ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 3873

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 6, 2024

The Assembly Education committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 3873 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill permits a public high school student in the tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade to substitute a physical education course with a study hall if the student: is enrolled in at least one advanced placement course, a dual enrollment program, or other college-level course, or is in need of additional academic support due to low academic performance indicators, as determined by the school district; participates in a school-sponsored sport; and is scheduled to attend a physical education course during the athletic season of that sport. The student who chooses to substitute the physical education course with a study hall is to receive for participation in the sport the number of high school graduation credits equal to the number received for completion of the physical education course.

The amended bill requires the parent or guardian of the student to provide the school district with written approval for the substitution. The coach of the school-sponsored sport is given the responsibility to certify to the school district the student's participation in the sport. The student's school counselor is required to certify to the school district that the student is eligible to substitute a physical education course with a study hall and that the counselor approves of the substitution.

The amended bill provides that the school district is to determine which school athletic activities constitute a school-sponsored sport. Eligible student-athletes participating in school-sponsored sports will only be permitted to elect to substitute study hall for physical education during that athletic season.

As amended, this bill does not exempt students from the statutory requirement that they attend at least two and one-half hours per school week of health and safety education courses, when these courses are scheduled. This bill also does not affect the physical education requirement for students in grades one through eight or for high school students who do not participate in school-sponsored sports.

Finally, the amended bill requires each school district to develop a policy to allow eligible students to substitute a physical education course with a study hall in accordance with the provisions of the bill.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to provide that a student is able to substitute the physical education course with a study hall during the student's athletic season if the student: is enrolled in an advanced placement course, a dual enrollment program, or other college-level course; or is in need of additional academic support due to low academic performance indicators, as determined by the school district.

Additionally, the committee amended the bill to provide that the student's school counselor is required to certify to the school district that the student is eligible to substitute a physical education course with a study hall and that the counselor approves of the substitution.

Finally, the committee amended the bill to provide that each school district is required to develop a policy to allow eligible students to substitute a physical education course with a study hall in accordance with the provisions of the bill.