

House Bill 400 (AS PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE)

By: Representatives Millar of the 79th, Lindsey of the 54th, Pruett of the 144th, Amerson of the 9th, and Ashe of the 56th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to the "Quality Basic Education Act," so as to enact the "Building Resourceful
3 Individuals to Develop Georgia's Economy Act"; to develop programs to improve graduation
4 rates and to improve the preparedness of students for postsecondary education and careers;
5 to provide for definitions; to provide for individual graduation plans; to establish a reform
6 grant program; to provide that the grant program is subject to appropriations; to require local
7 school systems which receive a reform grant to comply with certain requirements; to provide
8 for rules and regulations; to provide for exemptions from certain portions of the high school
9 graduation test and end-of-course assessments; to provide for related matters; to provide for
10 an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

11 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

12 **SECTION 1.**

13 Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to the
14 "Quality Basic Education Act," is amended by adding a new part to read as follows:

15 "Part 16

16 20-2-325.

17 This part shall be known and may be cited as the 'Building Resourceful Individuals to
18 Develop Georgia's Economy Act.'

19 20-2-326.

20 For purposes of this part, the term:

21 (1) 'Articulation' means agreement between a high school and a postsecondary institution
22 regarding the awarding of both secondary and postsecondary credit for a dual enrollment
23 course.

(2) 'Career academy' means a specialized charter school established by a partnership between one or more local boards of education and a technical school or college and approved by the State Board of Education in accordance with Article 31 of this chapter or the Georgia Charter Schools Commission in accordance with Article 31A of this chapter. This term also includes a small learning community where a student receives academic instruction at his or her assigned high school combined with work based learning opportunities at an industry center or technical school or college.

(3) 'Choice technical high school' means a high school, other than the high school to which a student is assigned by virtue of his or her residence and attendance zone, which is designed to prepare a high school student for postsecondary education and for employment in a career field. A choice technical high school may be operated by a local school system or a technical school or college. A choice technical high school may also be operated as a charter school under a governance board composed of parents, employers, and representatives from the local board of education.

(4) 'Chronically low-performing high school' means a public high school in this state that has a graduation rate of less than 60 percent for three consecutive years, as determined in accordance with methodology established by the National Governors Association's Compact on High School Graduation Data, or that has not made adequate yearly progress for three consecutive years, as defined by the Office of Student Achievement.

(5) 'Focused program of study' means a rigorous academic core combined with a focus in mathematics and science; a focus in humanities, fine arts, and foreign language; or a coherent sequence of career pathway courses that is aligned with graduation requirements established by the State Board of Education and curriculum requirements established pursuant to Part 2 of this article that prepares a student for postsecondary education or immediate employment after high school graduation.

(6) 'Graduation plan' means a student specific plan developed in accordance with subsection (c) of Code Section 20-2-327 detailing the courses necessary for a high school student to graduate from high school and to successfully transition to postsecondary education and the work force.

(7) 'Industry certification' means a process of program evaluation that ensures that individual programs meet industry standards in the areas of curriculum, teacher qualification, lab specifications, equipment, and industry involvement.

(8) 'Public college or university' means a two-year or four-year college, university, or other institution under the auspices of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

(9) 'Small learning community' means an autonomous or semiautonomous small learning environment within a large high school which is made up of a subset of students and

teachers for a two, three, or four-year period. The goal of a small learning community is to achieve greater personalization of learning with each community led by a principal or instructional leader. A small learning community blends academic studies around a broad career or academic theme where teachers have common planning time to connect teacher assignments and assessments to college and career readiness standards. Students voluntarily apply for enrollment in a small learning community but must be accepted, and such enrollment must be approved by the student's parent or guardian. A small learning community also includes a career academy organized around a specific career theme which integrates academic and career instruction, provides work-based learning opportunities, and prepares students for postsecondary education and employment, with support through partnerships with local employers, community organizations, and postsecondary institutions.

(10) 'Teacher adviser system' means a system where an individual professional educator in the school assists a small group of students and their parents or guardians throughout the students' high school careers to set postsecondary goals and help them prepare programs of study, utilizing assessments and other data to track academic progress on a regular basis; communicates frequently with parents or guardians; and provides advisement, support, and encouragement as needed.

(11) 'Technical school or college' means a school, college, institution, or other branch of the Technical College System of Georgia.

20-2-327.

(a) Student performance at the advanced proficiency/honors level on any assessments required for purposes of high school graduation shall be recognized as:

(1) Meeting postsecondary entrance test requirements, and

(2) Qualifying students to enroll in credit-bearing postsecondary course work in

accordance with policies and requirements established by the State Board of Education,

the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, and the State Board of

Technical and Adult Education.

(b) Secondary and postsecondary credit shall be awarded immediately upon successful completion of any articulated or dual enrollment course in accordance with policies and requirements established by the State Board of Education, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, and the State Board of Technical and Adult Education.

(c) Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades shall be provided counseling, advisement, career awareness, career interest inventories, and information to assist them in evaluating their academic skills and career interests. Before the end of the second semester of the eighth grade, students shall develop

an individual graduation plan in consultation with their parents, guardians, or individuals appointed by the parents or guardians to serve as their designee. High school students shall be provided guidance, advisement, and counseling annually that will enable them to successfully complete their individual graduation plans, preparing them for a seamless transition to postsecondary study, further training, or employment. An individual graduation plan shall:

(1) Include rigorous academic core subjects and focused course work in mathematics and science or in humanities, fine arts, and foreign language or sequenced career pathway course work;

(2) Incorporate provisions of a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), where applicable;

(3) Align educational and broad career goals and a student's course of study;

(4) Be based on the student's selected academic and career focus area as approved by the student's parent or guardian;

(5) Include experience based, career oriented learning experiences which may include, but not be limited to, internships, apprenticeships, mentoring, co-op education, and service learning;

(6) Include opportunities for postsecondary studies through articulation, dual enrollment, and joint enrollment;

(7) Be flexible to allow change in the course of study but be sufficiently structured to meet graduation requirements and qualify the student for admission to postsecondary education; and

(8) Be approved by the student and the student's parent or guardian with guidance from the student's school counselor or teacher adviser.

An individual graduation plan shall be reviewed annually, and revised, if appropriate, upon approval by the student and the student's parent or guardian with guidance from the student's school counselor or teacher adviser. An individual graduation plan may be changed at any time throughout a student's high school career upon approval by the student and the student's parent or guardian with guidance from the student's school counselor or teacher adviser.

20-2-328.

(a) Subject to appropriations by the General Assembly, the State Board of Education shall establish a competitive grant program for local school systems to implement school reform measures in selected high schools. The state board shall establish program requirements in accordance with the provisions of this Code section and shall establish grant criteria,

which shall include that priority for reform grants shall be given to chronically low-performing high schools.

(b)(1) The State Board of Education shall develop an evidence based model program for chronically low-performing high schools receiving a reform grant pursuant to this Code section for addressing at-risk students, which shall include various programs and curricula that have proven to be effective for at-risk students focusing on:

(A) Identification of students at risk for being poorly prepared for the next grade level or for dropping out of school;

(B) Strengthening retention of ninth grade students in school and reducing high failure rates;

(C) Improving more students' performances to grade level standards in reading and mathematics by the end of ninth grade;

(D) Assisting students and their parents or guardians in setting an outcome career and educational goal and identifying a focused program of study to achieve such goal; and

(E) Assisting students in learning and applying study skills, coping skills, and other habits that produce successful students and adults.

(2) The at-risk model program shall include:

(A) Diagnostic assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses in the core academic areas;

(B) A process for identifying at-risk students, closely monitored by the Department of Education in collaboration with local school systems to ensure that students are being properly identified and provided timely, appropriate guidance and assistance and to ensure that no group is disproportionately represented; and

(C) An evaluation component in each high school to ensure the programs are providing students an opportunity to graduate with a high school diploma.

(3) The at-risk model program may include various components designed to result in more students facilitating a successful start in high school and passing ninth grade such as:

(A) Utilizing a flexible schedule that increases students' time in core language arts/reading and mathematics studies designed to eliminate academic deficiencies;

(B) Maintaining a student-teacher ratio in ninth grade that is no higher than any other grade level ratio in high school;

(C) Utilizing experienced and effective teachers as leaders for teacher teams in ninth grade to improve instructional planning, delivery, and reteaching strategies;

(D) Assigning students to a teacher mentor who will meet with them frequently to provide planned lessons on study skills and other habits of success that help students

become independent learners and who will help them receive the assistance they need to successfully pass ninth grade; and

(E) Including ninth grade career courses which incorporate a series of miniprojects throughout the school year that require the application of ninth grade level reading, mathematics, and science skills to complete while students learn to use a range of technology and help students explore a range of educational and career options that will assist them in formulating post high school goals and give them a reason to stay in school and work toward achieving their stated goals.

(c) The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules and regulations for chronically low-performing high schools receiving a reform grant pursuant to this Code section to make the high schools more relevant to and effective for all students. Such rules shall encourage high schools to implement a comprehensive school reform research based model that focuses on:

(1) Setting high expectations for all students;

(2) Personalizing graduation plans for students;

(3) Developing small learning communities or career academies with a rigorous academic foundation and emphasis in broad career fields of study;

(4) Using project based instruction embedded with strong academics to improve relevancy in learning;

(5) Fostering collaboration among academic and career/technical teachers;

(6) Implementing nontraditional scheduling in ninth grade for students behind in their grade level;

(7) Promoting parental involvement; and

(8) Training teachers to work with low-performing students and their parents or guardians.

(d) This Code section shall be subject to appropriations by the General Assembly.

20-2-329.

High schools that receive a reform grant pursuant to Code Section 20-2-328 shall:

(1) Provide focused programs of study which are designed to provide a well-rounded education for students by fostering artistic creativity, critical thinking, and self-discipline through the teaching of academic content, knowledge, and skills that students will use in the workplace, further education, and life. The focused programs of study, whether provided at a choice technical high school, a career academy, a traditional high school, or on site at a technical school or college or a public college or university, shall be aligned with graduation requirements established by the State Board of Education and curriculum requirements established pursuant to Part 2 of this article, including, at a

minimum, four years of mathematics, Algebra I and higher, and four years of English, with an emphasis on developing reading and writing skills to meet college and career readiness standards;

(2) Implement a teacher adviser system;

(3) Provide students in the ninth through twelfth grades information on educational programs offered in high school, in technical and community colleges, in colleges and universities, and through apprenticeship programs and how these programs can lead to a variety of career fields. Local school systems shall provide opportunities for field trips, speakers, educational and career information centers, job shadowing, and classroom centers to assist students and their parents or guardians, with guidance from school counselors and teacher advisers, in revising, if appropriate, the individual graduation plan developed pursuant to subsection (c) of Code Section 20-2-327;

(4) Enroll students no later than ninth grade into one of the following options for earning a high school diploma and preparing students for postsecondary education and a career which will include a structured program of academic study with in-depth studies in:

(A) Mathematics and science;

(B) Humanities, fine arts, and foreign language; or

(C) A career pathway that leads to passing an employer certification exam in a high demand, high skill, or high wage career field or to an associate's degree or bachelor's degree.

The awarding of a special education diploma to any disabled student who has not completed all of the requirements for a high school diploma, but who has completed his or her Individualized Education Program (IEP) shall be deemed to meet the requirements of this paragraph;

(5) Implement the at-risk model program developed by the State Board of Education pursuant to subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-328;

(6) Comply with the rules and regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education for chronically low-performing high schools pursuant to subsection (c) of Code Section 20-2-328; and

(7) Schedule annual conferences to assist students and their parents or guardians in setting educational and career goals and creating individual graduation plans beginning with students in the eighth grade and continuing through high school. These conferences shall include, but are not limited to, assisting the student in identifying educational and career interests and goals, selecting a career and academic focus area, and developing an individual graduation plan.

239 20-2-329.1.
240 The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry out
241 the provisions of this part."

242 **SECTION 2.**

243 Said article is further amended in Code Section 20-2-281, relating to assessment of
244 effectiveness of educational programs, by adding a new subsection to read as follows:

245 "(q) The State Board of Education shall consider the passage by a student of an industry
246 certification examination or a state licensure examination which is approved by the State
247 Board of Education when considering whether to grant such student a variance for one or
248 more portions of the high school graduation test required by the State Board of Education
249 pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code section in order to obtain a Georgia high school
250 diploma; provided, however, that the state board shall not grant a variance to a student
251 unless the student has attempted and failed to pass the relevant portion of the high school
252 graduation test at least four times."

253 **SECTION 3.**

254 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law
255 without such approval.

256 **SECTION 4.**

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