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SENATE, No. 4716

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

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Sponsored by:
Senator VIN GOPAL
District 11 (Monmouth)
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District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:
Senators Turner, McKnight and Diegnan

SYNOPSIS

Concerns charter school enrollment, student placements, reporting, and athletics.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Education Committee on November 10, 2025, with amendments.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/8/2025)

AN ACT concerning charter schools, amending and supplementing P.L.1995, c.426, and supplementing P.L.1986, c.160 (C.18A:36-19a).

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

[1]1. (New section) Unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the provisions of P.L.1995, c.426 (C.18A:36A-1 et seq.) shall not be construed as applying to renaissance school projects approved pursuant to the provisions of the "Urban Hope Act," P.L.2011, c.176 (C.18A:36C-1 et seq.).[1]

[1]**[**1.**]** 2.[1] Section 7 of P.L.1995, c.426 (C.18A:36A-7) is amended to read as follows:

7. [1]**[**a.**]**[1] A charter school shall be open to all students on a space available basis and shall not discriminate in its admission policies or practices on the basis of intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, status as a person with a disability, proficiency in the English language, or any other basis that would be illegal if used by a school district; however, a charter school may limit admission to a particular grade level or to areas of concentration of the school, such as mathematics, science, or the arts. **[**A**]** Except as otherwise permitted pursuant to section 8 of P.L.1995, c.426 (C.18A:36A-8), a charter school **[**may**]** shall not establish **[**reasonable**]** criteria to evaluate prospective students **[**which shall be outlined in the school's charter**]** and shall not impose qualifications for enrollment on a student selected through a random selection process established pursuant to section 8 of P.L.1995, c.426 (C.18A:36A-8). Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prohibit use of a weighted admission lottery in furtherance of a charter school seeking the enrollment of a cross section of the community's school age population pursuant to subsection e. of section 8 of P.L.1995, c.426 (C.18A:36A-8).

[1]**[**b. A charter school shall make its student application available in the seven most common non-English languages spoken by individuals with limited-English proficiency in the school district in which the charter school is located, based on United States Census Bureau American Community Survey data.**]**[1]

(cf: P.L.2017, c.131, s.26)

[1]**[**2.**]** 3.[1] Section 8 of P.L.1995, c.426 (C.18A:36A-8) is amended to read as follows:

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]Senate SED committee amendments adopted November 10, 2025.

8. a. Preference for enrollment in a charter school shall be given to students who reside in the school district in which the charter school is located. If there are more applications to enroll in the charter school than there are spaces available, the charter school shall select students to attend using a random selection process. A charter school shall not charge tuition to students who reside in the district.

b. A charter school shall allow any student who was enrolled in the school in the immediately preceding school year to enroll in the charter school in the appropriate grade unless the appropriate grade is not offered at the charter school.

c. A charter school may give enrollment priority to:

(1) a sibling of a student enrolled in the charter school; and

(2) regardless of residence, the children of teaching staff members of the charter school.

d. (1) If available space permits, a charter school may enroll **[**non-resident**]** students who do not reside in the school district in which the charter school is located, provided that the commissioner approves the enrollment of these students in accordance with paragraph (2) of this subsection. The terms and **[**condition**]** conditions of the enrollment shall be outlined in the school's charter and approved by the commissioner.

(2) The commissioner shall establish a procedure for the enrollment of students who do not reside in the school district in which the charter school is located. The procedure shall require the commissioner to evaluate the following criteria:

(a) the fiscal impact on the student's district of residence;

(b) the impact on student population diversity in the student's district of residence;

(c) the degree to which student attendance at a charter school located outside of the school district of residence will promote or reduce educational quality in the school district of residence and the charter school; and

(d) any other criteria the commissioner deems necessary.

e. The admission policy of the charter school shall, to the maximum extent practicable, seek the enrollment of a cross section of the community's school age population including racial and academic factors.

(cf: P.L.1995, c.426, s.8)

[1]**[**3.**]** 4.**[1]** Section 9 of P.L.1995, c.426 (C.18A:36A-9) is amended to read as follows:

9. a. A student may withdraw from a charter school at any time; however, a charter school, or any employee or representative thereof, shall not counsel or advise a student, or a student's parent or guardian, to withdraw from the charter school. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as prohibiting a charter school's child study team from considering, with the full participation of a

student's parent or guardian, a program or placement option for a student with a disability that includes placement in another setting in accordance with the provisions of the "Individuals with Disabilities Education Act," 20 U.S.C. s.1400 et seq., chapter 46 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes, or regulations promulgated thereto.

b. Except as otherwise provided in section 1 of P.L.2016, c.45 (C.18A:37-2a), a student may be expelled from a charter school based on criteria determined by the board of trustees, which are consistent with the provisions of N.J.S.18A:37-2, and approved by the commissioner as part of the school's charter. Any expulsion shall be made upon the recommendation of the charter school principal, in consultation with the student's teachers.

(cf: P.L.2016, c.45, s.3)

[1][4.]** 5.[1]** (New section) a. The Commissioner of Education shall establish minimum qualification standards and training requirements for the position of student placement liaison.

b. The chief school administrator or lead person of a public school shall designate a staff member who meets the qualification standards established by the commissioner to serve as a student placement liaison.

c. It shall be the responsibility of the student placement liaison to:

(1) coordinate with a new student's school of last attendance and the parent or guardian of a new student to ensure the successful transition of the student;

(2) coordinate with an exiting student's subsequent educational placement, including when placement occurs at an alternative education program, and the student's parent or guardian to ensure the successful transition of the student; and

(3) regularly track and maintain student enrollment data, including information on student transfers into or out of the public school, to ensure State school aid is provided in accordance with State law and regulation.

[1][5.]** 6.[1]** (New section) In addition to the responsibilities required pursuant to subsection c. of section **[1]**[4]** 5[1]** of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), a charter school's student placement liaison shall, to the greatest extent practicable, conduct an exit interview for any student who exits the charter school for a reason other than graduation. When conducting an exit interview, the student placement liaison shall identify the reasons contributing to the decision to exit the school.

[1][6.]** 7.[1]** (New section) a. Each charter school shall**[1]**[**, based on exit reporting criteria developed by the Commissioner of Education, annually report to the commissioner and to each school

district served by the charter school] include information on[1] the number of students exiting the charter school in the preceding school year [1]in the annual report submitted by the charter school to the commissioner pursuant to section 16 of P.L.1995, c.426 (C.18A:36A-16)[1].

b. The [1][report] information[1] shall include last dates of attendance, reasons for exiting the charter school, and subsequent educational placements. The [1][report] information[1] shall not include the personal identifying information of an individual or any information that would otherwise violate the privacy rights of a student.

c. The commissioner shall establish a comprehensive list of reasons for exiting a charter school that a charter school shall select from when reporting exit data pursuant to the provisions of this section.

[1][7.] 8.[1] (New section) The Commissioner of Education shall post on the Department of Education's Internet website, the report card information of a charter school required pursuant to section 3 of P.L.1995, c.235 (C.18A:7E-3). If a charter school operates more than one charter school facility, the information shall be posted separately for each charter school facility.

[1][8.] 9.[1] (New section) a. A charter school that offers interscholastic athletics shall join one or more voluntary associations that regulate the conduct of student activities between and among their members, whose membership may include private and public schools. Membership in the voluntary association shall be by resolution of the board of trustees, adopted annually. A voluntary association shall not be operative without approval of its charter, constitution, bylaws, and rules and regulations by the Commissioner. Upon the adoption of the resolution, the board, its faculty, and students shall be governed by the rules and regulations of that association. The rules and regulations of the association shall be deemed to be the policy of the board of trustees and enforced first by the internal procedures of the association. In matters involving only public schools and students, faculty, administrators and boards thereof, appeals shall be to the commissioner and thereafter the Superior Court. In all other matters, appeals shall be made directly to the Superior Court. The commissioner shall have the authority to direct the association to conduct an inquiry by hearing or otherwise on a particular matter or alternatively, direct that particular matter be heard directly by the commissioner. The association shall be a party to any proceeding before the commissioner or in any court.

b. The rules and regulations of the voluntary association shall only apply to association sanctioned activities offered by the charter school.

[1]**[**9.**]** 10.[1] (New section) a. A non-resident student enrolled at a charter school shall meet the following requirements to participate in interscholastic athletics at the school:

(1) the student shall reside within a 20-mile radius of the charter school;

(2) if the student initially enrolls in the charter school in grade 11, the student shall not participate in interscholastic athletics for one year following the date of enrollment; and

(3) if the student initially enrolls in the charter school in grade 12, the student shall not participate in interscholastic athletics.

b. The commissioner may authorize a waiver of the provisions of subsection a. of this section if the school district of residence of the non-resident student does not offer the interscholastic athletic activity in which the non-resident student participates.

c. The provisions of subsection a. of this section shall not apply to any student enrolled in a charter school on the effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

[1]**[**10.**]** 11.[1] This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to the first full school year next following the date of enactment.