.

Professional Standards Commission

Professional Standards Commission Executive Secretary Matt Arthur discussed their commission’s proposal for budget costs. Much of their focus will be on increased teleworking and the ability to cut administrative costs because of that change. These administrative cuts include reducing the office space by one-third, halting all travel, and forgoing its meeting space in the Sloppy Floyd building. The commission is also eliminating one of the two teacher ethics tests to save costs.

Department of Education

Chief Financial Officer Rusk Roam was the last to speak on the Department of Education's proposed cuts. They are proposing an across-the-board reduction of 14% that would amount to \$1.8 billion. The specifics of the proposed cuts are as follows:

- \$1,330,340,288 reduction to Quality Basic Education program
- \$97,107,343 reduction to Quality Basic Education Equalization grants
- \$18,960,893 reduction to Pupil Transportation grants
- \$8,924,547 reduction to Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support grants
- \$6,063,400 reduction to Preschool Disabilities Services grants
- \$4,297,325 reduction to State Schools for operations
- \$3,746,810 reduction to Testing for personnel and operations
- \$3,380,847 reduction to Nutrition grants
- \$2,197,529 reduction to Technology/Career Education for CTE grants, Extended Day/Year, Vocational Industry Certification, Vocational Supervisors, and Youth Apprenticeship Programs
- \$2,000,000 reduction to Charter Schools for facilities grants.
- \$2,000,000 reduction to Grants for Career, Technical and Agricultural Education, and Technology to reflect program elimination.
- \$1,965,508 reduction to Chief Turnaround Officer for personnel and to reflect program elimination.
- \$1,953,780 reduction to Information Technology Services for operations
- \$1,815,521 reduction to Regional Education Services Agencies grants
- \$1,472,437 reduction to Agricultural Education for the Area Teacher Program, Extended Day/Year, Young Farmers, and Youth Camps
- \$1,117,111 reduction to Information Technology Services for grant programs
- \$1,108,514 reduction to Business and Finance Administration for operations
- \$940,965 reduction to Non-Quality Basic Education Formula Grants for sparsity grants
- \$928,841 reduction to Non Quality Basic Education Formula Grants for Residential Treatment Facilities grants
- \$664,130 reduction to Curriculum Development for operations
- \$639,676 reduction to the Central Office for operations
- \$578,953 reduction to Technology/Career Education for operations
- \$516,076 reduction to School Improvement for personnel and operations
- \$423,116 reduction to Georgia Virtual School for operations
- \$235,404 reduction to Chief Turnaround Officer for operations
- \$224,000 reduction to Regional Education Service Agencies for operations
- \$217,272 reduction to Tuition for Multiple Disability Students for operations
- \$199,934 reduction to Communities in Schools for local affiliates
- \$191,461 reduction to School Improvement for contracts
- \$140,347 reduction to Agricultural Education for operations
- \$140,000 reduction to Non Quality Basic Education Formula Grants for feminine hygiene products
- \$94,667 reduction to Charter Schools for operations
- \$53,960 reduction to Nutrition for operations
- \$17,500 reduction to Non-Quality Basic Education Formula Grants for operations

DPH Update

Dr. Kathleen Toomey gave a presentation this week on behalf of the Georgia Department of Public Health. In her update, she reiterated that one of the main focuses of the department is contact tracing. This is done to help track and stop the spread of the Coronavirus. The biggest challenge the DPH is currently facing is getting citizens to answer the phone calls from DPH. They expect to release fact sheets and videos on contact tracing soon.

Covid-19 Testing Updates

As a reminder, testing is now available for all Georgians, whether or not they have symptoms. Georgians are asked to contact their local healthcare providers or any Georgia public health department to schedule a test. To find a local public health department, visit <https://dph.georgia.gov/>.

CVS has announced 23 new testing locations in Georgia where patients will do a self-swab through the drive thru. To find a location and see if you meet the criteria, click here: <https://www.cvs.com/minuteclinic/covid-19-testing>

Thank you!

As we navigate this situation into the next phases, we will not stop working to protect your interests at the state and local level. While we see light at the end of the tunnel, it is clear that we will not return to normalcy for some time. We will continue to meet remotely and social distance but we will get things done!