

The House Committee on Higher Education offers the following substitute to HB 217:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 4 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 vocational, technical, and adult education, so as to extend the Dual Achievement Program
3 for an additional five years; to provide updated eligibility requirements for the program
4 beginning July 1, 2026; to provide for continued eligibility for students already enrolled in
5 the program; to provide for QBE funding and accountability assessments to be included in
6 the program; to provide for policies, rules, and regulations; to provide for participation
7 agreements; to provide for reporting; to provide for automatic repeal; to provide definitions;
8 to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 **SECTION 1.**

11 Chapter 4 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to vocational,
12 technical, and adult education, is amended by revising Article 6, relating to the Dual
13 Achievement Program, as follows:

14 "ARTICLE 6

15 20-4-140.

16 As used in this article, the term:

17 (1) 'Dual Achievement Program' or 'program' means the program provided for in this
18 article.19 (2) 'Eligible student' means a student who meets the qualifications to participate in the
20 program.21 (3) 'Extracurricular activities' and 'interscholastic activities' shall have the same
22 respective meanings as set forth in Code Section 20-2-319.6.23 (4) 'QBE formula earnings' means funds earned for the Quality Basic Education Formula
24 pursuant to Code Section 20-2-161 and shall include the portion of such funds that are
25 calculated as the local five mill share in accordance with Code Section 20-2-164. QBE
26 formula earnings shall include the salary portion of direct instructional costs, the
27 adjustment for training and experience, the nonsalary portion of direct instructional costs,
28 and earnings for psychologists and school social workers, school administration, facility
29 maintenance and operation, media centers, and staff development, as determined by the
30 Department of Education.31 ~~(3)~~(5) 'State board' means the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia.32 (6) 'Resident school' means the public school in which an eligible student is or would be
33 enrolled based on his or her primary residence.34 (7) 'Resident school system' means the public school system in which an eligible student
35 is or would be enrolled based on his or her primary residence.36 ~~(4)~~(8) 'Technical college system' means the Technical College System of Georgia.

37 20-4-141.

38 (a)(1) The state board shall, in coordination with the State Board of Education,
39 Department of Education, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of
40 Corrections, and the Office of Planning and Budget, establish a pilot program to allow
41 students who meet eligibility requirements to qualify for enrollment in the Dual
42 Achievement Program at a participating unit of the technical college system and, upon
43 successful completion of the program, be awarded a high school diploma. The purpose
44 of the pilot program is to assess the feasibility of implementing a state-funded program
45 for eligible students who have withdrawn from high school to enroll in a unit of the
46 technical college system to participate in an academic and technical education and
47 training program which, upon successful completion, allows the student to earn a high
48 school diploma while also earning a technical college associate degree, a technical
49 college diploma, or technical college certificates of credit in specific career pathways.

50 (2) To implement the pilot program, notwithstanding any other provision of law to the
51 contrary, the ~~State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia~~ state board and the
52 State Board of Education shall be authorized to waive or provide variances to state rules,
53 regulations, policies, and procedures and to provisions of this title that may be reasonably
54 necessary to meet the goals of the pilot program, including, but not limited to, such rules,
55 regulations, policies, procedures, and provisions as relate to the calculation, allocation,
56 and distribution of QBE formula earnings. Such waivers or variances shall automatically
57 expire at the end of ~~five~~ ten years unless an earlier expiration is provided for. The ~~State~~
58 ~~Board of the Technical College System of Georgia~~ state board and the State Board of
59 Education shall be authorized to seek waivers or variances of federal laws, rules,
60 regulations, policies, and procedures that may be reasonably necessary to meet the goals
61 of the pilot program.

62 (3) The pilot program, as determined by the state board, may include up to five units of
63 the technical college system for a period of ~~five~~ ten years. In an effort to pilot the

64 program under various conditions present in the state, the state board shall seek to include
65 in the pilot program units of the technical college system from various geographic areas
66 in the state.

67 (4) The state board shall review the results of the pilot program and shall no later than
68 ~~February 1~~ November 15 each year during the program provide ~~the General Assembly~~
69 the Office and Planning and Budget and the chairpersons of the House Committee on
70 Education, the Senate Education and Youth Committee, the House Committee on Higher
71 Education, the Senate Higher Education Committee, the House Committee on
72 Appropriations, and the Senate Appropriations Committee with a comprehensive report
73 on the program with any recommendations for its continued use and any needed changes
74 in the program. Such report shall include a comprehensive list of any such waivers or
75 variances implemented or requested as provided for in paragraph (2) of this subsection,
76 a statement of necessity for each waiver or variance, and with respect to any such
77 requests, request, and whether each request was granted in whole or in part.

78 (b) The pilot program established by the state board pursuant to this article shall provide
79 for the award of a high school diploma by the state board to students who successfully
80 complete the program.

81 (c) The state board shall determine the specific competencies concerning the skills and
82 knowledge needed for completion of each component of the program; provided, however,
83 that the state board shall make such determination regarding the skills and knowledge
84 needed to meet the requirements for a high school diploma as provided for in this program
85 in consultation with the State Board of Education and the Department of Education.

86 ~~(d) In order to minimize the risk of prospective students prematurely withdrawing from~~
87 ~~a secondary school in order to participate in the program, the~~ The state board shall provide
88 for preliminary review of academic records, including, but not limited to official secondary
89 school transcripts, submitted by prospective students to determine whether such students
90 meet the requirements provided for in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (e) of this Code

91 ~~Section section~~. If a prospective student meets such requirements, the student shall be so
 92 notified and allowed to complete a readiness assessment required by the technical college
 93 system. Students who meet the requirements provided for in paragraphs (1) and (2) of
 94 subsection (e) of this Code ~~Section section~~ and attain a an acceptable score of admission
 95 ~~acceptable~~ on the readiness assessment shall be notified that they are eligible to participate
 96 in the program, subject to meeting the requirements provided for in the applicable
 97 paragraphs ~~(4) and (5)~~ of subsection ~~(e)~~ (f) of this Code ~~Section section~~.

98 (e) To be eligible to participate in the program, a student shall:

99 (1) Be 16 years of age or older;

100 (2) Have completed at least six of the nine following state required ninth and tenth grade
 101 level high school courses: two English courses, two mathematics courses, two science
 102 courses, two social studies courses, and one health and physical education course; and
 103 any state required tests associated with any such courses;

104 (3) Receive a an acceptable score of admission ~~acceptable~~ on the readiness assessment
 105 required by the technical college system; and

106 (4) Meet the requirements provided for in the applicable paragraph of subsection (f) of
 107 this Code section.

108 (f)(1) Before July 1, 2026, to be eligible to participate in the program, a student shall be
 109 withdrawn from a public secondary school of this state, shall meet the requirements
 110 provided for in subsection (e) of this Code section, and shall provide ~~Provide~~ the
 111 following:

112 (A) If an unemancipated minor:

113 (i) Verification that the student's parent or legal guardian attended a conference with
 114 the student's high school principal or the principal's designee as provided for in
 115 subsection (e) of Code Section 20-2-690.1;

116 (ii) A copy of the form provided for in subsection (e) of Code Section 20-2-690.1
 117 signed by the student's parent or legal guardian;

118 (iii) Written acknowledgment by the student's parent or guardian that withdrawal of
 119 the student from secondary school may result in loss of eligibility for
 120 accommodations, specialized instruction, and other services pursuant to the federal
 121 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 ~~U.S.C.A.~~ U.S.C. Section 1400, et seq.,
 122 and Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 ~~U.S.C.A.~~ U.S.C. Section
 123 701, et seq.; and

124 (iv) Written acknowledgment that the high school diploma available through the Dual
 125 Achievement Program requires successful completion of the program; or

126 (B) If an emancipated minor or a student who is 18, 19, or 20 years of age:

127 (i) Written acknowledgment that the student has conferred with his or her secondary
 128 school principal or the principal's designee or a qualified designated official of the
 129 technical college system and discussed alternatives to withdrawing from high school
 130 without completing graduation requirements and potential consequences of not having
 131 a high school diploma, including lower lifetime earnings, fewer jobs for which the
 132 student will be qualified, and the inability to avail oneself of higher educational
 133 opportunities;

134 (ii) Written acknowledgment by the student's parent or guardian that withdrawal of
 135 the student from secondary school may result in loss of eligibility for
 136 accommodations, specialized instruction, and other services pursuant to the federal
 137 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 ~~U.S.C.A.~~ U.S.C. Section 1400, et seq.,
 138 and Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 ~~U.S.C.A.~~ U.S.C. Section
 139 701, et seq.; and

140 (iii) Written acknowledgment that the high school diploma available through the
 141 Dual Achievement Program requires successful completion of the program; ~~and,~~

142 ~~(5) Be withdrawn from a public secondary school of this state.~~

143 (2) Beginning July 1, 2026, to be eligible to participate in the program, a student shall
 144 be enrolled in a public secondary school of this state, shall not have reached 21 years of

145 age, shall meet the requirements provided for in subsection (e) of this Code section, and
146 shall provide the following:

147 (A) Written acknowledgment that such student shall not be eligible to participate in
148 extracurricular activities or interscholastic activities under the sponsorship, direction,
149 or control of such student's resident school or resident school system; and

150 (B) Written acknowledgment that the high school diploma available through the Dual
151 Achievement Program requires successful completion of the program.

152 (g) Any student who is enrolled in the program on June 30, 2026, shall remain eligible to
153 participate in the program according to the terms and conditions of such student's original
154 eligibility to participate in the program.

155 (h) By March 1, 2026, the State Board of Education shall adopt any policies, rules, or
156 regulations that are necessary to ensure that any student who withdraws from his or her
157 resident school or resident school system and subsequently wishes to participate in the
158 program shall be permitted to re-enroll in such resident school or resident school system
159 in order to participate in the program on and after July 1, 2026. Such policies, rules, and
160 regulations shall provide for such students to complete such re-enrollment without having
161 to appear at such resident school or resident school system. Upon collaboration with the
162 state board, such policies, rules, and regulations may provide for such re-enrollment to be
163 facilitated by the technical college system.

164 (f)(i) The state board shall award a high school diploma to a student enrolled in the
165 program provided for in this article who:

166 (1) Completes all student counseling and assessment requirements of the program;

167 (2) Completes rigorous coursework at a participating unit of the technical college
168 system; and

169 (3) Completes:

170 (A) A technical college associate degree program;

171 (B) A technical college diploma program; or

172 (C) At least two technical college certificate of credit programs in one specific career
173 pathway.

174 ~~(g)~~(j) A student who meets the requirements of ~~subsections (f)~~ subsection (h) of this Code
175 section shall be deemed to have met all graduation requirements of the State Board of
176 Education and shall not be subject to any assessments otherwise required for purposes of
177 graduation.

178 ~~(h)~~(k) The state board, in consultation with the State Board of Education, Department of
179 Education, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Department of Corrections, and the
180 Office of Planning and Budget, shall establish rules and regulations to implement the
181 provisions of this article.

182 20-2-141.1.

183 (a) By January 1, 2026, the State Board of Education, in collaboration with the state board,
184 the Office of Planning and Budget, and the Office of Student Achievement, shall establish
185 whatever policies, rules, and regulations are necessary to implement the requirements of
186 this article, including, but not limited to, any such policies, rules, or regulations that are
187 necessary to accurately account for each student who is participating in the program
188 pursuant to paragraph (2) of subsection (f) of Code Section 20-4-141 in the counts required
189 by Code Section 20-2-160.

190 (b) For each eligible student enrolled in the program on or after July 1, 2026, the State
191 Board of Education shall pay to the state board an amount not less than a proportional share
192 of QBE formula earnings, QBE grants, and federal funds earned by the resident school
193 system for such eligible student. Such proportional share shall be calculated pro rata based
194 on the number of one-sixth segments of the school day such eligible student attends at a
195 participating unit of the technical college system.

196 (c)(1) By April 1, 2026, and by April 1 each year thereafter, the state board and the State
197 Board of Education shall publish on the public website of the technical college system

198 a comprehensive list of courses at participating units of the technical college system that
 199 shall be counted towards high school diploma requirements and shall be considered a
 200 one-sixth segment of the school day for the purposes of this article. Once such a
 201 comprehensive list is published on the public website of the technical college system, it
 202 may only be revised upon written agreement by the state board and the State Board of
 203 Education detailing the reasons for each revision. In the event such comprehensive list
 204 is revised pursuant to such a written agreement, the comprehensive list published on the
 205 public website of the technical college system shall be updated immediately along with
 206 a copy of such written agreement.

207 (2) Each revision to the comprehensive list required by paragraph (1) of this subsection
 208 shall be prospective, and no revision to such comprehensive list shall result in any
 209 adverse action for any student enrolled and in good standing at the time of such revision.

210 (d) Beginning July 1, 2026, each resident school system with an eligible student who is
 211 participating in the program pursuant to paragraph (2) of subsection (f) of Code Section
 212 20-4-141 shall enter into a participation agreement with the state board agreeing that each
 213 such student:

214 (1) Is enrolled in the resident school system and resident school for administrative
 215 purposes and for the purposes of education accountability assessment programs provided
 216 for in Article 2 of Chapter 14 of this title only; and

217 (2) Shall not be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities or interscholastic
 218 activities under the sponsorship, direction, or control of such student's resident school or
 219 resident school system.

220 20-4-142.

221 This article shall stand repealed on July 1, ~~2026~~ 2031."

222

SECTION 2.

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