

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
SENATE, No. 2054

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
220th LEGISLATURE

ADOPTED NOVEMBER 27, 2023

Sponsored by:

Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER
District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)
Senator ROBERT W. SINGER
District 30 (Monmouth and Ocean)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators Cunningham, Burgess, Pou, Ruiz and Gopal

SYNOPSIS

Requires high school students to complete financial aid applications.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Substitute as adopted by the Senate Education Committee.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/8/2024)

1 AN ACT concerning high school students and financial aid
2 applications.

3

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

6

7 1. a. Beginning with the 2023-2024 grade 11 class, and for two
8 school years thereafter, a board of education or a board of trustees
9 of a charter school shall require a student, and the student's parent
10 or guardian, if applicable, to complete and submit a financial aid
11 application in a form prescribed by the Higher Education Student
12 Assistance Authority as a prerequisite to the student receiving a
13 high school diploma from a public high school or charter school
14 unless a waiver is submitted to the school district or charter school
15 as set forth in subsection b. of this section.

16 b. (1) A student shall be exempt from the requirement in
17 subsection a. of this section if the student or the student's parent or
18 guardian submits to the school district or charter school a waiver
19 form signed by the parent or guardian, or by the student if the
20 student is at least 18 years of age, requesting the exemption from
21 the requirement.

22 (2) If the student is under 18 years of age and a form signed by
23 the parent or guardian cannot be reasonably obtained, the student's
24 school counselor may authorize the waiver as permitted by
25 regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education pursuant
26 to subsection h. of this section.

27 c. The Executive Director of the Higher Education Student
28 Assistance Authority, in consultation with the Commissioner of
29 Education, shall provide resources for school districts, charter
30 schools, parents, and students that include instructions on how to
31 complete a financial aid application prescribed by the authority.
32 The resources shall include webinars, presentations, guidance
33 documents, and a list of available State and federal resources. The
34 executive director of the authority shall make available such
35 resources as are necessary directly to school counselors or other
36 school employees who shall share the resources with students and
37 with the students' parents or guardians.

38 d. Each school district and charter school shall annually notify
39 students and the parents or guardians of the requirement established
40 pursuant to this section.

41 e. No adverse action shall be taken by a board of education or a
42 board of trustees of a charter school against any student due to a
43 student's receipt of an exemption from the requirement to complete
44 and submit a financial aid application pursuant to subsection b. of
45 this section.

46 f. Nothing in this act shall be construed as requiring school
47 counselors, or any other school employee, to assist students in
48 completing the financial aid application. Nothing in this act shall

- 1 be construed as creating a private right of action against the school
2 district, charter school, or the State upon compliance or
3 noncompliance with the provisions of this act.
- 4 g. The Executive Director of the Higher Education Student
5 Assistance Authority shall make the resources listed in subsection c.
6 of this section available to institutions of higher education in order
7 to facilitate the delivery of technical assistance to area high schools.
- 8 h. The State Board of Education shall adopt, pursuant to the
9 Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
10 seq.), rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of
11 this act.
- 12 i. The executive director of the authority shall prepare and issue
13 to the Department of Education, and to the Legislature pursuant to
14 section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), a report that includes
15 the number of students that completed a financial aid form pursuant
16 to subsection a. of this section, as well as the number of waivers
17 submitted to school districts or charter schools pursuant to
18 subsection b. of this section no later than three years following the
19 effective date of this act.
- 20
- 21 2. This act shall take effect immediately.