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ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
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STATE OF NEW JERSEY
221st LEGISLATURE

ADOPTED JUNE 3, 2024

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Assemblyman Wimberly, Assemblywomen Hall, Speight, Pintor Marin,
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SYNOPSIS

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

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As amended by the General Assembly on October 28, 2024.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/19/2024)

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 ²,including academic credits earned
27 through a dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment agreement².
28 The transfer agreement shall be submitted to the Secretary of
29 Higher Education for review and approval every five years and shall
30 include:

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

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

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

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:

¹Assembly AHI committee amendments adopted September 23, 2024.

²Assembly floor amendments adopted October 28, 2024.

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

12 (3) for courses completed under a dual enrollment agreement or a
13 concurrent enrollment agreement between a public school in the
14 State and a public institution of higher education ²in the State²,
15 which policies and procedures ensure that credits for these courses
16 are fully transferable and applicable across all ²[public]
17 participating² institutions of higher education;¹

18 ²(4) for courses completed under a dual enrollment agreement or
19 a concurrent enrollment agreement approved by the Secretary of
20 Higher Education that permits the dual enrollment or concurrent
21 enrollment of a student at both a public school in the State and an
22 out-of-State institution of higher education; and

23 (5) for general education courses between participating
24 independent institutions of higher education and public institutions
25 of higher education, which policies and procedures ensure that
26 credits for these courses are fully transferable and applicable across
27 all participating institutions of higher education;²

28 c. policies and procedures for the **[implementation of an**
29 **appeals process for students and institutions to resolve disputes**
30 **regarding the transfer of academic credits]** New Jersey Transfer
31 Ombudsperson established pursuant to section 5 of
32 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)
33 to utilize in facilitating the resolution of credit transfer disputes
34 between students and public institutions of higher education;

35 d. **[policies and procedures for the annual review and update of**
36 **the agreement; and]** (Deleted by amendment, P.L. , c.) (pending
37 before the Legislature as this bill)

38 e. policies and procedures for the collection of data by the
39 **[commission]** Secretary of Higher Education to be utilized by the
40 New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson established pursuant to section
41 5 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this
42 bill) to ensure that all [participating] ²[public] participating²
43 institutions of higher education are in compliance with the
44 provisions of [this act] P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-46 et seq.), as
45 amended and supplemented, and to ensure that the agreement is
46 fostering [both a seamless] the transfer process and the academic

1 success of transfer students at the **【senior】** receiving institutions.
2 The **【commission】** secretary shall annually determine the data to be
3 collected and shall notify each **【participating】** ²**【public】**
4 participating² institution in a timely manner; and

5 f. policies and procedures for the transfer and application of
6 academic credits earned through participation in dual enrollment or
7 concurrent enrollment.

8 **【The policies and procedures set forth in the transfer agreement**
9 **shall be fully operational by September 1, 2008, except that, with**
10 **respect to associate in applied science in technical studies degree**
11 **programs which have credits transferred by the NJ PLACE program**
12 **from apprenticeship programs, the transfer agreement shall be fully**
13 **operational by September 1, 2011】**

14 As used in this section, “general education” means instruction
15 that presents forms of expression, fields of knowledge, and methods
16 of inquiry fundamental to intellectual growth and to a mature
17 understanding of the world and the human condition, as
18 distinguished from “specialized education,” which prepares
19 individuals for particular occupations or specific professional
20 responsibilities.

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

22

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

25 1. a. Each public institution of higher education**【,** in
26 consultation with the Secretary of Higher Education the New Jersey
27 Presidents' Council,**】** shall **【establish and】** enter into a collective
28 Statewide reverse transfer agreement developed by the New Jersey
29 Presidents’ Council, in consultation with the New Jersey Transfer
30 Ombudsperson established pursuant to section 5 of
31 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

32 Under the agreement, a student enrolled in a ²participating² four-
33 year ²**【public】² institution of higher education who has a
34 cumulative total of 66 credits earned between a county college
35 established pursuant to chapter 64A of Title 18A of the New Jersey
36 Statutes and the ²participating² four-year ²**【public】² institution
37 may be awarded an associate degree by the county college. The
38 reverse transfer agreement shall address the following:****

39 (1) the effective communication between the county college and
40 the ²participating² four-year ²**【public】² institution on student
41 transcripts and course equivalencies;**

42 (2) the process by which a student is notified of potential
43 eligibility, and by which the ²participating² four-year ²**【public】²
44 institution obtains the consent of the student for release of **【his】** the
45 student’s transcript to the county college;**

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

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

4 (5) policies and procedures for the collection of data by the
5 **【**secretary**】** Secretary of Higher Education to ensure that all
6 ²participating² institutions are in compliance with this section. The
7 secretary shall annually determine the data to be collected and shall
8 notify each ²participating² institution in a timely manner.

9 b. **【**The policies and procedures set forth in the collective
10 Statewide reverse transfer agreement shall be fully operational by
11 September 1, 2018.**】** (Deleted by amendment, P.L. , c.)
12 (pending before the Legislature as this bill)

13 c. (1) The annual report prepared by the ¹**【**Secretary of Higher
14 Education**】** New Jersey Transfer Ombudsperson¹ pursuant to
15 section 4 of P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-49) shall include an
16 analysis of each ²participating² institution's compliance with the
17 provisions of this section.

18 (2) **【**In the first annual report issued after the effective date of
19 this act, the secretary shall identify the institutions that have entered
20 into a reverse transfer agreement prior to that effective date, and the
21 institutions that enter into an agreement on or after that effective
22 date.**】** (Deleted by amendment, P.L. , c.) (pending before the
23 Legislature as this bill)

24 ²d. An independent institution of higher education in the State
25 may elect to enter into the agreement.²
26 (cf: P.L.2017, c.130, s.1)

27
28 3. Section 2 of P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-47) is amended to
29 read as follows:

30 2. **【**On or before January 1, 2008, each**】** Each ²**【**public**】**
31 participating² institution of higher education shall, in consultation
32 with the **【**Commission on**】** Secretary of Higher Education **【**and**】** ,
33 the Presidents' Council, and the New Jersey Transfer
34 Ombudsperson established pursuant to section 5 of
35 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill),
36 develop and adopt as part of the collective Statewide transfer
37 agreement established pursuant to section 1 of **【**this act**】** P.L.2007,
38 c.175 (C.18A:62-46), as amended and supplemented, policies and
39 procedures for the transfer of credits earned by a student who has
40 not completed **【**his**】** an associate degree program prior to
41 transferring into a baccalaureate degree program**【**, except that, with
42 respect to associate in applied science in technical studies degree
43 programs which have credits transferred by the NJ PLACE program
44 from apprenticeship programs, those policies and procedures shall
45 be developed and adopted on or before January 1, 2011**】**.

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

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

3 4. ¹a.¹ The **Commission on Higher Education** New Jersey
4 Transfer Ombudsperson established pursuant to section 5 of P.L. ,
5 c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) shall
6 prepare an annual report for the Secretary of Higher Education
7 containing a compilation of the data collected pursuant to
8 subsection e. of section 1 of **[this act]** P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-
9 46), as amended and supplemented, an analysis of the effect of the
10 agreement on the transfer process and on the academic success of
11 transfer students at the ¹**[senior]** four-year public¹ institutions, and
12 an analysis of each **[participating]** ²**[public]** participating²
13 institution's compliance with the provisions of **[this act]** P.L.2007,
14 c.175 (C.18A:62-46 et seq.), as amended and supplemented. The
15 **[commission]** secretary shall ¹post the report on the Internet
16 website of the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and¹
17 annually submit the report to the **[Legislature and the]** New Jersey
18 Presidents' Council, the Governor [by November 15th of each
19 year] , and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991,
20 c.164 (C.52:14-19.1).

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

23 (1) the number of student transfers between four-year public
24 institutions of higher education ²**[and]** ,² the number of student
25 transfers between county colleges and four-year public institutions
26 of higher education², and the number of student transfers between a
27 public institution of higher education and a participating
28 independent institution of higher education²;

29 (2) the number of associate and baccalaureate degree
30 completions for transfer students;

31 (3) the number of students transferring from a county college to a
32 four-year public institution of higher education, the number of
33 credits awarded by a county college and, of those credits the
34 number of general education credits applied to a baccalaureate
35 degree program, the number of credits applies to a student's
36 program of study, and the number of credits applied as elective
37 credit;

38 (4) the number of credits awarded to a student during the
39 student's high school enrollment through a dual enrollment
40 agreement or a concurrent enrollment agreement and, of those
41 credits, the number of general education credits applied to an
42 associate's or baccalaureate degree program, the number of credits
43 applied to a student's program of study, and the number of credits
44 applied as elective credit;

45 (5) any ²**[public]** participating² institutions of higher education
46 determined by the ombudsperson to be noncompliant with the

1 agreement established pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2007, c.175
2 (C.18A:62-46), as amended and supplemented; and

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

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

8

9 5. (New section) a. The position of ¹the¹ New Jersey Transfer
10 Ombudsperson shall be established within the Office of the
11 Secretary of Higher Education. The ¹primary¹ purpose of the
12 ombudsperson shall be to facilitate the resolution of disputes
13 between students and ²[public] participating² institutions of higher
14 education regarding ¹[the institution's]¹ compliance with the
15 Statewide credit transfer agreement established pursuant to section
16 1 of P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-46), as amended and supplemented,
17 in order to foster the transfer process and the academic success of
18 transfer students ¹; provided, however, that the ombudsperson shall
19 resolve the disputes only after every reasonable effort has been
20 exhausted by a student and institution to resolve the dispute, as
21 determined by the ombudsperson¹.

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

24 c. The ombudsperson shall organize and direct the work of the
25 office, including the work of any professional and clerical staff as
26 may be necessary to carry out the ombudsperson's duties.

27 d. The ombudsperson shall be responsible for:

28 (1) ¹overseeing and assessing the compliance of ²[public]
29 participating² institutions of higher education with the provisions of
30 P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-46), as amended and supplemented;

31 ⁽²⁾¹ final administrative decisions over disputes between
32 students and ²[public] participating² institutions of higher
33 education regarding the transfer of academic credits ¹only after
34 every reasonable effort has been exhausted by the student and the
35 institution to resolve the dispute, as determined by the
36 ombudsperson¹. In making a final administrative decision, the
37 ombudsperson shall give appropriate consideration to any potential
38 negative affect of a decision on ¹[the] any¹ programmatic
39 accreditation ¹[of] held by¹ the institution; provided, however, that
40 the institution shall be afforded the opportunity to specifically
41 demonstrate in each case the potential negative effect of a decision
42 not in favor of the institution on ¹[the] any¹ programmatic
43 accreditation ¹[of] held by¹ the institution¹. The ombudsperson, in
44 making a final administrative decision, shall specify the provision
45 or provisions of the Statewide transfer agreement relevant to the
46 decision in writing to the student and the institution¹;

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

7 ¹**[(3)] (4)**¹ preparation of the annual credit transfer report
8 required pursuant to section 4 of P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-49),
9 which shall be posted publicly on the website of the Office of the
10 Secretary of Higher Education. ¹**[The report shall include, but not**
11 **be limited to:**

12 (a) the number of student transfers between public institutions of
13 higher education;

14 (b) the number of associate and baccalaureate degree
15 completions for transfer students;

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

20 (d) recommendations, as appropriate, to the Secretary of Higher
21 Education and the Legislature regarding the Statewide transfer
22 agreement and any other initiatives or proposals towards improving
23 the experiences and academic outcomes of transfer students.]¹

24
25 6. (New section) Each ²**[public]** participating² institution of
26 higher education shall provide transfer students with data on
27 program outcomes of students who have transferred from other
28 ²**[public]** participating² institutions of higher education in the State,
29 including completion rates. The data shall include general and
30 specific programmatic outcomes, as those measures are determined
31 by the Secretary of Higher Education.

32
33 ²**7.** (New section) The Secretary of Higher Education shall
34 approve or disapprove any dual enrollment or concurrent enrollment
35 agreement in which the partnering institution of higher education is
36 located out-of-State.²

37
38 ²**[7.] 8.**² (New section) The Secretary of Higher Education
39 shall adopt rules and regulations, pursuant to the "Administrative
40 Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), necessary to
41 carry out the provisions of this act.

42
43 ²**[8.] 9.**² This act shall take effect immediately.