

House Bill 970 (AS PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE)

By: Representatives Dickey of the 145th, Knight of the 134th, Erwin of the 32nd, Dempsey of the 13th, Mathis of the 149th, and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Part 4 of Article 7 of Chapter 3 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia
2 Annotated, relating to the Realizing Educational Achievement Can Happen (REACH)
3 Scholarship, so as to provide that victims of human trafficking are eligible for such
4 scholarship; to provide for the designation of REACH scholars; to provide for funding; to
5 provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

7 **SECTION 1.**

8 Part 4 of Article 7 of Chapter 3 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
9 relating to the Realizing Educational Achievement Can Happen (REACH) Scholarship, is
10 amended by revising paragraph (3) of Code Section 20-3-497, relating to establishment of
11 REACH scholarship and student requirements, as follows:

12 "(3) Qualify for the federal free or reduced lunch program or be a victim of human
13 trafficking;"

SECTION 2.

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Said part is further amended by revising Code Section 20-3-499, relating to selection of REACH scholars, as follows:

"20-3-499.

(a) REACH participating school systems shall select each student for the program in the spring of the student's seventh grade year or in the fall of his or her eighth grade year, for participation beginning in the eighth grade year. REACH participating school systems shall develop a rigorous application process to select REACH scholars, including but not limited to:

(1) Identifying all students eligible for federal free or reduced price lunch by:

(A) Completing the Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals form from the Georgia Department of Education; or

(B) Direct certification by meeting one of the following criteria:

(i) Live in a family unit receiving SNAP (Food Stamp) benefits;

(ii) Live in a family unit receiving TANF benefits;

(iii) Identify as homeless;

(iv) Identify as foster; or

(v) Identify as migrant;

(1.1) Identifying eligible students who are victims of human trafficking;

(2) Nominating qualified students to apply. Nominations can be made by counselors, principals, superintendents, or any individual within the REACH participating school system who is able to identify students most in need of the REACH scholarship;

(3) Requiring nominated students to complete the REACH student application, which includes an academic recommendation and a community recommendation;

(4) Reviewing student packets, including the nomination form, proof of eligibility for federal free or reduced lunch or as a victim of human trafficking, citizenship and residency requirements, and grade, attendance, and discipline reports; and

41 (5) Interviewing all nominated students by a student selection committee established by
42 the REACH participating school system.

43 (b) REACH participating school systems shall be eligible to designate REACH scholars
44 each school year, the number of which shall be subject to available appropriations. ~~the~~
45 ~~following number of REACH scholars:~~

46 (1) ~~For school systems with five or more high schools, 12 REACH scholars; and~~

47 (2) ~~For school systems with less than five high schools, seven REACH scholars."~~

48 **SECTION 3.**

49 Said part is further amended by revising subsection (b) of Code Section 20-3-499.2, relating
50 to funding procedures for scholarships, as follows:

51 "(b) Each year thereafter, the REACH participating school system will be responsible for
52 providing \$1,000.00 for each REACH scholar enrolled in such school system and the
53 authority shall be responsible for providing \$9,000.00 for each REACH scholar enrolled
54 in such school system. ~~a proportionate share of the scholarship. The REACH participating~~
55 ~~school system's proportionate share shall be based on the tier designated by the Department~~
56 ~~of Community Affairs pursuant to Code Section 48-7-40 for the county in which the school~~
57 ~~system is located and the population of such county, according to the United States~~
58 ~~decennial census of 2010 or any future such census. The term of the tier designation shall~~
59 ~~be five years; provided, however, that in any subsequent year within the five-year~~
60 ~~designation period in which the county of the local school system is designated with a~~
61 ~~lower tier, a REACH participating school system may reduce its tier designation~~
62 ~~commensurately and utilize such designation for the remainder of the five-year period.~~
63 ~~Through Fiscal Year 2022, the 2016 Department of Community Affairs tier designation~~
64 ~~shall be used to define the proportionate share, as adjusted pursuant to the foregoing. The~~
65 ~~REACH participating school system's proportionate share shall be as follows:~~

66 (1) ~~A proportionate share of \$1,000.00 per REACH scholar for:~~

