

ASSEMBLY, No. 5025

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 19, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman JEAN STANFIELD

District 8 (Atlantic, Burlington and Camden)

Assemblywoman MILA M. JASEY

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

SYNOPSIS

Modifies age eligibility criteria for certain classified students under “Bridge Year Pilot Program.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/29/2021)

1 AN ACT concerning the eligibility of certain students under the
2 “Bridge Year Pilot Program” and amending P.L.2020, c.41.

3

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

6

7 1. Section 2 of P.L.2020, c.41 is amended to read as follows:

8 2. a. The Commissioner of Education shall establish a three-
9 year “Bridge Year Pilot Program,” under which each school district
10 with a high school shall offer students in the graduating class of
11 2021 and the graduating class of 2022 the opportunity to pursue a
12 bridge year during the year immediately following their senior year
13 of high school, in accordance with the provisions of this act. The
14 purpose of the pilot program shall be to provide participating
15 students an additional year to address learning loss and missed
16 opportunities in extracurricular activities, including spring sports
17 programs, as a result of the public health state of emergency caused
18 by the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic.

19 A nonpublic school may elect to participate in the Bridge Year
20 Pilot Program.

21 Under the pilot program, each high school in a school district
22 shall designate a school staff member as a bridge year liaison to
23 serve as the school’s central point of contact for students interested
24 in pursuing a bridge year pursuant to this act and for students
25 participating in a bridge year. Nothing in this subsection shall be
26 construed to require a school district to hire an individual to serve
27 as a bridge year liaison.

28 b. A student in the graduating class of 2021 or the graduating
29 class of 2022 who has met all applicable high school graduation
30 requirements by the end of the senior year of high school may defer
31 graduation from high school to pursue a bridge year. A student who
32 intends to pursue a bridge year shall notify his host high school’s
33 bridge year liaison of that intent no later than the first day of the
34 second semester of the student’s senior year of high school. The
35 host high school shall permit students participating in the bridge
36 year to participate in graduation ceremonies with the graduating
37 class of 2021 or class of 2022, as applicable, but shall not issue
38 diplomas to those students until the conclusion of the bridge year.
39 Nothing in this section shall be construed to require a student to
40 pursue a bridge year. To be eligible to participate in the bridge year
41 program, a student shall be 19 years of age or younger and shall not
42 turn 20 years of age at any time during the bridge year, except that a
43 classified student shall be eligible to participate if the student will
44 turn 20 years of age or 21 years of age during the bridge year due to

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 services provided pursuant to the student's individualized education
2 program.

3 c. (1) A student pursuing a bridge year shall remain enrolled in
4 the host high school while participating in the Bridge Year Pilot
5 Program. A bridge year liaison shall develop, in consultation with a
6 student pursuing a bridge year, an individual learning plan for the
7 student. The individual learning plan shall define academic and co-
8 curricular goals for the bridge year and detail activities and
9 strategies for accomplishing those goals including, but not limited
10 to, counseling, academic support, coursework, and co-curricular or
11 athletic participation. During the fall semester of the student's
12 bridge year, the student shall take between nine and 12 credits at the
13 host high school, the county college that serves the county of the
14 host high school, or a combination thereof. During the spring
15 semester of the student's bridge year, the student shall take between
16 nine and 12 credits at the county college that serves the county of
17 the host high school. The credits taken by a student pursuant to this
18 paragraph shall together form a coordinated sequence of academic
19 content that prepares the student for high-skill, high wage, or in-
20 demand occupations. At the conclusion of each semester of the
21 bridge year, the host high school shall update the student's high
22 school transcript to reflect any high school credits earned during the
23 bridge year. For the purpose of enrolling in college credits pursuant
24 to this paragraph, the student shall be considered a non-matriculated
25 student of the county college. A student who pursues a bridge year
26 and participates in a spring sport sanctioned by the New Jersey
27 State Interscholastic Athletic Association pursuant to section 3 of
28 this act shall enroll in less than 12 college credits, or otherwise be
29 enrolled in a number of college credits as to not be considered a
30 full-time college student, in each of the fall and spring semesters
31 during the student's bridge year.

32 (2) The student shall maintain a grade point average of 2.0 in
33 order to remain in the Bridge Year Pilot Program. The county
34 college or other institution of higher education which a student
35 pursuing a bridge year is attending shall report at least quarterly to
36 the bridge year liaison at a student's host high school, in a manner
37 specified by the student's individual learning plan developed
38 pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection, concerning the
39 student's academic progress and performance.

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

45 (4) During a semester of the bridge year, a student may take
46 three credits offered by a four-year institution of higher education at
47 any high school in the State or at any other location to fulfill the
48 student's credit requirement. The four-year institution shall charge

1 the student no more than is permitted pursuant to paragraph (3) of
2 this subsection and shall report to the student's bridge year liaison
3 as required pursuant to paragraph (2) of this subsection.

4 d. Notwithstanding the requirement established under the
5 Community College Opportunity Grant Program to be enrolled in a
6 course of study or a curriculum leading to a degree or certificate
7 and subject to the availability of funds in the annual appropriations
8 act, a student pursuing a bridge year shall be eligible for a financial
9 aid grant under the Community College Opportunity Grant Program
10 if the student meets all other applicable eligibility requirements.

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

17 f. In the event that a student initially decides to pursue a bridge
18 year in the fall semester but does not continue the bridge year in the
19 spring semester, the student's host high school shall release all final
20 transcripts and other records as necessary and as may be requested.
21 A student who decides not to continue the bridge year in the spring
22 semester shall not be eligible to participate in a spring sports
23 program or extracurricular activities pursuant to this act.

24 (cf: P.L.2020, c.41, s.2)

25
26 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

27 28 29 STATEMENT

30
31 This bill amends the law establishing the "Bridge Year Pilot
32 Program" to specify that a classified student, who will turn 21 years
33 of age during a bridge year due to services provided pursuant to the
34 an individualized education program, is eligible to participate in the
35 pilot program. The law currently states that, to be eligible to
36 participate in the Bridge Year Pilot Program, a student must be 19
37 years of age or younger and cannot turn 20 years of age at any time
38 during the bridge year. A classified student, however, is eligible to
39 participate if the student will turn 20 years of age during the bridge
40 year.