

SENATE, No. 177

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 217th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2016 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator CHRISTOPHER "KIP" BATEMAN

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Kyrillos

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Task Force on School District Regionalization.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



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1 AN ACT establishing a Task Force on School District
2 Regionalization.

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4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

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7 1. a. There is established in the Department of Education a
8 Task Force on School District Regionalization. The purpose of the
9 task force is to study and evaluate issues associated with the
10 establishment of new regional school districts in the State.

11 b. The task force shall consist of the following 16 members:

12 (1) the Commissioner of Education, or a designee, who shall
13 serve ex officio;

14 (2) 11 members appointed by the Governor, who shall include:
15 an executive county superintendent of schools; a director of special
16 education services in a school district; a superintendent of schools;
17 a school principal; a director of curriculum; one member upon the
18 recommendation of the New Jersey Education Association; one
19 member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey School
20 Boards Association; one member upon the recommendation of the
21 New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association; one member
22 upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Association of School
23 Administrators; one member upon the recommendation of the
24 Garden State Coalition of Schools; and one person who was directly
25 involved in facilitating the most recent school district
26 regionalization effort in the State;

27 (3) one member appointed by the President of the Senate and
28 one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate, both
29 of whom shall be members of the public with demonstrated
30 expertise in issues relating to the work of the task force; and

31 (4) one member appointed by the Speaker of the General
32 Assembly and one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the
33 General Assembly, both of whom shall be members of the public
34 with demonstrated expertise in issues relating to the work of the
35 task force.

36 c. Appointments to the task force shall be made within 30 days
37 after the effective date of this act. Vacancies in the membership of
38 the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original
39 appointments were made. Members of the task force shall serve
40 without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for necessary
41 expenditures incurred in the performance of their duties as members
42 of the task force within the limits of funds appropriated or
43 otherwise made available to the task force for its purposes.

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45 2. The task force shall organize as soon as practicable, but no
46 later than 30 days following the appointment of its members. The
47 task force shall choose a chairperson from among its members and
48 shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the task

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1 force. The presence of 9 members of the task force shall constitute
2 a quorum. The task force may conduct business without a quorum,
3 but may only vote on recommendations when a quorum is present.
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5 3. The Department of Education shall provide such
6 stenographic, clerical, and other administrative assistants, and such
7 professional staff as the task force requires to carry out its work.
8 The task force also shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail
9 itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or
10 municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it
11 may require and as may be available for its purposes.
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13 4. The task force shall study and evaluate issues associated
14 with school district regionalization, and make recommendations
15 regarding the provision of regionalization incentives and the
16 elimination of impediments to regionalization. The task force shall:

17 a. review existing research, studies, and data concerning the
18 regionalization of school districts;

19 b. consider implementation challenges associated with the
20 regionalization of school districts including, but not limited to, the
21 financing of feasibility studies along with innovative approaches to
22 conduct feasibility studies that may reduce the costs of pursuing
23 regionalization, issues associated with school district governance
24 and financing, and the integration of curriculum, programs, and
25 staff;

26 c. identify and review benefits of regionalization including, but
27 not limited to, any potential cost savings, and the ability to establish
28 and offer a wider array of educational programs and services and
29 extracurricular activities; and

30 d. identify incentives that may encourage school districts to
31 regionalize and the impediments that discourage school districts
32 from entering into regional school district arrangements.
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34 5. a. The task force shall issue a final report to the Governor,
35 and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164
36 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than six months after the task force
37 organizes. The report shall contain the task force's findings and
38 recommendations regarding possible incentives for the
39 establishment of new regional school districts and the elimination
40 of impediments to the creation of regional districts.

41 b. The task force shall expire 30 days after the issuance of its
42 final report.
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44 6. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

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This bill establishes in the Department of Education a 16-member task force to study and evaluate issues associated with school district regionalization. The task force will be comprised of:

- the Commissioner of Education;
 - 11 members appointed by the Governor, including an executive county superintendent of schools; a director of special education services in a school district; a superintendent of schools; a school principal; a director of curriculum; one member upon the recommendation on the New Jersey Education Association; one member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey School Boards Association; one member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association; one member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Association of School Administrators; one member upon the recommendation of the Garden State Coalition of Schools; and one person who was directly involved in facilitating the most recent school district regionalization effort in the State;
 - one member appointed by the President of the Senate and one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate, both of whom will be members of the public with demonstrated expertise in issues relating to the work of the task force; and
 - one member appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly and one member appointed by the Minority Leader of the General Assembly, both of whom will be members of the public with demonstrated expertise in issues relating to the work of the task force.
- The task force will study and evaluate issues associated with school district regionalization, and make recommendations regarding the provision of regionalization incentives and the elimination of impediments to regionalization. The task force will:
- review existing research, studies, and data concerning the regionalization of school districts;
 - consider implementation challenges associated with the regionalization of school districts including, but not limited to, the financing of feasibility studies along with innovative approaches to conduct feasibility studies that may reduce the costs of pursuing regionalization, issues associated with school district governance and financing, and the integration of curriculum, programs, and staff;
 - identify and review benefits of regionalization including, but not limited to, any potential cost savings, and the ability to establish and offer a wider array of educational programs and services and extracurricular activities; and
 - identify incentives that may encourage school districts to regionalize and the impediments that discourage school districts from entering into regional school district arrangements.

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1 The task force is required to issue a final report to the Governor
2 and the Legislature within six months of its organization, which
3 contains the task force's findings and recommendations regarding
4 possible incentives for the establishment of new regional school
5 districts and the elimination of impediments to the creation of
6 regional districts.