

SENATE, No. 1552

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 13, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator RICHARD J. CODEY

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

SYNOPSIS

Prohibits school districts from joining associations which oversee Statewide interscholastic sports unless association limits interscholastic eligibility of certain student-athletes who repeat middle school grade for athletic advantage.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ACT** concerning school district participation in certain voluntary
2 associations and supplementing chapter 11 of Title 18A of the
3 New Jersey 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. a. As used in this section;

9 “Hold-back repeat student” means a student who has
10 successfully completed the academic requirements that have been
11 established for the sixth, seventh, or eighth grades and who repeats
12 one or more of these grades prior to entering the ninth grade for
13 purposes of gaining athletic advantage.

14 b. A school district shall not join pursuant to section 1 of
15 P.L.1979, c.172 (C.18A:11-3), any voluntary association which
16 oversees activities associated with Statewide interscholastic sports
17 programs unless the association requires: that when a hold-back
18 repeat student enters the ninth grade for the first time after the
19 effective date of this act, the student shall be eligible to participate
20 in interscholastic athletics for only the next ensuing six consecutive
21 semesters; and that when a hold-back repeat student transfers after
22 the effective date of this act into a school that is a member of the
23 voluntary association from a school that is not a member of the
24 voluntary association, the student shall be eligible to participate in
25 interscholastic athletics for a total of only six consecutive
26 semesters, including participation in interscholastic athletics at the
27 school from which the student transferred.

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29 2. This act shall take effect in the first full school year
30 following the date of enactment.

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STATEMENT

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35 This bill prohibits school districts from joining voluntary
36 associations which oversee Statewide interscholastic sports
37 programs under certain circumstances. Under the bill, school
38 districts are prohibited from joining any such association unless the
39 association requires that when a “hold-back repeat student” enters
40 the ninth grade for the first time, the student will be eligible to
41 participate in interscholastic athletics for only the next ensuing six
42 consecutive semesters. The bill defines a “hold-back repeat
43 student” as a student who has successfully completed the academic
44 requirements that have been established for the sixth, seventh, or
45 eighth grades and who repeats one or more of these grades prior to
46 entering the ninth grade for purposes of gaining athletic advantage.

47 Under the current rules of the association which oversees
48 interscholastic sports programs in the State, the New Jersey State

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1 Interscholastic Athletic Association, a student-athlete is eligible to
2 compete as a high school senior provided that the student-athlete
3 does not turn 19 prior to September 1 of that school year. These
4 rules also provide that an athlete may only play interscholastic high
5 school sports for eight consecutive semesters. This bill is designed
6 to help curtail the practice whereby student-athletes seek to gain
7 athletic advantage at the high school level by repeating sixth,
8 seventh, or eighth grade despite having met the academic
9 requirements for those grades.