

SENATE, No. 4652

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 1, 2026

Sponsored by:
Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER
District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

SYNOPSIS

Requires transparency, standards, and discontinuance of certain Statewide assessments; eliminates high school graduation proficiency test.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning Statewide assessments, supplementing
2 P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-1 et seq.), and amending and
3 repealing various parts of the statutory law.

4

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

7

8 1. (New section) As used in sections 1 through 3 of
9 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill):

10 "Commercially-developed standardized assessment" means a
11 State-required assessment that: is administered by a school district
12 or charter school; requires all students in a grade to answer the same
13 questions, or a selection of questions from a common bank of
14 questions, in the same manner; and is developed and scored by an
15 entity under contract with a board of education. A commercially-
16 developed standardized assessment shall not include district-
17 mandated assessments or diagnostic and formative assessments used
18 by teaching staff members to identify particular student learning
19 needs or the need for special services, or to modify instructional
20 strategies to improve an individual student's learning.

21 "State assessment" means an assessment required pursuant to
22 State or federal law and administered to all students in a specific
23 grade level or subject area and whose results are aggregated for
24 analysis at the district, school, or student subgroup level.

25

26 2. (New section) a. The Department of Education shall provide
27 each school district with the results of any State assessment or
28 commercially-developed standardized assessment administered to
29 the district's students within 30 days of the administration of the
30 test.

31 b. A school district shall provide the parents or guardians of a
32 student enrolled in the district the results of any State assessment or
33 commercially-developed standardized assessment administered to
34 the student within 14 days of receiving the results from the
35 department pursuant to subsection a. of this section.

36

37 3. (New section) a. The Commissioner of Education shall
38 review, and determine the continued applicability of, any State
39 assessment or commercially-developed standardized assessment
40 that is administered to students in grades three through 12 as of the
41 effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
42 Legislature as this bill). The commissioner shall discontinue the
43 use of any assessment that is not necessary for complying with the
44 requirements of State or federal law.

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.

1 b. Within 90 days of the effective date of P.L. , c. (C.)
2 (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the commissioner shall
3 develop guidelines that provide best practices for school districts in
4 preparing students to take any State assessment or commercially-
5 developed standardized assessment, including guidelines on
6 limiting the amount of instructional time to be spent on test
7 preparation for these assessments.

8 c. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the ability
9 of a classroom teacher or board of education to develop, administer,
10 and score an assessment for an individual classroom, grade level, or
11 group of grade levels in any subject area in grades three through 12.
12

13 4. (New section) Notwithstanding the provisions of any law,
14 rule, or regulation to the contrary, the State Board of Education
15 shall not require as part of the standards for graduation from high
16 school, developed pursuant to section 1 of P.L.1979, c.241
17 (C.18A:7C-1), that any high school student achieve satisfactory
18 performance on any Statewide proficiency test.
19

20 5. Section 1 of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-1) is amended to
21 read as follows:

22 1. By July 1, 1980 the Commissioner of Education with the
23 approval of the State Board of Education shall establish a program
24 of standards for graduation from **【secondary】** high school. **【Such**
25 **a】** The program shall include, but not be limited to:

26 a. **【The development of a Statewide assessment test in reading,**
27 **writing and computational skills to be administered to all secondary**
28 **school pupils as provided herein;】** (Deleted by amendment,
29 P.L. , c.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)

30 b. **【Clear and explicit】** Statewide levels of proficiency in
31 reading, writing, and computational skills to be demonstrated as a
32 minimum requirement for high school graduation;

33 c. Guidelines for the development of graduation standards by
34 local boards of education;

35 d. Guidelines for remediation procedures for **【pupils】** students
36 who fail to meet graduation standards; and

37 e. Guidelines for graduation standards for those **【pupils】**
38 students classified pursuant to chapter 46 of Title 18A of the New
39 Jersey Statutes.

40 (cf: P.L.1979, c.241, s.1)
41

42 6. Section 2 of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-2) is amended to
43 read as follows:

44 2. Pursuant to guidelines established by the Commissioner of
45 Education, each board of education shall establish standards for
46 graduation from its **【secondary】** high schools. The standards shall
47 include, but **【need】** not be limited to:

1 a. **【Satisfactory performance on the Statewide assessment test**
2 **as provided for in section 1 of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-1);】**
3 **(Deleted by amendment, P.L. , c.) (pending before the**
4 **Legislature as this bill)**

5 b. Demonstration of proficiencies in those subject areas and
6 skills identified by the board as necessary for graduation **【other**
7 **than those assessed by the Statewide assessment tests】**.

8 The **【Commissioner of Education】** commissioner shall monitor
9 local plans for the assessment of proficiencies required for
10 graduation including techniques and instruments to be used to
11 determine **【pupil】** student proficiency; required programs designed
12 to provide the opportunity for **【pupils】** students to progress toward
13 the mastery of proficiencies required for graduation; and
14 remediation programs for **【pupils】** students who fail to meet
15 graduation proficiency standards in order to assure compliance with
16 the requirement of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-1 et seq.).

17 The **【Commissioner of Education】** commissioner shall, upon
18 request of the local board, provide **【such】** technical assistance as
19 may be necessary to aid a district in the planning, implementation,
20 and evaluation of graduation standards.

21 (cf: P.L.1996, c.138, s.46)

22
23 7. Section 3 of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-3) is amended to
24 read as follows:

25 For any student who **【does not meet the State and district**
26 **examination standards】** has not demonstrated satisfactory progress
27 towards meeting the State and local requirements for graduation by
28 the end of 11th grade, the local board of education when
29 appropriate shall provide additional remedial instruction
30 specifically directed toward mastery of those proficiencies
31 identified as necessary for the awarding of a diploma, which may
32 include, but **【need】** not be limited to, an extended school year,
33 extended school day, or additional school years.

34 Any **【12th grade】** student in grade 12 who does not meet **【said】**
35 the requirements but who has met all the credit, curriculum, and
36 attendance requirements shall be eligible for a comprehensive
37 assessment of **【said】** these proficiencies utilizing techniques and
38 instruments other than standardized tests, which techniques and
39 instruments shall have been approved by the Commissioner of
40 Education as fulfilling State and local graduation requirements.

41 (cf: P.L.1988, c.168, s.1)

42
43 8. Section 4 of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-4) is amended to
44 read as follows:

45 4. All students who meet State and local graduation
46 requirements shall receive a State endorsed diploma; provided,
47 however, that the Commissioner of Education shall approve any

1 State endorsed diploma which utilizes the comprehensive
2 assessment techniques as provided in section 3 of P.L.1979, c.241
3 (C.18A:7C-3).

4 Local districts may not provide a high school diploma to students
5 not meeting these standards. Any out-of-school youth or adult age
6 18 or over who has otherwise met the district graduation
7 requirements but has **【failed to earn】** not previously been granted a
8 State endorsed diploma **【may take the graduation proficiencies test**
9 which has been developed and administered under the auspices of
10 the Commissioner of Education. Upon passing this test, a State
11 endorsed diploma will be granted**】** may apply for and shall be
12 granted a State endorsed diploma.

13 Each board of education shall provide, in a format approved by
14 the **【Commissioner of Education】** commissioner, a performance
15 transcript for each student leaving **【secondary】** high school.
16 (cf: P.L.1988, c.168, s.2)

17
18 9. Section 5 of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-5) is amended to
19 read as follows:

20 Upon adoption by the local board of education, each board of
21 education shall provide each high school **【pupil】** student and the
22 parents or legal guardians of **【such pupil】** the student with a copy
23 of **【said】** the board's policy on graduation, including a clear
24 statement of the proficiencies required for graduation and those
25 programs available to assist in attaining those levels of proficiency.
26 (cf: P.L.1979, c. 241, s. 5)

27
28 10. Section 3 of P.L.1995, c.235 (C.18A:7E-3) is amended to
29 read as follows:

30 3. Report cards issued pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1995, c.235
31 (C.18A:7E-2) shall include, but not be limited to, the following
32 information for:

33 a. the school district and for each school within the district, as
34 appropriate:

35 (1) results of the elementary assessment programs;

36 (2) results of the Early Warning Test;

37 (3) **【results of the High School Proficiency Test;】** (Deleted by
38 amendment, P.L. , c.) (pending before the Legislature as this
39 bill)

40 (4) daily attendance records for students and professional staff;

41 (5) student graduation and dropout rates;

42 (6) annual student scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test;

43 (7) total student enrollment, percentage of **【limited English**
44 **proficient students】** multilingual learners, percentage of students in
45 advanced placement courses, and any other school characteristics
46 which the commissioner deems appropriate;

1 (8) instructional resources including teacher/student ratio,
2 average class size and amount of instructional time per day, as
3 calculated by formulas specified by the commissioner;

4 (9) a written narrative by the school principal or a designee
5 which describes any special achievements, events, problems or
6 initiatives of the school or district;

7 (10) data identifying the number and nature of all reports of
8 harassment, intimidation, or bullying;

9 (11) indicators of student career readiness;

10 (12) the number and percentage of students who were chronically
11 absent, as defined in rules and regulations promulgated by the
12 Commissioner of Education within 90 days of the effective date of
13 P.L.2018, c.23 (C.18A:38-25.1 et al.), including the number and
14 percentage of students who were chronically absent disaggregated
15 by multiple student subgroups to be determined by the
16 commissioner;

17 (13) the number, percentage, and demographics, including race,
18 gender, disability, grade level, and eligibility for free or reduced-
19 price lunch under the National School Lunch Program, of students
20 who received one or more suspensions or expulsions or who were
21 reported to or arrested by law enforcement, by category of offense,
22 pursuant to the provisions of the Uniform State Memorandum of
23 Agreement Between Education and Law Enforcement Officials; and

24 (14) the number of school psychologists, school counselors,
25 social workers, student assistance coordinators, and other mental
26 health professionals employed by, or under contract with, the school
27 district to provide mental health services to students, and the ratio
28 of students to the total number of mental health professionals
29 providing services in the school and the district; and

30 (15) the number of school safety specialists; and

31 b. the school district, as appropriate:

32 (1) per pupil expenditures and State aid ratio;

33 (2) percent of budget allocated for salaries and benefits of
34 administrative personnel;

35 (3) percent of budget allocated for salaries and benefits of
36 teachers;

37 (4) percentage increase over the previous year for salaries and
38 benefits of administrative and instructional personnel;

39 (5) the number of administrative personnel and the ratio of
40 administrative personnel to instructional personnel;

41 (6) a profile of the most recent graduating class concerning
42 their educational or employment plans following graduation; and

43 (7) any other information which the commissioner deems
44 appropriate.

45 For the purposes of this section, the **【Commissioner of**
46 **Education】** commissioner shall establish a uniform methodology for

1 the reporting of the data concerning administrative personnel on a
2 full-time equivalent basis.
3 (cf: P.L.2021, c.387, s.1)
4

5 11. Section 10 of P.L.2011, c.176 (C.18A:36C-10) is amended
6 to read as follows:

7 10. a. The renaissance school project shall be authorized for 10
8 years from the date of opening, subject to periodic reviews by the
9 commissioner. The renaissance school project shall be
10 automatically renewed for additional five-year periods provided
11 there is not a breach of the agreement that outlines the terms and
12 conditions of the renaissance school project.

13 Every **【ten】 10** years, the commissioner shall conduct a
14 comprehensive review of the renaissance school project prior to
15 granting a renewal. Renewal at these 10-year intervals shall be
16 presumed provided there is not a breach of the agreement that
17 outlines the terms and conditions of the renaissance school project
18 and the renaissance school project's average percent of students
19 proficient on the New Jersey **【Assessment of Skills and**
20 **Knowledge】** Student Learning Assessments, if the school includes
21 any grades from three to eight, **【or on the New Jersey High School**
22 **Proficiency Assessment, if the school includes grades 11 and 12,】**
23 exceed the average percent of students proficient for the renaissance
24 school district in which it is located in like grades by 15 percent or
25 more in language arts literacy, mathematics, or both after five years,
26 and 25 percent or more in language arts literacy, mathematics, or
27 both after **【ten】 10** years, or achieves the State-level proficiency
28 standards during that period.

29 b. The commissioner shall periodically assess whether each
30 renaissance school project is meeting its goals and improving
31 student achievement. In order to facilitate the commissioner's
32 review, each renaissance school project shall submit an annual
33 report to the commissioner in the form prescribed by the
34 commissioner. The report shall be received annually by August 1
35 and shall be made publicly available immediately thereafter,
36 including on the Department of Education's website.

37 c. The commissioner shall have on-going access to the records
38 and facilities of the renaissance school project and the nonprofit
39 entity to ensure that the renaissance school project is in compliance
40 with its organizational document and with State laws and
41 regulations.

42 d. Five years following the date of the opening of the third
43 renaissance school project, or **【ten】 10** years after the opening of
44 the first renaissance school project, whichever occurs first, a review
45 of the efficacy of the program shall be conducted by an independent
46 education researcher or research organization selected by the
47 commissioner. The independent review shall be funded by the

1 Department of Education. The review shall include interviews with
2 staff, parents, and resident district representatives, and a fiscal and
3 educational assessment. The commissioner shall report the results
4 of the review to the Governor, the State Board of Education, and to
5 the Legislature as provided pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164
6 (C.52:14-19.1), and, in addition, the Governor shall report on the
7 efficacy of the renaissance school projects in educating students and
8 whether additional renaissance school districts should be authorized
9 and, if so, how many. The commissioner shall also recommend any
10 changes to this act deemed appropriate based on experience with the
11 renaissance school projects and the independent review.

12 (cf: P.L.2011, c.176, s.10)

13
14 12. The following sections are repealed:

15 Section 6 of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-6);

16 Section 5 of P.L.1988, c.168 (C.18A:7C-6.1);

17 Section 7 of P.L.1988, c.168 (C.18A:7C-10); and

18 Section 8 of P.L.1988, c.168 (C.18A:7C-11).

19
20 13. This act shall take effect immediately and sections 4 through
21 9 shall first apply to students entering grade 12 in the 2027-2028
22 school year.

23 24 25 STATEMENT

26
27 This bill requires transparency, standards, and discontinuance of
28 certain Statewide assessments. It also eliminates the high school
29 graduation proficiency test.

30 State Board of Education regulations require the Department of
31 Education to provide certain information to school districts after
32 each administration of the Statewide assessments. This information
33 includes individualized test results for each student in the districts.
34 There is no statute or regulation, however, specifying a timeframe
35 in which the department is required to release these test results to
36 the school district. Additionally, State board regulations require
37 chief school administrators to provide educators, parents, and
38 students with the results of Statewide assessments within 30 days of
39 receipt of the information from the department.

40 This bill specifies that the department is to provide these test
41 results to each school district within 30 days of the administration
42 of the test. Under the bill, a school district would then have 14 days
43 to provide those results to the parents or guardians of students
44 enrolled in the district.

45 The bill also requires the Commissioner of Education to review,
46 and determine the continued applicability of, State assessments or
47 commercially-developed standardized assessments that are
48 administered to students in grades three through 12. The bill

1 requires the commissioner to discontinue the use of any assessment
2 that is not necessary for complying with the requirements of State
3 or federal law. The bill clarifies that it is not to be construed to limit
4 the ability of a classroom teacher or board of education to develop,
5 administer, and score an assessment for an individual classroom,
6 grade level, or group of grade levels in any subject area in grades
7 three through 12.

8 Under the bill, the commissioner would develop guidelines that
9 provide best practices for school districts in preparing students for
10 taking any State assessment or commercially-developed
11 standardized assessment. The best practices will include guidelines
12 on limiting the amount of instructional time to be spent on test
13 preparation for these assessments.

14 The bill further prohibits the State Board of Education from
15 including in the standards for graduation from high school a
16 requirement that students achieve satisfactory performance on the
17 Statewide graduation proficiency test.

18 The bill amends current law to remove various references to the
19 graduation proficiency test, including: the requirement that a
20 Statewide proficiency test be included in the State or district
21 standards for graduation from high school; the requirement that an
22 out-of-school youth or adult age 18 or older pass the graduation
23 proficiency test before being granted a State endorsed diploma; the
24 requirement that school district report cards include information
25 regarding the results of the graduation proficiency test; and the
26 requirement that renaissance school projects be evaluated based on
27 students' performance on the graduation proficiency test.

28 Finally, the bill repeals the section of law that requires the State
29 to administer a graduation proficiency test to all 11th grade students
30 and certain 12th grade students, and repeals the section of law that
31 requires the Commissioner of Education to consult with educators,
32 parents, students, business and community representatives, and
33 members of minority groups while developing the graduation
34 proficiency test. The bill also repeals sections of law requiring the
35 commissioner and the Joint Committee on the Public Schools to
36 review and report on student performance on the graduation
37 proficiency test.