

Senate Bill 364

By: Senators Ligon, Jr. of the 3rd, Albers of the 56th, Rogers of the 21st, Carter of the 1st, Williams of the 19th and others

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, so as to prohibit the use of standards based
3 grading in grades four through 12; to provide for legislative findings; to provide for a
4 definition; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

6 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

7 The General Assembly finds:

- 8 (1) The weakness of the standards based grading system is its failure to differentiate
9 among students who excel academically and those who merely meet minimal standards;
- 10 (2) The assessment focus is on equal outcomes for all students, referred to as mastery of
11 minimal standards, in which students can take as long as they need through the school year
12 to meet standards without incurring grading penalties, and further, it removes grade
13 averaging for all students, with a sole outcome based focus on meeting minimum
14 standards;
- 15 (3) Students who master a standard early in the academic year conclude the school year
16 with the same assessment grade as a student who takes all year to master the standards,
17 resulting in equalized outcomes that can reduce the individual incentive to excel;
- 18 (4) This grading system penalizes students who excel academically, and in some cases,
19 schools do not include an assessment scale that recognizes students who have mastered a
20 standard above the proficient level;
- 21 (5) This assessment system can place additional pressure on a teacher with a class of
22 differentiated learners of all ability levels to disproportionately focus classroom time,
23 attention, and resources on the students who have not meet the minimum proficiency
24 levels, leaving little instructional attention for students who quickly master the standards;

25 (6) When used in higher grades, standards based grading is often accompanied by the
 26 elimination of academic honors programs, academic societies, and academic awards and
 27 recognitions, including class rankings and valedictorian designations;

28 (7) This lack of academic recognition and grade point averages can inhibit the
 29 competitiveness of Georgia students in college admissions;

30 (8) The assessment includes the use of unreliable subjective measures, including peer
 31 judgments of a student's work and other collaborative models; and

32 (9) When used in higher grade levels, standards based grading can also create confusion
 33 and difficulty for Georgia students transferring into other school districts or states with
 34 traditional grading, as well as with standards-based grading that utilizes a different scale
 35 or that is based on another state's curriculum standards.

36 SECTION 2.

37 Part 3 of Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
 38 relating to educational programs, is amended by adding a new Code section to read as
 39 follows:

40 "20-2-159.6.

41 (a) As used in this Code section, the term 'standards based grading system' means a
 42 multilayered process of measuring student progress and performance solely based on a
 43 checklist of curriculum content and performance standards representing only student
 44 mastery of minimum learning outcomes. Such grading system typically includes the
 45 replacement of traditional report cards by an assessment that is typically based on either
 46 a three-point or four-point scale. Such grading system is also known under alternate names,
 47 including, but not limited to, 'nongraded integrated education model,' a '3-2-1 report card,'
 48 'skills based grading,' a 'standards based achievement report,' 'formative assessment,' or
 49 'assessment for learning.'

50 (b) Local school systems shall not utilize a standards based grading system in grades four
 51 through 12.

52 (c) The State Board of Education shall establish consistent measures for use in standards
 53 based reporting in grades one through three for the purpose of facilitating the transfer of
 54 students between local school systems in Georgia.

55 (d) The State Board of Education shall not be authorized to waive the provisions of this
 56 Code section pursuant to Code Section 20-2-82, 20-2-244, or 20-2-2065.

57 (e) This Code section shall be effective beginning in school year 2012-2013."

58 SECTION 3.

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