ASSEMBLY, No. 4488

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED AUGUST 10, 2020

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON
District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)
Assemblyman ANTHONY S. VERRELLI
District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)
Assemblywoman AURA K. DUNN
District 25 (Morris and Somerset)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Commission on Career and Technical Education and creates initiatives that promote career and technical education programs in State.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 8/24/2020)

AN ACT concerning career and technical education and supplementing various parts of the statutory law.

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

1. a. There is established a Commission on Career and Technical Education. The purpose of the commission is to study and evaluate the availability of high quality secondary career and technical education programs across counties, including programs offered by county vocational school districts and programs offered by other school districts, and to review the costs, benefits, and challenges associated with potential expansion.

b. The commission shall consist of the following 11 members:

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

(2) the Director of the Office of Career and Technical Education in the Department of Education; and

(3) 9 members appointed by the Governor, who shall include: three superintendents of a county vocational school district upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools; one principal of a public school operating a career and technical education program; two teachers employed in a public school career and technical education program; one member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Education Association; one member from the New Jersey Business and Industry Association; and one member from the New Jersey Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools.

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

2. The commission shall organize as soon as practicable following the appointment of its members, but no later than 60 days after the effective date of this act. The commission shall choose a chairperson from among its members and shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the commission.

3. The Department of Education shall provide such stenographic, clerical, and other administrative assistants, and such professional staff as the commission requires to carry out its work.

The commission also shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it may require and as may be available for its purposes.

4. The commission shall study and evaluate:

a. the equity in the number and scope of career and technical education programs available across counties;

b. options to improve the availability of high quality career and technical education programs so that more students can be served; and

c. the costs, benefits, and challenges associated with the expansion of approved career and technical education programs throughout the State.

5. a. The commission shall issue a final report to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than one year after the commission organizes. The report shall contain the commission's findings and recommendations regarding the expansion of career and technical education programs in the State.

b. The commission shall expire 30 days after the issuance of its final report.

6. Except as otherwise provided pursuant to section 14 of P.L.2007, c.137 (C.18A:7G-45), a county vocational school district operating a career and technical education program shall have the right of first refusal to purchase or lease at or below fair market value, a closed public school facility or property located in the same county.

7. The principal of a public school with students enrolled in grades 6 through 12 shall take such action as is necessary to promote an interest in and increase awareness of educational opportunities available through career and technical education programs offered by the district, local charter schools, and the county vocational school district. Such actions shall include, but need not be limited to:

a. making an annual announcement to the student body at a student assembly or similar event about career and technical education opportunities;

b. making an annual announcement to parents and guardians at the school's annual back-to-school night or similar event about career and technical education opportunities; and

c. annually posting an announcement on the school district website or sending an annual notice or email to students and parents or guardians about career and technical education opportunities.

8. The Department of Education shall provide on its website information on best practices in the field of career and technical education, including information on methods to maximize enrollment, retention, and student performance. The department shall also include on its website profiles of the State's most successful and innovative career and technical education programs. The information shall be updated annually.

9. When reviewing a charter school application, the commissioner shall give a preference to an application for a charter school that will offer an approved career and technical education program that is not duplicative of programs offered in the resident district or county vocational school district.

10. When reviewing an application submitted by a proposed choice district, the commissioner shall give a preference to an application of a district that offers an approved career and technical education program that is not duplicative of programs offered in the county vocational school district.

11. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to the 2020-2021 school year.

STATEMENT

This bill establishes a Commission on Career and Technical Education and creates various initiatives that promote career and technical education programs in the State.

Under the bill, the Commission on Career and Technical Education will study and evaluate the availability of high quality secondary career and technical education programs across counties and review the costs, benefits, and challenges associated with the potential expansion of career and technical education programs in the State. The 11-member commission will include: the Commissioner of Education, or a designee; the Director of the Office of Career and Technical Education in the Department of Education; and 9 members appointed by the Governor, including: three superintendents of a county vocational school district upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools; one principal of a public school operating a career and technical education program; two teachers employed in a public school career and technical education program; one member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Education Association; one member from the New Jersey Business and Industry Association; and one member from the New Jersey

Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools. The bill also does the following:

- grants the right of first refusal to a county vocational school district operating a career and technical education program to purchase or lease at or below fair market value, a closed public school facility or property located in the same county;
- requires the principal of a public school with students enrolled in grades 6 through 12 to take specific actions that will promote an interest in and increase awareness of educational opportunities available through career and technical education programs offered by the district, local charter schools, and the county vocational school district;
- directs the Department of Education to provide on its website information on best practices in the field of career and technical education;
- provides that the Commissioner of Education will give preference to an application for a charter school that proposes to offer an approved career and technical education program that is not duplicative of programs offered in the resident district or county vocational school district; and
- provides that the Commissioner of Education will give preference to an application submitted by a proposed choice district under the "Interdistrict Public School Choice Program" that offers an approved career and technical education program that is not duplicative of programs offered in the county vocational school district.