

House Bill 217 (COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE)

By: Representatives Hong of the 103rd, Martin of the 49th, Erwin of the 32nd, Wade of the 9th,
and Ballard of the 147th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 4 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 vocational, technical, and adult education, so as to extend the Dual Achievement Program
3 for an additional five years; to provide updated eligibility requirements for the program
4 beginning July 1, 2026; to provide for continued eligibility for students already enrolled in
5 the program; to provide for QBE funding and accountability assessments to be included in
6 the program; to provide for policies, rules, and regulations; to provide for participation
7 agreements; to provide for reporting; to provide for automatic repeal; to provide definitions;
8 to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 **SECTION 1.**

11 Chapter 4 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to vocational,
12 technical, and adult education, is amended by revising Article 6, relating to the Dual
13 Achievement Program, as follows:

"ARTICLE 6

20-4-140.

As used in this article, the term:

(1) 'Dual Achievement Program' or 'program' means the program provided for in this article.

(2) 'Eligible student' means a student who meets the qualifications to participate in the program.

(3) 'Extracurricular activities' and 'interscholastic activities' shall have the same respective meanings as set forth in Code Section 20-2-319.6.

(4) 'QBE formula earnings' means funds earned for the Quality Basic Education Formula pursuant to Code Section 20-2-161 and shall include the portion of such funds that are calculated as the local five mill share in accordance with Code Section 20-2-164. QBE formula earnings shall include the salary portion of direct instructional costs, the adjustment for training and experience, the nonsalary portion of direct instructional costs, and earnings for psychologists and school social workers, school administration, facility maintenance and operation, media centers, and staff development, as determined by the Department of Education.

~~(3)~~(5) 'State board' means the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia.

(6) 'Resident school' means the public school in which an eligible student is or would be enrolled based on his or her primary residence.

(7) 'Resident school system' means the public school system in which an eligible student is or would be enrolled based on his or her primary residence.

~~(4)~~(8) 'Technical college system' means the Technical College System of Georgia.

20-4-141.

(a)(1) The state board shall, in coordination with the State Board of Education, Department of Education, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Corrections, and the Office of Planning and Budget, establish a pilot program to allow students who meet eligibility requirements to qualify for enrollment in the Dual Achievement Program at a participating unit of the technical college system and, upon successful completion of the program, be awarded a high school diploma. The purpose of the pilot program is to assess the feasibility of implementing a state-funded program for eligible students who have withdrawn from high school to enroll in a unit of the technical college system to participate in an academic and technical education and training program which, upon successful completion, allows the student to earn a high school diploma while also earning a technical college associate degree, a technical college diploma, or technical college certificates of credit in specific career pathways.

(2) To implement the pilot program, notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the ~~State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia~~ state board and the State Board of Education shall be authorized to waive or provide variances to state rules, regulations, policies, and procedures and to provisions of this title that may be reasonably necessary to meet the goals of the pilot program, including, but not limited to, such rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and provisions as relate to the calculation, allocation, and distribution of QBE formula earnings. Such waivers or variances shall automatically expire at the end of ~~five~~ ten years unless an earlier expiration is provided for. The ~~State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia~~ state board and the State Board of Education shall be authorized to seek waivers or variances of federal laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures that may be reasonably necessary to meet the goals of the pilot program.

(3) The pilot program, as determined by the state board, may include up to five units of the technical college system for a period of ~~five~~ ten years. In an effort to pilot the

64 program under various conditions present in the state, the state board shall seek to include
65 in the pilot program units of the technical college system from various geographic areas
66 in the state.

67 (4) The state board shall review the results of the pilot program and shall no later than
68 ~~February 1~~ November 15 each year during the program provide ~~the General Assembly~~
69 the Office and Planning and Budget and the chairpersons of the House Committee on
70 Education, the Senate Education and Youth Committee, the House Committee on Higher
71 Education, the Senate Higher Education Committee, the House Committee on
72 Appropriations, and the Senate Appropriations Committee with a comprehensive report
73 on the program with any recommendations for its continued use and any needed changes
74 in the program. Such report shall include a comprehensive list of any such waivers or
75 variances implemented or requested as provided for in paragraph (2) of this subsection,
76 a statement of necessity for each waiver or variance, and with respect to any such
77 requests, request, and whether each request was granted in whole or in part.

78 (b) The pilot program established by the state board pursuant to this article shall provide
79 for the award of a high school diploma by the state board to students who successfully
80 complete the program.

81 (c) The state board shall determine the specific competencies concerning the skills and
82 knowledge needed for completion of each component of the program; provided, however,
83 that the state board shall make such determination regarding the skills and knowledge
84 needed to meet the requirements for a high school diploma as provided for in this program
85 in consultation with the State Board of Education and the Department of Education.

86 ~~(d) In order to minimize the risk of prospective students prematurely withdrawing from~~
87 ~~a secondary school in order to participate in the program, the~~ The state board shall provide
88 for preliminary review of academic records, including, but not limited to official secondary
89 school transcripts, submitted by prospective students to determine whether such students
90 meet the requirements provided for in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (e) of this Code

~~Section section.~~ If a prospective student meets such requirements, the student shall be so notified and allowed to complete a readiness assessment required by the technical college system. Students who meet the requirements provided for in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (e) of this Code ~~Section section~~ and attain a an acceptable score of admission ~~acceptable~~ on the readiness assessment shall be notified that they are eligible to participate in the program, subject to meeting the requirements provided for in the applicable paragraphs ~~(4) and (5)~~ of subsection ~~(e)~~ (f) of this Code ~~Section section~~.

(e) To be eligible to participate in the program, a student shall:

(1) Be 16 years of age or older;

(2) Have completed at least six of the nine following state required ninth and tenth grade level high school courses: two English courses, two mathematics courses, two science courses, two social studies courses, and one health and physical education course; and any state required tests associated with any such courses;

(3) Receive a an acceptable score of admission ~~acceptable~~ on the readiness assessment required by the technical college system; and

(4) Meet the requirements provided for in the applicable paragraph of subsection (f) of this Code section.

(f)(1) Before July 1, 2026, to be eligible to participate in the program, a student shall be withdrawn from a public secondary school of this state, shall meet the requirements provided for in subsection (e) of this Code section, and shall provide ~~Provide~~ the following:

(A) If an unemancipated minor:

(i) Verification that the student's parent or legal guardian attended a conference with the student's high school principal or the principal's designee as provided for in subsection (e) of Code Section 20-2-690.1;

(ii) A copy of the form provided for in subsection (e) of Code Section 20-2-690.1 signed by the student's parent or legal guardian;

(iii) Written acknowledgment by the student's parent or guardian that withdrawal of the student from secondary school may result in loss of eligibility for accommodations, specialized instruction, and other services pursuant to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 ~~U.S.C.A.~~ U.S.C. Section 1400, et seq., and Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 ~~U.S.C.A.~~ U.S.C. Section 701, et seq.; and

(iv) Written acknowledgment that the high school diploma available through the Dual Achievement Program requires successful completion of the program; or

(B) If an emancipated minor or a student who is 18, 19, or 20 years of age:

(i) Written acknowledgment that the student has conferred with his or her secondary school principal or the principal's designee or a qualified designated official of the technical college system and discussed alternatives to withdrawing from high school without completing graduation requirements and potential consequences of not having a high school diploma, including lower lifetime earnings, fewer jobs for which the student will be qualified, and the inability to avail oneself of higher educational opportunities;

(ii) Written acknowledgment by the student's parent or guardian that withdrawal of the student from secondary school may result in loss of eligibility for accommodations, specialized instruction, and other services pursuant to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 ~~U.S.C.A.~~ U.S.C. Section 1400, et seq., and Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 ~~U.S.C.A.~~ U.S.C. Section 701, et seq.; and

(iii) Written acknowledgment that the high school diploma available through the Dual Achievement Program requires successful completion of the program; ~~and,~~

~~(5) Be withdrawn from a public secondary school of this state.~~

(2) Beginning July 1, 2026, to be eligible to participate in the program, a student shall be enrolled in a public secondary school of this state, shall not have reached 21 years of

age, shall meet the requirements provided for in subsection (e) of this Code section, and shall provide the following:

(A) Written acknowledgment that such student shall not be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities or interscholastic activities under the sponsorship, direction, or control of such student's resident school or resident school system; and

(B) Written acknowledgment that the high school diploma available through the Dual Achievement Program requires successful completion of the program.

(g) Any student who is enrolled in the program on June 30, 2026, shall remain eligible to participate in the program according to the terms and conditions of such student's original eligibility to participate in the program.

(h) By March 1, 2026, the State Board of Education shall adopt any policies, rules, or regulations that are necessary to ensure that any student who withdraws from his or her resident school or resident school system and subsequently wishes to participate in the program shall be permitted to re-enroll in such resident school or resident school system in order to participate in the program on and after July 1, 2026. Such policies, rules, and regulations shall provide for such students to complete such re-enrollment without having to appear at such resident school or resident school system. Upon collaboration with the state board, such policies, rules, and regulations may provide for such re-enrollment to be facilitated by the technical college system.

~~(f)~~(i) The state board shall award a high school diploma to a student enrolled in the program provided for in this article who:

(1) Completes all student counseling and assessment requirements of the program;

(2) Completes rigorous coursework at a participating unit of the technical college system; and

(3) Completes:

(A) A technical college associate degree program;

(B) A technical college diploma program; or

(C) At least two technical college certificate of credit programs in one specific career pathway.

~~(g)~~(j) A student who meets the requirements of ~~subsections (f)~~ subsection (h) of this Code section shall be deemed to have met all graduation requirements of the State Board of Education and shall not be subject to any assessments otherwise required for purposes of graduation.

~~(h)~~(k) The state board, in consultation with the State Board of Education, Department of Education, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Corrections, and the Office of Planning and Budget, shall establish rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this article.

20-2-141.1.

(a) By January 1, 2026, the State Board of Education, in collaboration with the state board, the Office of Planning and Budget, and the Office of Student Achievement, shall establish whatever policies, rules, and regulations are necessary to implement the requirements of this article, including, but not limited to, any such policies, rules, or regulations that are necessary to accurately account for each student who is participating in the program pursuant to paragraph (2) of subsection (f) of Code Section 20-4-141 in the counts required by Code Section 20-2-160.

(b) For each eligible student enrolled in the program on or after July 1, 2026, the State Board of Education shall pay to the state board an amount not less than a proportional share of QBE formula earnings, QBE grants, and federal funds earned by the resident school system for such eligible student. Such proportional share shall be calculated pro rata based on the number of one-sixth segments of the school day such eligible student attends at a participating unit of the technical college system.

(c)(1) By April 1, 2026, and by April 1 each year thereafter, the state board and the State Board of Education shall publish on the public website of the technical college system

a comprehensive list of courses at participating units of the technical college system that shall be counted towards high school diploma requirements and shall be considered a one-sixth segment of the school day for the purposes of this article. Once such a comprehensive list is published on the public website of the technical college system, it may only be revised upon written agreement by the state board and the State Board of Education detailing the reasons for each revision. In the event such comprehensive list is revised pursuant to such a written agreement, the comprehensive list published on the public website of the technical college system shall be updated immediately along with a copy of such written agreement.

(2) Each revision to the comprehensive list required by paragraph (1) of this subsection shall be prospective, and no revision to such comprehensive list shall result in any adverse action for any student enrolled and in good standing at the time of such revision.

(d) Beginning July 1, 2026, each resident school system with an eligible student who is participating in the program pursuant to paragraph (2) of subsection (f) of Code Section 20-4-141 shall enter into a participation agreement with the state board agreeing that each such student:

(1) Is enrolled in the resident school system and resident school for administrative purposes and for the purposes of education accountability assessment programs provided for in Article 2 of Chapter 14 of this title only; and

(2) Shall not be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities or interscholastic activities under the sponsorship, direction, or control of such student's resident school or resident school system.

20-4-142.

This article shall stand repealed on July 1, ~~2026~~ 2031."

222

SECTION 2.

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