

House Bill 281

By: Representatives Walker of the 107th, Casas of the 103rd, Coan of the 101st, Reese of the 98th, and Cox of the 102nd

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Part 14 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia
2 Annotated, relating to other educational programs under the "Quality Basic Education Act,"
3 so as to enact the "Georgia Virtual School Opportunity and Enrichment Act"; to provide for
4 legislative findings; to provide for a definition; to require a local school system to allow
5 virtual students in grades six through 12 to participate in extracurricular activities; to provide
6 for academic requirements; to provide for ineligibility; to provide that the virtual student is
7 subject to all rules, regulations, and codes of conduct as would apply to other students; to
8 provide for ineligibility; to prohibit certain memberships; to provide for rules and
9 regulations; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

10 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

11 **SECTION 1.**

12 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Georgia Virtual School Opportunity and
13 Enrichment Act."

14 **SECTION 2.**

15 The General Assembly finds that extracurricular student activities are an important
16 complement to the academic curriculum and that participation in extracurricular activities
17 contributes to student development of the social and intellectual skills necessary to become
18 a well-rounded adult. Further, the General Assembly finds that the state has an investment
19 in every child in this state and his or her education, regardless of where that child is being
20 educated.

21 **SECTION 3.**

22 Part 14 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
23 relating to other educational programs under the "Quality Basic Education Act," is amended
24 by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

25 "20-2-319.3.

26 (a) As used in this Code section, the term 'virtual student' means a student in Georgia
27 enrolled in one or more courses in the Georgia Virtual School established pursuant to Code
28 Section 20-2-319.1 or in a virtual charter school approved by the State Board of Education
29 through a program which meets the requirements of subsection (c) of Code Section
30 20-2-690.

31 (b) A local school system shall allow a virtual student in grades six through 12 to
32 participate in any and all extracurricular activities offered or conducted by the school in
33 which such child would be enrolled by virtue of his or her residence in the same manner
34 as any student currently attending the school as a public school student. If a virtual student
35 wishes to participate in an extracurricular activity, he or she shall register with the principal
36 of the school, or his or her designee, of such intent to participate in extracurricular activities
37 of the school in accordance with rules and regulations established by the State Board of
38 Education. A virtual student shall be required to complete any related forms required by
39 the school system or required pursuant to state board rules.

40 (c) In order to be eligible to participate pursuant to this Code section, a virtual student shall
41 achieve a satisfactory score as defined by the state board on a standardized, noncurriculum
42 based test as approved by the state board. It shall be the responsibility of the virtual student
43 and his or her parent or guardian to make all arrangements to take the test required pursuant
44 to this subsection and to provide the principal of the school, or his or her designee, with the
45 results of such test prior to participation in any extracurricular activity.

46 (d) A virtual student who does not meet the requirements contained in subsection (c) of
47 this Code section shall be ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activity of the
48 school for the remainder of the current semester and each succeeding semester until he or
49 she meets the requirements in subsection (c) of this Code section.

50 (e) A virtual student shall comply with the same rules and requirements for participation
51 that apply to any student's participation in the same activity and shall be subject to the same
52 code of conduct as would apply to other students participating in the same activity.

53 (f) A student who drops out of a public school during the school year shall be ineligible
54 to participate as a virtual student in extracurricular activities pursuant to this Code section
55 for the remainder of the current school year in addition to the following school year. The
56 public school principal may grant a waiver of this provision in the event of an extraordinary
57 health related issue.

58 (g) Public schools shall be prohibited from membership in any organization or entity
59 which regulates or governs interscholastic extracurricular activities that discriminates
60 against virtual students.

61 (h) The State Board of Education shall establish rules and regulations to implement the
62 provisions of this Code section."

63 **SECTION 4.**

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