

# SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

[Second Reprint]

## ASSEMBLY, No. 1181

with committee amendments

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 27, 2023

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports Assembly Bill No. 1181 (2R) with committee amendments.

The amended bill provides that, beginning with the 2023-2024 grade 11 class, and for two school years thereafter, a board of education or a board of trustees of a charter school will require a student, and the student's parent or guardian, if applicable, to complete and submit a financial aid application in a form prescribed by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) as a prerequisite to the student receiving a high school diploma unless a waiver is submitted to the school district or charter school. A student is exempt from the requirement if the student, or the student's parent or guardian, submits to the school district or charter school a waiver form signed by the parent or guardian, or by the student if the student is at least 18 years of age, requesting the exemption from the requirement. If the student is under 18 years of age and a form signed by the parent or guardian cannot be reasonably obtained, the student's school counselor may authorize the waiver as permitted by regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education.

As amended, the bill directs the executive director of HESAA, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education, to provide resources for school districts, charter schools, parents, and students that include instructions on how to complete a financial aid application prescribed by the authority. The resources are to include webinars, presentations, guidance documents, and a list of available State and federal resources. The executive director of the authority is to make available such resources as are necessary directly to school counselors or other school employees who are required to share resources with students and with the students' parents or guardians. The amended bill also directs HESSA to make the resources available to institutions of higher education in order to facilitate the delivery of technical assistance to area high schools.

Under the amended bill, each school district and charter school will annually notify students and the parents or guardians of the requirement established by the bill. The amended bill also requires the

executive director of the authority to prepare and issue a report to the Department of Education, as well as to the Legislature, that includes the number of students that completed a financial aid form, as well as the number of waivers submitted to a school district or a charter school.

As amended and reported by the committee, Assembly Bill No. 1181 (2R) is identical to the Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 2054, which was also reported by the committee on this date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- provide that the provisions of the bill are required to begin with the 2023-2024 school year;
- specify that the provisions of the bill apply to charter schools;
- amend the title of the bill; and
- require that the executive director of the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority prepare and issue a report to the Department of Education and the Legislature, that includes the number of students that completed a financial aid form, as well as the number of waivers submitted to a school district or charter school.