

ASSEMBLY, No. 4142

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 11, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman PAMELA R. LAMPITT

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Assemblywoman MILA M. JASEY

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

SYNOPSIS

Requires Commissioner of Education to establish three-year “Bridge Year Pilot Program” for students graduating high school in 2021 and 2022 who were impacted by public health state of emergency caused by coronavirus disease 2019.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/11/2020)

1 **AN ACT** requiring the Commissioner of Education to establish the
2 Bridge Year Pilot Program.

3

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

6

7 1. As used in this act, “host high school” means the high school
8 that a student, who pursues a bridge year pursuant to the provisions
9 of this act, attended as a junior in high school.

10

11 2. a. The Commissioner of Education shall establish a three-
12 year “Bridge Year Pilot Program,” under which each school district
13 with a high school shall offer students in the graduating class of
14 2021 and the graduating class of 2022 the opportunity to pursue a
15 bridge year during the year immediately following graduation from
16 high school, in accordance with the provisions of this act. The
17 purpose of the pilot program shall be to provide eligible students
18 and student-athletes an opportunity to address lost time in
19 educational activities, extracurricular activities, and sports
20 programs as a result of the public health state of emergency caused
21 by the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic.

22 A nonpublic school may elect to participate in the Bridge Year
23 Pilot Program.

24 Under the pilot program, each high school in a school district
25 shall designate a school staff member as a bridge year liaison to
26 serve as the school’s central point of contact for students interested
27 in pursuing a bridge year pursuant to this act and for students
28 participating in a bridge year, as well as for county colleges and
29 four-year institutions of higher education in which students may be
30 enrolled in academic courses under the pilot program. Nothing in
31 this subsection shall be construed to require a school district to hire
32 an individual to serve as a bridge year liaison.

33 b. A student in the graduating class of 2021 or the graduating
34 class of 2022 who decides to pursue a bridge year after graduating
35 from high school shall, in a format and manner to be determined by
36 the school district and no later than seven days prior to the
37 beginning of the student’s senior year of high school, notify the host
38 high school of the decision to pursue the bridge year. Nothing in
39 this section shall be construed to require a student to pursue a
40 bridge year after graduating from high school. To be eligible to
41 participate in the bridge year program, a student shall be 19 years of
42 age or younger and shall not turn 20 years of age at any time during
43 the bridge year, except as may otherwise be provided in a student’s
44 individualized education program.

45 c. (1) A student pursuing a bridge year shall enroll as a non-
46 matriculated student in the county college that serves the county of
47 his host high school. The student shall enroll in 12 credits in each
48 of the fall and spring semesters during the student’s bridge year. A
49 student who pursues a bridge year and participates in a winter or

1 spring sport sanctioned by the New Jersey State Interscholastic
2 Athletic Association pursuant to section 3 of this act shall, during
3 the semester in which he is participating in the sport, enroll in at
4 least nine but less than 12 credits.

5 (2) The student shall maintain a grade point average of 2.25 in
6 order to remain in the Bridge Year Pilot Program. The county
7 college in which a student pursuing a bridge year is enrolled shall
8 report quarterly to the bridge year liaison at a student's host high
9 school concerning the student's academic progress and
10 performance.

11 (3) A county college shall charge students participating in a
12 bridge year pursuant to this act a maximum of \$145 per credit
13 inclusive of all fees, except that fees associated with specific
14 courses or with the use of on-campus science laboratories may be
15 charged at a maximum of \$45 per course.

16 (4) A student may take any portion of the credits required
17 pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection at the student's host
18 high school, in the event that the county college which the student
19 is attending offers courses at the host high school. During a
20 semester of the bridge year, a student may take three credits offered
21 by a four-year institution of higher education at any high school in
22 the State or at any other location to fulfill the student's credit
23 requirement. The four-year institution shall charge the student no
24 more than is permitted pursuant to paragraph (3) of this subsection
25 and shall report to the student's bridge year liaison as required
26 pursuant to paragraph (2) of this subsection.

27 d. Notwithstanding the requirement established under the
28 Tuition Aid Grant Program pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71B-20 and
29 under the New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward
30 Scholarship (NJSTARS) Program pursuant to section 5 of P.L.2004,
31 c.59 (C.18A:71B-85), to be enrolled as a full-time student in a
32 course of study or a curriculum leading to a degree or certificate, a
33 student pursuing a bridge year pursuant to this act shall be eligible
34 for a tuition aid grant or scholarship under the Tuition Aid Grant
35 Program or the NJSTARS Program if the student meets all other
36 applicable eligibility requirements.

37 e. A public institution of higher education shall, pursuant to
38 P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-46 et seq.), accept all applicable credits
39 that a student, who completed a bridge year pursuant to this act,
40 earned during the bridge year. An independent institution of higher
41 education in the State may elect to accept the credits that a student
42 earned during the bridge year.

43 f. A county college or four-year institution of higher education
44 in which a student enrolls during his bridge year shall not, during
45 the bridge year, release the student's transcripts as part of that
46 student's application for admission to an institution of higher
47 education.

1 disease 2019, an opportunity to make up for a major interruption in
2 their scholastic careers and to assist student-athletes in recouping a
3 lost year of recruitment and crucial playing time.

4 To be eligible for the bridge year, a student must be 19 years old
5 or younger and cannot not turn 20 years old at any time during the
6 bridge year, except as may otherwise be provided in the student's
7 individualized education program.

8 A student pursuing a bridge year will enroll at a county college
9 as a non-matriculated student and will enroll in 12 credits in each of
10 the fall and spring semesters. The bill generally requires students to
11 take courses at the county college that serves the county of their
12 host high school, but they are given flexibility in certain
13 circumstances to take course credits at other institutions of higher
14 education. The student must maintain a grade point average of 2.25
15 in order to remain in the bridge year program. Under the bill, a
16 county college or four-year institution of higher education will
17 charge students participating in a bridge year a maximum of \$145
18 per credit inclusive of all fees, except that fees associated with
19 specific courses or with the use of on-campus science laboratories
20 may be charged at a maximum of \$45 per course. Students
21 participating in a bridge year will be eligible for student financial
22 aid under the Tuition Aid Grant Program and the New Jersey
23 Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship Program if they
24 meet all eligibility requirements for those programs other than full-
25 time enrollment in a degree program during the bridge year.

26 A student who pursues a bridge year will be permitted to
27 participate in a winter or a spring sport sanctioned by the New
28 Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) and
29 extracurricular activities at the student's host high school, which is
30 defined under the bill as the high school that the student attended as
31 a junior in high school. A student will not be eligible to participate
32 in any fall sport. In order to participate in a winter or spring sport
33 during a student's bridge year, the student must turn 19 years of age
34 after September 1 of his bridge year. Under the bill, a student
35 participating in a sport during the bridge year is required to enroll in
36 at least nine but less than 12 credits, during the semester of
37 participation in the sport.

38 In the event that a student pursuing a bridge year elects to
39 participate in a winter or spring sport sanctioned by the NJSIAA,
40 the NJSIAA is required to waive the eight semester rule, under
41 which a student is not eligible for high school athletics after the
42 expiration of eight consecutive semesters following the student's
43 entrance into the ninth grade. The NJSIAA is directed to confer
44 with the National Collegiate Athletic Association or any other
45 similar entities to ensure that any student participating in a spring
46 sport during a bridge year pursuant to the bill will be eligible to
47 declare as a college recruit and participate in intercollegiate
48 athletics.