[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 2076

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 3, 2022

Sponsored by:
Senator ANDREW ZWICKER
District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)
Senator LINDA R. GREENSTEIN
District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)
Assemblywoman ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT
District 31 (Hudson)
Assemblywoman PAMELA R. LAMPIITT
District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Co-Sponsored by:
Assemblywomen Reynolds-Jackson, Jasey and Swain

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

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As amended by the General Assembly on January 8, 2024.

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

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:

Assembly floor amendments adopted January 8, 2024.
(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.1"

1[2. This act shall take effect immediately.]1

1. a. There is established in the Department of Education a 
three-year Innovation Dual Enrollment II Pilot Program. The 
purpose of the program shall be to offer participating students in 
grades nine through 12 a guided start to postsecondary coursework, 
through the provision of targeted supports and low-cost courses in 
which students may simultaneously earn high school and college 
credits. The program will support school districts that have 
historically lower rates of college enrollment among high school 
graduates, and shall prioritize for eligibility students receiving free 
or reduced lunch.

b. The Commissioner of Education shall select districts 
representing each of the southern, central, and northern regions of
the State to participate in the program. The commissioner shall
select districts impacted substantially by the COVID-19 public
health crisis which have a high proportion of economically
disadvantaged students. The commissioner shall provide a grant to
each of the pilot districts to finance costs associated with offering
the pilot program, including the cost of tuition charged to the
district pursuant to subsection e. of this section.

c. A school district that wants to participate in the pilot program
shall submit an application to the commissioner. The application
may include, but shall not be limited to:

(1) a partnership agreement with an institution of higher
education which includes a commitment from the institution of
higher education to apply any enrolled student’s credits as outlined
in subsection f. of this section;

(2) a commitment from the school district to apply any credits
earned by students in the pilot program towards the student’s
secondary school graduation requirements;

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

(4) a commitment from the school district to provide free
transportation to any courses held on the college campus, as needed;
and

(5) a commitment from the school district to provide program
and student data, disaggregated by demographic subgroups, 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.

d. A school district selected to participate in the pilot program
shall require participating students to:

(1) enroll in no less than one academic credit at the
postsecondary level, and no more than 15 academic credits at the
postsecondary level, in each semester; and

(2) maintain a 2.0 grade point average for the student’s
secondary and postsecondary coursework in order to continue
participation in the program.

e. 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 one or more academic
credits in each semester. The program shall offer students an
opportunity to earn academic credits directly applicable to a
credential or degree awarded by the institution. The institution
shall waive student fees and charge the partnering district no more
than $100 per academic credit for each participating student. The
institution shall provide reports each semester to the district, at a
minimum, on the academic progress of the district’s students
enrolled in the program.
f. 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.

g. 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, but not be limited to, the commissioner’s recommendation on the feasibility of implementing the program on a Statewide basis.1

2. a. There is created a non-lapsing fund known as the Innovation Dual Enrollment II Fund. All monies annually appropriated by the Legislature and any other monies made available for the purposes of the program shall be deposited in the fund. Monies deposited in the fund shall be available for the duration of the Innovation Dual Enrollment II Pilot Program and shall be used by the Department of Education to provide funding for the program.

b. The department shall, in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, determine allowable uses for funds prior to accepting applications to participate in the program, and shall describe the allowable uses in a Notice of Grant Opportunity.

c. The department shall, in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, prioritize pilot program investments in school districts that partner with New Jersey institutions of higher education.1

3. The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules and regulations pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.) necessary to effectuate the provisions of this act.1

4. This act shall take effect 240 days following the date of enactment, but shall remain inoperative until the first day of the first full school year following the effective date. The Commissioner of Education may take such anticipatory action as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.1