

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 991

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
217th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 4, 2016

Sponsored by:

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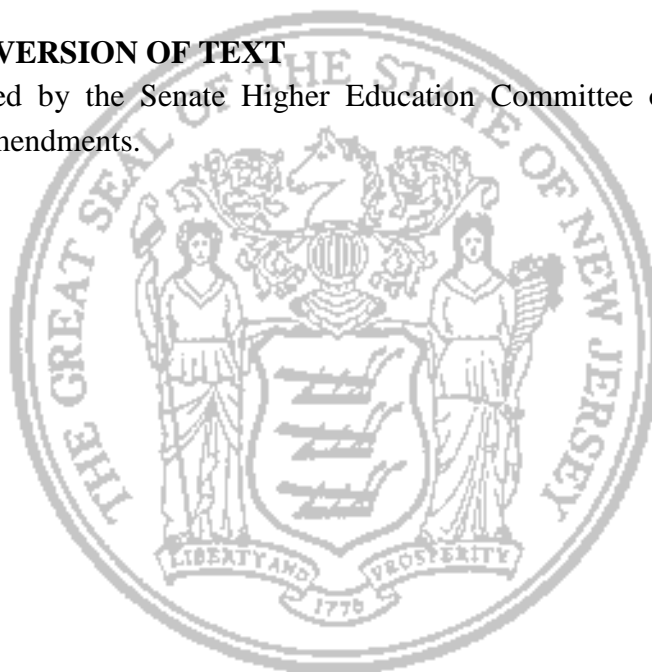
Senators Ruiz and Diegnan

SYNOPSIS

Revises and renames NJSTARS; repeals NJSTARS II; establishes NJ HonorScholars Program.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Higher Education Committee on February 8, 2016, with amendments.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/28/2017)

1 AN ACT concerning college scholarships, revising various parts of
2 the statutory law, and supplementing chapter 71B of Title 18A of
3 the New Jersey Statutes.

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

7
8 1. Section 1 of P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-81) is amended to
9 read as follows:

10 1. **[This act]** P.L.2004, c. 59 (C.18A:71B-81 et seq.) and
11 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) shall
12 be known and may be cited as the "New Jersey **[Student Tuition**
13 **Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS) Program]**
14 HonorScholars Act."
15 (cf: P.L.2004, c.59, s.1)

16
17 2. Section 3 of P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-83) is amended to
18 read as follows:

19 3. As used in **[this act]** P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-81 et seq.)
20 and P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill):

21 "Authority" means the Higher Education Student Assistance
22 Authority established pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71A-3.

23 "Full-time course of study" in any semester for a county college
24 student means a course of study, leading to a degree from the
25 county college of enrollment, that includes at least 12 credit hours,
26 not including any credit hours in a remedial or developmental
27 curriculum. "Full-time course of study" in any semester for a
28 student at a four-year public institution of higher education means a
29 course of study that includes at least 12 credit hours, not including
30 any credit hours in a remedial or developmental curriculum, and
31 leads to a degree from a New Jersey four-year public institution of
32 higher education.

33 "Program" means the New Jersey **[Student Tuition Assistance**
34 **Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS)]** HonorScholars Program **[for**
35 **county college students]**.
36 (cf: P.L.2004, c.59, s.3)

37
38 3. Section 4 of P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-84) is amended to
39 read as follows:

40 4. There is hereby created the New Jersey **[Student Tuition**
41 **Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS)]** HonorScholars
42 Program for county college students and students attending a State
43 public four-year institution of higher education. It shall be the duty

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:

¹Senate SHI committee amendments adopted February 8, 2016.

1 of the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority to administer
2 the program.

3 (cf: P.L.2004, c.59, s.4)

4

5 4. Section 5 of P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-85) is amended to
6 read as follows:

7 5. a. A county college scholarship under the **[NJ STARS]** New
8 Jersey HonorScholars Program shall cover the full cost of tuition,
9 subject to the prior application of other grants and scholarships
10 against those costs as provided under paragraph (2) of subsection c.
11 of this section, for up to 18 credit hours in any semester, for an
12 eligible student enrolled in a full-time course of study at the New
13 Jersey county college serving the student's county of residence. An
14 otherwise eligible student who demonstrates to the authority, in
15 accordance with such criteria and by means of such documentation
16 as the authority shall establish by regulation, that the county college
17 serving the student's county of residence does not offer the
18 curriculum that the student chooses to study shall be eligible for
19 such scholarship at another New Jersey county college offering that
20 curriculum. The amount of any scholarship allowed hereunder to a
21 student at a county college serving a county other than the student's
22 county of residence shall be computed as though the student were a
23 resident of the county served by that college, and the college shall
24 likewise compute the amount of any additional payment, required
25 with respect to the enrollment of that student for credit hours of
26 study during a semester in which the scholarship is awarded that are
27 not covered by that scholarship, as though the student were a
28 resident of the county.

29 b. A student shall be eligible for a county college scholarship
30 under the **[NJ STARS]** New Jersey HonorScholars Program for up
31 to five semesters, including summer sessions. The scholarship shall
32 be payable for the first year of enrollment in a county college to a
33 student who:

34 (1) has graduated high school and, in the case of a student who
35 graduates in the **[2013-2014]** 2016-2017 school year and thereafter,
36 whose class rank at the completion of the 11th grade or 12th grade
37 was in the top **[15.0%]** 20.0% of the student's high school class,
38 provided that in the case of students graduating from high schools
39 that do not calculate the class rank of their students, the student's
40 ranking at the completion of the 11th grade or 12th grade shall be
41 determined by the high school in consultation with the authority;
42 and

43 (2) completed a rigorous high school course of study in
44 accordance with standards established by the Secretary of Higher
45 Education in consultation with the Commissioner of Education.

46 During a student's enrollment in a county college after the first
47 year of enrollment, the scholarship shall be payable to that student
48 if the student attains a grade point average of at least 3.0 by the start

1 of the student's second year of county college enrollment. A
2 student who attains a grade point average of less than 3.0 at the start
3 of the second semester of the student's first year of county college
4 enrollment shall participate in an enrichment program designed by
5 the county college during the second semester of the student's first
6 year of enrollment.

7 c. To be eligible to receive a county college scholarship under
8 the **[NJ STARS]** New Jersey HonorScholars Program a student
9 shall:

10 (1) be a State resident pursuant to guidelines established by the
11 authority. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 1 of P.L.1979,
12 c.361 (C.18A:62-4) or any other section of law to the contrary, a
13 dependent child of a parent or guardian who has been transferred to
14 a military installation located in this State shall be considered a
15 resident of this State for the purposes of qualifying for **[an NJ**
16 **STARS]** a New Jersey HonorScholars scholarship;

17 (2) have applied for all other available forms of State and
18 federal need-based grants and merit scholarships, exclusive of
19 loans, the full amount of which grants and scholarships shall be
20 applied to tuition to reduce the amount of any county college
21 scholarship that the student shall receive under the **[provisions of**
22 **this act]** New Jersey HonorScholars Program;

23 (3) except as otherwise provided pursuant to subsection a. of
24 section 3 of P.L.2008, c.124 (C.18A:71B-85.2), be enrolled in a
25 full-time course of study at a New Jersey county college;

26 (4) have graduated from high school in 2004 or later, and not
27 earlier than the calendar year two years prior to the first calendar
28 year in which a scholarship payment is to be made; and

29 (5) except as otherwise provided pursuant to subsection a. of
30 section 3 of P.L.2008, c.124 (C.18A:71B-85.2), maintain
31 continuous enrollment in a full-time course of study, unless on
32 medical leave due to the illness of the student or a member of the
33 student's immediate family or emergency leave because of a family
34 emergency, which medical or emergency leave shall have been
35 approved by the county college, or unless called to partial or full
36 mobilization for State or federal active duty as a member of the
37 National Guard or a Reserve component of the Armed Forces of the
38 United States.

39 d. A student who is dismissed for academic or disciplinary
40 reasons from a county college shall no longer be eligible for a
41 county college scholarship under **[this act]** the New Jersey
42 HonorScholars Program. If a student participating in the program is
43 dismissed for disciplinary reasons, the student shall repay in full all
44 amounts received under the program. The county college shall be
45 responsible for collecting the repayment, or the amount of any
46 overpayment or other improper payment, of any State awards under
47 the program, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.18A:71B-
48 10.

1 e. A **【student】** county college scholarship under the **【NJ**
2 **STARS】** New Jersey HonorScholars Program may be renewed upon
3 the student's filing of a renewal financial aid application and
4 providing evidence that the student has satisfied the requirements
5 pursuant to subsection b. of this section.

6 (cf: P.L.2014, c.55, s.1)

7

8 5. Section 2 of P.L.2008, c.124 (C.18A:71B-85.1) is amended
9 to read as follows:

10 2. a. Upon notice from the authority in a student's senior year of
11 high school of conditional eligibility for a county college
12 scholarship under the **【NJ STARS】** New Jersey HonorScholars
13 Program, a student who determines to pursue final eligibility for the
14 program shall take a college placement test to determine readiness
15 for college-level coursework. The test shall be selected by the New
16 Jersey Council of County Colleges and administered by the county
17 college of the county in which the student's school district is located
18 at no cost to the student or the school district. A county college
19 may enter into an agreement with the school district to administer
20 the test at the high school or other selected site within the district.

21 b. A county college shall notify any student who does not
22 achieve the required score on the placement test that the student
23 requires remediation prior to pursuing county college coursework
24 for credit under the **【NJ STARS】** New Jersey HonorScholars
25 Program. The student shall have the responsibility to address the
26 identified deficiencies through such means as the student
27 determines, including enrollment in remedial classes at the county
28 college during the senior year of high school.

29 c. Upon graduation from high school, if a student meets the
30 eligibility criteria for receipt of **【an NJ STARS scholarship】** a
31 county college scholarship under the New Jersey HonorScholars
32 Program but is not able to demonstrate the skill levels required to
33 pursue courses for credit at a county college, the student shall not
34 receive **【an NJ STARS】** a New Jersey HonorScholars scholarship
35 until that ability is demonstrated. The student shall have one year
36 from the September 1 next following the date of high school
37 graduation to demonstrate such ability, and if at the end of the one-
38 year period the student continues to require remediation, then the
39 student shall lose eligibility for a county college scholarship under
40 the **【NJ STARS】** New Jersey HonorScholars Program. If during or
41 at the end of the one-year period the student demonstrates the
42 required ability, then the student shall be eligible for **【an NJ**
43 **STARS scholarship】** a county college scholarship under the New
44 Jersey HonorScholars Program for five semesters.

45 (cf: P.L.2008, c.124, s.2)

46

47 6. Section 3 of P.L.2008, c.124 (C.18A:71B-85.2) is amended
48 to read as follows:

1 3. a. A student who receives **【an NJ STARS】** a county college
2 New Jersey HonorScholars scholarship shall be eligible to take less
3 than 12 credits in the final semester if the county college determines
4 that the student needs to complete less than 12 credits in that
5 semester to complete the degree program.

6 b. In the case of a student who is enrolled in an associate
7 degree program regularly requiring six semesters, the student shall
8 not receive **【an NJ STARS】** a county college scholarship under the
9 New Jersey HonorScholars Program for the sixth semester but shall
10 maintain eligibility for **【the New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance**
11 **Reward Scholarship II (NJ STARS II) Program** established pursuant
12 to P.L.2005, c.359 (C.18A:71B-86.1 et seq.) **】** a scholarship under
13 the New Jersey HonorScholars Program for the third and fourth
14 years of academic study at a four-year public institution of higher
15 education pursuant to section 11 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending
16 before the Legislature as this bill), provided that the student meets
17 the requirements for receipt of **【an NJ STARS II】** that scholarship.
18 (cf: P.L.2008, c.124, s.3)

19
20 7. Section 4 of P.L.2008, c.124 (C.18A:71B-85.3) is amended
21 to read as follows:

22 4. A student who is eligible for **【an NJ STARS】** a county
23 college New Jersey HonorScholars Program scholarship who earned
24 college credits while enrolled in high school may submit to the
25 county college a transcript from the institution of higher education
26 that awarded the credits. If the county college determines that the
27 student's coursework is equivalent to that offered by the county
28 college, then the county college shall apply the credits toward the
29 award of the student's associate degree under the **【NJ STARS】** New
30 Jersey HonorScholars Program.
31 (cf: P.L.2008, c.124, s.4)

32
33 8. Section 1 of P.L.2009, c.280 (C.18A:71B-85.5) is amended
34 to read as follows:

35 1. a. In September of each school year, the board of education
36 of a school district or the chief school administrator of a nonpublic
37 school shall provide each student in the 9th grade with general
38 information on the **【New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward**
39 **Scholarship (NJ STARS)】** New Jersey HonorScholars Program
40 **【created pursuant to P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-81 et seq.)】**.

41 b. In September of each school year, the board of education of
42 a school district or the chief school administrator of a nonpublic
43 school shall notify each student in the 11th grade who is ranked in
44 the top 25.0% of the class of his potential to qualify for a county
45 college scholarship under the **【NJ STARS】** New Jersey
46 HonorScholars Program if the student's class rank at the completion

1 of the 11th grade or 12th grade is within the top **[15.0%]** 20.0% of
2 the class.

3 The notification shall include information about the rigorous
4 course of study required to qualify for the program.

5 A student in the 12th grade shall be notified of conditional
6 eligibility for a county college scholarship under the [NJ STARS]
7 New Jersey HonorScholars Program by the Higher Education
8 Student Assistance Authority in accordance with the provisions of
9 section 2 of P.L.2008, c.124 (C.18A:71B-85.1).

10 c. The notification by the board of education or chief school
11 administrator required pursuant to subsections a. and b. of this
12 section shall be communicated via regular or electronic mail or sent
13 home with the student and include a brief description of the **[NJ**
14 **STARS]** New Jersey HonorScholars Program and the requirements
15 for eligibility for the program.

16 (cf: P.L.2014, c.55, s.2)

17

18 9. Section 5 of P.L.2012, c.8 (C.18A:71B-85.6) is amended to
19 read as follows:

20 5. Each county college is encouraged to host an annual
21 recruitment day and invite a representative from each four-year
22 public **[and independent]** institution of higher education in the
23 State for the purpose of recruiting students for a scholarship for the
24 third and fourth years of academic study at the four-year institution
25 under the [NJ STARS II] New Jersey HonorScholars Program.

26 (cf: P.L.2012, c.8, s.5)

27

28 10. (New section) a. The New Jersey HonorScholars Program
29 shall offer scholarships to students at State public four-year
30 institutions of higher education. For an eligible student enrolled in
31 a full-time course of study at a New Jersey four-year public
32 institution of higher education, the scholarship shall be applied
33 toward the cost of tuition, subject to the prior application of other
34 grants and scholarships against such costs as provided under
35 paragraph (3) of subsection c. of this section. A scholarship under
36 the program shall be paid to the four-year institution in the amount
37 of \$2,000 per semester. The award amount shall not, when
38 combined with any other financial assistance, exceed the student's
39 actual tuition costs. The cost of a scholarship shall be paid 100%
40 by the State. Any cost of attendance that is not covered by the
41 scholarship or other available forms of grants and scholarships shall
42 be paid by the student.

43 b. Except as provided in section 11 of P.L. ,

44 c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), a student
45 shall be eligible for a scholarship under this section for up to eight
46 semesters, excluding summer sessions, and in order to receive the
47 scholarship the student shall have graduated in the top 10.0% of the
48 student's high school graduating class. In the case of students

1 graduating from high schools that do not calculate the class rank of
2 their students, the student's ranking shall be determined by the high
3 school in consultation with the authority.

4 c. A student shall be eligible to receive a scholarship to a State
5 public four-year institution of higher education if the student:

6 (1) has an annual family income, both taxable and non-taxable,
7 as derived from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid
8 (FAFSA) for the academic year, of less than \$250,000;

9 (2) is a State resident pursuant to guidelines established by the
10 authority. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 1 of P.L.1979,
11 c.361 (C.18A:62-4) or any other section of law to the contrary, a
12 dependent child of a parent or guardian who has been transferred to
13 a military installation located in this State shall be considered a
14 resident of this State for the purposes of qualifying for a
15 scholarship;

16 (3) has applied for all other available forms of State and federal
17 need-based grants and merit scholarships, exclusive of loans, the
18 full amount of which grants and scholarships shall be applied to
19 tuition to reduce the amount of any scholarship that the student
20 receives under the provisions of the New Jersey HonorScholars
21 Program;

22 (4) is enrolled in a full-time course of study at a four-year public
23 institution of higher education and maintains a 3.0 grade point
24 average. A grade for credits earned during a summer semester shall
25 for the purposes of this paragraph be included in the calculation of
26 the grade point average for the preceding academic year; and

27 (5) maintains continuous enrollment in a full-time course of
28 study, unless on medical leave due to the illness of the student or a
29 member of the student's immediate family or emergency leave
30 because of a family emergency, which medical or emergency leave
31 shall have been approved by the four-year public institution of
32 higher education, or unless called to partial or full mobilization for
33 State or federal active duty as a member of the National Guard or a
34 Reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States.

35 d. A student who is dismissed for academic or disciplinary
36 reasons from a four-year public institution of higher education shall
37 no longer be eligible for a scholarship under the New Jersey
38 HonorScholars Program. If a student participating in the program is
39 dismissed for disciplinary reasons, the student shall repay in full all
40 amounts received under the program. The four-year public
41 institution of higher education shall be responsible for collecting the
42 repayment, or the amount of any overpayment or other improper
43 payment, of any State awards under the program, in accordance
44 with the provisions of N.J.S.18A:71B-10.

45 e. A scholarship at a four-year institution under the program
46 may be renewed upon the student's filing of a renewal financial aid
47 application and providing evidence that the student has satisfied the
48 requirements pursuant to this section.

1 11. (New section) a. In addition to a student eligible for a
2 scholarship under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program pursuant
3 to subsection b. of section 10 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before
4 the Legislature as this bill), a student who is receiving a county
5 college scholarship under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program
6 shall be eligible for a scholarship under the program at a State four-
7 year public institution of higher education for the student's third
8 and fourth academic years pursuant to subsection b. of this section.
9 The student shall be eligible for a scholarship under the program for
10 up to four semesters, excluding summer sessions.

11 b. The student shall be eligible for a New Jersey HonorScholars
12 Program scholarship for the student's third academic year of study
13 if the student: attained an associates degree from a New Jersey
14 county college; except as otherwise provided pursuant to subsection
15 c. of section 2 and subsection b. of section 3 of P.L.2008,
16 c.124 (C.18A:71B-85.1 and C.18A:71B-85.2), received a county
17 college scholarship under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program
18 for each semester of study in the county college or was eligible for
19 but did not receive a scholarship because the student's tuition was
20 fully covered by other State or federal need-based grants or merit
21 scholarships, or was eligible for but did not receive a scholarship
22 under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program because the student
23 was enrolled while a high school student in county college courses
24 and received an associates degree in accordance with a joint
25 program offered by the student's school district and a county
26 college; ¹ [graduated in the top 10.0% of the student's county
27 college graduating class] attains a cumulative grade point average of
28 at least 3.25 upon graduation from a county college¹; enrolls in a
29 baccalaureate degree program at a New Jersey four-year public
30 institution of higher education for the third academic year of study
31 in the academic year immediately following the student's attainment
32 of an associates degree; and meets the criteria set forth in
33 subsection c. of section 10 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
34 Legislature as this bill).

35 c. The provisions of subsections d. and e. of section 10 of
36 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) shall
37 apply to a student receiving a New Jersey HonorScholars Program
38 scholarship pursuant to this section.
39

40 12. (New section) The policies and procedures set forth in the
41 Statewide transfer agreement established pursuant to P.L.2007,
42 c.175 (C.18A:62-46 et seq.) shall govern the transfer of academic
43 credits awarded by a county college to a New Jersey HonorScholars
44 Program student who subsequently enrolls in a four-year public
45 institution of higher education and is participating in the New
46 Jersey HonorScholars Program at the institution.

1 13. (New section) Nothing in sections 10 and 11 of P.L. ,
2 c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill) shall be
3 construed to require a four-year public institution of higher
4 education to admit a student eligible for a scholarship under the
5 New Jersey HonorScholars Program or to waive its admission
6 standards and application procedures.

7
8 14. (New section) a. In September of each school year, the
9 board of education of a school district or the chief school
10 administrator of a nonpublic school shall notify each student in the
11 11th grade who is ranked in the top 15.0% of the class of his
12 potential to qualify for a scholarship to a four-year public institution
13 of higher education under the New Jersey HonorScholars Program
14 if the student's class rank at the time of graduation is within the top
15 10.0% of the graduating class.

16 A student in the 12th grade shall be notified of conditional
17 eligibility for the New Jersey HonorScholars Program by the Higher
18 Education Student Assistance Authority.

19 b. The notification by the board of education or chief school
20 administrator required pursuant to subsection a. of this section shall
21 be communicated via regular or electronic mail or sent home with
22 the student and include a brief description of the New Jersey
23 HonorScholars Program and the requirements for eligibility for the
24 program.

25
26 15. (New section) a. In the case of a student who is receiving a
27 scholarship under the NJ STARS Program and is in the first
28 academic year of study on the effective date of P.L. ,
29 c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill), the
30 scholarship shall be administered and the student shall remain
31 eligible for the program in accordance with the provisions of
32 P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-81 et seq.) as the same read before the
33 effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature
34 as this bill).

35 b. In the case of a student who is receiving a scholarship under
36 the NJ STARS II Program and is in the third academic year of study
37 on the effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
38 Legislature as this bill), or was eligible to receive an NJ STARS II
39 scholarship for the third academic year of study but did not receive
40 the scholarship because the student's tuition or tuition and fees, as
41 applicable, was fully covered by other available forms of State and
42 federal need-based grants and merit scholarships, the scholarship
43 shall be administered and the student shall remain eligible for the
44 program in accordance with the provisions of P.L.2005,
45 c.359 (C.18A:71B-86.1 et seq.) as the same read before the
46 effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature
47 as this bill).

1 16. (New section) a. Not later than two years following the
2 effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature
3 as this bill) and annually thereafter, the Higher Education Student
4 Assistance Authority shall prepare and submit to the Legislature
5 and the Governor a report on the implementation of the New Jersey
6 HonorScholars Program. The report shall, for each institution of
7 higher education, set forth statistics on and include an analysis of
8 student participation in the program at the institution, the amounts
9 of funding provided under the program to students enrolled at the
10 institution, the amounts of funding made available to those
11 participating students from State sources other than the New Jersey
12 HonorScholars Program and from federal and institutional sources,
13 and such other factors as the authority deems to be necessary or
14 useful to the evaluation of the program.

15 b. The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority shall
16 establish appropriate criteria, procedures, and guidelines for
17 awarding scholarships under the New Jersey HonorScholars
18 Program to eligible students in accordance with the provisions of
19 P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-81 et seq.) and P.L. ,
20 c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill). The
21 authority shall adopt in accordance with the "Administrative
22 Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), rules and
23 regulations as may be necessary to implement the provisions of
24 P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-81 et seq.) and P.L. ,
25 c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

26

27 17. The following sections are repealed:
28 Section 5 of P.L.2008, c.124 (C.18A:71B-85.4);
29 Section 3 of P.L.2014, c.55 (C.18A:71B-85.5a);
30 Section 6 of P.L.2012, c.8 (C.18A:71B-85.7);
31 Section 6 of P.L.2004, c.59 (C.18A:71B-86);
32 Sections 1 through 7 of P.L.2005, c.359 (C.18A:71B-86.1
33 through C.18A:71B-86.7);
34 Section 9 of P.L.2008, c.124 (C.18A:71B-86.4a); and
35 Section 7 of P.L.2012, c.8 (C.18A:71B-86.4b).

36

37 18. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first be
38 applicable to the 2017-2018 academic year.