

House Bill 1032

By: Representatives Scott of the 76<sup>th</sup>, Schofield of the 63<sup>rd</sup>, Davis of the 87<sup>th</sup>, and Burnough of the 77<sup>th</sup>

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, the  
2 "Quality Basic Education Act," so as to provide for early enrollment for students who have  
3 completed pre-kindergarten or kindergarten at a private school but who do not meet the age  
4 requirements for enrollment in kindergarten or first grade; to require the State Board of  
5 Education to establish guidelines for early enrollment and to develop a model early  
6 enrollment policy; to require local boards of education to adopt an early enrollment policy;  
7 to provide for a short title; to provide for an effective date and applicability; to provide for  
8 related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 **SECTION 1.**

11 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Early Enrollment Act."

12 **SECTION 2.**

13 Article 6 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, the "Quality  
14 Basic Education Act," is amended in Code Section 20-2-150, relating to eligibility for  
15 enrollment, by revising subsection (a) and adding a new subsection to read as follows:

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16 "(a) Except as otherwise provided by subsection (b) or (b.1) of this Code section, all  
17 children and youth who have attained the age of five years by September 1 shall be eligible  
18 for enrollment in the appropriate general education programs authorized in this part unless  
19 they attain the age of 20 by September 1 or they have received high school diplomas or the  
20 equivalent. This shall specifically include students who have reenrolled after dropping out  
21 and who are married, parents, or pregnant. Special education students shall also be eligible  
22 for enrollment in appropriate education programs through age 21 or until they receive high  
23 school or special education diplomas or the equivalent; provided, however, that they were  
24 enrolled during the preceding school year and had an approved Individualized Education  
25 Program (IEP) which indicated that a successive year of enrollment was needed. Other  
26 students who have not yet attained age 21 by September 1 or received high school diplomas  
27 or the equivalent shall be eligible for enrollment in appropriate education programs,  
28 provided they have not dropped out of school for one quarter or more. Each local unit of  
29 administration shall have the authority to assign students who are married, parents, or  
30 pregnant or who have reenrolled after dropping out one quarter or more to programs of  
31 instruction within its regular daytime educational program, provided that a local unit of  
32 administration may develop and implement special programs of instruction limited to such  
33 students within the regular daytime educational program or, at the option of the student, in  
34 an alternative program beyond the regular daytime program; provided, further, that such  
35 programs of instruction are designed to enable such students to earn course credit toward  
36 receiving high school diplomas. These programs may include instruction in prenatal care  
37 and child care. Each local unit of administration shall have the authority to provide  
38 alternative programs beyond the regular daytime educational program. Unless otherwise  
39 provided by law, the State Board of Education shall have the authority to determine the  
40 eligibility of students for enrollment. It is declared to be the policy of this state that general  
41 and occupational education be integrated into a comprehensive educational program which  
42 will contribute to the total development of the individual."

43 “(b.1)(1) A child who has successfully completed pre-kindergarten or kindergarten at a  
44 private school which meets the requirements of subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-690  
45 shall be eligible for enrollment in kindergarten, if such child has completed  
46 pre-kindergarten, or first grade, if such child has completed kindergarten, in the  
47 appropriate general or special education programs authorized in this part if such child is  
48 otherwise qualified; provided, however, that, if such child does not meet the age  
49 requirements of subsection (a) of this Code section for eligibility for enrollment in  
50 kindergarten or the age requirements of paragraph (2) of subsection (b) of Code Section  
51 20-2-151 for eligibility for enrollment in first grade, such child may be eligible for early  
52 enrollment if he or she demonstrates readiness for kindergarten or first grade in  
53 accordance with this subsection.

54 (2) No later than January 1, 2027, the State Board of Education shall establish guidelines  
55 for a student to demonstrate readiness for kindergarten, which shall include a student's  
56 grades, his or her scores on norm-referenced assessments, teacher recommendations, and  
57 other factors relevant to determine whether a student is ready for kindergarten. Such  
58 guidelines shall provide that the first grade readiness assessment required by Code  
59 Sections 20-2-151 and 20-2-281 shall be used to determine if a student is ready for first  
60 grade. Such guidelines shall include information pertinent to consideration of the  
61 placement of students who have been identified as being disabled or  
62 limited-English-proficient.

63 (3) No later than July 1, 2027, each local board of education shall adopt an early  
64 enrollment policy in accordance with the guidelines established by the State Board of  
65 Education pursuant to this subsection. Such policy shall establish a process for a parent  
66 or guardian to request early enrollment for his or her child and an appeal process for  
67 denials of such requests. The State Board of Education shall develop a model early  
68 enrollment policy which may be utilized by a local board of education.”

69

**SECTION 3.**

70 Said article is further amended by revising subsection (b) of Code Section 20-2-151, relating  
71 to general and career education programs, purpose, and authorized programs, as follows:

72 "(b) The following general and career education programs are authorized for purposes of  
73 funding under this article:

74 (1)(A) All local school systems may offer a full-day kindergarten program. For  
75 ~~purposes of~~ As used in this subsection, the term 'full-day kindergarten program' means  
76 a student is provided classroom instruction for a minimum of four and one-half hours  
77 daily for a 180 day school year, or the equivalent thereof as determined in accordance  
78 with State Board of Education guidelines.

79 (B) It is the policy of this state that the purposes of the kindergarten program shall be  
80 to provide all children with an equal opportunity to become prepared for a successful  
81 first grade experience and to acquire the foundation for academic progress throughout  
82 the students' educational careers. To be eligible for enrollment in a state supported  
83 kindergarten program, a child must attain the age of five by September 1, except as  
84 otherwise provided by subsection (b) or (b.1) of Code Section 20-2-150;

85 (2) It is the policy of this state that the purpose of the primary grades program shall be  
86 mastery by enrolled students of the essential basic skills and knowledge which will  
87 enable them to achieve more advanced skills and knowledge offered at the higher grade  
88 levels. For purposes of funding under this article, the primary grades program shall  
89 include grades one, two, and three. To be eligible for enrollment in the first grade of a  
90 state supported primary grades program, a child must attain the age of six by September  
91 1, except as otherwise provided by subsection (b) or (b.1) of Code Section 20-2-150. The  
92 State Board of Education shall adopt an instrument or instruments, procedures, and  
93 policies necessary to assess the first grade readiness of children enrolled in Georgia's  
94 public school kindergarten programs pursuant to Code Section 20-2-281. Readiness  
95 information obtained by the instrument or instruments adopted by the state board shall

96 be used by local school systems in concert with teacher recommendations and other  
97 relevant information to make appropriate student grade placement decisions. The  
98 Department of Education shall develop guidelines for utilization of the instrument or  
99 instruments in grade placement decisions and shall provide such guidelines to local  
100 school systems. The guidelines shall include information pertinent to consideration of  
101 the placement of students who have been identified as being disabled or  
102 limited-English-proficient. Whenever the decision is made not to promote a child to the  
103 first grade, the local school system shall document the reasons for the decision not to  
104 promote, according to guidelines established by the board. The State School  
105 Superintendent may annually provide a report summarizing the results of the readiness  
106 of first grade Georgia public school kindergarten children. No student shall remain in  
107 kindergarten for more than two years;

108 (3) It is the policy of this state that the primary purposes of the middle grades program  
109 shall be assuring the mastery of essential basic skills and knowledge, assisting students  
110 in the transition from childhood to adolescence, and preparing students for the selection  
111 of programs and courses consistent with their abilities and interests when they enter high  
112 school, as well as providing an opportunity for mastery of essential but more advanced  
113 skills and knowledge. For purposes of funding under this article, the middle grades  
114 program shall include grades four, five, six, seven, and eight; and

115 (4)(A) It is the policy of this state that the primary purposes of the high school  
116 programs shall be to prepare students for the continuation of their education beyond  
117 high school and for entry into their chosen career fields as well as to prepare them to  
118 take their places in society as young adults. The following high school programs for  
119 grades nine, ten, 11, and 12 are authorized for purposes of funding under this article:

- 120 (i) The high school education program; and  
121 (ii) The career, technical, and agricultural education laboratory program.

122 (B) As a reflection of the reduced teacher-student ratios and more extensive material  
123 and equipment needed for effective laboratory courses compared to courses with no or  
124 only limited laboratory experiences, the career, technical, and agricultural education  
125 laboratory program shall be funded at a higher level than the high school general  
126 education program. The state board shall adopt criteria which courses must meet in  
127 order to qualify for the career, technical, and agricultural education laboratory  
128 program."

129 **SECTION 4.**

130 This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2026, and shall apply beginning with the  
131 2027-2028 school year.

132 **SECTION 5.**

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