

ASSEMBLY, No. 5068

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED DECEMBER 7, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman NANCY J. PINKIN

District 18 (Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Requires high school students to be assessed using college placement cut scores to determine readiness for college-level course work, and Commissioner of Education to develop plan to improve college and career counseling for students.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning high school curriculum requirements and
2 supplementing chapter 7C of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

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

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8 1. The Legislature finds and declares that it is the goal of the
9 State that all students achieve competency in Language Arts
10 Literacy and Mathematics by the time of the student's graduation
11 from high school.

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13 2. a. As used in this section, "cut score" means that a student
14 has achieved one of the following scores in each subject area:

15 (1) in English/Language Arts:

16 (a) a minimum score of 24 on the verbal section of the ACT,

17 (b) a minimum score of 540 on the critical reading section of the
18 SAT, or

19 (c) a score to be determined by the Commissioner of Education
20 on the Language Arts Literacy section of the Statewide high school
21 assessment; and

22 (2) in Mathematics:

23 (a) a minimum score of 23 on the mathematics section of the
24 ACT,

25 (b) a minimum score of 550 on the mathematics section of the
26 SAT, or

27 (c) a score to be determined by the Commissioner of Education
28 on the mathematics section of the Statewide high school
29 assessment.

30 b. The State Board of Education shall establish high school
31 curriculum standards that include the following requirements:

32 (1) beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, all public school
33 students shall be assessed using cut scores no later than the 11th
34 grade to determine whether the student is ready for college-level,
35 credit-bearing course work in Language Arts Literacy and
36 Mathematics;

37 (2) the Commissioner of Education, in collaboration with school
38 districts and the county colleges, shall develop and implement by
39 the 2023-2024 school year, transition courses or other instructional
40 opportunities to be provided in the 12th grade to students who have
41 not achieved college and career readiness by the end of the 11th
42 grade. The implementation of the transition courses required
43 pursuant to this paragraph shall include an assessment or
44 reassessment of the student after completion of the course, and may
45 not preclude or replace enrollment in a course otherwise required
46 for graduation from high school.

47 c. A student who successfully completes a transition course
48 shall not be required to take a college placement test upon

1 enrollment in a college or university and shall be enrolled in credit-
2 bearing course-work. A college or university may require a student
3 who fails to successfully complete a transition course to take a
4 college placement test upon enrollment and to delay the student's
5 enrollment in credit-bearing coursework until the student
6 demonstrates the skill levels required to pursue courses for credit.

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8 3. The Commissioner of Education, in collaboration with the
9 Secretary of Higher Education and school districts, shall study the
10 development, content, and implementation of the transition courses
11 required pursuant to paragraph (2) of subsection b. of section 2 of
12 this act. The study shall include the alignment of the transition
13 courses to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards and whether
14 the courses should be considered to meet high school graduation
15 standards. The study shall also determine the appropriate
16 assessment to be used to determine college and career readiness and
17 how a student's level of readiness will be reflected on the high
18 school transcript.

19 A report on the study shall be submitted to the Governor, and to
20 the Senate Higher Education and Education Committees and the
21 General Assembly Higher Education and Education Committees, or
22 their successor committees.

23
24 4. On or before December 1, 2022, the Commissioner of
25 Education shall report to the Governor, and to the Legislature
26 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), concerning
27 the feasibility of the award of a State endorsed high school diploma
28 regardless of whether a student has completed the minimum number
29 of required credits or four years of high school if:

- 30 a. the student is assessed as college and career ready pursuant
31 to subsection b. of section 2 of this act; and
32 b. successfully completes any graduation assessment
33 requirements established by the State board.

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35 5. a. The Commissioner of Education shall develop a plan, in
36 consultation with the Secretary of Higher Education, to improve
37 college and career counseling that is provided to students in middle
38 and high schools.

39 b. The plan developed pursuant to subsection a. of this section
40 shall include:

- 41 (1) the identification of best practices in college and career
42 counseling used in the State and nationally; and
43 (2) a recommendation for a competitive grant program to
44 implement the identified best practices.

45 c. The commissioner shall submit the plan to the Governor, and
46 to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164
47 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than 90 days after the effective date of this
48 act.

1 6. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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6 This bill provides that beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, all
7 public high school students will be assessed by the end of the 11th
8 grade using cut scores to determine whether the student is ready for
9 college-level, credit-bearing course work in Language Arts Literacy
10 and Mathematics. The Commissioner of Education, in collaboration
11 with school districts and county colleges, is to develop and implement
12 by the 2023-2024 school year, transition courses or other instructional
13 opportunities to be provided in the 12th grade to students who have not
14 achieved college and career readiness by the end of the 11th grade. A
15 transition course may not replace enrollment in a course otherwise
16 required for high school graduation.

17 The bill directs the Commissioner of Education, in collaboration
18 with the Secretary of Higher Education and school districts, to study
19 the development, content, and implementation of the transition courses
20 required under the bill. The study will include the alignment of the
21 transition courses to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards and
22 whether the courses should be considered to meet high school
23 graduation standards. The study will also determine the appropriate
24 assessment to be used to determine college and career readiness and
25 how a student's level of readiness will be reflected on the high school
26 transcript.

27 The bill requires that on or before December 1, 2022, the
28 Commissioner of Education will report to the Governor and the
29 Legislature concerning the feasibility of the award of a State endorsed
30 high school diploma regardless of whether a student has completed the
31 minimum number of required credits or four years of high school if the
32 student: 1) is assessed as college and career ready under section 2 of
33 the bill; and 2) successfully completes any graduation assessment
34 requirements established by the State board.

35 Finally, the bill requires the Commissioner of Education, in
36 consultation with the Secretary of Higher Education, to develop a plan
37 to improve college and career counseling that is provided to students
38 in middle and high schools. The plan would identify best practices in
39 college and career counseling in New Jersey and nationally. In
40 addition, the plan would include recommendations for a competitive
41 grant program that would be used to implement the best practices
42 identified in the plan. Under the bill, the plan must be submitted to the
43 Governor and the Legislature no later than 90 days after the effective
44 date of the bill.