

Senate Bill 3

By: Senators Tippins of the 37th, Wilkinson of the 50th, Brass of the 28th, Cowser of the 46th, Anderson of the 24th and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 elementary and secondary education, so as to enact the "Creating Opportunities Needed Now
3 to Expand Credentialed Training (CONNECT) Act"; to provide for industry credentialing
4 for students who complete certain focused programs of study; to provide for industry
5 credentialing in individual graduation plans; to provide for the identification of certain
6 critical and emerging occupations; to provide for a short title; to provide for related matters;
7 to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

9 **SECTION 1.**

10 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Creating Opportunities Needed Now to
11 Expand Credentialed Training (CONNECT) Act."

12 **SECTION 2.**

13 Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to elementary and
14 secondary education, is amended by revising Code Section 20-2-145.1, relating to career
15 education, as follows:

16 "20-2-145.1.

17 The State Board of Education shall prescribe a minimum course of study in career
18 education for students in grades ~~kindergarten~~ six through 12. Such minimum course of
19 study shall be age appropriate and shall include, but not be limited to, ~~career awareness,~~
20 career exploration; and career oriented learning experiences. Career oriented learning
21 experiences shall include, but not be limited to, participation in work based learning
22 programs such as internships, apprenticeships, cooperative education, service learning, or
23 employability skill development. The State Board of Education shall ensure that career
24 oriented learning experiences provided jointly with the Technical College System of
25 Georgia include or may be revised to include industry credentialing, as defined in Code
26 Section 20-2-326."

27 **SECTION 3.**

28 Said chapter is further amended by revising subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-149.2,
 29 relating to awarding of high school diploma for completion of postsecondary programs and
 30 identification of critical needs fields of study, as follows:

31 "(b) The State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia, in consultation with
 32 industry representatives, shall annually identify fields of study ~~in which a critical need or~~
 33 ~~shortage of trained personnel exists in the labor markets in this state~~ that are (1) within an
 34 industry that addresses a critical local or state-wide workforce need, (2) linked to an
 35 occupation that is identified as part of the skilled trade industry, or (3) linked to an
 36 occupation that is identified in an emerging technology and provide such information to
 37 the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education shall annually provide such
 38 information to local school systems for the purpose of emphasizing areas of critical
 39 workforce needs and shortages in the labor markets in our state to middle and high school
 40 students to support their career pathway decisions."

41 **SECTION 4.**

42 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 20-2-159.1, relating to focused
 43 programs of study, as follows:

44 "20-2-159.1.

45 (a) No later than July 1, 2013, the Department of Education shall develop in collaboration
 46 with the Technical College System of Georgia, and the State Board of Education shall
 47 approve, state models and industry required content standards for the following focused
 48 programs of study, as defined in Code Section 20-2-326, including, but not limited to:

- 49 (1) Agriculture, food, and natural resources;
- 50 (2) Architecture and construction;
- 51 (3) Arts, audio-video technology, and communications;
- 52 (4) Business, management, and administration;
- 53 (5) Education and training;
- 54 (6) Finance;
- 55 (7) Health science;
- 56 (8) Hospitality and tourism;
- 57 (9) Human services;
- 58 (10) Information technology;
- 59 (11) Law, public safety, and security;
- 60 (12) Manufacturing;
- 61 (13) Government and public administration;
- 62 (14) Marketing, sales, and service;

63 (15) Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; ~~and~~

64 (16) Transportation, distribution, and logistics; and

65 (17) Energy.

66 Such focused programs of study may be combined around these and other related clusters.

67 (b) The focused programs of study established pursuant to this Code section may include

68 or be revised to include international industry standards or industry credentialing, as

69 defined in Code Section 20-2-326, pertinent to any such focused program of study."

70 **SECTION 5.**

71 Said chapter is further amended by revising subsection (c) of Code Section 20-2-159.4,

72 relating to policies and guidelines for awarding units of high school credit based on

73 demonstrated proficiency, as follows:

74 "(c) The state board shall identify assessments, including various industry developed

75 commercial assessments, for immediate use for students to demonstrate subject area

76 competency, which shall include industry credentialing, as defined in Code Section

77 20-2-326, and which may include, but not be limited to:

78 (1) Advanced placement exams;

79 (2) ACT course assessment;

80 (3) Industry-specific certificates ~~and credentials~~ for career, technical, and agricultural
81 education courses;

82 (4) College Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams; and

83 (5) Nationally recognized foreign language performance assessments.

84 The state board shall establish a process for reviewing and approving performance based

85 industry developed assessments that are developed commercially; or that are developed by

86 the state; or by a local school system. ~~Initially, the state board shall limit the number of~~

87 ~~credits earned through such educational options to three credits per student until the practice~~

88 ~~is proven to yield student outcomes at least equivalent to those found in standard seat-time~~

89 ~~courses.~~ The policy shall ensure that credit for demonstrated proficiency is reported on

90 student transcripts in the same way that seat-time credit is recorded. The state board and

91 the Technical College System of Georgia shall jointly review such policy ~~after every three~~

92 years to determine if student outcomes from these educational options are equivalent to,

93 if not better than, student outcomes in traditional courses."

94

SECTION 6.

95 Said chapter is further amended by revising subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-161.2,
96 relating to work based learning programs, as follows:

97 "(b) Any student aged ~~16~~ 15 or over in any public school in this state may enroll in a work
 98 based learning program which is offered at that public school and which is approved for
 99 secondary credit by the department. Such student shall be granted release time from the
 100 public school to work as a student learner for any business or governmental enterprise
 101 which is approved by the local work based learning coordinator as a qualified employer
 102 pursuant to this Code section and work based learning program guidelines established by
 103 the department. A student shall receive secondary credit for such work based learning only
 104 under the conditions established by the department. The department is authorized to
 105 establish work based learning programs and guidelines to assist local school systems in
 106 operating such programs and to promulgate such policies, standards, procedures, criteria,
 107 and administrative requirements as may be necessary to implement the program by rules
 108 and regulations. The work based learning programs established pursuant to this Code
 109 section may include, but not be limited to, employability skill development, service
 110 learning, cooperative education, internships, and youth apprenticeships. The department
 111 shall collaborate with the Department of Labor and the Technical College System of
 112 Georgia in developing such policies and procedures. The department's work based learning
 113 programs shall include but not be limited to the following:

- 114 (1) A detailed training agreement and training plan between employer and student that
 115 identifies specific work tasks that will develop workplace competency;
- 116 (2) A minimum of one unit of credit in a career pathway course related to the work based
 117 learning placement;
- 118 (3) A minimum number of hours of on-the-job training as required in the department's
 119 guidelines for awarding secondary credit;
- 120 (4) On-site evaluation of the student's performance;
- 121 (5) Training remediation as necessary at the school site;
- 122 (6) A broad range of skills but shall be focused on skills related to the student's career
 123 pathway;
- 124 (7) Development of materials by the business, industry, and labor community in
 125 conjunction with the department to promote the awareness of work based learning
 126 opportunities for high school students and encourage recruitment; and
- 127 (8) Structural linkage between secondary and postsecondary components of the program
 128 leading to the awarding of a high school diploma and a postsecondary credential, which
 129 may include industry credentialing, as defined in Code Section 20-2-326, related to the
 130 student's career pathway."

131

SECTION 7.

132 Said chapter is further amended by revising paragraph (5) of and adding a new paragraph to
 133 subsection (b) and by revising subsections (j) and (k) of Code Section 20-2-260, relating to
 134 capital outlay funds generally, as follows:

135 "(5) 'Educational facilities' shall include buildings, fixtures, and equipment necessary for
 136 the effective and efficient operation of the program of public education required by this
 137 article, which, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, shall include classrooms,
 138 libraries, rooms and space for physical education, space for fine arts, restrooms,
 139 specialized laboratories, cafeterias, media centers, building equipment, building fixtures,
 140 furnishings, career education labs and facilities to support industry credentialing, related
 141 exterior facilities, landscaping and paving, and similar items which the State Board of
 142 Education may determine necessary. The following facilities are specifically excluded:
 143 swimming pools, tracks, stadiums, and other facilities or portions of facilities used
 144 primarily for athletic competition and the central and area administrative offices of local
 145 units of administration."

146 "(8.1) 'Industry credentialing' shall have the same meaning as in Code Section 20-2-326."

147 "(j) The State Board of Education shall establish a competitive grant program for
 148 renovation, modernization, replacement, or purchase of equipment for the enhancement of
 149 career, technical, and agricultural education programs in educational facilities to align with
 150 industry credentialing in fields of study identified by the State Board of the Technical
 151 College System of Georgia, in consultation with industry representatives, that are (1)
 152 within an industry that addresses a critical local or state-wide workforce need, (2) linked
 153 to an occupation that is identified as part of the skilled trade industry, or (3) linked to an
 154 occupation that is identified in an emerging technology. ~~Reserved:~~

155 (k) The State Board of Education shall request separate appropriations for each of the
 156 following categories:

- 157 (1) Regular entitlements pursuant to subsection (g) of this Code section;
- 158 (2) Regular advance funding projects pursuant to paragraphs (1) through (4) of
 159 subsection (h) of this Code section;
- 160 (3) Construction projects resulting from the consolidation of schools across local school
 161 system lines pursuant to paragraph (5) of subsection (h) of this Code section;
- 162 (4) Construction projects resulting from merger of local school systems pursuant to
 163 subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-291 or by agreement between two or more local
 164 school systems; and
- 165 (5) Advance funding projects for consolidation or reorganization of schools pursuant to
 166 subsection (i) of this Code section; and
- 167 (6) Equipment grants to enhance industry credentialing pursuant to subsection (j) of this
 168 Code section."

169 **SECTION 8.**

170 Said chapter is further amended by revising subsection (q) of Code Section 20-2-281, relating
 171 to student assessments, as follows:

172 "(q) The State Board of Education shall consider the passage by a student of an industry
 173 certification examination, industry credentialing examination, or a state licensure
 174 examination which is approved by the State Board of Education or an ACCUPLACER
 175 score approved by the ~~State Board of Education~~ State Board of the Technical College
 176 System of Georgia when considering whether to grant such student a variance or a waiver
 177 of one or more end-of-course assessments or other instruments required by the State Board
 178 of Education pursuant to subsection (c) of this Code section in order to obtain a Georgia
 179 high school diploma; provided, however, that the state board shall not grant a variance to
 180 a student unless the student has attempted and failed to pass the relevant end-of-course
 181 assessment or assessments at least ~~four~~ three times."

182 **SECTION 9.**

183 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 20-2-326, relating to definitions
 184 relative to the "Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia's Economy Act," as
 185 follows:

186 "20-2-326.

187 For purposes of this part, the term:

188 (1) 'Articulation' means agreement between a high school and a postsecondary institution
 189 regarding the awarding of both secondary and postsecondary credit for a dual enrollment
 190 course.

191 (2) 'Choice technical high school' means a high school, other than the high school to
 192 which a student is assigned by virtue of his or her residence and attendance zone, which
 193 is designed to prepare a high school student for postsecondary education and for
 194 employment in a career field. A choice technical high school may be operated by a local
 195 school system or a technical school or college. A choice technical high school may also
 196 be operated as a charter school under a governance board composed of parents,
 197 employers, and representatives from the local board of education.

198 (3) 'Chronically low-performing high school' means a public high school in this state that
 199 has a graduation rate of less than 60 percent for three consecutive years, as determined
 200 in accordance with methodology established by the National Governors Association's
 201 Compact on High School Graduation Data, or that has received an unacceptable rating
 202 for three consecutive years, as defined by the Office of Student Achievement.

203 (4) 'College and career academy' means a specialized school established as a charter
 204 school or pursuant to a contract for a strategic waivers school system or charter system,

205 which formalizes a partnership that demonstrates a collaboration between business,
206 industry, and community stakeholders to advance work force development between one
207 or more local boards of education, a private individual, a private organization, or a state
208 or local public entity in cooperation with one or more postsecondary institutions.

209 (5) 'Focused program of study' means a rigorous academic core combined with a focus
210 in mathematics and science; a focus in humanities, fine arts, and foreign language; or a
211 coherent sequence of career pathway courses that is aligned with graduation requirements
212 established by the State Board of Education and content standards established pursuant
213 to Part 2 of this article that prepares a student for postsecondary education or immediate
214 employment after high school graduation.

215 (6) 'Graduation plan' means a student specific plan developed in accordance with
216 subsection (c) of Code Section 20-2-327 detailing the courses necessary for a high school
217 student to graduate from high school and to successfully transition to postsecondary
218 education and the work force.

219 (7) 'Industry certification' means a process of program evaluation that ensures that
220 individual programs meet industry standards in the areas of curriculum, teacher
221 qualification, lab specifications, equipment, and industry involvement.

222 (7.1) 'Industry credentialing' means a process through which students are assessed by an
223 independent third-party certifying entity using predetermined standards for knowledge,
224 skills, and competencies, resulting in the award of industry certification, state licensure,
225 or an occupational competency that is nationally or internationally recognized.

226 (8) 'Public college or university' means a two-year or four-year college, university, or
227 other institution under the auspices of the Board of Regents of the University System of
228 Georgia.

229 (9) 'Small learning community' means an autonomous or semiautonomous small learning
230 environment within a large high school which is made up of a subset of students and
231 teachers for a two-year, three-year, or four-year period. The goal of a small learning
232 community is to achieve greater personalization of learning with each community led by
233 a principal or instructional leader. A small learning community blends academic studies
234 around a broad career or academic theme where teachers have common planning time to
235 connect teacher assignments and assessments to college and career readiness standards.
236 Students voluntarily apply for enrollment in a small learning community but must be
237 accepted, and such enrollment must be approved by the student's parent or guardian. A
238 small learning community also includes a college and career academy organized around
239 a specific career theme which integrates academic and career instruction, provides work
240 based learning opportunities, and prepares students for postsecondary education and

241 employment, with support through partnerships with local employers, community
242 organizations, and postsecondary institutions.

243 (10) 'Teacher adviser system' means a system where an individual professional educator
244 in the school assists a small group of students and their parents or guardians throughout
245 the students' high school careers to set postsecondary goals and help them prepare
246 programs of study, utilizing assessments and other data to track academic progress on a
247 regular basis; communicates frequently with parents or guardians; and provides
248 advisement, support, and encouragement as needed.

249 (11) 'Technical school or college' means a school, college, institution, or other branch of
250 the Technical College System of Georgia."

251 **SECTION 10.**

252 Said chapter is further amended by revising subsection (c) of Code Section 20-2-327, relating
253 to recognition of advanced proficiency/honors courses and counseling and development of
254 individual graduation plans, as follows:

255 "(c) Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth
256 grades shall be provided counseling, advisement, career awareness, career interest
257 inventories, and information to assist them in evaluating their academic skills and career
258 interests. Before the end of the second semester of the eighth grade, students shall develop
259 an individual graduation plan in consultation with their parents, guardians, or individuals
260 appointed by the parents or guardians to serve as their designee. High school students shall
261 be provided guidance, advisement, and counseling annually that will enable them to
262 successfully complete their individual graduation plans, preparing them for a seamless
263 transition to postsecondary study, further training, or employment. An individual
264 graduation plan shall:

265 (1) Include rigorous academic core subjects and focused ~~course-work~~ coursework in
266 mathematics and science or in humanities, fine arts, and foreign language or sequenced
267 career pathway ~~course-work~~ coursework;

268 (2) Incorporate provisions of a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), where
269 applicable;

270 (3) Align educational and broad career goals and a student's course of study;

271 (4) Be based on the student's selected academic and career focus area as approved by the
272 student's parent or guardian;

273 (5) Include experience based, career oriented learning experiences which may include,
274 but not be limited to, participation in work based learning programs such as internships,
275 apprenticeships, cooperative education, service learning, and employability skill
276 development;

277 (6) Include any applicable industry credentialing that pertains to the student's focused
 278 program of study;

279 ~~(6)~~(7) Include opportunities for postsecondary studies through articulation, dual
 280 enrollment, and joint enrollment;

281 ~~(7)~~(8) Be flexible to allow change in the course of study but be sufficiently structured to
 282 meet graduation requirements and qualify the student for admission to postsecondary
 283 education; and

284 ~~(8)~~(9) Be approved by the student and the student's parent or guardian with guidance
 285 from the student's school counselor or teacher adviser.

286 An individual graduation plan shall be reviewed annually, and revised, if appropriate, upon
 287 approval by the student and the student's parent or guardian with guidance from the
 288 student's school counselor or teacher adviser. An individual graduation plan may be
 289 changed at any time throughout a student's high school career upon approval by the student
 290 and the student's parent or guardian with guidance from the student's school counselor or
 291 teacher adviser."

292 **SECTION 11.**

293 Said chapter is further amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

294 "20-2-327.1.

295 (a) The State Board of Education, in collaboration with the Technical College System of
 296 Georgia, shall facilitate and encourage industry credentialing for career, technical, and
 297 agricultural education programs utilizing existing career pathways and individual
 298 graduation plans. The state board, in collaboration with the Technical College System of
 299 Georgia, shall identify industry credentialing that aligns with national and international
 300 industry certified programs and list such alignments on its website. Further, local school
 301 systems are authorized and encouraged to align competency based career education, along
 302 with enhanced work based learning experiences, as provided for in Code Section
 303 20-2-161.2, to facilitate and make available to students opportunities to receive industry
 304 credentialing in critical and emerging occupations in Georgia.

305 (b) No later than December 31, 2017, and annually thereafter, the Department of
 306 Education shall produce a report identifying the industry credentialing attainment levels
 307 for the previous calendar year. Such report shall include the current and projected regional
 308 business and industry needs for the purpose of establishing annual goals and strategies to
 309 increase attainment rates of industry credentialing, including the development of additional
 310 industry credentialing to align with current industry certified programs."

311 **SECTION 12.**

312 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 20-2-328, relating to a competitive
313 grant program, as follows:

314 "20-2-328.

315 (a) Subject to appropriations by the General Assembly, the State Board of Education shall
316 establish a competitive grant program for local school systems to implement school reform
317 measures in selected high schools. The state board shall establish program requirements
318 in accordance with the provisions of this Code section and shall establish grant criteria,
319 which shall ~~include that priority~~ encourage alignment with industry credentialing, including
320 postsecondary partnerships between the Technical College System of Georgia and college
321 and career academies and other technical programs in high schools. Priority for reform
322 grants shall be given to chronically low-performing high schools in accordance with
323 subsection (b) of this Code section or to high schools enhancing career, technical, and
324 agricultural education programs to allow for greater attainment of industry credentialing
325 in accordance with subsection (b.1) of this Code section.

326 (b)(1) The State Board of Education shall develop an evidence based model program for
327 chronically low-performing high schools receiving a reform grant pursuant to this Code
328 section for addressing at-risk students, which shall include various programs and
329 curricula that have proven to be effective for at-risk students focusing on:

330 (A) Identification of students at risk for being poorly prepared for the next grade level
331 or for dropping out of school;

332 (B) Strengthening retention of ninth grade students in school and reducing high failure
333 rates;

334 (C) Improving more students' performances to grade level standards in reading and
335 mathematics by the end of ninth grade;

336 (D) Assisting students and their parents or guardians in setting an outcome career and
337 educational goal and identifying a focused program of study to achieve such goal; and

338 (E) Assisting students in learning and applying study skills, coping skills, and other
339 habits that produce successful students and adults.

340 (2) The at-risk model program shall include:

341 (A) Diagnostic assessments to identify strengths and weaknesses in the core academic
342 areas;

343 (B) A process for identifying at-risk students, closely monitored by the Department of
344 Education in collaboration with local school systems to ensure that students are being
345 properly identified and provided timely, appropriate guidance and assistance and to
346 ensure that no group is disproportionately represented; and

347 (C) An evaluation component in each high school to ensure the programs are providing
348 students an opportunity to graduate with a high school diploma.

349 (3) The at-risk model program may include various components designed to result in
 350 more students facilitating a successful start in high school and passing ninth grade such
 351 as:

352 (A) Utilizing a flexible schedule that increases students' time in core language
 353 arts/reading and mathematics studies designed to eliminate academic deficiencies;

354 (B) Maintaining a student-teacher ratio in ninth grade that is no higher than any other
 355 grade level ratio in high school;

356 (C) Utilizing experienced and effective teachers as leaders for teacher teams in ninth
 357 grade to improve instructional planning, delivery, and reteaching strategies;

358 (D) Assigning students to a teacher mentor who will meet with them frequently to
 359 provide planned lessons on study skills and other habits of success that help students
 360 become independent learners and who will help them receive the assistance they need
 361 to successfully pass ninth grade; and

362 (E) Including ninth grade career courses which incorporate a series of miniprojects
 363 throughout the school year that require the application of ninth grade level reading,
 364 mathematics, and science skills to complete while students learn to use a range of
 365 technology and help students explore a range of educational and career options that will
 366 assist them in formulating post high school goals and give them a reason to stay in
 367 school and work toward achieving their stated goals.

368 (b.1) The State Board of Education shall develop criteria for reform grants for high schools
 369 that enhance career, technical, and agricultural education programs to allow for greater
 370 attainment of industry credentialing including postsecondary partnerships between the
 371 Technical College System of Georgia and college and career academies and other technical
 372 programs in high schools. The grants may also be used to require that career, technical,
 373 and agricultural education teachers participate in industry credentialing training to teach
 374 courses that lead to industry credentialing.

375 (c) The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules and regulations for ~~chronically~~
 376 ~~low-performing~~ high schools receiving a reform grant pursuant to this Code section to
 377 make the high schools more relevant to and effective for all students. Such rules shall
 378 encourage high schools to implement a comprehensive school reform research based model
 379 that focuses on:

380 (1) Setting high expectations for all students;

381 (2) Personalizing individual graduation plans for students;

382 (3) Developing small learning communities or college and career academies with a
 383 rigorous academic foundation and emphasis in broad career fields of study;

384 (4) Using project based instruction embedded with strong academics to improve
 385 relevancy in learning;

- 386 (5) Fostering collaboration among academic and career/technical teachers;
 387 (6) Implementing nontraditional scheduling in ninth grade for students behind in their
 388 grade level;
 389 (7) Promoting parental involvement; and
 390 (8) Training teachers to work with low-performing students and their parents or
 391 guardians.
 392 (d) This Code section shall be subject to appropriations by the General Assembly."

393 **SECTION 13.**

394 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 20-2-329, relating to requirements
 395 for high schools that receive a reform grant, as follows:

396 "20-2-329.

397 High schools that receive a reform ~~grant~~ grants as chronically low-performing high schools
 398 pursuant to subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-328 shall:

399 (1) Provide focused programs of study which are designed to provide a well-rounded
 400 education for students by fostering artistic creativity, critical thinking, and self-discipline
 401 through the teaching of academic content, knowledge, and skills that students will use in
 402 the workplace, further education, and life. The focused programs of study, whether
 403 provided at a choice technical high school, a college and career academy, a traditional
 404 high school, or on site at a technical school or college or a public college or university,
 405 shall be aligned with graduation requirements established by the State Board of Education
 406 and content standards established pursuant to Part 2 of this article, including, at a
 407 minimum, four years of mathematics, Algebra I and higher, and four years of English,
 408 with an emphasis on developing reading and writing skills to meet college and career
 409 readiness standards or including high school diploma requirements established pursuant
 410 to Code Section 20-2-149.2;

411 (2) Implement a teacher adviser system;

412 (3) Provide students in the ninth through twelfth grades information on educational
 413 programs offered in high school, in technical and community colleges, in colleges and
 414 universities, and through work based learning programs and how these programs can lead
 415 to a variety of career fields. Local school systems shall provide career awareness and
 416 exploratory opportunities such as field trips, speakers, educational and career information
 417 centers, job shadowing, and classroom centers to assist students and their parents or
 418 guardians, with guidance from school counselors and teacher advisers, in revising, if
 419 appropriate, the individual graduation plan developed pursuant to subsection (c) of Code
 420 Section 20-2-327;

421 (4) Enroll students no later than ninth grade into one of the following options for earning
 422 a high school diploma and preparing students for postsecondary education and a career
 423 which will include a structured program of academic study with in-depth studies in:

424 (A) Mathematics and science;

425 (B) Humanities, fine arts, and foreign language; or

426 (C) A career pathway that leads to passing an ~~employer certification~~ industry
 427 credentialing exam in a high demand, high skill, or high wage career field or to an
 428 associate's degree or bachelor's degree.

429 The awarding of a special education diploma to any disabled student who has not
 430 completed all of the requirements for a high school diploma, but who has completed his
 431 or her Individualized Education Program (IEP) shall be deemed to meet the requirements
 432 of this paragraph;

433 (5) Implement the at-risk model program developed by the State Board of Education
 434 pursuant to subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-328;

435 (6) Comply with the rules and regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education
 436 for chronically low-performing high schools pursuant to subsection (c) of Code Section
 437 20-2-328; and

438 (7) Schedule annual conferences to assist students and their parents or guardians in
 439 setting educational and career goals and creating individual graduation plans beginning
 440 with students in the eighth grade and continuing through high school. These conferences
 441 shall include, but are not limited to, assisting the student in identifying educational and
 442 career interests and goals, selecting a career and academic focus area, and developing an
 443 individual graduation plan."

444 **SECTION 14.**

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