

Senate Bill 440

By: Senators Brass of the 28th, Parent of the 42nd, Dixon of the 45th, Butler of the 55th, Williams of the 25th and others

AS PASSED SENATE

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 provide for the Accelerated Career
3 Diploma Program; to provide a short title; to establish and provide for the ACE Grants
4 program; to provide for ACE (accelerated career education) grants for technical college
5 students pursuing certain degrees, diplomas, and certificates; to provide for reporting; to
6 provide for the adoption of content standards for a minimum course of instruction in
7 foundations of algebra; to revise a definition in the "Dual Enrollment Act"; to revise
8 provisions relating to the maximum of eligible dual enrollment courses allowable for
9 students; to make conforming changes; to extend an automatic repeal; to provide for related
10 matters; to provide for 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 in Part 2, relating to competencies and core
15 curriculum, by revising Code Section 20-2-149.2, relating to awarding of high school
16 diploma for completion of postsecondary programs and identification of critical needs fields
17 of study, as follows:

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18 "20-2-149.2.

19 (a) This Code section shall be known and may be cited as the 'Accelerated Career Diploma
20 Program.'

21 (b) A local board of education ~~may~~ shall be authorized to award a high school diploma to
22 a student enrolled in coursework pursuant to Code Section 20-2-161.3 who:

23 ~~(1) Completes rigorous coursework at a postsecondary institution which meets the~~
24 ~~requirements in paragraph (7) of Code Section 20-3-519;~~

25 ~~(2)(1)(A) Has completed at least the following state required ninth and tenth grade~~
26 ~~level high school courses:~~

27 (i) The high school English course, including its end-of-course assessment, required
28 for purposes of federal accountability requirements, plus at least one additional state
29 funded core English course;

30 (ii) The high school math course, including its end-of-course assessment, required for
31 purposes of federal accountability requirements, plus either a state funded course on
32 the foundations of algebra or one other state funded core math course;

33 (iii) The high school science course, including its end-of-course assessment, required
34 for purposes of federal accountability requirements, plus at least one additional state
35 funded core science course;

36 (iv) Any two state funded core social studies courses; provided, however, that in lieu
37 of taking a second state funded core social studies course, a student shall be permitted
38 to take a third state funded math course in addition to the courses required in division
39 (ii) of this subparagraph, provided that such math course is aligned with competencies
40 required by such student's technical college program of study; and

41 (v) One health and physical education course.

42 (B) School personnel shall counsel each student to choose state funded courses
43 provided for in divisions (i) through (iv) of subparagraph (A) of this paragraph that
44 meet workforce needs and are appropriate for such student based on his or her

45 competencies and on the competencies required in the technical college program of
 46 study.

47 (C) As used in this paragraph, the term 'state funded core' courses shall include any
 48 high school course listed as core or required on the state funded course list and any
 49 technical college diploma-level or postsecondary degree-level English, math, science,
 50 or social studies course for which the student earns dual credit.

51 (D) The State Board of Education shall adopt content standards for a minimum course
 52 of instruction in foundations of algebra that may be chosen by students participating in
 53 the Accelerated Career Diploma Program to meet the requirements of division (ii) of
 54 subparagraph (A) of this paragraph;and

55 ~~two English courses, two mathematics courses, two science courses, two social studies~~
 56 ~~courses, and one health and physical education course, and any state required tests~~
 57 ~~associated with any such courses;~~

58 ~~(3) Receives a score of admission acceptable on the readiness assessment required by the~~
 59 ~~postsecondary institution; and~~

60 ~~(4)(2)(A) Completes: (i) an associate~~ associate's ~~degree program in applied science at a~~
 61 unit of the Technical College System of Georgia; (ii) a technical college diploma program
 62 at a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia and all postsecondary academic
 63 education and technical education and training prerequisites for any state, national, or
 64 industry occupational certifications or licenses required to work in the field; or (iii) at
 65 least two technical college certificate of credit programs in one specific career pathway
 66 and all postsecondary academic education and technical education and training
 67 prerequisites for any state, national, or industry occupational certifications or licenses
 68 required to work in the field as determined by the Technical College System of Georgia
 69 included in the High-demand Career List published by the State Workforce Development
 70 Board as provided in Code section 34-14-3.

71 (B) The State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia shall publish a list that
72 identifies which certificates are in the same program of study or closely related
73 programs of study. A student meets the requirements of division (iii) of subparagraph
74 (A) of this paragraph by completing at least two certificates in the same program of
75 study or in closely related programs of study.

76 ~~(b) The State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia shall annually identify~~
77 ~~fields of study in which a critical need or shortage of trained personnel exists in the labor~~
78 ~~markets in this state and provide such information to the State Board of Education. The~~
79 ~~State Board of Education shall annually provide such information to local school systems~~
80 ~~for the purpose of emphasizing areas of critical workforce needs and shortages in the~~
81 ~~labor markets in our state to high school students to support their career pathway~~
82 ~~decisions.~~

83 (c) The State Board of Education, in consultation with the State Board of the Technical
84 College System of Georgia and the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia,
85 shall establish rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Code section.

86 (d) A student who meets the requirements of subsection ~~(a)~~ (b) of this Code section shall
87 be deemed to have met all graduation requirements of the State Board of Education and
88 shall not be subject to any assessments otherwise required for purposes of graduation.

89 (e)(1) There is established the ACE Grants program to provide for awarding accelerated
90 career education grants to students participating in the Accelerated Career Diploma
91 Program, as provided for in this Code section.

92 (2) The Georgia Student Finance Commission shall be authorized to provide funds
93 appropriated by the General Assembly for the implementation of a program to award
94 ACE grants to students pursuing a degree, diploma, or certificate provided for in
95 paragraph (2) of subsection (b) of this Code section.

96 (3) The Georgia Student Finance Commission shall assess the program and shall, no later
97 than December 1 of each year during the program, provide the Governor, the Lieutenant

98 Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the director of the Office of
 99 Planning and Budget, and the chairpersons of the House Committee on Education, the
 100 Senate Education and Youth Committee, the House Committee on Higher Education, and
 101 the Senate Higher Education Committee with a comprehensive report to include
 102 recommendations as to the program's continued implementation and any changes deemed
 103 necessary for such program.

104 (4) The Georgia Student Finance Commission, in consultation with the State Board of
 105 the Technical College System of Georgia and the State Board of Education, shall
 106 establish rules and regulations consistent with the provisions of this Code section to
 107 implement, assess, and report on the program."

108 **SECTION 2.**

109 Said article is further amended in Part 4, relating to financing, by revising paragraph (7) of
 110 subsection (b), paragraph (3) of subsection (f), and subsection (g) of Code Section
 111 20-2-161.3, relating to the "Dual Enrollment Act," purpose, dual credit courses, eligibility
 112 for participation, and eligibility for payment, as follows:

113 ~~"(7) 'Eligible dual credit course' means a dual credit course which is included in the~~
 114 ~~eligible course list and which is eligible for payment under this program subject to the~~
 115 ~~following maximum credit hour caps:~~

116 ~~(A) Eligible high school students with 18 or fewer semester hours, or the equivalent~~
 117 ~~amount of quarter hours, of dual credit courses funded under this part on or before June~~
 118 ~~30, 2020, shall be limited to a total of 30 semester hours, or the equivalent amount of~~
 119 ~~quarter hours, of eligible dual credit courses; and~~

120 ~~(B) Eligible high school students with 19 or more semester hours, or the equivalent~~
 121 ~~amount of quarter hours, of dual credit courses funded under this part on or before June~~
 122 ~~30, 2020, shall be limited to 12 additional semester hours, or the equivalent amount of~~
 123 ~~quarter hours, of eligible dual credit courses."~~

124 ~~“(3) The local board of education or other authorized governing body of a participating~~
125 ~~eligible high school shall be required to award a high school diploma to an eligible high~~
126 ~~school student who is enrolled at or through an eligible postsecondary institution under~~
127 ~~the program as so long as the credit earned at or through such postsecondary institution~~
128 ~~satisfies course requirements needed for the eligible high school student to complete high~~
129 ~~school graduation provided in subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-149.2. The State~~
130 ~~Board of Education, in consultation with the State Board of the Technical College System~~
131 ~~of Georgia and the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, shall~~
132 ~~determine appropriate courses to meet these requirements. No later than July 1, 2015, the~~
133 ~~department shall communicate to high schools the subject area requirements or elective~~
134 ~~courses that may be satisfied with dual credit courses provided by eligible postsecondary~~
135 ~~institutions, which shall include completion of:~~

136 ~~(A) At least the following state required ninth and tenth grade level high school courses~~
137 ~~or their equivalent: two English courses, two mathematics courses, two science courses,~~
138 ~~two social studies courses, and one health and physical education course, and any state~~
139 ~~required tests associated with any such courses; and~~

140 ~~(B) One of the following:~~

141 ~~(i) An associate degree program;~~

142 ~~(ii) A technical college diploma program and all postsecondary academic education~~
143 ~~and technical education and training prerequisites for any state, national, or industry~~
144 ~~occupational certifications or licenses required to work in the field; or~~

145 ~~(iii) At least two technical college certificate of credit programs in one specific career~~
146 ~~pathway and all postsecondary academic education and technical education and~~
147 ~~training prerequisites for any state, national, or industry occupational certifications or~~
148 ~~licenses required to work in the field as determined by the Technical College System~~
149 ~~of Georgia.~~

150 ~~Students who have taken dual credit courses in pursuit of a high school diploma under~~
151 ~~this paragraph, and were funded under this part, on or before June 30, 2020, shall not be~~
152 ~~subject to any maximum credit hour caps as set forth in this Code section. Such students~~
153 ~~may continue participation in the program until the student completes the coursework~~
154 ~~required for his or her high school diploma."~~

155 "(g)(1) Each eligible student shall be limited to a total of 30 semester hours, or the
156 equivalent amount of quarter hours, of eligible dual credit courses funded under this part;
157 provided, however, that, subject to appropriations specifically for such purpose, the
158 commission shall be authorized to waive such limitation for students participating in the
159 Accelerated Career Diploma Program provided for in Code Section 20-2-149.2 to the
160 extent necessary for such students to complete such program.

161 (2) Hours for eligible dual credit courses taken at or through an eligible postsecondary
162 institution pursuant to this Code section by an eligible high school student shall not count
163 against any maximum hourly caps which may be applicable for purposes of HOPE
164 scholarships or grants."

165 **SECTION 3.**

166 Said article is further amended in said part by revising the undesignated text at the end of
167 paragraph (2) of subsection (a) and subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-161.4, relating to
168 accessing HOPE scholarship funds for dual enrolled students and termination, as follows:

169 "No later than January 1 each year, the Georgia Student Finance Commission shall
170 provide an interim report to the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the
171 House of Representatives, the director of the Office of Planning and Budget, and the
172 chairpersons of the House Committee on Education, the Senate Education and Youth
173 Committee, the House Committee on Higher Education, and the Senate Higher Education
174 Committee. A final report shall be provided to the same no later than ~~September~~
175 December 1, 2026 2027."

176 "(b) This Code section shall stand repealed on June 30, ~~2026~~ 2027."

177 **SECTION 4.**

178 This Act shall become effective July 1, 2024.

179 **SECTION 5.**

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