

SENATE, No. 144

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 221st LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2024 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator NILSA I. CRUZ-PEREZ

District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “New Jersey College Ready Students Program Act”; provides tuition-free dual enrollment opportunities at county college for certain high school students.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 AN ACT concerning dual enrollment opportunities for certain
2 students and supplementing chapter 61C of Title 18A of the New
3 Jersey Statutes.

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

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8 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the “New Jersey
9 College Ready Students Program Act.”

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11 2. a. The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the
12 Secretary of Higher Education, shall establish a program to provide
13 for the tuition-free enrollment of certain public high school students
14 who enroll in dual enrollment courses at a county college.

15 b. In determining eligibility for the tuition benefit provided
16 pursuant to this section, the criteria shall be the same as the
17 Statewide eligibility standards regarding family need established by
18 the Board of Directors of the New Jersey Educational Opportunity
19 Fund created by section 4 of P.L.1968, c.142 (C.18A:71-31) to
20 qualify for financial assistance from the New Jersey Educational
21 Opportunity Fund.

22 c. An eligible student may receive up to 3 credits tuition-free
23 per semester, and no more than 6 credits tuition-free in a school
24 year in each of the 11th and 12th grades provided that:

25 (1) the school district in which the student is enrolled has
26 entered into a dual enrollment agreement with a county college
27 pursuant to the provisions of section 1 of P.L.2014, c.74
28 (C.18A:61C-10); and

29 (2) the student has earned a minimum grade point average to
30 indicate college readiness, as determined by the commissioner.

31 In order to maintain eligibility for the program, a student shall
32 receive a grade of C or higher for all college courses completed
33 through the program.

34 In the event that an otherwise eligible student does not meet the
35 minimum grade point average requirement established pursuant to
36 this section, the student shall be eligible to complete one remedial
37 course through the county college tuition-free per semester of
38 eligibility.

39 d. The State shall bear the cost of tuition for students who
40 participate in the program.

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42 3. The Commissioner of Education shall annually submit a
43 report on the program to the Governor, and to the Legislature
44 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1). The report
45 shall be submitted no later than August 1 of each year and shall
46 include, but not be limited to, the following information for the
47 prior school year: the number of students who participated in the
48 program; the number of participants who successfully completed

1 dual enrollment courses; the cost of the program, the number of
2 credits earned by participants through the program; the number of
3 remedial courses completed by participants through the program,
4 the number of 12th grade participants who graduated high school;
5 and the number of 12th grade participants who plan to enroll in
6 college in the upcoming school year.

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8 4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
9 the first full school year following the date of enactment.

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12 STATEMENT

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14 This bill establishes the “New Jersey College Ready Students
15 Program Act.” Under the bill, the Commissioner of Education, in
16 consultation with the Secretary of Higher Education, is directed to
17 establish a program to provide for the tuition-free enrollment of
18 certain public high school students who enroll in dual enrollment
19 courses at a local county college.

20 In determining eligibility for the tuition benefit provided
21 pursuant to the bill, the criteria will be the same as the Statewide
22 eligibility standards regarding family need established by the Board
23 of Directors of the New Jersey Educational Opportunity Fund to
24 qualify for financial assistance from the New Jersey Educational
25 Opportunity Fund.

26 A student may receive up to 3 credits tuition-free per semester,
27 and no more than 6 credits tuition-free in a school year in each of
28 the 11th and 12th grades provided that:

29 (1) the school district in which the student is enrolled has entered
30 into a dual enrollment agreement with a county college pursuant to
31 the provisions of State law; and

32 (2) the student has earned a minimum grade point average to
33 indicate college readiness, as determined by the commissioner.

34 In order to maintain eligibility for the program, a student shall
35 receive a grade of C or higher for all college courses completed
36 through the program.

37 In the event that an otherwise eligible student does not meet the
38 minimum grade point average requirement established pursuant to
39 this section, the student shall be eligible to complete one remedial
40 course through the county college tuition-free per semester of
41 eligibility.

42 Under the bill, the State will bear the cost of tuition for students
43 who participate in the program.

44 The Commissioner of Education is directed to annually submit a
45 report to the Governor and the Legislature on the program.