

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
ASSEMBLY, No. 398
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
220th LEGISLATURE

DATED: MARCH 2, 2023

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Establishes position of Youth Disconnection Prevention and Recovery Ombudsperson; establishes “School Disconnection Prevention Task Force.”
- Type of Impact:** Annual State expenditure increase.
- Agencies Affected:** Department of Education.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Annual</u>
State Cost Increase	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes that this bill will lead to an indeterminate increase in State costs. The increase in State costs will primarily stem from expenditures related to the salary and benefits of the newly-created position of a Youth Disconnection Prevention and Recovery Ombudsperson.
- The bill may cause an additional, minimal State expenditure increase to reimburse members of the School Disconnection Prevention Task Force for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill establishes the position of a Youth Disconnection Prevention and Recovery Ombudsperson in the Department of Education. The ombudsperson would be appointed by the Governor but would report directly to the Commissioner of Education. The ombudsperson would serve for a term of four years and would be responsible for implementing a Statewide strategic plan of action to prevent students aged 16 to 24 from disconnecting from school, addressing the need for the reengagement of disconnected youth, and developing strategies to increase reengagement.

The bill also establishes the “School Disconnection Prevention Task Force,” the purpose of which would be to analyze the causes of school disconnection for high school students and students at public institutions of higher education, recommend best practices for reducing school disconnection to school districts and public institutions of higher education, and support the development of strategies to reengage disconnected youth. The task force is required under the bill to issue a final report to the Governor and the Legislature no later than nine months after the task force organizes.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS concludes that this bill will lead to an indeterminate increase in State costs. The increase in State costs will primarily stem from expenditures related to the salary and benefits of the newly-created position of a Youth Disconnection Prevention and Recovery Ombudsperson. While the OLS does not have information on which to estimate a salary for this position, the office notes for informational purposes that the average annual salary for a full-time employee in the Department of Education, according to the Civil Service Commission’s “State Government 2022 Workforce Profile,” is \$93,559. Given that the ombudsperson position established in the bill is to report directly to the Commissioner of Education, it is likely that the salary for the position will exceed that of the average annual salary for a full-time employee in the department.

The bill may cause an additional, minimal State expenditure increase to reimburse members of the School Disconnection Prevention Task Force for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. There may be additional expenditures associated with the department providing staffing services to the task force.

Section: Revenue, Finance, and Appropriations

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*Approved: Thomas Koenig
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This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).