Senate Bill 588
By: Senators Miller of the 49th, Albers of the 56th, Anavitarte of the 31st, Dixon of the 45th and Harbin of the 16th

AS PASSED

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

To amend Article 3 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to local boards of education, so as to provide that meetings of local boards of education shall be open to the public except as otherwise provided by law; to provide for public notice of public meetings of local boards of education; to require local boards of education to annually adopt rules of conduct for public meetings of the local board of education; to provide for the removal of members of the public from public meetings of a local board of education in accordance with rules adopted and published by the local board of education; to provide that visual and sound recording shall be permitted at such public meetings; to provide for construction; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

Article 3 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to local boards of education, is amended by revising subsections (a) and (c) of Code Section 20-2-58, relating to regular monthly meetings of local boards of education, adjournment, temporary
presiding officer, notice of date, template for financial review, and public comment period, as follows:

(a) It shall be the duty of each local board of education to hold a regular meeting during each calendar month for the transaction of business pertaining to the public schools and to review the financial status of the local school system. The local board of education shall provide a public comment period during such regular monthly meetings. Such public comment period shall be included on the agenda required to be made available and posted prior to the meeting pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection (e) of Code Section 50-14-1. A local board of education shall not require notice by an individual more than 24 hours prior to the meeting as a condition of addressing the local board during such public comment period. The chairperson of the local board of education shall have the discretion to limit the length of time for individual comments and the number of individuals speaking for or against a specific issue. Any such regular monthly meeting may be adjourned from time to time, and, in the absence of the president or secretary, the members of the local board may appoint one of their own number to serve temporarily. The local board shall annually determine the date of its regular monthly meetings and shall publish it either in the official county organ or, at the option of the local board of education, in a newspaper having a general circulation in said county at least equal to that of the official county organ for two consecutive weeks following the setting of the date; provided, however, that the date shall not be changed more often than once in 12 months and, if changed, the new date shall also be published as provided in this Code section. The local board of education shall also publish notice of such regular monthly meetings in a prominent manner on its principal public website.

(c)(1) Except as otherwise provided by law, including, but not limited to, the provisions of subsection (b) of Code Section 50-14-3, all meetings of a local board of education, including, but not limited to, regular monthly meetings provided for in subsection (a) of this Code section, shall be open to the public. The local board of education shall publish

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notice of each such public meeting in a prominent manner on its principal public website.

(2) Visual and sound recording shall be permitted at all such public meetings.

(3) By October 1, 2022, and by August 1 each year thereafter, each local board of education shall adopt rules of conduct for public meetings of the local board of education and shall publish such rules of conduct in a prominent manner on its principal public website. Such rules shall include provisions for the removal of members of the public for actual disruption of a public meeting of the local board of education.

(4) A member of the public may be removed from a public meeting of a local board of education for an actual disruption of the proceedings, as determined according to the rules of conduct for meetings open to the public adopted and published by the local board of education.

(5) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to limit the authority of any law enforcement officer or the application or enforcement of Chapter 14 of Title 50.

Each local board of education shall provide a public comment period during every regular monthly meeting. Such public comment period shall be included on the agenda required to be made available and posted prior to the meeting pursuant to paragraph (1) of subsection (e) of Code Section 50-14-1. A local board of education shall not require notice by an individual more than 24 hours prior to the meeting as a condition of addressing the local board during such public comment period. The chairperson of the local board of education shall have the discretion to limit the length of time for individual comments and the number of individuals speaking for or against a specific issue.”

SECTION 2.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.