

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
SENATE, No. 2383

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

ADOPTED MAY 7, 2020

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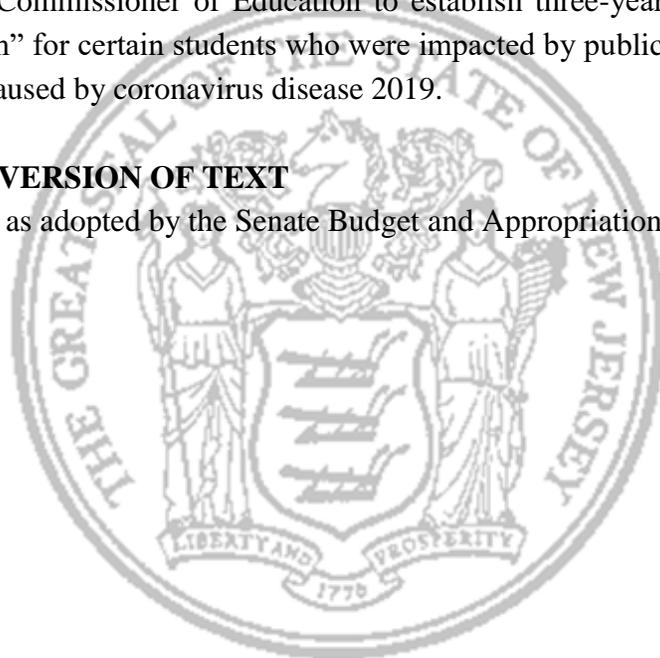
Senators Addiego, T.Kean, Cruz-Perez and Gopal

SYNOPSIS

Requires Commissioner of Education to establish three-year “Bridge Year Pilot Program” for certain students who were impacted by public health state of emergency caused by coronavirus disease 2019.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Substitute as adopted by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/11/2020)

1 AN ACT requiring the Commissioner of Education to establish the
2 Bridge Year Pilot Program.

3

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

6

7 1. As used in this act, “host high school” means the high school
8 that a student, who pursues a bridge year pursuant to the provisions
9 of this act, attended as a junior in high school.

10

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

22

23 A nonpublic school may elect to participate in the Bridge Year

24

25 Under the pilot program, each high school in a school district
26 shall designate a school staff member as a bridge year liaison to
27 serve as the school’s central point of contact for students interested
28 in pursuing a bridge year pursuant to this act and for students
29 participating in a bridge year, as well as for county colleges and
30 four-year institutions of higher education in which students may be
31 enrolled in academic courses under the pilot program. Nothing in
32 this subsection shall be construed to require a school district to hire
33 an individual to serve as a bridge year liaison.

33

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

1 turn 20 years of age during the bridge year due to services provided
2 pursuant to the student's individualized education 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 each of the fall and spring semesters
12 of the student's bridge year, the student shall take between nine and
13 12 credits at the host high school if an institution of higher
14 education offers courses at that location, the county college that
15 serves the county of the host high school, or a combination thereof.
16 The credits taken by a student pursuant to this paragraph shall
17 together form a coordinated sequence of academic content that
18 prepares the student for high-skill, high wage, or in-demand
19 occupations. At the conclusion of each semester of the bridge year,
20 the host high school shall update the student's high school transcript
21 to reflect any high school credits earned during the bridge year. For
22 the purpose of enrolling in college credits pursuant to this
23 paragraph, the student shall be considered a non-matriculated
24 student of the county college. A student who pursues a bridge year
25 and participates in a spring sport sanctioned by the New Jersey
26 State Interscholastic Athletic Association pursuant to section 3 of
27 this act shall enroll in at least nine but less than 12 credits in each of
28 the fall and spring semesters during the student's bridge year.

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

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

42 (4) A student may take any portion of the credits required
43 pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection at the student's host
44 high school, in the event that the county college which the student
45 is attending offers courses at the host high school. During a
46 semester of the bridge year, a student may take three credits offered
47 by a four-year institution of higher education at any high school in
48 the State or at any other location to fulfill the student's credit

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

5 d. Notwithstanding the requirement established under the
6 Tuition Aid Grant Program pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71B-20 and
7 under the New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward
8 Scholarship (NJSTARS) Program pursuant to section 5 of P.L.2004,
9 c.59 (C.18A:71B-85), to be enrolled as a full-time student in a
10 course of study or a curriculum leading to a degree or certificate, a
11 student pursuing a bridge year pursuant to this act shall be eligible
12 for a tuition aid grant or scholarship under the Tuition Aid Grant
13 Program or the NJSTARS Program if the student meets all other
14 applicable eligibility requirements.

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

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

28
29 3. a. A student who pursues a bridge year pursuant to this act
30 shall be permitted to participate in a spring sport sanctioned by the
31 New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association and
32 extracurricular activities at the student's host high school. A
33 student pursuing a bridge year shall not be eligible to participate in
34 any fall or winter sport sanctioned by the association. A student
35 participating in a spring sport or extracurricular activity during his
36 bridge year shall pay applicable student athletics and activities fees
37 and be subject to the host high school's student code of conduct,
38 athletic code of conduct, and any other applicable codes, rules or
39 policies that other students participating in the spring sport or
40 extracurricular activity at the host high school are required to
41 follow. Notwithstanding the provisions any law, rule, or regulation
42 to the contrary, an insurer doing business in the State and issuing
43 liability insurance policies to school districts shall provide coverage
44 for students participating in a spring sport or extracurricular activity
45 pursuant to this act, as part of a school district's liability insurance
46 policy.

47 This section shall not be construed to supersede the governance
48 or eligibility rules applicable to a particular extracurricular activity,

1 except as otherwise provided in subsection c. of this section. This
2 section shall also not be construed to supersede the governance or
3 eligibility rules, which are established by a local, state, or national
4 organization with bona fide authority over a particular
5 extracurricular activity, that are applicable to that activity, except as
6 otherwise provided in subsection c. of this section.

7 b. In order to participate in a spring sport during the bridge
8 year, the student shall meet the current age participation
9 requirements of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic
10 Association. The student shall participate in the spring sport at the
11 student's host high school and shall not be permitted to transfer to a
12 different high school, even in the event that the student experiences
13 a change in residence.

14 c. In the event that a student pursuing a bridge year elects to
15 participate in a spring sport, the association shall be requested by
16 the student to waive the eight semester rule under which a student is
17 not eligible for high school athletics after the expiration of eight
18 consecutive semesters following the student's entrance into the
19 ninth grade.

20 d. The association shall confer with the National Collegiate
21 Athletic Association or any other athletic association, conference,
22 or group or organization with authority over intercollegiate athletics
23 to ensure that any student participating in a spring sport during a
24 bridge year will be eligible to declare as a college recruit during the
25 bridge year and participate in intercollegiate athletics.

26
27 4. a. The State Board of Education shall promulgate
28 regulations pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act,"
29 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), necessary to effectuate the
30 provisions of this act.

31 b. The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority shall
32 promulgate regulations, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure
33 Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), necessary to effectuate
34 the provisions of subsection d. of section 2 of this act.

35

36 5. This act shall take effect immediately.