ASSEMBLY, No. 3319

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 7, 2022

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT
District 31 (Hudson)
Assemblywoman PAMELA R. LAMPTITT
District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

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

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/5/2022)
AN ACT establishing the "Twelfth Grade Postsecondary Transition Year Pilot Program" in the Department of Education.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

   (b) enroll in no less than six academic credits at the postsecondary level, and no more than 15 academic credits at the postsecondary level, in each semester; and
(c) maintain a 2.0 grade point average for the student’s postsecondary coursework in order to continue participation in the program.

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill establishes in the Department of Education a three-year "Twelfth Grade Postsecondary Transition Year Pilot Program." The purpose of the pilot program will be to offer participating 12th grade students with a guided start to postsecondary coursework, through the provision of targeted supports and no-cost courses. The pilot program will be offered to students in school districts that have been impacted substantially by the COVID-19 public health crisis, where learning loss as a result of the pandemic has increased the likelihood of students abandoning their higher education goals.
Under the bill, the Commissioner of Education will select two
districts in each of the southern, central, and northern regions of the
State to participate in the program and will seek a cross section of
school districts from urban, suburban, and rural areas of the State.
The commissioner will select districts impacted substantially by the
COVID-19 public health crisis which have a high proportion of
economically disadvantaged students and low rates of college
enrollment among recent high school graduates.

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

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

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

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

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