

# ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### ASSEMBLY, No. 3319

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 14, 2023

The Assembly Education committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 3319.

This bill establishes in the Department of Education a three-year "Twelfth Grade Postsecondary Transition Year Pilot Program." The purpose of the pilot program is to offer participating 12th grade students with a guided start to postsecondary coursework, through the provision of targeted supports and no-cost courses. The pilot program is to be offered to students in school districts that have been impacted substantially by the COVID-19 public health crisis, where learning loss as a result of the pandemic has increased the likelihood of students abandoning their higher education goals.

Under the bill, the Commissioner of Education is directed to select two districts in each of the southern, central, and northern regions of the State to participate in the program and seek a cross section of school districts from urban, suburban, and rural areas of the State. The commissioner is to select districts impacted substantially by the COVID-19 public health crisis which have a high proportion of economically disadvantaged students and low rates of college enrollment among recent high school graduates.

The bill also directs the commissioner to provide a grant to each of the pilot districts to finance the costs associated with offering the pilot program, including the cost of tuition charged to the district pursuant to the bill's provisions.

The bill further directs a school district that wants to participate in the pilot program to submit an application to the commissioner with the items detailed in the bill's provisions. The bill requires a school district selected to participate in the pilot program to require participating students to: be enrolled in the 12th grade, except as otherwise approved by the school district superintendent; enroll in no less than six academic credits, and no more than 15 academic credits, in each semester; and maintain a 2.0 grade point average for the student's postsecondary coursework in order to continue participation in the program.

The bill requires an institution of higher education that enters into a partnership agreement with a participating school district to provide a program of six or more academic credits in each semester. The program is required to include a coherent sequence of courses applicable towards a postsecondary degree or credential and the

student's high school diploma requirements. The bill requires the institution to waive student fees and charge the partnering district no more than \$100 per academic credit for each participating student. The institution is also required to provide quarterly reports to the district, at a minimum, on the academic progress of the district's students enrolled in the program.

The bill directs a public institution of higher education to accept and apply towards an applicable degree program all credits earned by a student during the pilot program, in accordance with the institution's credit transfer policies. An independent institution of higher education may accept the credits earned by a student during the pilot program.

Finally, the bill requires the commissioner to submit a report at the conclusion of the pilot program to the Governor and the Legislature containing information on the implementation of the pilot program and the commissioner's recommendation on the feasibility of implementing the program on a Statewide basis.