RESEARCH REPORT

Georgia's New School CPR Law: What Every North Atlanta District Needs to Know About HB 874

What OCGA § 20-2-775 as Amended by HB 874 Requires of Every K-12 School in Georgia — and What It Means for 21,900 Teachers, Coaches, and School Nurses Across Four North Atlanta Counties

Prepared by Work Readiness Center | Antoinette Lewis AHA-Certified CPR and BLS Training | Cumming, Georgia
Serving Schools, Healthcare Providers, and Employers Across North Atlanta

Data Sources: OCGA § 20-2-775 (as amended by HB 874, 2024 Ga. Laws) | Georgia General Assembly | Gwinnett County Public Schools | Forsyth County Schools | NCES 2024-2025 District Data | American Heart Association | Georgia Code § 51-1-29

260	21,900	43,800	Jul 1 2025
K-12 public schools across 4 North Atlanta counties	teachers, coaches & school nurses requiring CPR certification	minimum CPR practice events required annually (all districts)	AED deadline: every K-12 school must have one

BOTTOM LINE: Georgia House Bill 874, signed April 23, 2024 and effective July 1, 2025, expanded the state's school AED and CPR requirements from high schools with athletics programs to every K-12 public school in the state. All 260 public schools across Gwinnett, Forsyth, Cherokee, and Hall counties are now required to have an AED on-site. All 21,900 teachers, coaches, and school nurses across those districts are required to practice CPR and AED response twice per year. Every high school student must receive CPR and AED instruction. Most school staff members responsible for those obligations don't yet understand what the law specifically requires of them individually.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Georgia has required CPR instruction for high school students since 2013, when OCGA § 20-2-775 first mandated that every local board of education operating grades 9 through 12 provide instruction in CPR and AED use within existing health or physical education courses. That requirement covered students in athletics programs beginning in the 2013-2014 school year and expanded incrementally over the following decade. In April 2024, Governor Brian Kemp signed House Bill 874, which made the most significant expansion of Georgia's school cardiac emergency law since its original passage.

HB 874 does three things the prior law did not. First, it requires every public K-12 school in Georgia, not just high schools with interscholastic athletics, to have at least one AED on-site by July 1, 2025. Second, it requires teachers, coaches, and school nurses to practice CPR and AED response twice per year. Third, it reaffirms and extends the student CPR instruction requirement to create a comprehensive school-based cardiac emergency readiness system across all grade levels. Across the four North Atlanta counties covered in this report, Gwinnett, Forsyth, Cherokee, and Hall, that means 260 schools now have AED obligations, approximately 21,900 teachers and instructional staff have a twice-annual practice requirement, and an estimated 95,000 high school students must receive CPR and AED instruction.

This report documents the specific statutory requirements of HB 874, the scale of the compliance obligation across North Atlanta school districts, the distinction between the student instruction requirement and the staff practice requirement, and what Georgia law requires of any 'expected user' of an AED placed on school property.

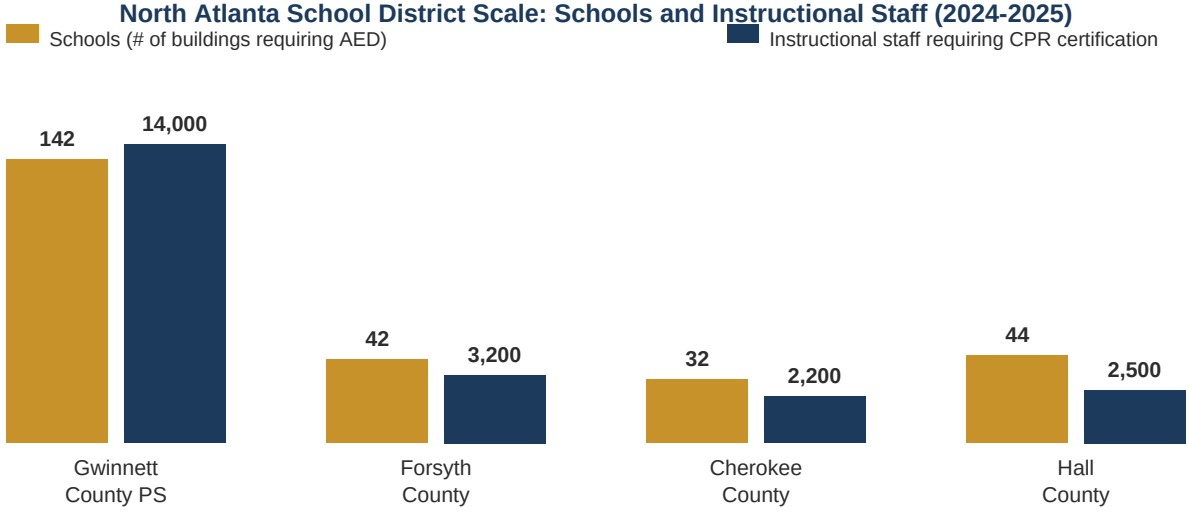
Finding 1

HB 874 Expanded AED Requirements From Athletics-Only to Every K-12 School

All 260 North Atlanta schools

Before HB 874, Georgia law required AEDs only in high schools that participated in interscholastic athletic programs, a requirement that covered roughly one-third of all K-12 schools in the state. HB 874, codified as an amendment to OCGA § 20-2-775, changed that to require at least one functional, accessible, and clearly marked AED in every public K-12 school building by July 1, 2025. The Georgia Department of Education was directed to provide guidance to districts on acquiring AEDs, and state funding assistance was made available alongside encouragement to seek private and community sources. Across the four counties covered in this report, that requirement encompasses all 142 schools in Gwinnett County Public Schools (the largest district in Georgia), 42 schools in Forsyth County Schools, an estimated 32 schools in Cherokee County School District, and 44 schools in Hall County Schools, for a combined total of 260 schools requiring a minimum of one AED on campus. Most large campuses, particularly those with multiple buildings, athletic facilities, and student populations exceeding 1,000, will require more than the minimum one unit to ensure the AED is accessible within the time window where defibrillation meaningfully improves survival outcomes.

North Atlanta School District Scale: Schools and Instructional Staff (2024-2025)



urces: GCPS gcpsk12.org / Gwinnett Chamber 2025; Forsyth County Schools forsyth.k12.ga.us / NCES 2024-25; Cherokee County SD; Hall County Schools. Teacher counts are instructional staff est

Gwinnett County Public Schools alone accounts for 54% of the four-county school total. Combined, the four districts serve approximately 328,000 students in 260 school buildings, all of which are now subject to HB 874's AED requirement.

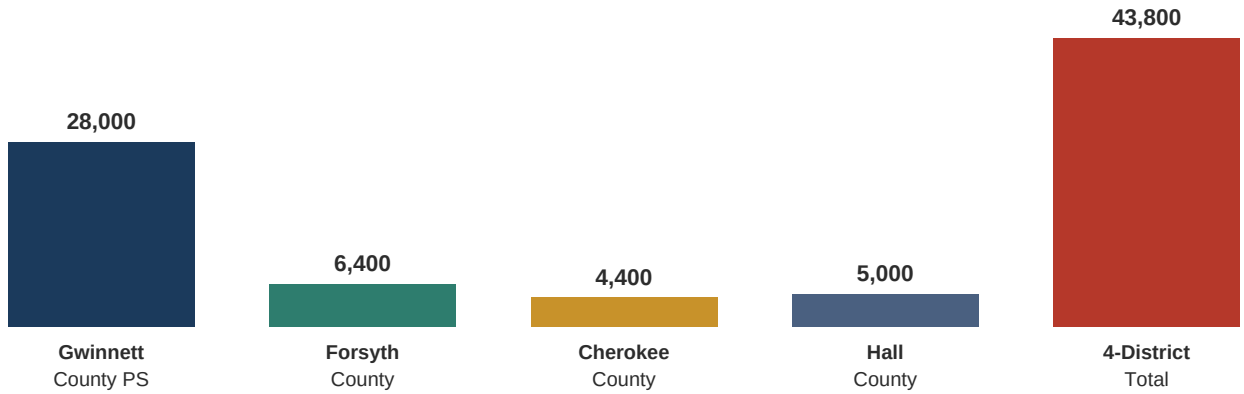
Finding 2

Teachers, Coaches, and School Nurses Must Practice CPR and AED Response Twice Per Year

21,900 staff with twice-yearly duty

HB 874 added a specific practice requirement for school staff that did not exist in prior Georgia law. Teachers, coaches, and school nurses at every public K-12 school are now required to practice their emergency response procedures, including CPR and AED use, twice per year. This requirement applies to all staff who would be expected to respond to a cardiac emergency on campus, not just those who voluntarily hold CPR certification. Georgia law, consistent with AED program standards in OCGA § 31-11-57, also requires that all 'expected users' of an AED placed on premises receive training in CPR and AED use from a nationally accredited program. The practical implication is that placing an AED in a school building creates a certification obligation for the staff expected to use it, not just a device obligation. Across the four-county area, this translates to approximately 21,900 teachers and instructional staff, plus additional coaches and nursing staff not fully captured in teacher counts, who are required to participate in at least two CPR and AED practice sessions per school year. At the district level, Gwinnett County Public Schools with approximately 14,000 teachers faces the largest single-district obligation in North Georgia.

Minimum Annual CPR Practice Events Required Under HB 874 (2 per staff member per year)



HB 874 requires teachers, coaches, and school nurses to practice CPR and AED response twice per year. Estimates based on district instructional staff counts. Coaches and nurses add to total.

Each bar represents the minimum number of CPR practice events required annually across that district's instructional staff. The 43,800 annual practice events across all four districts represents a consistent, recurring compliance obligation that does not decrease between school years.

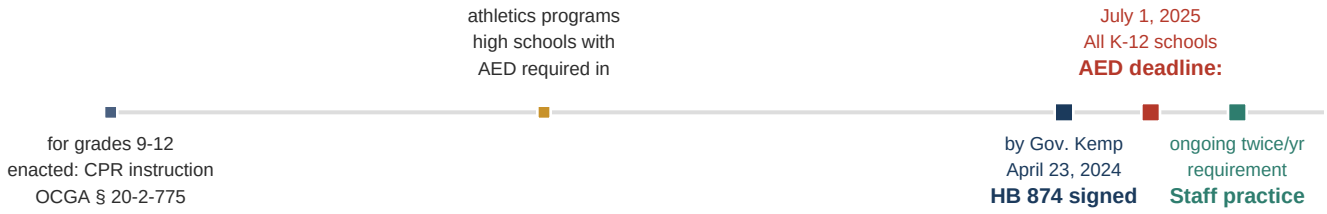
Finding 3

All High School Students Must Receive CPR and AED Instruction — A Requirement Since 2013

~95,000 North Atlanta high schoolers

The student CPR instruction requirement is not new to HB 874. OCGA § 20-2-775(c), first enacted for the 2013-2014 school year, already required every local board of education operating grades 9 through 12 to provide instruction in CPR and AED use within existing health or physical education courses. That instruction must include psychomotor skills — hands-on practice — and must follow an instructional program developed by the American Heart Association, the American Red Cross, or an equivalent nationally recognized organization. HB 874 extended and reinforced this requirement within the broader school preparedness framework it created. Across the four North Atlanta counties, applying an approximate 29% high school proportion to the combined enrollment of 328,274 students produces an estimate of approximately 95,000 students in grades 9 through 12 who must receive CPR and AED instruction as a condition of their physical education or health curriculum. Each of those students who learns CPR represents a potential bystander trained to respond in an emergency in their school, their home, or their community, precisely the pipeline of trained bystanders that cardiac arrest survival research identifies as the most scalable path to improving community-wide survival rates.

Georgia School CPR and AED Law: From 2013 Instruction Mandate to HB 874 (2024)



Sources: OCGA § 20-2-775 (as amended by HB 874, 2024 Ga. Laws); legis.ga.gov; ERTSS.com

Georgia's school CPR law has expanded three times since 2013. HB 874 (2024) is the most comprehensive expansion, extending AED requirements from athletics-only to all K-12 schools and adding a twice-annual staff practice mandate. Source: OCGA § 20-2-775 as amended; legis.ga.gov; ERTSS.com

Finding 4

Georgia's Good Samaritan Law Protects School Staff Who Use an AED in Good Faith

OCGA § 51-1-29 protects responders

A common concern among school staff asked to take on CPR and AED responsibilities is legal liability: what happens if they perform CPR and the outcome is bad? Georgia Code § 51-1-29, Georgia's Good Samaritan protection statute, provides civil liability immunity to any person who in good faith renders emergency care at the scene of an emergency or accident, without charge, to the extent that person acts as an ordinary, reasonably prudent person would have acted. This protection applies to bystanders performing CPR and to persons who use an AED in good faith during a cardiac emergency. Georgia's AED statutes additionally provide that persons who provide and operate AEDs, train users, and maintain equipment in accordance with the law are not subject to civil liability for actions taken in good faith. The legal framework deliberately removes liability as a barrier to bystander action, recognizing that no action in a cardiac arrest is almost always worse than imperfect action. For school staff who worry that performing CPR exposes them to legal risk, the answer is that Georgia law specifically and intentionally protects them when they act in good faith in an emergency.

THE DATA: HB 874 COMPLETE COMPLIANCE REFERENCE

Requirement	Who It Applies To	Deadline / Frequency	Legal Citation
AED on-site, accessible, clearly marked	**Every public K-12 school (all grades, all buildings)**	**In place by July 1, 2025**	**OCGA § 20-2-775 (as amended by HB 874)**
AED user training: nationally accredited CPR and AED certification	**All 'expected users' of any AED on school premises (teachers, coaches, nurses who would respond)**	**Prior to or concurrent with AED placement; renewed per cert cycle**	**OCGA § 31-11-57; HB 874 staff training provisions**
CPR and AED practice drills	**Teachers, coaches, and school nurses at every public K-12 school**	**Twice per school year (minimum)**	**OCGA § 20-2-775 (as amended by HB 874)**
CPR and AED instruction for students	All students in grades 9-12	Within existing health or P.E. curriculum; psychomotor skills required	OCGA § 20-2-775(c) (enacted 2013-2014; reinforced by HB 874)

Emergency Action Plan incorporating AED and CPR response roles	Each school building	Ongoing; reviewed and updated annually	OCGA § 20-2-775; GaDOE guidance
AED location report to local EMS	School AED program administrator	Upon placement; updated if location changes	OCGA § 31-11-57
AED maintenance per manufacturer specifications	School AED program administrator	Ongoing; documented regularly	OCGA § 31-11-57
Good Samaritan protection for responders	Any person responding in good faith during a cardiac emergency	Applies at time of emergency	OCGA § 51-1-29; AED immunity provisions

Highlighted rows indicate the three most commonly misunderstood requirements: AED placement (many schools believe the prior athletics-only law still applies), expected user certification (AED placement creates a training obligation), and twice-annual staff practice (a new obligation not in prior Georgia school law). Source: OCGA § 20-2-775 as amended by HB 874 (2024 Ga. Laws); OCGA § 31-11-57; OCGA § 51-1-29.

THE DATA: NORTH ATLANTA DISTRICT PROFILE — HB 874 SCOPE (2024-2025)

School District	Schools (K-12)	Total Staff	Teachers / Instructional	Students	Min. AEDs Required	Annual Practice Events (est.)
Gwinnett County Public Schools	142	24,000+	~14,000	182,274	142 minimum	~28,000
Forsyth County Schools	42	6,455	~3,200	54,000+	42 minimum	~6,400
Cherokee County School District	~32	~3,800	~2,200	~44,000	~32 minimum	~4,400
Hall County Schools	44	~4,200	~2,500	~48,000	44 minimum	~5,000
4-DISTRICT TOTAL	**260**	**~38,455**	**~21,900**	**~328,274**	**260 minimum**	**~43,800**

Annual practice events estimated at twice-yearly per instructional staff member. Actual obligation includes coaches and school nurses not fully reflected in teacher counts. Minimum AED count assumes one per building; large campuses with multiple structures will require additional units. Sources: GCPS gcpsk12.org; Forsyth County forsyth.k12.ga.us; NCES 2024-25 CCD; Cherokee County School District; Hall County Schools; Gwinnett Chamber 2025.

WHAT NORTH ATLANTA SCHOOL STAFF NEED TO KNOW

1

The AED deadline has passed — every K-12 school was required to have one by July 1, 2025.

If your school has not yet placed an AED, it is currently out of compliance with OCGA § 20-2-775 as amended by HB 874. The Georgia Department of Education provided guidance on funding assistance, and private donations and community partnerships were explicitly encouraged. Contact your district's safety coordinator to confirm your school's AED status and placement.

2

Placing an AED creates a training obligation — not just a device obligation.

Georgia Code § 31-11-57 requires that all expected users of an AED placed on premises receive CPR and AED training from a nationally accredited program. When your school installs an AED, every staff member expected to respond to a cardiac emergency in your building becomes an expected user with a training requirement. The AED is not a substitute for trained staff; it is a tool that requires trained staff to use it effectively.

3

Twice-annual practice is a specific mandate, not a recommendation.

HB 874's requirement for teachers, coaches, and school nurses to practice CPR and AED response twice per year is statutory language, not a best-practice suggestion. Annual CPR recertification already required every two years by AHA standards means your staff should be training at least once per year on certification cycles — HB 874 adds a minimum of two practice events per year on top of that baseline. The distinction between a certification course and a skills practice drill matters for compliance.

4

Student CPR instruction must include hands-on practice — not just video or classroom lecture.

OCGA § 20-2-775(c) specifically requires that student CPR instruction incorporate psychomotor skills necessary to perform CPR and use an AED. A video or classroom lesson on cardiac arrest without hands-on practice with a manikin does not meet the statutory standard. Every high school student's CPR instruction must include actual chest compression and AED use practice, using a program from AHA, the American Red Cross, or an equivalent nationally recognized organization.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: GEORGIA HB 874 AND SCHOOL CPR COMPLIANCE

Q: What did HB 874 change from prior Georgia school CPR law?

A: Prior Georgia law required AEDs only in high schools with interscholastic athletic programs. HB 874, signed April 23, 2024, extended the AED requirement to every public K-12 school building in Georgia by July 1, 2025. It also added a new requirement for teachers, coaches, and school nurses to practice CPR and AED response twice per year — a mandate that did not exist in the prior law.

Q: Does our school have to have an AED even if we have no sports programs?

A: Yes. HB 874 removed the athletics program condition. Every public K-12 school in Georgia, including elementary schools, middle schools, and all schools regardless of whether they offer sports programs, must have at least one AED on-site in an accessible, clearly marked location. The deadline for compliance was July 1, 2025.

Q: Who counts as an 'expected user' under Georgia's AED training requirement?

A: Georgia Code § 31-11-57 requires that any person who expects to use an AED placed on premises must receive CPR and AED training. In a school context, this includes teachers, coaches, school nurses, and any staff member whose role would involve responding to a cardiac emergency. When an AED is placed on your campus, the question 'who would pick this up and use it?' identifies your expected users.

Q: What does 'twice per year practice' mean — is recertification enough?

A: HB 874 requires practice drills twice per year, which is a separate requirement from the AHA two-year certification cycle. A staff member who completed certification in January still needs to participate in at least two practice sessions during that same school year. A certification course satisfies one practice event; the second must occur during the same academic year. Districts are responsible for scheduling and documenting these practice sessions.

Q: Are teachers legally protected if they perform CPR and the outcome is bad?

A: Yes. Georgia Code § 51-1-29 provides Good Samaritan protection for persons who in good faith render emergency care without charge at the scene of an accident or emergency. Georgia's AED statutes additionally protect persons who use an AED in good faith during a cardiac emergency. This protection is intentional — Georgia law is designed to remove liability as a barrier to bystander action.

Q: Can Work Readiness Center provide onsite training to meet HB 874 requirements?

A: Yes. Work Readiness Center provides AHA-certified CPR, AED, and First Aid training to school groups across North Atlanta — onsite at your school building, on schedules that work around the school day. Our training satisfies both the nationally accredited program requirement for expected AED users and can be structured to fulfill the twice-annual practice requirement for teachers, coaches, and school nurses. We serve groups as small as 4 and as large as several hundred, and are available seven days per week including evenings and weekends.

About Work Readiness Center

Work Readiness Center is an AHA-certified CPR, BLS, First Aid, and AED training provider serving schools, healthcare providers, businesses, and community groups across North Atlanta. We provide onsite group training at your school building on a schedule that fits your staff's calendar, eliminating travel and maximizing training time. Our training meets the nationally accredited program standards required by OCGA § 31-11-57 for expected AED users and can be structured to satisfy HB 874's twice-annual practice requirement for teachers, coaches, and school nurses. AHA certifications are valid for two years and issued on the same day as training. Available 7 days a week, including evenings and weekends. Groups of 4 to several hundred.

Serving Gwinnett, Forsyth, Cherokee, Hall, Fulton, DeKalb, and surrounding counties

workreadinesscenter.com

METHODOLOGY & SOURCES

Statutory language and requirements are sourced directly from the Official Code of Georgia Annotated as amended by HB 874 (2024 Ga. Laws), accessed through the Georgia General Assembly's official publications and confirmed by aed.com's Georgia AED Statutes and Regulations reference. District enrollment, school count, and staff figures are from NCES 2024-25 district data, official district websites (gcpsk12.org, forsyth.k12.ga.us), and the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce State of the Schools (2025). Cherokee County and Hall County figures are NCES-based estimates. Annual practice event estimates are calculated at two events per instructional staff member per year; actual obligations include coaches and nursing staff not fully captured in teacher counts. High school student estimates apply a 29% approximate proportion to total district enrollment. This report does not constitute legal advice; districts should consult their legal counsel and the Georgia Department of Education for definitive compliance guidance.

Georgia General Assembly. House Bill 874 (2024 Ga. Laws). Signed April 23, 2024. Amends OCGA § 20-2-775 to require AEDs in all K-12 schools by July 1, 2025 and twice-annual CPR/AED practice for teachers, coaches, and school nurses.
legis.ga.gov

Official Code of Georgia Annotated. § 20-2-775 — AEDs required in schools; emergency action plans; practice drills (as amended by HB 874). Full statutory text including AED placement, user training, student instruction, and staff practice requirements.
law.justia.com/codes/georgia

Official Code of Georgia Annotated. § 31-11-57 — AED program requirements. Requires all expected AED users to receive nationally accredited CPR/AED training; establishes AED maintenance, EMS notification, and liability provisions.
law.justia.com/codes/georgia

Official Code of Georgia Annotated. § 51-1-29 — Good Samaritan protection. Civil liability immunity for persons who in good faith render emergency care without charge; AED-specific immunity for good-faith responders.
law.justia.com/codes/georgia

Gwinnett County Public Schools. District overview and staff data, 2025. 142 schools; 182,274 students; 24,000+ employees including 14,000 teachers. Largest district in Georgia; 10th largest in the U.S.
gcpsk12.org

Forsyth County Schools. District overview, 2024-2025. 42 schools; 54,000+ students; 8,000 full-time employees and substitutes. Fifth largest district in Georgia.
forsyth.k12.ga.us

National Center for Education Statistics. Common Core of Data, 2024-2025. Gwinnett: 24,228 staff. Forsyth: 6,455 staff. Used for district-level verification.
nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/

ERTSS (Emergency Response Training & Safety Services). Georgia HB 874 — AEDs in All Public Schools. Confirms HB 874 signing date (April 23, 2024), expansion from athletics-only to all K-12 schools, and staff training requirements.
ertss.com/georgia-hb-874-proposed-aeds-in-all-public-schools/

AED.com. Georgia AED Statutes and Regulations. Confirms OCGA § 20-2-775(c) student instruction requirement (2013-2014 school year effective date) and expected user training obligation.
aed.com/georgia-aed-statutes-regulations

American Heart Association. CPR and First Aid Emergency Cardiovascular Care. AHA-certified training meets the nationally accredited program standard in OCGA § 20-2-775. AHA Heartsaver and BLS programs satisfy Georgia's nationally accredited program requirement.
heart.org