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STATE OF NEW JERSEY
221st LEGISLATURE

ADOPTED JUNE 3, 2024

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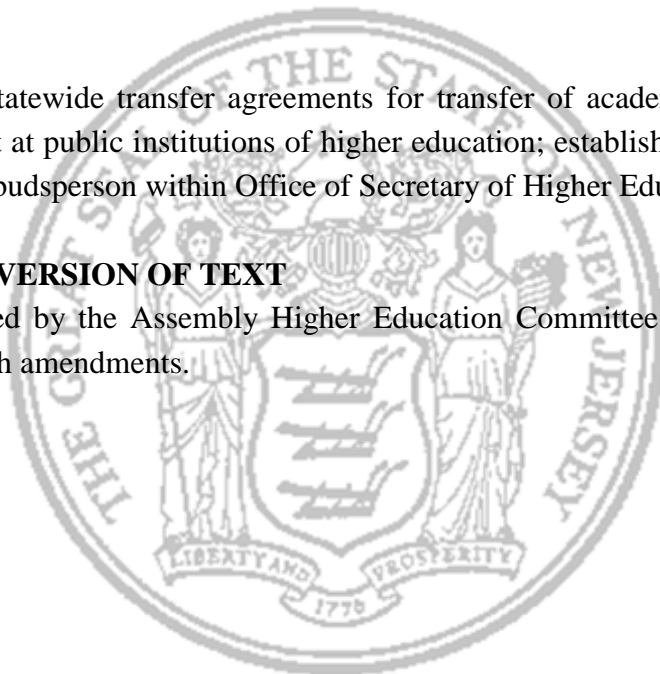
**Assemblyman Atkins, Assemblywomen Morales, Reynolds-Jackson,
Assemblyman Wimberly, Assemblywomen Hall, Speight and Pintor Marin**

SYNOPSIS

Revises Statewide transfer agreements for transfer of academic credit and reverse credit at public institutions of higher education; establishes New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson within Office of Secretary of Higher Education.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Assembly Higher Education Committee on September 23, 2024, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 10/28/2024)

1 AN ACT concerning academic credit transfer at public institutions of
2 higher education, amending P.L.2007, c.175 and P.L.2017,
3 c.130, and supplementing chapter 62 of Title 18A of the New
4 Jersey Statutes.

5

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

8

9 1. Section 1 of P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-46) is amended to
10 read as follows:

11 1. Each public institution of higher education **[**, in consultation
12 with the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education and the New
13 Jersey Presidents' Council,**]** shall **[**establish and**]** enter into a
14 collective Statewide transfer agreement **[**that provides for the
15 seamless transfer of academic credits to a baccalaureate degree
16 program from a completed associate of arts degree program, a
17 completed associate of science degree program, or a completed
18 associate in applied science in technical studies degree program
19 which has credits transferred by the NJ PLACE program from
20 apprenticeship programs**]** developed by the New Jersey Presidents'
21 Council, in consultation with the New Jersey Transfer
22 Ombudsperson established pursuant to section 5 of
23 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)
24 ¹and approved by the Secretary of Higher Education¹, that provides
25 for the transfer of academic credits between all public institutions
26 of higher education in the State. The transfer agreement shall be
27 submitted to the Secretary of Higher Education for review and
28 approval every five years and shall include:

29 a. a listing of the general education core courses^{1,1} as
30 **[**stipulated**]** compiled by the Presidents' Council, in consultation
31 with the New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson established pursuant
32 to section 5 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
33 Legislature as this bill)¹. The listing of general education core
34 courses shall be developed in accordance with regulations
35 promulgated by the Secretary of Higher Education¹;

36 b. policies and procedures for the **[**seamless**]** transfer and
37 application of academic credits;

38 (1) for general education courses between public institutions of
39 higher education, which policies and procedures ensure that credits
40 for general education courses are fully transferable and applicable
41 across all public institutions of higher education; ¹**[**and**]**¹

42 (2) to a baccalaureate degree program from a completed
43 associate degree program, **[**including a guarantee**]** which policies

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:

¹ Assembly AHI committee amendments adopted September 23, 2024.

1 and procedures ensure that an associate **【of arts】** degree**【,** associate
2 of science degree, or associate in applied science in technical
3 studies degree which has credits transferred by the NJ PLACE
4 program from apprenticeship programs,**】** awarded by a county
5 college established pursuant to chapter 64A of Title 18A of the New
6 Jersey Statutes shall be fully transferable and credited as the first
7 two years of a baccalaureate degree program at the four-year public
8 institution of higher education in the State to which a student is
9 admitted; ¹and

10 (3) for courses completed under a dual enrollment agreement or a
11 concurrent enrollment agreement between a public school in the
12 State and a public institution of higher education, which policies
13 and procedures ensure that credits for these courses are fully
14 transferable and applicable across all public institutions of higher
15 education;¹

16 c. policies and procedures for the **【implementation of an**
17 **appeals process for students and institutions to resolve disputes**
18 **regarding the transfer of academic credits】** New Jersey Transfer
19 Ombudsperson established pursuant to section 5 of
20 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)
21 to utilize in facilitating the resolution of credit transfer disputes
22 between students and public institutions of higher education;

23 d. **【policies and procedures for the annual review and update of**
24 **the agreement; and】** (Deleted by amendment, P.L. , c.) (pending
25 before the Legislature as this bill)

26 e. policies and procedures for the collection of data by the
27 **【commission】** Secretary of Higher Education to be utilized by the
28 New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson established pursuant to section
29 5 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this
30 bill) to ensure that all 【participating】 public institutions of higher
31 education are in compliance with the provisions of 【this act】
32 P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-46 et seq.), as amended and
33 supplemented, and to ensure that the agreement is fostering 【both a
34 seamless】 the transfer process and the academic success of transfer
35 students at the 【senior】 receiving institutions. The 【commission】
36 secretary shall annually determine the data to be collected and shall
37 notify each 【participating】 public institution in a timely manner;
38 and

39 f. policies and procedures for the transfer and application of
40 academic credits earned through participation in dual enrollment or
41 concurrent enrollment.

42 **【The policies and procedures set forth in the transfer agreement**
43 **shall be fully operational by September 1, 2008, except that, with**
44 **respect to associate in applied science in technical studies degree**
45 **programs which have credits transferred by the NJ PLACE program**

1 from apprenticeship programs, the transfer agreement shall be fully
2 operational by September 1, 2011】

3 As used in this section, “general education” means instruction
4 that presents forms of expression, fields of knowledge, and methods
5 of inquiry fundamental to intellectual growth and to a mature
6 understanding of the world and the human condition, as
7 distinguished from “specialized education,” which prepares
8 individuals for particular occupations or specific professional
9 responsibilities.

10 (cf: P.L.2009, c.200, s.2)

11

12 2. Section 1 of P.L.2017, c.130 (C.18A:62-46.1) is amended to
13 read as follows:

14 1. a. Each public institution of higher education【, in
15 consultation with the Secretary of Higher Education the New Jersey
16 Presidents' Council,】 shall 【establish and】 enter into a collective
17 Statewide reverse transfer agreement developed by the New Jersey
18 Presidents’ Council, in consultation with the New Jersey Transfer
19 Ombudsperson established pursuant to section 5 of
20 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

21 Under the agreement, a student enrolled in a four-year ¹public¹
22 institution of higher education who has a cumulative total of 66
23 credits earned between a county college established pursuant to
24 chapter 64A of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes and the four-
25 year ¹public¹ institution may be awarded an associate degree by the
26 county college. The reverse transfer agreement shall address the
27 following:

28 (1) the effective communication between the county college and
29 the four-year ¹public¹ institution on student transcripts and course
30 equivalencies;

31 (2) the process by which a student is notified of potential
32 eligibility, and by which the four-year ¹public¹ institution obtains
33 the consent of the student for release of 【his】 the student’s
34 transcript to the county college;

35 (3) procedures for advising students on the courses that a
36 student needs to complete to attain an associate degree; and

37 (4) 【policies and procedures for the annual review and update of
38 the agreement; and】 (Deleted by amendment, P.L. , c.) (pending
39 before the Legislature as this bill)

40 (5) policies and procedures for the collection of data by the
41 【secretary】 Secretary of Higher Education to ensure that all
42 institutions are in compliance with this section. The secretary shall
43 annually determine the data to be collected and shall notify each
44 institution in a timely manner.

45 b. 【The policies and procedures set forth in the collective
46 Statewide reverse transfer agreement shall be fully operational by

1 September 1, 2018.】 (Deleted by amendment, P.L. , c.)
2 (pending before the Legislature as this bill)

3 c. (1) The annual report prepared by the ¹【Secretary of Higher
4 Education】 New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson¹ pursuant to
5 section 4 of P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-49) shall include an
6 analysis of each institution's compliance with the provisions of this
7 section.

8 (2) 【In the first annual report issued after the effective date of
9 this act, the secretary shall identify the institutions that have entered
10 into a reverse transfer agreement prior to that effective date, and the
11 institutions that enter into an agreement on or after that effective
12 date.】 (Deleted by amendment, P.L. , c.) (pending before the
13 Legislature as this bill)
14 (cf: P.L.2017, c.130, s.1)
15

16 3. Section 2 of P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-47) is amended to
17 read as follows:

18 2. 【On or before January 1, 2008, each】 Each public institution
19 of higher education shall, in consultation with the 【Commission on】
20 Secretary of Higher Education 【and】 , the Presidents' Council, and
21 the New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson established pursuant to
22 section 5 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature
23 as this bill), develop and adopt as part of the collective Statewide
24 transfer agreement established pursuant to section 1 of 【this act】
25 P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-46), as amended and supplemented,
26 policies and procedures for the transfer of credits earned by a
27 student who has not completed 【his】 an associate degree program
28 prior to transferring into a baccalaureate degree program【, except
29 that, with respect to associate in applied science in technical studies
30 degree programs which have credits transferred by the NJ PLACE
31 program from apprenticeship programs, those policies and
32 procedures shall be developed and adopted on or before January 1,
33 2011】.

34 (cf: P.L.2009, c.200, s.3)
35

36 4. Section 4 of P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-49) is amended to
37 read as follows:

38 4. ¹a.¹ The 【Commission on Higher Education】 New Jersey
39 Transfer Ombudsperson established pursuant to section 5 of P.L. ,
40 c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) shall
41 prepare an annual report for the Secretary of Higher Education
42 containing a compilation of the data collected pursuant to
43 subsection e. of section 1 of 【this act】 P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-
44 46), as amended and supplemented, an analysis of the effect of the
45 agreement on the transfer process and on the academic success of
46 transfer students at the ¹【senior】 four-year public¹ institutions, and

1 an analysis of each participating public institution's compliance
2 with the provisions of this act P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-46 et
3 seq.), as amended and supplemented. The commission secretary
4 shall post the report on the Internet website of the Office of the
5 Secretary of Higher Education and¹ annually submit the report to
6 the Legislature and the New Jersey Presidents' Council, the
7 Governor by November 15th of each year , and to the
8 Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1).

9 ¹b. The report required pursuant to subsection a. of this section
10 shall include, but not be limited to, data on:

11 (1) the number of student transfers between four-year public
12 institutions of higher education and the number of student transfers
13 between county colleges and four-year public institutions of higher
14 education;

15 (2) the number of associate and baccalaureate degree
16 completions for transfer students;

17 (3) the number of students transferring from a county college to a
18 four-year public institution of higher education, the number of
19 credits awarded by a county college and, of those credits the
20 number of general education credits applied to a baccalaureate
21 degree program, the number of credits applies to a student's
22 program of study, and the number of credits applied as elective
23 credit;

24 (4) the number of credits awarded to a student during the
25 student's high school enrollment through a dual enrollment
26 agreement or a concurrent enrollment agreement and, of those
27 credits, the number of general education credits applied to an
28 associate's or baccalaureate degree program, the number of credits
29 applied to a student's program of study, and the number of credits
30 applied as elective credit;

31 (5) any public institutions of higher education determined by the
32 ombudsperson to be noncompliant with the agreement established
33 pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-46), as amended
34 and supplemented; and

35 (6) recommendations, as appropriate, to the Secretary of Higher
36 Education and the Legislature regarding the Statewide transfer
37 agreement and any other initiatives or proposals towards improving
38 the experiences and academic outcomes of transfer students.¹

39 (cf: P.L.2007, c.175, s.4)

40

41 5. (New section) a. The position of ¹the¹ New Jersey Transfer
42 Ombudsperson shall be established within the Office of the
43 Secretary of Higher Education. The ¹primary¹ purpose of the
44 ombudsperson shall be to facilitate the resolution of disputes
45 between students and public institutions of higher education
46 regarding ¹the institution's¹ compliance with the Statewide credit
47 transfer agreement established pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2007,

1 c.175 (C.18A:62-46), as amended and supplemented, in order to
2 foster the transfer process and the academic success of transfer
3 students ¹; provided, however, that the ombudsperson shall resolve
4 the disputes only after every reasonable effort has been exhausted
5 by a student and institution to resolve the dispute, as determined by
6 the ombudsperson¹.

7 b. The ombudsperson shall be qualified by training and
8 experience to perform the duties of the office.

9 c. The ombudsperson shall organize and direct the work of the
10 office, including the work of **【such】** any professional and clerical
11 staff as may be necessary to carry out the ombudsperson's duties.

12 d. The ombudsperson shall be responsible for:

13 (1) ¹overseeing and assessing the compliance of public
14 institutions of higher education with the provisions of P.L.2007,
15 c.175 (C.18A:62-46), as amended and supplemented;

16 (2)¹ final administrative decisions over disputes between
17 students and public institutions of higher education regarding the
18 transfer of academic credits ¹only after every reasonable effort has
19 been exhausted by the student and the institution to resolve the
20 dispute, as determined by the ombudsperson¹. In making a final
21 administrative decision, the ombudsperson shall give appropriate
22 consideration to any potential negative affect of a decision on
23 ¹**【the】** any¹ programmatic accreditation ¹**【of】** held by¹ the
24 institution; provided, however, that the institution shall be afforded
25 the opportunity to specifically demonstrate in each case the
26 potential negative effect of a decision not in favor of the institution
27 on ¹**【the】** any¹ programmatic accreditation ¹**【of】** held by¹ the
28 institution¹. The ombudsperson, in making a final administrative
29 decision, shall specify the provision or provisions of the Statewide
30 transfer agreement relevant to the decision in writing to the student
31 and the institution¹;

32 ¹**【(2)】** (3)¹ the periodic review, occurring not less than once
33 every five years, of the agreement to ensure compliance with the
34 provisions of P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-46 et seq.), as amended
35 and supplemented¹. The periodic review shall take into account, as
36 appropriate, final administrative decisions made by the
37 ombudsperson pursuant to this section¹; and

38 ¹**【(3)】** (4)¹ preparation of the annual credit transfer report
39 required pursuant to section 4 of P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-49),
40 which shall be posted publicly on the website of the Office of the
41 Secretary of Higher Education. ¹【The report shall include, but not
42 be limited to:

43 (a) the number of student transfers between public institutions of
44 higher education;

45 (b) the number of associate and baccalaureate degree
46 completions for transfer students;

1 (c) any public institutions of higher education determined by the
2 ombudsperson to be noncompliant with the agreement established
3 pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-46), as amended
4 and supplemented; and

5 (d) recommendations, as appropriate, to the Secretary of Higher
6 Education and the Legislature regarding the Statewide transfer
7 agreement and any other initiatives or proposals towards improving
8 the experiences and academic outcomes of transfer students. **】¹**

9
10 6. (New section) Each public institution of higher education
11 shall provide transfer students with data on program outcomes of
12 students who have transferred from other public institutions of
13 higher education in the State, including completion rates. The data
14 shall include general and specific programmatic outcomes, as those
15 measures are determined by the Secretary of Higher Education.

16
17 7. (New section) The Secretary of Higher Education shall
18 adopt rules and regulations, pursuant to the "Administrative
19 Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), necessary to
20 carry out the provisions of this act.

21
22 8. This act shall take effect immediately.