

[First Reprint]
SENATE, No. 316

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

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District 28 (Essex)

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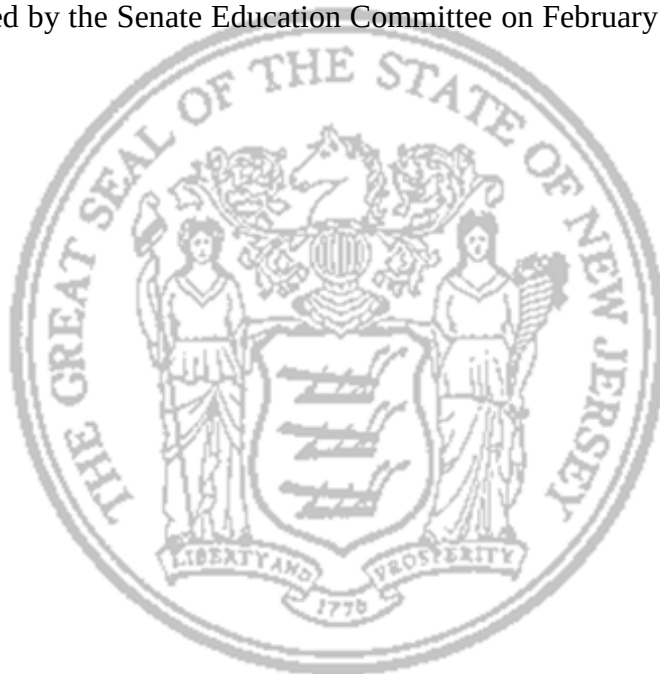
Senators Turner and Ruiz

SYNOPSIS

Establishes the Office of Dropout Prevention and Reengagement of Out-of-School Youth in DOE, and the Student Dropout Prevention Task Force.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Education Committee on February 13, 2020, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/13/2020)

1 **AN ACT** concerning students who drop out of school and
2 supplementing chapter 4 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

6
7 1. a. There is established in the Department of Education the
8 Office of Dropout Prevention and Reengagement of Out-of-School
9 Youth. The purpose of the office shall be to develop a Statewide
10 strategic plan of action to prevent students from dropping out of
11 school, address the need for the reenrollment of student dropouts,
12 and develop strategies to increase reenrollment.

13 b. The Office of Dropout Prevention and Reengagement of
14 Out-of-School Youth, in consultation with the Student Dropout
15 Prevention Task Force established pursuant to section 2 of P.L. c.
16 (pending before the Legislature as this bill), shall at a minimum:

17 (1) collaborate with school districts in the development of a
18 Statewide strategic plan to address the problem of student dropouts;

19 (2) develop and recommend to school districts programs to
20 prevent students from dropping out of school; and

21 (3) address issues associated with the reenrollment of students
22 and develop programs to facilitate the return of such students to the
23 classroom.

24 c. The Commissioner of Education shall appoint a person to
25 head the office who shall be a person qualified by training and
26 experience to perform the duties of the office and shall devote his
27 entire time to the performance of those duties.

28
29 2. a. There is established the Student Dropout Prevention
30 Task Force. The purpose of the task force shall be to analyze the
31 causes of students leaving school prior to graduation, recommend to
32 school districts best practices for reducing the student dropout rate,
33 and develop strategies to increase the reenrollment of students who
34 have left school.

35 b. The task force shall consist of 17 members as follows:

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

38 (2) the Commissioner of the Department of Corrections, or his
39 designee, who shall serve ex officio;

40 (3) two members of the Senate, no more than one of whom shall
41 be of the same political party, appointed by the Senate President;

42 (4) two members of the General Assembly, no more than one of
43 whom shall be of the same political party, appointed by the Speaker
44 of the General Assembly; and

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.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate SED committee amendments adopted February 13, 2020.

1 (5) eleven members appointed by the Governor, who shall
2 include: three superintendents of schools, one each from an urban,
3 suburban, and rural school district; two presidents of New Jersey
4 county colleges; two members of the public with demonstrated
5 expertise in issues relating to the work of the task force; two
6 members employed at a high school in an urban school district with
7 a high student drop out rate, one of whom shall be a principal and
8 one of whom shall be a guidance counselor; and two teachers, one
9 of whom shall be employed in an urban school district with a high
10 student drop out rate.

11 c. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled
12 in the same manner as the original appointments were made.
13 Members of the task force shall serve without compensation, but
14 shall be reimbursed for necessary expenditures incurred in the
15 performance of their duties as members of the task force.

16 d. The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's
17 designee, shall serve as chairperson of the task force. The task
18 force shall organize as soon as practicable following the
19 appointment of its members and shall select a vice-chairperson from
20 among its members. The chairperson shall appoint a secretary who
21 need not be a member of the task force.

22 e. The Department of Education shall provide such
23 stenographic, clerical, and other administrative assistants, and such
24 professional staff as the task force requires to carry out its work.
25 The task force shall also be entitled to call to its assistance and avail
26 itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or
27 municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it
28 may require and as may be available to it for its purposes.

29

30 3. It shall be the duty of the task force to analyze the causes of
31 students leaving school prior to graduation and to recommend best
32 practices for reducing the student dropout rate and increasing the
33 number of students who re-enroll in school. The task force shall, at
34 a minimum:

35 a. examine current data ¹, including the age, ethnicity, and
36 gender of student dropouts¹, research, programs, and initiatives
37 concerning student dropouts;

38 b. examine reasons why students leave school ¹, including
39 possible contributing factors such as household income, cultural or
40 language barriers, or being a child from a single parent household¹;

41 c. identify effective ways for school districts to reduce the
42 number of students who leave school prior to graduation and
43 increase student engagement while in school;

44 d. develop mechanisms to increase the reenrollment of students
45 who have left school; and

46 e. develop recommendations on the most effective ways for
47 school districts to support students in order to prevent them from
48 leaving school.

- 1 4. a. The task force shall issue a final report to the Governor,
2 and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L. 1991, c.164
3 (C.52:14-19.1), containing its findings and recommendations,
4 including any recommendations for legislation that it deems
5 appropriate, no later than nine months after the task force organizes.
- 6 b. The task force shall expire on the 30th day after the issuance
7 of its final report.
8
- 9 5. This act shall take effect immediately.