

Senate Bill 65

By: Senators Harbison of the 15th, Tanksley of the 32nd, Stokes of the 43rd and Walker of the 22nd

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Part 3 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia
2 Annotated, relating to educational programs under the "Quality Basic Education Act," so as
3 to change the provisions relating to the dates by which a child must reach a certain age in
4 order to be eligible for enrollment in certain educational programs; to repeal conflicting laws;
5 and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 Part 3 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
9 relating to educational programs under the "Quality Basic Education Act," is amended by
10 striking subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-150, relating to eligibility for enrollment, and
11 inserting in its place the following:

12 "(a) Except as otherwise provided by subsection (b) of this Code section, all children and
13 youth who have attained the age of five years by September 1 and each child who will
14 attain the age of five years between September 1 and December 31 and whose parent or
15 legal guardian files a written request with the local unit of administration for the enrollment
16 of such child shall be eligible for enrollment in the appropriate general education programs
17 authorized in this part unless they attain the age of 20 by September 1 or they have received
18 high school diplomas or the equivalent. This shall specifically include students who have
19 reenrolled after dropping out and who are married, parents, or pregnant. Special education
20 students shall also be eligible for enrollment in appropriate education programs through age
21 21 or until they receive high school or special education diplomas or the equivalent;
22 provided, however, they were enrolled during the preceding school year and had an
23 approved Individualized Education Program (IEP) which indicated that a successive year
24 of enrollment was needed. Other students who have not yet attained age 21 by September
25 1 or received high school diplomas or the equivalent shall be eligible for enrollment in
26 appropriate education programs, provided they have not dropped out of school for one

1 quarter or more. Each local unit of administration shall have the authority to assign
 2 students who are married, parents, or pregnant or who have reenrolled after dropping out
 3 one quarter or more to programs of instruction within its regular daytime educational
 4 program, provided that a local unit of administration may develop and implement special
 5 programs of instruction limited to such students within the regular daytime educational
 6 program or, at the option of the student, in an alternative program beyond the regular
 7 daytime program; provided, further, that such programs of instruction are designed to
 8 enable such students to earn course credit toward receiving high school diplomas. These
 9 programs may include instruction in prenatal care and child care. Each local unit of
 10 administration shall have the authority to provide alternative programs beyond the regular
 11 daytime educational program. Unless otherwise provided by law, the State Board of
 12 Education shall have the authority to determine the eligibility of students for enrollment.
 13 It is declared to be the policy of this state that general and occupational education be
 14 integrated into a comprehensive educational program which will contribute to the total
 15 development of the individual."

16

SECTION 2.

17 Said part is further amended by striking subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-151, relating
 18 to general and career education programs, purpose, and authorized programs, and inserting
 19 in its place the following:

20 "(b) The following general and career education programs are authorized for purposes of
 21 funding under this article:

22 (1)(A) All local school systems shall offer a full-day kindergarten program. For
 23 purposes of this subsection, the term 'full-day basis' means a student is provided
 24 classroom instruction for a minimum of four and one-half hours daily for a 180 day
 25 school year; ~~and~~.

26 (B) It is the policy of this state that the purposes of the kindergarten program shall be
 27 to provide all children with an equal opportunity to become prepared for a successful
 28 first grade experience and to acquire the foundation for academic progress throughout
 29 the students' educational careers. To be eligible for enrollment in a state supported
 30 kindergarten program, a child must attain the age of five by September 1 or the parent
 31 or legal guardian of a child who will attain the age of five between September 1 and
 32 December 31 must file a written request with the local unit of administration for the
 33 enrollment of such child, except as otherwise provided by subsection (b) of Code
 34 Section 20-2-150;

35 (2) It is the policy of this state that the purpose of the primary grades program shall be
 36 mastery by enrolled students of the essential basic skills and knowledge which will

1 enable them to achieve more advanced skills and knowledge offered at the higher grade
 2 levels. For purposes of funding under this article, the primary grades program shall
 3 include grades one, two, and three. To be eligible for enrollment in the first grade of a
 4 state supported primary grades program, a child must attain the age of six by September
 5 1 or the parent or legal guardian of a child who will attain the age of six between
 6 September 1 and December 31 must file a written request with the local unit of
 7 administration for the enrollment of such child, except as otherwise provided by
 8 subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-150. The State Board of Education shall adopt an
 9 instrument or instruments, procedures, and policies necessary to assess the first grade
 10 readiness of children enrolled in Georgia's public school kindergarten programs pursuant
 11 to Code Section 20-2-281. Readiness information obtained by the instrument or
 12 instruments adopted by the state board shall be used by local school systems in concert
 13 with teacher recommendations and other relevant information to make appropriate
 14 student grade placement decisions. The Department of Education shall develop guidelines
 15 for utilization of the instrument or instruments in grade placement decisions and shall
 16 provide such guidelines to local school systems. The guidelines shall include information
 17 pertinent to consideration of the placement of students who have been identified as being
 18 disabled or limited-English-proficient. Whenever the decision is made not to promote
 19 a child to the first grade, the local school system shall document the reasons for the
 20 decision not to promote, according to guidelines established by the board. The State
 21 School Superintendent shall annually provide a report summarizing the results of the
 22 readiness of first grade Georgia public school kindergarten children. No student shall
 23 remain in kindergarten for more than two years;

24 (3) It is the policy of this state that the primary purposes of the middle grades program
 25 shall be assuring the mastery of essential basic skills and knowledge, assisting students
 26 in the transition from childhood to adolescence, and preparing students for the selection
 27 of programs and courses consistent with their abilities and interests when they enter high
 28 school, as well as providing an opportunity for mastery of essential but more advanced
 29 skills and knowledge. For purposes of funding under this article, the middle grades
 30 program shall include grades four, five, six, seven, and eight; and

31 (4)(A) It is the policy of this state that the primary purposes of the high school
 32 programs shall be to prepare students for the continuation of their education beyond
 33 high school and for entry into their chosen career fields as well as to prepare them to
 34 take their places in society as young adults. The following high school programs for
 35 grades nine, ten, 11, and 12 are authorized for purposes of funding under this article:

- 36 (i) The high school education program; and
- 37 (ii) The vocational laboratory program.

1 (B) As a reflection of the reduced teacher-student ratios and more extensive material
2 and equipment needed for effective laboratory courses compared to courses with no or
3 only limited laboratory experiences, the vocational laboratory program shall be funded
4 at a higher level than the high school general education program. The state board shall
5 adopt criteria which courses must meet in order to qualify for the vocational laboratory
6 program."

7 **SECTION 3.**

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