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EDUCATION

Elementary and Secondary Education: Amend Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Relating to Elementary and Secondary Education, so as to Provide and Expand Career Pathway Options for High School Students to Ensure Their Career and College Readiness; Provide for Legislative Findings; Provide for Coordination between the State Board of Education, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, and the Board of Technical and Adult Education; Provide for Focused Programs of Study; Provide Measures to Minimize the Need for Remedial Course Work for Students in Postsecondary Institutions; Require Academic Core Standards to be Embedded in Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education Courses; Provide for End-of-Course Assessments; Provide for Course Credit for Demonstrated Proficiency; Provide for Certain Requirements Relating to Dual Credit Courses; Provide for Enrollment Counts for Students in Dual Credit Programs; Repeal a Code Section Relating to Enrollment in Postsecondary Courses; Provide that Certain Provisions Relating to Individual Graduation Plans may not be Waived; Amend Chapter 14 of Title 34 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, Relating to the Georgia Workforce Investment Board, so as to Provide for the Establishment of Soft Skills Certification by the Governor's Office of Workforce Development; Provide for Collaboration with the Department of Education to Enable High School Students to Attain Soft Skills Certification; Provide for Related Matters; Provide for an Effective Date; Repeal Conflicting Laws; and for Other Purposes.

CODE SECTIONS:	O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-82 (amended); 20-2-140 (amended), 20-2-157 (amended); 20-2-159.1, -159.2, -159.3, -159.4, -159.5 (new); 20-2-160 (amended); 20-2-161.1 (amended); 34-14-3 (amended)
BILL NUMBER:	HB 186
ACT NUMBER:	226

GEORGIA LAWS:	2011 Ga. Laws 635
SUMMARY:	The Act amends the current requirements for obtaining a high school diploma by expanding career pathway options and minimizing the need for remediation in postsecondary institutions. Curriculums will embed core standards in career, technical, and agricultural education (CTAE) courses, provide end of course tests for those CTAE courses, and allow credit for demonstrated proficiency. The Act also provides for the establishment of soft skills certification by the Governor's Office of Workforce Development.
EFFECTIVE DATE:	May 13, 2011

History

Prior to 2008, students in Georgia high schools selected from one of five programs of study: college preparatory, college preparatory with distinction, technology/career preparatory, technology/career preparatory with distinction, and a dual diploma.[1] In 2007, the State Board of Education unanimously passed the new "Graduation Rule," doing away with Georgia's so-called "tiered" diploma.[2] Instead, the new rule applied the same class and curriculum standards to all students, regardless of whether their future plans included college.[3] This change required all students to complete core classes in mathematics, English, science, and social studies.[4]

1. *See* GA. COMP. R. & REGS. 160-4-2-.47 (2002).

2. GaDOE Communications Office, New Graduation Requirements Passed (Sept. 13, 2007), http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/pea_communications.aspx?ViewMode=1&obj=1439 [hereinafter GaDOE Communications Office]; GA. COMP. R. & REGS. 160-4-2-.48 (2007).

3. GaDOE Communications Office, supra note 2. In support of the adoption of the new graduation rules, State Superintendent of Schools Kathy Cox explained, "We are no longer setting high expectations for just some students. As a state, we are saying that ALL students can learn at a high level." *Id.*

4. *Id.* The State Board of Education's stated goal in moving to a single diploma system was to ensure all students, not just those who are college bound, graduate with a diploma that will lead to better paying jobs. Richard C. Bentley, *House Bill 215: Graduating Everyone Matters Act*, 3 J. MARSHALL

Phasing out the dual diploma system in Georgia caused concern for some legislators, who feared that students struggling academically to meet the core course standards would choose to drop out unless they were provided a career/technical path to graduation.[5] This concern led Representative Steve Davis (R-109th) to attain firsthand knowledge of what needed to be done to improve Georgia's education system.[6] Representative Davis, a real estate agent, registered as a substitute teacher and spoke with administrators, teachers, and counselors to gain an understanding of students' needs.[7] This research prompted Representative Davis to introduce House Bill (HB) 215, the Graduating Everyone Matters Act.[8]

HB 215 was introduced in the House of Representatives on January 29, 2009, but failed to pass.[9] It was brought up again during the 2010 legislative session.[10] HB 215 would have returned the state to the dual diploma system, requiring schools to offer both a career technical diploma and a college preparation diploma.[11] The two diploma paths differ in the core courses required to graduate, with the goal "to have students who want to attend college take the college preparation courses, and for those who do not have the desire to attend college, to take practical courses that will better prepare them when they enter the workforce."[12]

HB 215 received strong opposition from State School Superintendent Kathy Cox as well as the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, asserting that the research process prior to

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L.J. 481, 493 (2010) (citing remarks by Kathy Cox, State Superintendent, during the February 18, 2010 House Committee on Education meeting).

5. Bentley, *supra* note 4, at 492. Rep. Randy Nix (R-69th) recognized constituent concern that the increase in required math credits will cause an increase in the dropout rate. *Id.* Vocational students would be hardest hit by the changes since the new standards "more closely resemble current college prep standards." Bridget Gutierrez, *Bar May be Raised to Earn High School Diploma*, ATLANTA J.-CONST., May 9, 2007, at A1, *available at* 2007 WLNR 8748221.

6. *See* Telephone Interview with Rep. Steve Davis (R-109th) (Apr. 1, 2011) [hereinafter Davis Interview] (on file with the Georgia State University Law Review); *see also* Bentley, *supra* note 4, at 487.

7. Bentley, *supra* note 4, at 487.

8. *See* Bentley, *supra* note 4.

9. Bentley, *supra* note 4, at 490.

10. *Id.*

11. HB 215, as introduced, 2010 Ga. Gen. Assem. *See also* Bentley, *supra* note 4, at 487.

12. Bentley, *supra* note 4, at 491. Supporting HB 215, Representative Brian Thomas (D-100th) stated "[w]e should not be trying to prepare every high school student for college because this is not a reflection of reality." *Id.* at 492.

eliminating the dual diploma system indicated that high school students were neither prepared for college nor the workforce.[13] HB 215 did not move forward during the 2010 legislative session because the state school board continued to advance the single diploma option.[14]

Instead, a Diploma Study Committee, including the sponsors of HB 186, Representatives Davis and Randy Nix (R-69th), was formed to research the effects of the recent move to the one diploma system.[15] The Committee met with major employers in the state, such as the Georgia National Guard, Kia, and Walmart, as well as local educators, the Georgia Department of Education, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, and the Board of Technical and Adult Education.[16] Responding to what skills the business community needed to see from high school graduates, these stakeholders indicated a need for people with basic academic skills (reading, writing, math, and computer skills), and a greater need for "soft skills" such as punctuality, teachability, and the ability to work in a team.[17]Additionally, the most prominent issue reported by educators, parents, and students was the challenging four-year math requirement that prevents some students from taking additional desired technical education courses.[18]

The results of the Diploma Study Committee's research demonstrated that a change was needed in Georgia's educational system to prepare graduates for life beyond high school. The study also revealed that, while most of those interviewed still favored a one-diploma system rather than a return to the dual diploma system,

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13. *See* Bentley, *supra* note 4, at 492–93 (noting the decision to move to a one diploma system was based on a "four-year process of evaluation, study, listening, and research" including a national perspective); GA. P'SHIP FOR EXCELLENCE IN EDUC., POSITION STATEMENT ON TIERED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA (Mar. 8, 2010), http://www.gpee.org/fileadmin/files/GPEE_Policy_Statement_Tiered_Diploma__2_.pdf (stating a return to the tiered diploma system would undo Georgia's efforts to strengthen the educational system).

14. Bentley, *supra* note 4, at 493.

15. STATE OF GEORGIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DIPLOMA STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT (2010) (on file with the Georgia State University Law Review) [hereinafter STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT].

16. *Id.*

17. *Id.*; *see also* Video Recording of House Education Committee Proceedings, Feb. 24, 2011 at 29 min., 30 sec. (remarks by Rep. Randy Nix (R-69th)), http://www1.legis.ga.gov/legis/2011_12/house/Committees/education/eduArchives.htm [hereinafter House Committee Video].

18. STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT, *supra* note 15.

they supported multiple pathways to that diploma.[19] To put into effect these recommendations, HB 186 was introduced during the 2011 legislative session.[20]

Bill Tracking of HB 186

Consideration and Passage by the House

Representatives Randy Nix (R-69th), Steve Davis (R-109th), Brooks Coleman (R-97th), Amy Carter (R-175th), Valerie Clark (R-104th), and Howard Maxwell (R-17th) sponsored HB 186 in the House of Representatives.[21] The bill was read to the House for the first time on February 7, 2011.[22] It was read for a second time on February 9, 2010, and Speaker of the House David Ralston (R-7th) assigned the bill to the House Education Committee.[23]

The bill received little opposition in Committee. However, there was some concern over the short time frame given to implement the law prior to the start of the upcoming school year,[24] as well as the fiscal impact the bill would have on an already strained budget.[25] Representative Coleman, who chairs the House Education Committee, reassured the Committee that the State Board of Education was in support of the bill and willing to work with legislators toward its timely implementation.[26] A fiscal note that documents the anticipated cost of the bill was not attached to the bill at this point, as Representative Nix explained, because existing resources would be redirected, making additional funding unnecessary.[27]

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19. *See* Interview with Rep. Randy Nix (R-69th) (Mar. 29, 2011) [hereinafter Nix Interview] (on file with the Georgia State University Law Review).

20. *See* Interview with Rep. Steve Davis (R-109th), *supra* note 6. Current State Superintendent John Barge wrote and developed the system of career clusters. *Id.*; *see also* House Committee Video, *supra* note 17, at 1 hr., 1 min., 32 sec.

21. HB 186, as introduced, 2011 Ga. Gen. Assem.

22. State of Georgia Final Composite Status Sheet, HB 186, May 24, 2011.

23. *Id.*

24. *See* House Committee Video, *supra* note 17, at 49 min., 44 sec. (remarks by Rep. Mike Dudgeon (R-24th)).

25. *Id.* at 51 min., 39 sec. (remarks by Rep. Kathy Ashe (D-56th)).

26. *Id.* at 50 min., 47 sec., (remarks by Rep. Brooks Coleman (R-97th)).

27. *Id.* at 52 min., 01 sec. (remarks by Rep. Randy Nix (R-69th)).

The House Education Committee offered a substitute to HB 186.[28] The substitute provided for career clusters of study, adding a section specifying the sixteen career clusters.[29] It also provided certain requirements relating to dual credit courses, adding a section enumerating the guidelines a local school system must follow when enrolling students in a dual credit course.[30] The House Committee substitute was favorably reported on February 24, 2011.[31]

HB 186 was read by the House for the third time on March 8, 2011, and passed by the House that day by a vote of 164 to 4.[32]

Consideration and Passage by the Senate

HB 186 was read in the Senate for the first time on March 10, 2011.[33] The bill's sponsor in the Senate was Senator Fran Millar (R-40th).[34] HB 186 was referred to the Senate Education and Youth Committee by Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle (R).[35] The bill was first heard in the Senate Education and Youth Subcommittee, which offered a substitute to the House bill, and then recommended it to the Senate Education and Youth Committee.[36]

The substitute bill was presented and discussed in the Senate Education and Youth Subcommittee on March 29, 2011.[37] Representative Nix, sponsor of the bill, presented the bill to the Subcommittee, emphasizing that the bill represented the interests and priorities of many of the stakeholders in high school education in Georgia, including the Board of Regents, technical colleges, state

28. HB 186 (HCS), 2011 Ga. Gen. Assem.

29. *Id.* § 3. *See also infra*, note 67 (detailing the sixteen programs of study, or "career clusters," available to high school students).

30. *Id.* The guidelines require local school systems to provide information about dual credit courses to all eighth through eleventh grade students by April first of each year, and to offer counseling to students and their parents prior to dual credit course enrollment. *Id.*

31. State of Georgia Final Composite Status Sheet, HB 186, May 24, 2011.

32. *Id.*; Georgia House of Representatives Voting Record, HB 186 (Mar. 8, 2011).

33. State of Georgia Final Composite Status Sheet, HB 186, May 24, 2011.

34. Georgia General Assembly, HB 186, Bill Tracking, http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/Display.aspx?Legislation=32465; Student Observation of the Senate Education and Youth Committee (Mar. 29, 2011) [hereinafter Senate Committee Observation] (on file with the Georgia State University Law Review).

35. Senate Committee Observation, *supra* note 34.

36. HB 186 (SCS), 2011 Ga. Gen. Assem.

37. Student Observation of the Senate Education and Youth Subcommittee (Mar. 29, 2011) [hereinafter Senate Subcommittee Observation] (on file with the Georgia State University Law Review).

education leaders, teachers' organizations, and major employers in the state.[38]

Senator Millar spoke to the Subcommittee about the changes made in the substitute version of the bill.[39] One alteration was placing limits on the number of credit hours a student can earn through the curriculum proposed by the bill, which Senator Millar indicated was added to the bill in order to provide an introductory period for the changes the bill would make.[40] Limiting the number of credits a student could earn through the new curriculum option to three hours per student would allow the bill's academic model to be introduced gradually, acknowledging the need for this experimental educational practice to be proven on a limited scale before students are allowed to devote more academic time in the proposed courses.[41] Senator Millar also discussed provisions to fund dual enrollment programs and also to define student eligibility for dual enrollment.[42] While the original sponsors of the bill did not provide for funding dual enrollment in fear that the bill would not pass if it included such funding provisions, Senator Millar indicated that there was money in the state budget to fund this provision without increasing taxes.[43] Because dual enrollment has a strong effect on graduation rates, Senator Millar strongly supported the substitute's inclusion of a funding provision.[44]

In the Subcommittee meeting, Senator Millar also proposed two additional amendments to the bill.[45] The first amendment removed language requiring that teachers of the new curriculum be certified, because the statutes governing charter schools allow those schools to employ highly qualified but not certified teachers.[46] The second amendment changed language placing a time restraint on implementation of the proposed curriculum to allow schools more

38. *Id.*
39. *Id.*
40. *Id.*
41. *Id. See* HB 186 (SCS), § 5, p. 4, ln. 218–21, 2011 Ga. Gen. Assem.
42. Senate Subcommittee Observation, *supra* note 37.
43. Nix Interview, *supra* note 19.
44. Senate Subcommittee Observation, *supra* note 37.
45. *Id.*
46. *Id.*

flexibility in case they need more time to implement the changes.[47] The Education and Youth Subcommittee passed the bill out of the Subcommittee with these additional amendments on March 29, 2011.[48]

The bill was then brought up for discussion in the Senate Education and Youth Committee, also on March 29, 2011.[49] Senator Millar and Representative Nix both spoke in support of the bill, as well as Mark Whitlock, CEO of the Central Educational Center Charter College and Career Academy in Coweta County, Georgia.[50] Mr. Whitlock, whose school already implemented many of the initiatives proposed by the bill, shared the successes his school has seen: improvements in graduation rate, student success in finding employment or enrollment in education programs after graduation, applying rigorous standards, and maintaining student diversity.[51]

Senate Education and Youth Committee members raised concerns about the bill's possible effects on dual enrollment, programs through which high school students are allowed to enroll in technical or non-technical colleges to earn college and high school credit simultaneously.[52] Senator Millar asserted that the provision in HB 186 funding dual enrollment would encourage technical colleges to participate in the program, and encourage students to participate.[53] Without funding by the state, dual enrollment participation has dropped because students and families cannot pay for the college course tuition.[54] Mr. Whitlock pointed out that HB 186 would allow students more flexibility in their school schedules, thus allowing more students to participate in dual enrollment.[55]

The Senate Education and Youth Committee favorably reported the Committee substitute to HB 186 on March 29, 2011, and the Senate read the bill for the second time on March 30, 2011.[56] On

47. *Id.*
48. Senate Subcommittee Observation, *supra* note 34 (voice vote).
49. Senate Committee Observation, *supra* note 34.
50. *Id*.
51. *Id*.
52. *Id*.
53. *Id*.
54. *Id*.
55. Senate Committee Observation, *supra* note 34.
56. *Id*.; State of Georgia Final Composite Status Sheet, HB 186, May 24, 2011; HB 186 (SCS), 2011 Ga. Gen. Assem.

April 11, 2011, the Senate read the substitute version of HB 186 for the third time.[57] Senator Millar offered a floor amendment to the bill that was passed, deleting a provision that would have allowed transitional courses for eleventh- and twelfth-grade students who failed to demonstrate postsecondary readiness to count as a credit towards meeting graduation requirements.[58] The same day, the Senate passed the Senate substitute to HB 186 unanimously.[59]

The House voted to accept the Senate substitute to HB 186 on April 14, 2011, with a vote of 154 yeas and 4 nays.[60]

The Act

The primary purposes of HB 186 are to "expand career pathway options for high school students to ensure their career and college readiness;" to "minimize the need for remedial course work" for students pursuing postsecondary studies; and to make changes for dual credit programs.[61]

Section 1 reports legislative findings about the importance of career pathway programs of study; the need for academically rigorous coursework that is "aligned to opportunities in high-demand, high-skill, high-wage career fields and to postsecondary career and technical pathways;" and the importance of providing and funding options for high school students to earn dual high school and postsecondary credit.[62] Section 2 amends Code section 20-2-82 to bar the State Board of Education from approving requests of waiver by local school systems of state rules and regulations governing dual enrollment programs under Code section 20-2-327.[63] Similarly, Section 8 amends Code section 20-2-244 to also bar approval of waivers of the requirements of Code section 20-2-327.[64]

Section 3 amends Code section 20-2-140 to require the State Board of Education to work with the Board of Regents of the state

57. State of Georgia Final Composite Status Sheet, HB 186, May 24, 2011.
58. Senate Floor Amendment to HB 186, introduced by Sen. Fran Millar (R-40th), Apr. 11, 2011.
59. Georgia Senate Voting Record, HB 186 (Apr. 11, 2011).
60. Georgia House of Representatives Voting Record, HB 186 (Apr. 14, 2011).
61. 2011 Ga. Laws 635
62. *Id.* § 1.
63. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-82 (Supp. 2011); O.C.G.A. § 20-2-327 (2010).
64. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-244 (Supp. 2011); O.C.G.A. § 20-2-327 (2010).

university system and the Board of Technical and Adult Education to "establish college and career readiness competency standards" aligned with the core curriculum already established by Code section 20-2-140, and further provides that the Board of Technical and Adult Education require technical colleges to accept this core curriculum coursework for the purpose of admitting high school students beginning in the fall of 2012.[65] Section 3 also gives local school systems the flexibility to sequence the core curriculum adopted by the State Board of Education according to local rules or priorities.[66] Section 4 makes a minor change to the reporting requirement of Code section 20-2-157, striking a provision relating to Code section 20-2-161.1, which is repealed by section 7 of the Act.[67]

Section 5 creates five new Code sections to carry out the primary purpose of the Act, which is to establish career and technical education pathways. First, new Code section 20-2-159.1 directs the Georgia Department of Education to establish curriculum frameworks for at least sixteen focused programs of technical and career study.[68] Second, new Code section 20-2-159.2 seeks to strengthen high school students' preparation for postsecondary education by directing the State Board of Education, Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, and the Board of Technical and Adult Education to develop policies to ensure that students who complete core curriculum courses will meet the admission requirements of postsecondary institutions and to define college-readiness standards.[69] It further calls for state-wide assessments to determine postsecondary readiness no later than the end of students' sophomore year and provides for transitional courses in reading, writing, and mathematics for high school juniors and

65. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-140 (Supp. 2011).

66. *Id.*

67. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-157 (Supp. 2011).

68. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-159.1 (Supp. 2011). The programs of study include, but are not limited to: agriculture, food and natural resources; architecture and construction; arts, audio-video technology, and communications; business, management and administration; education and training; finance; health science; hospitality and tourism; human services; information technology; law, public safety, and security; manufacturing; government and public administration; marketing, sales, and service; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and transportation, distribution, and logistics. *Id.*

69. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-159.2 (Supp. 2011).

seniors who fail to meet standards of readiness.[70] It also requires that dual credit courses mirror postsecondary coursework.[71]

Third, new Code section 20-2-159.3 requires that core academic subject matter be embedded in career, technical, and agricultural education (CTAE) course curricula, and provides that students who complete one of these courses with embedded academic standards receive credit for both the CTAE course and the core academic course and also be given the opportunity to take an end-of-course test, required to earn course credit, if applicable, for the academic subject area.[72] Thus, students could earn both academic and CTAE credit by taking CTAE courses with embedded academic content. Students are limited to only three academic credits earned through career, technical, and agricultural education courses.[73]

Fourth, new Code section 20-2-159.4 provides for the State Board of Education to adopt policies and guidelines for awarding high school credit based on demonstration of subject area competency—that is, testing out of a course—beginning in the 2012-2013 school year.[74] The state board must identify assessments through which students can demonstrate competency in a subject area, and students may earn up to three credits by testing out "until the practice is proven to yield student outcomes at least equivalent to those found in standard seat-time courses."[75] Every school system is required to comply with the plan established by the State Board of Education, which will be reviewed after three years to determine whether student outcomes are similar to those of traditional coursework.[76]

Fifth, new Code section 20-2-159.5 establishes policies for dual credit courses, requiring the Department of Education, Board of Regents, and the Board of Technical and Adult Education to work jointly to develop standards for student entry into and completion of dual credit courses.[77] Local school systems must grant academic credit for qualifying dual credit courses, and, upon student

70. *Id.*
71. *Id.*
72. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-159.3 (Supp. 2011).
73. *Id.*
74. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-159.4 (Supp. 2011).
75. *Id.*
76. *Id.*
77. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-159.5 (Supp. 2011).

enrollment, postsecondary institutions must award postsecondary credit for successful completion of dual credit courses without charging the student for the credit.[78]

Section 6 amends subsection (a) of Code section 20-2-160 so that students enrolled in dual credit courses are counted by the high school for attendance purposes for the portion of the day in which the students are attending the dual credit course.[79] Section 7 repeals Code section 20-2-161.1, which regulated postsecondary enrollment for high school students.[80] Section 9 amends Code section 20-2-2065 to require that charter schools be subject to the provisions of Code section 20-2-327 related to individual graduation plans.[81]

Section 10 amends Code section 34-14-3 to authorize the Governor's Office of Workforce Development to develop a soft skills and work readiness certification system.[82]

Analysis

Concerns of Educators

Many of the public policy concerns that may be raised by the Act have, in fact, already been considered and addressed during its development and consideration by the Georgia General Assembly. When Representative Steve Davis (R-109th) introduced HB 215, the Graduating Everyone Matters Act during the 2009–2010 session, it failed due in large part to opposition from the State Board of Education and State School Superintendent.[83] The unsuccessful Graduating Everyone Matters Act sought to return to a dual diploma system, and it did not survive opposition from the stakeholders who affected the move to a single-diploma system in 2008.[84] Rather than attempting the same strategy during the 2011 legislative session, Georgia lawmakers conducted further study into what changes were

78. *Id.*
79. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-160(a) (Supp. 2011).
80. *Compare* O.C.G.A. § 20-2-161.1 (Supp. 2011), *with* O.C.G.A. § 20-2-161.1 (2010).
81. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-327 (2010); O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065 (Supp. 2011).
82. O.C.G.A. § 34-14-3 (Supp. 2011).
83. Bentley, *supra* note 4, at 493.
84. HB 215, as introduced, 2010 Ga. Gen. Assem. *See also* Bentley, *supra* note 4, at 492–93.

needed and could be supported by all major stakeholders in the state, and framed HB 186 accordingly.[85]

The move to a single-diploma system in 2008 was intended to increase the level of rigor for all high school students.[86] While a return to a dual diploma system was seen by some educators and education advocates as a step backwards, as evidenced by their opposition to the Graduating Everyone Matters Act, the Act retains a single-diploma system but provides far greater flexibility and opportunities for students interested in career and technology education.[87] Representative Randy Nix (R-69th) argues that the Act promotes "rigor with relevance"—a high school education that is rigorous, but relevant to the careers high school students may choose to pursue after graduation so that they remain interested and invested in their education.[88]

HB 186 reflects the recommendations of the Diploma Study Committee formed to research the effects of the elimination of the dual diploma system, which met with educators, employers, representatives from Georgia colleges, universities, and technical colleges.[89] Accordingly, the Act incorporates and addresses the concerns of these stakeholders. Unlike the Graduating Everyone Matters Act, HB 186 received a showing of support from the State Board of Education, teachers' groups, and postsecondary schools, representatives of which attended the Senate Education and Youth Committee meeting where the Bill was discussed.[90]

Because of its history, the Act has broad support. However, some if its provisions call for a review of the program to determine whether the changes lead to student success.[91] Whether the Act continues to receive support from educators may depend on the outcomes for students under its provisions.

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85. Nix Interview, *supra* note 19; STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT, *supra* note 15.
86. GaDOE Communications Office, *supra* note 2.
87. *Compare* HB 215, as introduced, § 1, p. 1, ln. 14–16, 2009 Ga. Gen. Assem., *with* O.C.G.A. § 34-14-3 (Supp. 2011).
88. Nix Interview, *supra* note 19.
89. STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT, *supra* note 15.
90. Senate Committee Observation, *supra* note 34.
91. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-159.4 (Supp. 2011).

Funding

The original version of HB 186 introduced in the House of Representatives did not include funding provisions for dual enrollment, so paying for tuition for dual enrollment classes at local colleges or technical colleges would be left to students or local school systems.[92] Dual enrollment was addressed in greater detail in the substitute version of the bill offered by the Senate Education and Youth Committee.[93] Representative Nix expressed concern that HB 186 would not pass if it included funding for dual enrollment because of fears that it would excessively increase the budget.[94] However, Senators Fran Millar (R-40th) and Lindsey Tippens (R-37th) both asserted that funding is essential to the success of dual enrollment.[95] Many students may not be able to participate in dual enrollment courses if they are required to pay tuition to earn the postsecondary credit; so providing direct funding so that the tuition costs do not come out of the pockets of students and their families is critical to dual enrollment participation.[96]

Senator Tippens also raised concerns in the Senate Education and Youth Subcommittee meeting about the rigor of technical education and the costs associated with providing rigorous technical education classes.[97] He theorized that the lack of rigor in technical classes under the existing curriculum is because of budget restrictions, and suggested that more rigor is needed in order for high school technical classes to positively affect employability.[98] Representative Nix pointed out that the curriculum changes in the bill would embed academic material in career and technology classes, thus increasing the rigor of those classes by reallocating resources without significant cost increases.[99] In the end, the Act provides funding for dual enrollment courses, but the fears of its sponsors that budgetary

92. HB 186, as introduced, 2011 Ga. Gen. Assem.
93. HB 186 (SCS), 2011 Ga. Gen. Assem.
94. Nix Interview, *supra* note 19.
95. Senate Committee Observation, *supra* note 34; Senate Subcommittee Observation, *supra* note 37.
96. Senate Committee Observation, *supra* note 34; Senate Subcommittee Observation, *supra* note 37.
97. Senate Subcommittee Observation, *supra* note 37.
98. *Id.*
99. *Id.*

concerns may override the support for this funding may eventually prove true.

Effects on Employability and Student Success

The intent of the legislators sponsoring HB 186 was to increase employability of high school graduates from Georgia schools and to improve outcomes for students pursuing postsecondary degrees.[100] By going directly to major employers in the state through the Diploma Study Committee and bringing representatives of the Board of Regents and Board of Technical and Adult Education to the table in developing the legislation, the bill sponsors sought to include provisions that will best ensure these policy goals are met.[101] The Act appears to cohesively address all aspects of the changes it seeks to implement, from the initial development of new curriculum to assessing student achievement after implementation. However, it is difficult to predict whether the Act will be successful, as the best measure of success is the outcomes for graduates once the Act is implemented. Fortunately, the Act requires that the policies and guidelines that are developed for the program be reviewed and evaluated based on the student outcomes they achieve, and if any changes to the policy are needed, such changes can be addressed at that time.[102]

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100. *See, e.g.*, Senate Committee Observation, *supra* note 34; Senate Subcommittee Observation, *supra* note 37.
101. *See* STUDY COMMITTEE REPORT, *supra* note 15.
102. O.C.G.A. § 20-2-159.4 (Supp. 2011).