



# Pickens High School

## *Pursuing Higher Standards*

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## **Petition Process Now in Place for Students Denied a Diploma Due to State Testing Requirements**

Former Pickens County School System students who were not awarded a high school diploma because of state graduation testing requirements may petition the school system for a diploma, according to a new state law (House Bill 91).

Governor Nathan Deal signed House Bill 91 into law on March 30, 2015. The law provides that Georgia students shall no longer be required to earn a passing score on a graduation test to earn a high school diploma if the student has otherwise met all state and local graduation requirements.

The law also contains additional details and requirements regarding the ability of students who are no longer enrolled to petition a local board of education for a diploma. The law covers all graduation tests, beginning with the Georgia Basic Skills Test which was administered to students who enrolled for the first time in grade 9 on or after July 1, 1981, and provides that all subsequent subjects, forms and versions of the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies), Georgia High School Writing Test, and Basic Skills Tests (Reading, Mathematics, and Writing) no longer be required as a graduation requirement for Georgia students.

More information about HB 91 can be found at the Georgia Department of Education's website at [gadoe.org](http://gadoe.org), External Affairs and Policy (**Waivers and Variances**) and the Georgia General Assembly's website at [legis.ga.gov](http://legis.ga.gov) (**HB91**).

Individuals no longer enrolled in a Pickens County public school who were denied a high school diploma solely for not achieving a passing score on any graduation test – but who met all other local and state requirements - may now submit a petition to the high school they attended to determine eligibility to receive a high school diploma.

Petitions may be obtained through the counselor's office at Pickens High school (PHS). Completed petitions must be submitted to the PHS Counseling Department of the high school from which the student would have graduated. There is no deadline by which a petition must be submitted, and there is no charge to file a petition.

Completed and signed petitions should be submitted in person, or through U.S. Mail, to the counseling department of the high school from which the petitioner would have graduated. All petitioners must provide a copy of government-issued photo identification such as a valid driver's license.

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If submitting by U.S. Mail, petitioners should write “Attention Counselor” under the name of the high school, and include a photo copy of their personal identification. Petitions may be submitted to the counseling departments at:

**Pickens High School Counseling Department**

**500 Dragon Drive**

**Jasper, Georgia 30705**

**(706) 253-1800 (ext. 116 or 121)**

Once a petition has been received, the school system will review the student’s records to determine his or her eligibility to receive a high school diploma, based on the state and local graduation requirements in effect when the student first entered ninth grade.

- If the petitioning individual met all of the graduation requirements for the expected year of graduation, then a diploma will be awarded.
- Individuals who received a GED (General Educational Development) certificate solely for failing to achieve a passing score on one or more sections of the graduation tests may also petition for a diploma, so long as they met all other graduation requirements.
- Individuals who received a special education diploma or certificate solely for failing to achieve a passing score on one or more sections of the graduation tests may also petition for a diploma.
- Individuals who did not receive a regular education diploma solely for failing to achieve a passing score on one or more sections of the graduation tests, and who subsequently earned a diploma from a private school, may also petition for a diploma, so long as all other graduation requirements are met.

Completed petitions will be determined – and school transcripts updated accordingly - within 30 days of receipt of a petition. Successful petitioners will be issued a copy of their diploma free of charge.

For more information, contact the PHS counseling offices (706) 253-1800, extension 121 and speak to Heather Whitfield.

