

[First Reprint]

## **ASSEMBLY, No. 398**

# **STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

## **220th LEGISLATURE**

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2022 SESSION

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman RALPH R. CAPUTO**

**District 28 (Essex)**

**Assemblyman THOMAS P. GIBLIN**

**District 34 (Essex and Passaic)**

**Assemblywoman CLEOPATRA G. TUCKER**

**District 28 (Essex)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

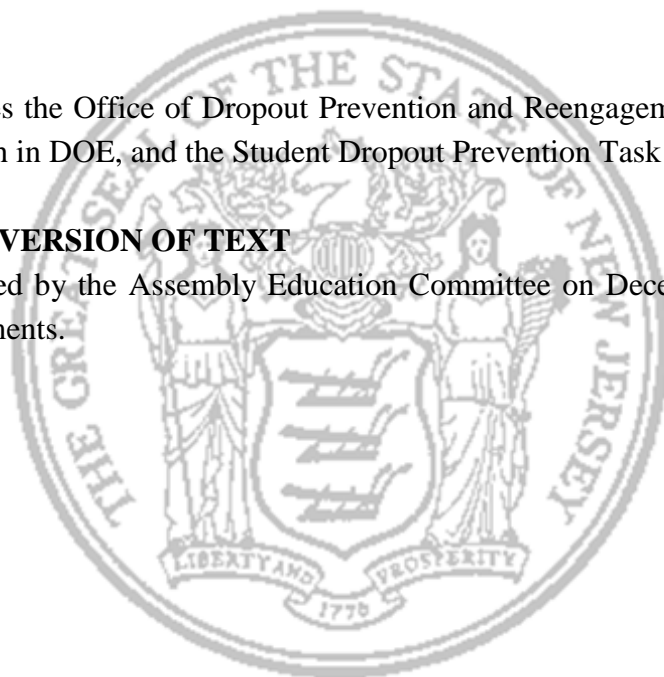
**Assemblywoman Jasey, Assemblymen Simonsen, McClellan, Assemblywoman McKnight, Assemblyman Atkins, Assemblywomen Matsikoudis, Haider, Assemblyman Sampson, Assemblywoman Reynolds-Jackson, Assemblyman Umba, Assemblywoman Park and Assemblyman Mukherji**

**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 Assembly Education Committee on December 8, 2022, with amendments.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/9/2023)**

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, and  
 12 develop strategies to increase reenrollment.

13 b. The Office of Dropout Prevention and Reengagement of Out-  
 14 of-School Youth, in consultation with the Student Dropout Prevention  
 15 Task Force established pursuant to section 2 of P.L. c. <sup>1</sup>(C.\_\_\_\_)<sup>1</sup>  
 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 prevent  
 20 students from dropping out of school; and

21 <sup>1</sup>(3) address issues associated with the reenrollment of students and  
 22 develop programs to facilitate the return of such students to the  
 23 classroom.<sup>1</sup>

24 c. <sup>1</sup>**【**The task force shall consist of 17 members as follows:

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

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

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

31 d.<sup>1</sup>**】** The Commissioner of Education shall appoint a person to  
 32 head the office who shall be a person qualified by training and  
 33 experience to perform the duties of the office <sup>1</sup>**【and】**. The appointee<sup>1</sup>  
 34 shall devote <sup>1</sup>**【his】** the appointee's<sup>1</sup> entire time to the performance of  
 35 those duties.

36  
 37 2. a. There is established the Student Dropout Prevention Task  
 38 Force. The purpose of the task force shall be to analyze the causes of  
 39 students leaving school prior to graduation, recommend to school  
 40 districts best practices for reducing the student dropout rate, and  
 41 develop strategies to increase the reenrollment of students who have  
 42 left school.

43 b. The task force shall consist of <sup>1</sup>**【17】** 18<sup>1</sup> members as follows:

**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:

<sup>1</sup>Assembly AED committee amendments adopted December 8, 2022.

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

3 (2) the Commissioner of <sup>1</sup>【the Department of】<sup>1</sup> Corrections, or his  
4 designee, who shall serve ex officio;

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

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

10 (5) <sup>1</sup>【eleven】 twelve<sup>1</sup> members appointed by the Governor, who  
11 shall include: <sup>1</sup>one representative from the New Jersey Chamber of  
12 Commerce Foundation;<sup>1</sup> three superintendents of schools, one each  
13 from an urban, suburban, and rural school district; two presidents of  
14 New Jersey county colleges; two members of the public with  
15 demonstrated expertise in issues relating to the work of the task force;  
16 two members employed at a high school in an urban school district  
17 with a high student <sup>1</sup>【drop out】 dropout<sup>1</sup> rate, one of whom shall be a  
18 principal and one of whom shall be a guidance counselor; and two  
19 teachers, one of whom shall be employed in an urban school district  
20 with a high student <sup>1</sup>【drop out】 dropout<sup>1</sup> rate.

21 c. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled in  
22 the same manner as the original appointments were made. Members of  
23 the task force shall serve without compensation, but shall be  
24 reimbursed for necessary expenditures incurred in the performance of  
25 their duties as members of the task force.

26 d. The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's  
27 designee, shall serve as chairperson of the task force. The task force  
28 shall organize as soon as practicable following the appointment of its  
29 members and shall select a vice-chairperson from among its members.  
30 The chairperson shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member  
31 of the task force.

32 e. The Department of Education shall provide such stenographic,  
33 clerical, and other administrative assistants, and such professional staff  
34 as the task force requires to carry out its work. The task force shall  
35 also be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of  
36 the employees of any State, county, or municipal department, board,  
37 bureau, commission, or agency as it may require and as may be  
38 available to it for its purposes.

39

40 3. It shall be the duty of the task force to analyze the causes of  
41 students leaving school prior to graduation and to recommend best  
42 practices for reducing the student dropout rate and increasing the  
43 number of students who <sup>1</sup>【re-enroll】 reenroll<sup>1</sup> in school. The task  
44 force shall, at a minimum:

45 a. examine current data <sup>1</sup>, including the age, ethnicity, and gender  
46 of student dropouts<sup>1</sup>, research, programs, and initiatives concerning  
47 student dropouts;

- 1       b. examine reasons why students leave school <sup>1</sup>, including  
2 possible contributing factors such as household income, cultural or  
3 language barriers, or being a child from a single parent household<sup>1</sup>;  
4       c. identify effective ways for school districts to reduce the  
5 number of students who leave school prior to graduation and increase  
6 student engagement while in school;  
7       d. develop mechanisms to increase the reenrollment of students  
8 who have left school; and  
9       e. develop recommendations on the most effective ways for  
10 school districts to support students in order to prevent them from  
11 leaving school.  
12  
13       4. a. The task force shall issue a final report to the Governor,  
14 and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L. 1991, c.164  
15 (C.52:14-19.1), containing its findings and recommendations,  
16 including any recommendations for legislation that it deems  
17 appropriate, no later than nine months after the task force organizes.  
18       b. The task force shall expire on the 30th day after the issuance  
19 of its final report.  
20  
21       5. This act shall take effect immediately.