

ASSEMBLY, No. 616

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman RALPH R. CAPUTO

District 28 (Essex)

Assemblyman THOMAS P. GIBLIN

District 34 (Essex and Passaic)

Assemblywoman CLEOPATRA G. TUCKER

District 28 (Essex)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywomen Jasey and Vainieri Huttie

SYNOPSIS

Establishes the Office of Dropout Prevention and Reengagement of Out-of-School Youth in DOE, and the Student Dropout Prevention Task Force.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** concerning students who drop out of school and
2 supplementing chapter 4 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

3

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

6

7 1. a. There is established in the Department of Education the
8 Office of Dropout Prevention and Reengagement of Out-of-School
9 Youth. The purpose of the office shall be to develop a Statewide
10 strategic plan of action to prevent students from dropping out of
11 school, address the need for the reenrollment of student dropouts,
12 and develop strategies to increase reenrollment.

13 b. The Office of Dropout Prevention and Reengagement of
14 Out-of-School Youth, in consultation with the Student Dropout
15 Prevention Task Force established pursuant to section 2 of
16 P.L. c. (pending before the Legislature as this bill), shall at a
17 minimum:

18 (1) collaborate with school districts in the development of a
19 Statewide strategic plan to address the problem of student dropouts;

20 (2) develop and recommend to school districts programs to
21 prevent students from dropping out of school; and

22 c. The task force shall consist of 17 members as follows:

23 (1) the Commissioner of Education, or his designee, who shall
24 serve ex officio;

25 (2) the Commissioner of the Department of Corrections, or his
26 designee, who shall serve ex officio;

27 (3) two members of the Senate, no more than one of whom shall
28 be of the same political party, appointed by the Senate President;

29 d. The Commissioner of Education shall appoint a person to
30 head the office who shall be a person qualified by training and
31 experience to perform the duties of the office and shall devote his
32 entire time to the performance of those duties.

33

34 2. a. There is established the Student Dropout Prevention Task
35 Force. The purpose of the task force shall be to analyze the causes
36 of students leaving school prior to graduation, recommend to school
37 districts best practices for reducing the student dropout rate, and
38 develop strategies to increase the reenrollment of students who have
39 left school.

40 b. The task force shall consist of 17 members as follows:

41 (1) the Commissioner of Education, or his designee, who shall
42 serve ex officio;

43 (2) the Commissioner of the Department of Corrections, or his
44 designee, who shall serve ex officio;

45 (3) two members of the Senate, no more than one of whom shall
46 be of the same political party, appointed by the Senate President;

1 (4) two members of the General Assembly, no more than one of
2 whom shall be of the same political party, appointed by the Speaker
3 of the General Assembly; and

4 (5) eleven members appointed by the Governor, who shall
5 include: three superintendents of schools, one each from an urban,
6 suburban, and rural school district; two presidents of New Jersey
7 county colleges; two members of the public with demonstrated
8 expertise in issues relating to the work of the task force; two
9 members employed at a high school in an urban school district with
10 a high student drop out rate, one of whom shall be a principal and
11 one of whom shall be a guidance counselor; and two teachers, one
12 of whom shall be employed in an urban school district with a high
13 student drop out rate.

14 c. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled
15 in the same manner as the original appointments were made.
16 Members of the task force shall serve without compensation, but
17 shall be reimbursed for necessary expenditures incurred in the
18 performance of their duties as members of the task force.

19 d. The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's
20 designee, shall serve as chairperson of the task force. The task
21 force shall organize as soon as practicable following the
22 appointment of its members and shall select a vice-chairperson from
23 among its members. The chairperson shall appoint a secretary who
24 need not be a member of the task force.

25 e. The Department of Education shall provide such
26 stenographic, clerical, and other administrative assistants, and such
27 professional staff as the task force requires to carry out its work.
28 The task force shall also be entitled to call to its assistance and avail
29 itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or
30 municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it
31 may require and as may be available to it for its purposes.

32
33 3. It shall be the duty of the task force to analyze the causes of
34 students leaving school prior to graduation and to recommend best
35 practices for reducing the student dropout rate and increasing the
36 number of students who re-enroll in school. The task force shall, at a
37 minimum:

38 a. examine current data, research, programs, and initiatives
39 concerning student dropouts;

40 b. examine reasons why students leave school;

41 c. identify effective ways for school districts to reduce the
42 number of students who leave school prior to graduation and increase
43 student engagement while in school;

44 d. develop mechanisms to increase the reenrollment of students
45 who have left school; and

46 e. develop recommendations on the most effective ways for
47 school districts to support students in order to prevent them from
48 leaving school.

1 rate, one of whom will be a principal and one of whom will be a
2 guidance counselor; and two teachers, one of whom will be
3 employed in an urban school district with a high student drop out
4 rate. The task force will issue a final report to the Governor and to
5 the Legislature containing its findings and recommendations,
6 including any recommendations for legislation that it deems
7 appropriate, no later than nine months after the task force organizes.