

Senate Bill 3

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

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

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

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

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

SECTION 2.

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

"20-2-145.1.

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

SECTION 3.

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

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

SECTION 4.

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

"20-2-159.1.

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

- (1) Agriculture, food, and natural resources;
- (2) Architecture and construction;
- (3) Arts, audio-video technology, and communications;
- (4) Business, management, and administration;
- (5) Education and training;
- (6) Finance;
- (7) Health science;
- (8) Hospitality and tourism;
- (9) Human services;
- (10) Information technology;
- (11) Law, public safety, and security;
- (12) Manufacturing;
- (13) Government and public administration;
- (14) Marketing, sales, and service;

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

(16) Transportation, distribution, and logistics; and

(17) Energy.

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

(b) The focused programs of study established pursuant to this Code section may include or be revised to include international industry standards or industry credentialing, as defined in Code Section 20-2-326, pertinent to any such focused program of study."

SECTION 5.

Said chapter is further amended by revising subsection (c) of Code Section 20-2-159.4, relating to policies and guidelines for awarding units of high school credit based on demonstrated proficiency, as follows:

"(c) The state board shall identify assessments, including various industry developed commercial assessments, for immediate use for students to demonstrate subject area competency, which shall include industry credentialing, as defined in Code Section 20-2-326, and which may include, but not be limited to:

(1) Advanced placement exams;

(2) ACT course assessment;

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

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

(5) Nationally recognized foreign language performance assessments.

The state board shall establish a process for reviewing and approving performance based industry developed assessments that are developed commercially; or that are developed by the state; or by a local school system. ~~Initially, the state board shall limit the number of credits earned through such educational options to three credits per student until the practice is proven to yield student outcomes at least equivalent to those found in standard seat-time courses.~~ The policy shall ensure that credit for demonstrated proficiency is reported on student transcripts in the same way that seat-time credit is recorded. The state board and the Technical College System of Georgia shall jointly review such policy ~~after every three~~ years to determine if student outcomes from these educational options are equivalent to, 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:

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

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

SECTION 7.

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

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

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

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

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

(1) Regular entitlements pursuant to subsection (g) of this Code section;

(2) Regular advance funding projects pursuant to paragraphs (1) through (4) of subsection (h) of this Code section;

(3) Construction projects resulting from the consolidation of schools across local school system lines pursuant to paragraph (5) of subsection (h) of this Code section;

(4) Construction projects resulting from merger of local school systems pursuant to subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-291 or by agreement between two or more local school systems; and

(5) Advance funding projects for consolidation or reorganization of schools pursuant to subsection (i) of this Code section; and

(6) Equipment grants to enhance industry credentialing pursuant to subsection (j) of this Code section."

SECTION 8.

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

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

SECTION 9.

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

"20-2-326.

For purposes of this part, the term:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 10.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 11.

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

"20-2-327.1.

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

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

SECTION 12.

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

"20-2-328.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(1) Setting high expectations for all students;

(2) Personalizing individual graduation plans for students;

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

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

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

SECTION 13.

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

"20-2-329.

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

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

(2) Implement a teacher adviser system;

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

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

(A) Mathematics and science;

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 14.

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