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**Chancellor Erroll B. Davis Endorses the
State Board of Education's Adoption of the New High School Graduation Rule
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Technological advances and globalization in the 21st century mean that Georgia's students will be entering a workforce that is dramatically more challenging than that of their parents, or even their older siblings. That is why I applaud the recent action by the State Board of Education to raise high school graduation requirements and to establish a solid academic core of courses for all students so that all will be prepared for post-secondary education or for more complex entry level jobs in the workforce.

It is very important that the new high school graduation requirements align with the expectations and competencies needed in postsecondary education and work. To this end, state education agencies and the business community have supported the Department of Education's efforts and are now working collaboratively to ensure that the necessary alignments and expectations are in place. For example, in November, the Board of Regents will be changing its college admission requirements to mirror those required by the State Board of Education in the new high school graduation rule.

The Department of Technical and Adult Education, the University System and the business community have all agreed that students need four units of English and mathematics—with a competency level through Math III and English III to be ready for entry-level careers, and to be prepared to enter a technical college or University System institution. Likewise, we understand that these competency levels will give students the knowledge base necessary to succeed in accelerated courses offered in the International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement programs.

Unfortunately, some people have expressed concern about whether all students have the ability to succeed in a more rigorous curriculum, particularly in the areas of science and math. However, it is interesting to note that in high schools where requirements have been strengthened, students can and do learn at higher levels when challenged to do so. Equally important, by raising the curriculum standards, these schools have given their students more choices and opportunities for successful careers in the growing fields of science, math, engineering and technology.

Georgia is not alone in its efforts to raise expectations and standards for all high school students. We are participating as one of thirty states in the American Diploma Project, an initiative designed to align high school graduation competencies with the entry requirements of college and work. Like our partner states, we know that providing a seamlessly strong educational footing for our students is critical if we hope to compete in the 21st century marketplace.

More than ever, Georgia's students deserve and need a quality education. The State Board of Education has taken a significant step in providing for their academic and economic success by passing the new graduation rule.

Erroll B. Davis, Jr.
Chancellor