ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 1676

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 4, 2024

The Assembly Education committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1676 with committee amendments.

This bill, as amended, requires the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD), in consultation with the Department of Education (DOE), to establish a database of novice teachers to assist school districts in filling staffing vacancies and requires the DOLWD, in consultation with the DOE, to hold three job fairs per year.

Under the amended bill, the DOLWD, in consultation with the DOE, is required, within 180 days of the effective date of the bill, to establish and maintain a database of novice teachers that is to be available to school districts and novice teachers to assist in filling staffing vacancies. The Commissioner of Education is required to provide certain information for each novice teacher to the DOLWD to be included in the database. The amended bill requires the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development to develop a mechanism by which a novice teacher may opt out of inclusion in the database and permits a novice teacher to request to be excluded from the database at any time. Under the amended bill, a novice teacher is permitted to request the contact information included in the database be limited to that of a preferred method of contact. The Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development is required to comply with this request.

The amended bill also requires the DOLWD, in consultation with the DOE, to hold three job fairs per year, with one held in each of the northern, central, and southern regions of the State. The Commissioner of Education is required to invite school districts to participate in the job fairs, and the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development is required to notify each novice teacher included in the database established under the provisions of the amended bill of the date, time, and location of each job fair. Novice teachers, individuals enrolled in an educator preparation program, and any other individual appropriately certified to work in a public school in the State are permitted to attend the job fair.

The amended bill permits the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development to charge employer participants a

reasonable, nominal fee to participate in the job fair, but limits use of any fees collected to covering costs associated with identifying and securing a location for the job fair, hospitality services, and any other administrative costs as determined by the commissioner.

The amended bill defines "novice teacher" as a teacher eligible to work under a valid certificate of eligibility or certificate of eligibility with advanced standing who has not yet been issued a provisional certificate. The amended bill defines "school district" as a school district, charter school, renaissance school project, county special services school district, or county vocational school district.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2024-2025 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- include approved private schools for students with disabilities in the bill's definition of school district;
- require the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, in consultation with the Department of Education, to establish and maintain the novice teacher database;
- require the Commissioner of Education to provide certain listed information to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development for inclusion in the database;
- require the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, in consultation with the Department of Education, to hold three job fairs per year;
- require the Commissioner of Education to invite school districts to participate in the job fairs and the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development to notify novice teachers included in the database of the date, time, and location of each job fair; and
- permit the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development to charge employer participants a fee to participate in a job fair as outlined under the bill.