

The BRIDGE (Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia's Economy) Act, House Bill 400, was signed into law May 2010 to create an atmosphere motivating middle- and high-school students to learn because they see the relevance of education to their dreams and future plans. The implementation of the BRIDGE Act provides middle- and high-school students with career counseling and regularly-scheduled advisement to choose a focused plan of study.

What are the critical parts of the BRIDGE Act?

The most critical parts of the BRIDGE Act mandate all students in middle and high school receive counseling and regularly-scheduled advisement. The second mandate is that students choose a career area, create an Individual Graduation Plan, and graduate high school prepared to go to college or to enter the workforce. The third mandate requires regularly-scheduled advisement for all high- and middle-school students. The new rigorous performance standards and graduation requirements found in Georgia secondary schools better prepare our students and ensure they are prepared to move on successfully from one phase of their educational life to the next, and eventually to become a productive citizen of Georgia's workforce. The BRIDGE Act when coupled with Georgia's economic and workforce development model creates qualified workers to attract strong, stable companies and industries.

What are the requirements of the BRIDGE Act?

Beginning in the 2010-2011 academic year, local school systems must provide to sixth, seventh and eighth grade students the following:

- o counseling
- o regularly-scheduled advisement
- o career awareness
- o career interest inventories
- o information to assist students in evaluating their academic skills and career interests.



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Beginning in the 2010-2011 academic year, local school systems must provide the following to high school students:

- o career counseling
- o career guidance
- o regularly-scheduled career advisement
- o information to enable students to successfully complete their individual graduation plans, preparing them for a seamless transition to postsecondary study, further training, or employment.

What is the Individual Graduation Plan?

Another part of the BRIDGE Act is the requirement that all 8th grade students during their spring semester create an Individual Graduation Plan (IGP). This graduation plan helps "map out" the rigorous academic core subjects and focused work in mathematics, science, or humanities, fine arts, world languages or sequenced career pathway coursework. The IGP is based on the student's selected academic and career area to prepare them for their chosen career. This plan must be developed in consultation with parents/guardians, students, school counselor or teacher as advisor.

Additional parts of the IGP may include career-oriented and work-based learning experiences, and postsecondary studies through Georgia's multiple College Credit Now programs.

Can students change their Individual Graduation Plan?

Students are allowed changes to their IGP, but need to keep it sufficiently structured to meet graduation requirements and to qualify for admission to postsecondary education. It is advisable that any changes to the plan be based on career data gathered from career interest inventories.

These changes can be made during the high school ongoing review of the Individual Graduation Plan. During the IGP review, courses completed, schedules, career pathway, postsecondary plans, and related topics can be reviewed 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-advisor.



Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent
"Making Education Work for All Georgians"