

Senate Bill 161

By: Senators Tippins of the 37th, Black of the 8th, Unterman of the 45th, Stone of the 23rd, Albers of the 56th and others

AS PASSED SENATE

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1 To amend Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to education, so as to
2 provide for weighted scores for certain coursework for purposes of determining HOPE
3 scholarship and Zell Miller scholarship eligibility; to provide for related matters; to provide
4 for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

6 **SECTION 1.**

7 Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to education, is amended in
8 Code Section 20-2-157, relating to the uniform reporting system for certain purposes and
9 academic eligibility requirements to receive HOPE scholarships, by revising subsections (b)
10 and (c) as follows:

11 "(b) Each school system and private school shall adopt the reporting system described in
12 this subsection for purposes of identifying and qualifying graduating seniors for the HOPE
13 scholarship program and other programs identified in this Code section:

14 (1) Each school system and private school shall transmit, in a manner and at such times
15 prescribed by the Georgia Student Finance Commission, an electronic transcript of
16 courses and course grades for each graduating senior that reflects the complete high
17 school academic record of the student, including scores on any state tests required for
18 graduation, the grading scales used by the school system or private school for the time
19 periods referenced by the transcripts, and any other pertinent information as determined
20 by the Georgia Student Finance Commission. Each grade reported by a school system
21 or private school to the commission for the purpose of calculating the grade point average
22 for HOPE scholarship and Zell Miller scholarship eligibility shall be the actual grade
23 earned by the student, with no weighting or addition of points by the local school system
24 or private school;

25 (2) The Georgia Student Finance Commission shall calculate a grade point average for
26 the purpose of determining eligibility for the HOPE scholarship and Zell Miller

27 scholarship from these electronic transcripts and shall notify students of their eligibility
28 and high schools as to the eligibility of students;

29 (3) For students otherwise qualified and enrolling as freshmen students in eligible public
30 or private postsecondary institutions for the first time on May 1, 2007, or thereafter,
31 except as otherwise provided in paragraph (3.1) of this subsection, the Georgia Student
32 Finance Commission shall calculate grade point averages for determining eligibility for
33 the HOPE scholarship and other scholarships referenced in this Code section as follows:

34 (A) For students receiving a college preparatory diploma, each grade for a student in
35 attempted coursework in English, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign
36 language that would, if successfully completed, satisfy a core graduation requirement
37 for the college preparatory curriculum shall be equated to a grade on a 4.0 scale, such
38 that a grade of 'A' = 4.0, a grade of 'B' = 3.0, a grade of 'C' = 2.0, a grade of 'D' = 1.0,
39 and a grade of 'F' = 0; or

40 (B) For students receiving a career/technical diploma, each grade for a student in
41 attempted coursework in English, mathematics, science, and social studies that would,
42 if successfully completed, satisfy a core graduation requirement for the career/technical
43 curriculum shall be equated to a grade on a 4.0 scale, such that a grade of 'A' = 4.0, a
44 grade of 'B' = 3.0, a grade of 'C' = 2.0, a grade of 'D' = 1.0, and a grade of 'F' = 0.

45 Grades for coursework that is classified as advanced placement, a dual credit course, or
46 international baccalaureate shall be weighted uniformly by the Georgia Student Finance
47 Commission in calculating the overall grade point averages for students, provided that
48 the weighting of such course grades is uniformly applied to all students in this state
49 taking the specified coursework. The grade earned by each student for any such
50 advanced placement, dual credit, or international baccalaureate course shall be increased
51 by an additional 0.5 point if such grade is an A, B, C, or D. The sum of the equated
52 grades shall be divided by the number of course grades, adjusted for term length, to yield
53 a grade point average on a 4.0 scale;

54 (3.1) For students otherwise qualified and enrolling in the ninth grade for the first time
55 during the 2008-2009 school year and thereafter, the Georgia Student Finance
56 Commission shall calculate grade point averages for determining eligibility for the HOPE
57 scholarship and other scholarships referenced in this Code section by equating each grade
58 for a student in attempted coursework in English, mathematics, science, social studies,
59 and foreign language during the student's ninth, tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade year to
60 a grade on a 4.0 scale, such that a grade of 'A' = 4.0, a grade of 'B' = 3.0, a grade of 'C' =
61 2.0, a grade of 'D' = 1.0, and a grade of 'F' = 0. Grades for coursework that is classified
62 as advanced placement, a dual credit course, or international baccalaureate shall be
63 weighted uniformly by the Georgia Student Finance Commission in calculating the

64 overall grade point averages for students, provided that the weighting of such course
65 grades is uniformly applied to all students in this state taking the specified coursework.
66 The grade earned by each student for any such advanced placement, dual credit, or
67 international baccalaureate course shall be increased by an additional 0.5 point if such
68 grade is an A, B, C, or D. The sum of the equated grades shall be divided by the number
69 of course grades, adjusted for term length, to yield a grade point average on a 4.0 scale;
70 and

71 (4) Qualification for the HOPE scholarship shall be determined from the grade point
72 average calculated either as set out in paragraph (3) of this subsection or as set out in
73 paragraph (3.1) of this subsection for students enrolling in the ninth grade for the first
74 time in a Georgia public school during the 2008-2009 school year and thereafter.
75 Beginning May 1, 2007, students with grade point averages equal to or in excess of 3.0
76 on the 4.0 scale with a college preparatory diploma shall meet achievement standards for
77 the HOPE scholarship; students receiving a career/technical diploma shall meet
78 achievement standards for the HOPE scholarship with a grade point average equal to or
79 in excess of 3.2 on a 4.0 scale. For students enrolling in the ninth grade for the first time
80 in a Georgia public school during the 2008-2009 school year and thereafter, such students
81 with grade point averages equal to or in excess of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale shall meet
82 achievement standards for the HOPE scholarship. This paragraph shall apply regardless
83 of when a student graduated from high school and regardless of such student's eligibility
84 status prior to May 1, 2007.

85 (c)(1) Beginning with the school year beginning after May 1, 2011, each school system
86 and private school shall adopt the reporting system described in this subsection for
87 purposes of determining potential eligibility for freshman, sophomore, and junior high
88 school students for the HOPE scholarship program and other programs identified in this
89 Code section.

90 (2) Each school system and private school shall transmit to the Georgia Student Finance
91 Commission, in ~~such~~ a manner and at such times as the commission may prescribe, an
92 electronic transcript of courses and course grades for each freshman, sophomore, and
93 junior high school student that reflects the complete high school academic record of the
94 student, including scores on any state tests required for graduation, the grading scales
95 used by the school system or private school for the time periods referenced by the
96 transcripts, and any other pertinent information as determined by the Georgia Student
97 Finance Commission. Each grade reported by a school system or private school to the
98 commission for the purpose of calculating the grade point average for potential HOPE
99 scholarship and Zell Miller scholarship eligibility shall be the actual grade earned by the
100 student with no weighting or addition of points by the school system or private school.

101 (3) The Georgia Student Finance Commission shall calculate a grade point average for
102 the purpose of determining eligibility for the HOPE scholarship and Zell Miller
103 scholarship from these electronic transcripts and shall notify students of their potential
104 eligibility and high schools as to the potential eligibility of students.”

105 **SECTION 2.**

106 This Act shall become effective on January 1, 2020.

107 **SECTION 3.**

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