

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 1181

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 8, 2023

The Assembly Education committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1181 (1R) with committee amendments.

The amended bill provides that, beginning with the 2022-2023 grade 11 class, and for two school years thereafter, the State Board of Education is to require that the local graduation requirements adopted by a board of education or a board of trustees of a charter school include the requirement that a student, or the student's parent or guardian, if applicable, complete and submit a financial aid application in a form prescribed by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) as a prerequisite to the student receiving a high school diploma unless a waiver is submitted to the school district or charter school. A student is exempt from the requirement if the student, or the student's parent or guardian, submits to the school district or charter school:

(1) a waiver form signed by the parent or guardian, or by the student if the student is at least 18 years of age, requesting the exemption of the requirement; or

(2) if the student is under 18 years of age and a form signed by the parent or guardian cannot be reasonably obtained, the student's school counselor may authorize the waiver as permitted by regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education.

The amended bill directs the Executive Director of HESAA, in consultation with the commissioner, to provide resources for school districts, parents, and students that include instructions on how to complete a financial aid application prescribed by the authority. The resources are to include webinars, presentations, guidance documents, and a list of available State and federal resources. The executive director of the authority is to make available such resources as are necessary directly to school counselors or other school employees who are required to share the information with students and with the students' parents or guardians. The amended bill also directs HESSA to make the resources available to public four year institutions of higher education in order to facilitate the delivery of technical assistance to area high schools.

Each school district will annually notify students and the parents or guardians of the requirement established by the bill.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- Provide that the resources concerning completing a financial aid application prescribed by the authority will include webinars, presentations, guidance documents, and a list of available State and federal resources;
- Require the Executive Director of HESAA to make the resources available to public four year institutions of higher education in order to facilitate the delivery of technical assistance to area high schools;
- Provide that the State Board of Education will adopt rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of the bill.