

# ASSEMBLY, No. 5490

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 17, 2021

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman ANDREW ZWICKER**

**District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)**

**Assemblywoman ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT**

**District 31 (Hudson)**

**Assemblywoman MILA M. JASEY**

**District 27 (Essex and Morris)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes “Twelfth Grade Postsecondary Transition Year Pilot Program” in Department of Education.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/22/2021)

1   **AN ACT** establishing the "Twelfth Grade Postsecondary Transition  
2       Year Pilot Program" in the Department of Education.

3  
4       **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
5 *of New Jersey:*

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7       1. a. There is established in the Department of Education a  
8 three-year "Twelfth Grade Postsecondary Transition Year Pilot  
9 Program." The purpose of the pilot program shall be to offer  
10 participating 12th grade students with a guided start to  
11 postsecondary coursework, through the provision of targeted  
12 supports and no-cost courses. The pilot program shall be offered to  
13 students in school districts that have been impacted substantially by  
14 the COVID-19 public health crisis, where learning loss as a result  
15 of the pandemic has increased the likelihood of students abandoning  
16 their higher education goals.

17       b. The Commissioner of Education shall select two districts in  
18 each of the southern, central, and northern regions of the State to  
19 participate in the program and shall seek a cross section of school  
20 districts from urban, suburban, and rural areas of the State. The  
21 commissioner shall select districts impacted substantially by the  
22 COVID-19 public health crisis which have a high proportion of  
23 economically disadvantaged students and low rates of college  
24 enrollment among recent high school graduates.

25       The commissioner shall provide a grant to each of the pilot  
26 districts to finance the costs associated with offering the pilot  
27 program, including the cost of tuition charged to the district  
28 pursuant to subsection d. of this section.

29       c. (1) A school district that wants to participate in the pilot  
30 program shall submit an application to the commissioner. The  
31 application shall include:

32       (a) a partnership agreement with an institution of higher  
33 education;

34       (b) a commitment to provide student support and counseling  
35 services necessary to ensure the academic success of participating  
36 students; and

37       (c) a commitment to provide program and student data to the  
38 department including, but not limited to, data on program  
39 enrollment, student completion, college credit attainment, student  
40 grades, and post-program college entrance rates. The district shall  
41 provide the data disaggregated by demographic subgroups.

42       (2) A school district selected to participate in the pilot program  
43 shall require participating students to:

44       (a) be enrolled in the 12th grade, except as otherwise approved  
45 by the school district superintendent;

46       (b) enroll in no less than six academic credits at the  
47 postsecondary level, and no more than 15 academic credits at the  
48 postsecondary level, in in each semester; and

1 (c) maintain a 2.0 grade point average for the student's  
2 postsecondary coursework in order to continue participation in the  
3 program.

4 d. (1) An institution of higher education that enters into a  
5 partnership agreement with a participating school district pursuant  
6 to subsection c. of this section shall provide a program of six or  
7 more academic credits in each semester. The program shall include  
8 a coherent sequence of courses applicable towards a postsecondary  
9 degree or credential and the student's high school diploma  
10 requirements.

11 (2) The institution shall waive student fees and charge the  
12 partnering district no more than \$100 per academic credit for each  
13 participating student.

14 (3) The institution shall provide quarterly reports to the district,  
15 at a minimum, on the academic progress of the district's students  
16 enrolled in the program.

17 e. A public institution of higher education shall accept and  
18 apply towards an applicable degree program all credits earned by a  
19 student during the pilot program established pursuant to this  
20 section, in accordance with the institution's credit transfer policies.  
21 An independent institution of higher education may accept the  
22 credits earned by a student during the pilot program established  
23 pursuant to this section.

24 Nothing in this section shall be construed to require any public  
25 or independent institution of higher education to admit a student or  
26 to waive its admission standards, application procedures, and credit  
27 transfer policies.

28 f. At the conclusion of the pilot program, the commissioner  
29 shall submit a report to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of  
30 P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), the Legislature. The report shall  
31 contain information on the implementation of the pilot program and  
32 shall include the commissioner's recommendation on the feasibility  
33 of implementing the program on a Statewide basis.

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35 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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#### STATEMENT

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40 This bill establishes in the Department of Education a three-year  
41 "Twelfth Grade Postsecondary Transition Year Pilot Program." The  
42 purpose of the pilot program will be to offer participating 12th  
43 grade students with a guided start to postsecondary coursework,  
44 through the provision of targeted supports and no-cost courses. The  
45 pilot program will be offered to students in school districts that  
46 have been impacted substantially by the COVID-19 public health  
47 crisis, where learning loss as a result of the pandemic has increased  
48 the likelihood of students abandoning their higher education goals.

1 Under the bill, the Commissioner of Education will select two  
2 districts in each of the southern, central, and northern regions of the  
3 State to participate in the program and will seek a cross section of  
4 school districts from urban, suburban, and rural areas of the State.  
5 The commissioner will select districts impacted substantially by the  
6 COVID-19 public health crisis which have a high proportion of  
7 economically disadvantaged students and low rates of college  
8 enrollment among recent high school graduates.

9 The bill directs the commissioner to provide a grant to each of  
10 the pilot districts to finance the costs associated with offering the  
11 pilot program, including the cost of tuition charged to the district  
12 pursuant to the bill's provisions.

13 The bill directs a school district that wants to participate in the  
14 pilot program to submit an application to the commissioner with the  
15 items detailed in the bill's provisions. The bill requires a school  
16 district selected to participate in the pilot program to require  
17 participating students to: be enrolled in the 12th grade, except as  
18 otherwise approved by the school district superintendent; enroll in  
19 no less than six academic credits, and no more than 15 academic  
20 credits, in in each semester; and maintain a 2.0 grade point average  
21 for the student's postsecondary coursework in order to continue  
22 participation in the program.

23 The bill provides that an institution of higher education that  
24 enters into a partnership agreement with a participating school  
25 district will provide a program of six or more academic credits in  
26 each semester. The program must include a coherent sequence of  
27 courses applicable towards a postsecondary degree or credential and  
28 the student's high school diploma requirements. The bill requires  
29 the institution to waive student fees and charge the partnering  
30 district no more than \$100 per academic credit for each  
31 participating student. The institution must also provide quarterly  
32 reports to the district, at a minimum, on the academic progress of  
33 the district's students enrolled in the program.

34 The bill directs a public institution of higher education to accept  
35 and apply towards an applicable degree program all credits earned  
36 by a student during the pilot program, in accordance with the  
37 institution's credit transfer policies. An independent institution of  
38 higher education may accept the credits earned by a student during  
39 the pilot program.

40 Finally, the bill requires the commissioner to submit a report at  
41 the conclusion of the pilot program to the Governor and the  
42 Legislature, containing information on the implementation of the  
43 pilot program and shall include the commissioner's recommendation  
44 on the feasibility of implementing the program on a Statewide basis.