

SENATE, No. 600

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 215th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2012 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator JENNIFER BECK

District 11 (Monmouth)

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex)

Assemblyman DAVID P. RIBLE

District 30 (Monmouth and Ocean)

Assemblywoman MARY PAT ANGELINI

District 11 (Monmouth)

Assemblyman JASON O'DONNELL

District 31 (Hudson)

Assemblywoman DONNA M. SIMON

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

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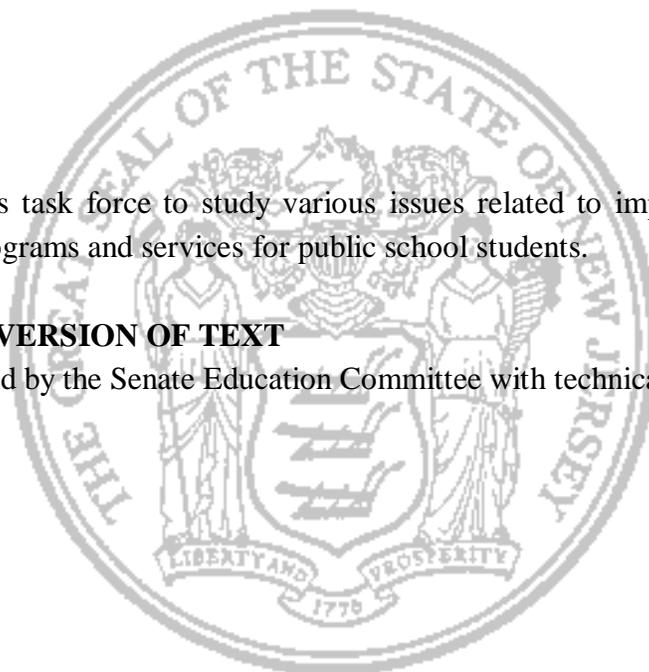
Senators Kyrillos, Singer, Allen, Madden, Assemblywoman Casagrande, Assemblymen S.Kean, Benson, Diegnan, Assemblywoman Wagner and Assemblyman Coughlin

SYNOPSIS

Establishes task force to study various issues related to improving special education programs and services for public school students.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Education Committee with technical review.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/29/2013)

1 AN ACT establishing a Task Force on Improving Special Education
2 for Public School Students.

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

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7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. According to the Department of Education, there are
9 approximately 215,000 students in the State currently eligible to
10 receive special education and related services, and the excess cost
11 of providing special education and related services beyond general
12 education is an additional \$11,000 per pupil;

13 b. Despite the ever-increasing allocation of State and local
14 dollars to fund special education services each year, many public
15 schools in the State are ill-equipped to provide effective special
16 education and related services for their students within the district
17 and must send students to out-of-district public schools or private
18 schools in order to meet their needs, which increases the overall
19 cost of providing special education and creates additional hardships
20 for the students and their parents;

21 c. A series of recent newspaper articles alleged that millions of
22 dollars are squandered on special education programs each year due
23 to fraud, a lack of oversight, a failure to document the effectiveness
24 of programs, the need to send students to out-of-district public or
25 private schools, and a lack of uniform standards for educating
26 students with certain disabilities such as autism;

27 d. Many parents and guardians of students requiring special
28 education feel that the programs and services do not adequately
29 meet the needs of their children, and that the current system is too
30 inflexible to allow for necessary programmatic changes; and

31 e. It is therefore in the public interest of special education
32 students and the parents or guardians of those students to establish a
33 task force to study various issues related to improving service
34 delivery and providing appropriate and cost-effective special
35 education programs and services for public school students.

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37 2. There is established a Task Force on Improving Special
38 Education for Public School Students to consist of 17 members as
39 follows: the Commissioner of Education, ex officio, or a designee;
40 and 16 members appointed by the Governor, including one parent or
41 guardian of a public school student receiving special education
42 services, one parent or guardian of a student attending a private
43 school for students with disabilities, one public school special
44 education teacher, one director of special education services for a
45 school district, one representative of the Arc of New Jersey, one
46 representative of the New Jersey Council on Developmental
47 Disabilities, one representative of the New Jersey Parent-Teacher

1 Association, one representative of the New Jersey Association of
2 School Administrators, one representative of the New Jersey
3 Education Association, one representative of the New Jersey School
4 Boards Association, one representative of the New Jersey Principals
5 and Supervisors Association, one representative of the New Jersey
6 Association of School Business Officials, one representative of the
7 Statewide Parent Advocacy Network of New Jersey, one
8 representative of the Garden State Coalition of Schools, one
9 representative of ASAH, and one representative of the American
10 Federation of Teachers.

11

12 3. Appointments to the task force shall be made within 30 days
13 of the effective date of this act. Vacancies in the membership of the
14 task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original
15 appointments were made. Members of the task force shall serve
16 without compensation but shall be entitled to their actual and
17 necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties
18 pursuant to this act.

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20 4. It shall be the duty of the task force to study issues
21 associated with improving the funding, delivery, and effectiveness
22 of special education programs and services for public school
23 students. The task force shall examine issues including, but not
24 limited to: the evaluation of practices for classifying and educating
25 students who are eligible for special education programs and
26 services; the development of best practices for education
27 professionals working with special education students; strategies to
28 reduce the costs associated with the placement of eligible students
29 in out-of-district public schools or private schools, including the
30 development of in-district special education programs and services;
31 and the development of standards and appropriate oversight to
32 ensure that programs and services address the needs of students,
33 focus on student achievement, and assess the effectiveness of
34 programs and services.

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36 5. Staff and related support services shall be provided to the
37 task force by the Department of Education. The task force shall also
38 be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of
39 the employees of any State, county or municipal department, board,
40 bureau, commission or agency as it may require and as may be
41 available to it for its purposes.

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43 6. The task force may meet and hold meetings at the place or
44 places it designates and shall present its findings and
45 recommendations to the Governor, the Legislature pursuant to
46 section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), the State Board of

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1 Education, and the Commissioner of Education no later than 180
2 days following its organizational meeting.

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4 7. This act shall take effect immediately and the task force
5 shall expire upon submission of its report pursuant to section 6 of
6 this act.