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STATE OF NEW JERSEY
218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 24, 2019

Sponsored by:
Senator M. TERESA RUIZ
District 29 (Essex)

SYNOPSIS
Revises provisions of law concerning graduation proficiency test and eliminates requirement that graduation proficiency test be administered in eleventh grade.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.

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

1. Section 1 of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-1) is amended to read as follows:
   1. By July 1, 1980 the Commissioner of Education with the approval of the State Board of Education shall establish a program of standards for graduation from secondary school. Such a program shall include, but not be limited to:
      a. The development or designation of a Statewide assessment [test] or assessments in reading, writing and computational skills to be administered to all [secondary school] pupils as provided [herein] pursuant to section 6 of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-6);
      b. Clear and explicit Statewide levels of high school proficiency and college and career readiness in reading, writing and computational skills to be demonstrated as a minimum requirement for high school graduation;
      c. Guidelines for the development of graduation standards by local boards of education;
      d. Guidelines for remediation procedures for pupils who fail to meet graduation standards; and
      e. Guidelines for graduation standards for those pupils classified pursuant to chapter 46 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.
   (cf: P.L.1979, c.241, s.1)

2. Section 2 of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-2) is amended to read as follows:
   2. Pursuant to guidelines established by the Commissioner of Education, each board of education shall establish standards for graduation from its secondary schools. The standards shall include, but need not be limited to:
      a. Satisfactory performance on the Statewide assessment [test] or assessments as provided for in section 1 of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-1) and section 6 of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-6);
      b. Demonstration of proficiencies in those subject areas and skills identified by the board as necessary for graduation other than those assessed by the Statewide assessment [tests] or assessments.
   The Commissioner of Education shall monitor local plans for the assessment of proficiencies required for graduation including techniques and instruments to be used to determine pupil proficiency; required programs designed to provide the opportunity

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.
for pupils to progress toward the mastery of proficiencies required for graduation; and remediation programs for pupils who fail to meet graduation proficiency standards in order to assure compliance with the requirement of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-1 et seq.).

The Commissioner of Education shall, upon request of the local board, provide such technical assistance as may be necessary to aid a district in the planning, implementation and evaluation of graduation standards.

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

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

3. For any student who does not meet the State and district [examination] assessment standards for graduation [by the end of 11th grade], the local board of education when appropriate shall provide additional remedial instruction specifically directed toward mastery of those proficiencies identified as necessary for the awarding of a diploma which may include but need not be limited to an extended school year, extended school day, or additional school years.

Any [12th grade] student who does not meet said requirements but who has taken the requisite assessment or assessments pursuant to section 6 of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-6) and who has met all the credit, curriculum and attendance requirements shall be eligible for a comprehensive assessment of said proficiencies utilizing techniques and instruments other than standardized tests, which techniques and instruments shall have been approved by the Commissioner of Education as fulfilling State and local graduation requirements.

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

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

4. All students who meet State and local graduation requirements shall receive a State endorsed diploma; provided, however, that the Commissioner of Education shall approve any State endorsed diploma which utilizes the comprehensive assessment techniques as provided in section 3 of P.L. 1979, c. 241 (C. 18A:7C-3).

Local districts may not provide a high school diploma to students not meeting these standards. Any out-of-school youth or adult age 18 or over who has otherwise met the district graduation requirements but has failed to earn a State endorsed diploma may take the graduation [proficiencies test] proficiency assessment or assessments which [has] have been developed or designated and administered under the auspices of the Commissioner of Education pursuant to section 1 of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-1) and section 6
of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-6). Upon passing [this test] the
assessment or assessments, a State endorsed diploma will be
granted.

   Each board of education shall provide, in a format approved by
the Commissioner of Education, a performance transcript for each
student leaving secondary school.
(cf: P.L.1988, c.168, s.2)

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

   6. [In the school year which begins in September 1993, and
annually thereafter, the State graduation proficiency test shall be
administered to all 11th grade pupils and to any 11th or 12th grade
pupil who has previously failed to demonstrate mastery of State
graduation proficiency standards on said test] The State shall
administer an assessment or assessments designed to test high
school proficiency and college and career readiness. Any pupil who
initially does not demonstrate proficiency on the assessment or
assessments shall be given an opportunity to retest. The mastery of
proficiencies required to fulfill local graduation standards shall be
determined as appropriate under local board of education
assessment plans.

   Students in the graduating classes of 2019 and 2020 shall be
deemed to have met the graduation assessment requirements if they
satisfy the State Board of Education regulations that were in place
as of December 30, 2018 concerning graduation assessment
requirements for the class of 2019.

   For the graduating classes of 2021 and thereafter, the graduation
proficiency assessment or assessments shall be developed or
designated by the Commissioner of Education, with the approval of
the State Board of Education, as provided pursuant to section 1 of
(cf: P.L.1988, c.168, s.3)

6. Section 5 of P.L.1988, c.168 (C.18A:7C-6.1) is amended to
read as follows:

   5. In the development or designation of the graduation
proficiency [test] assessment or assessments to be administered [to
all 11th grade pupils] pursuant to section 6 of P.L.1979, c.241
(C. 18A:7C-6), the Commissioner of Education shall consult with
educators, parents, students, business and community
representatives and members of minority groups. The [test]
assessment or assessments shall measure [those basic] high school
proficiency and the college and career readiness skills all students
must possess to function politically, economically and socially in a
democratic society.
(cf: P.L.1988, c.168, s.5)
7. Section 4 of P.L.1988, c.168 (C.18A:7C-6.2) is amended to read as follows:

4. The Commissioner of Education shall develop and administer to all eighth grade pupils in the school year which begins in September 1990, and annually thereafter, a test to assess progress toward mastery of State graduation proficiency standards. For any student not meeting established examination standards, the local board of education shall provide for appropriate remediation in areas of demonstrated deficiency. Appropriate remediation may include after school, weekend and summer programs.

   The local board of education shall provide all students with appropriate instructional support and preparation to meet the State graduation proficiency standards. (cf: P.L.1990, c.52, s.36)

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

7. The local chief school administrators shall report annually to their local boards of education and to the Commissioner of Education the number of students who completed the twelfth grade course requirements and were denied a diploma and the number of students who received State endorsed diplomas;

   a. By successfully completing the Statewide assessment [tests] or assessments and local requirements;
   b. By using the comprehensive assessment techniques and meeting local requirements, and were not classified pursuant to chapter 46 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes; and
   c. By using the comprehensive assessment techniques, meeting local requirements, and were classified pursuant to chapter 46 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

   This report to the commissioner shall be included as a portion of the district annual report required under section 11 of P.L.1975, c.212 (C.18A:7A-11). (cf: P.L.1979, c.241, s.7)

9. Section 7 of P.L.1988, c.168 (C.18A:7C-10) is amended to read as follows:

7. Not later than September 1, 1989 and annually thereafter, the Commissioner of Education shall report to the Governor and Legislature on the impact of the State graduation proficiency [test] assessment or assessments required pursuant to section 6 of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-6). In addition to including data on [test] assessment performance of students, this annual report shall include data on the number of students who have dropped out of school, the number of students who have failed to take the [test] assessment or assessments, curriculum realignments in grades K-12 to prepare students for the [examination] assessment or
assessments, analysis of remediation efforts for students who have failed the [examination] assessment or assessments, testing requirements and practices in grades K-8 and any other related matters requested by the Chairman of the Joint Committee on the Public Schools or the chairman of the education committee of either House of the Legislature. The report shall also enumerate the efforts by the Department of Education to assist local school districts in the areas of pupil retention, curriculum alignment and remediation.

(cf: P.L.1988, c.168, s.7)

10. Section 8 of P.L.1988, c.168 (C.18A:7C-11) is amended to read as follows:

8. a. Not later than September 1, 1990 the Joint Committee on the Public Schools shall evaluate and report to the Legislature on the status of proficiency testing in the public schools of New Jersey. Among other topics the report shall specifically address: (1) how New Jersey's testing program compares to that in other states, (2) the advisability of requiring State administered tests in elementary grades, and (3) whether any changes in the statutes providing for the State graduation proficiency [test] assessment or assessments are appropriate. The committee's analysis shall include an evaluation of all provisions of this amendatory and supplementary act and any recommendations for additional legislation. The joint committee shall use the funds appropriated or otherwise made available, in addition to all other resources to which the committee may have access, to secure the expertise necessary to conduct this evaluation and shall report its findings to the Governor and Legislature.

b. Beginning in 1991, the Joint Committee on the Public Schools shall undertake an annual evaluation of the report submitted to the Legislature by the Commissioner of Education pursuant to section 7 of this amendatory and supplementary act.

(cf: P.L.1988, c.168, s.8)

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

3. Report cards issued pursuant to section 2 of this act shall include, but not be limited to, the following information for:

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

(1) results of the elementary assessment programs;
(2) results of the Early Warning Test;
(3) results of the [High School Proficiency Test] graduation proficiency assessment or assessments administered pursuant to section 6 of P.L.1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-6);
(4) daily attendance records for students and professional staff;
(5) student graduation and dropout rates;
(6) annual student scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test;
(7) total student enrollment, percentage of limited English proficient students, percentage of students in advanced placement courses, and any other school characteristics which the commissioner deems appropriate;
(8) instructional resources including teacher/student ratio, average class size and amount of instructional time per day, as calculated by formulas specified by the commissioner;
(9) a written narrative by the school principal or a designee which describes any special achievements, events, problems or initiatives of the school or district;
(10) data identifying the number and nature of all reports of harassment, intimidation, or bullying;
(11) indicators of student career readiness;
(12) the number and percentage of students who were chronically absent, as defined in rules and regulations promulgated by the Commissioner of Education within 90 days of the effective date of P.L.2018, c.23 (C.18A:38-25.1 et al.), including the number and percentage of students who were chronically absent disaggregated by multiple student subgroups to be determined by the commissioner; and
(13) the number and percentage of students who received a disciplinary suspension; and
b. the school district, as appropriate:
(1) per pupil expenditures and State aid ratio;
(2) percent of budget allocated for salaries and benefits of administrative personnel;
(3) percent of budget allocated for salaries and benefits of teachers;
(4) percentage increase over the previous year for salaries and benefits of administrative and instructional personnel;
(5) the number of administrative personnel and the ratio of administrative personnel to instructional personnel;
(6) a profile of the most recent graduating class concerning their educational or employment plans following graduation; and
(7) any other information which the commissioner deems appropriate.
For the purposes of this section, the Commissioner of Education shall establish a uniform methodology for the reporting of the data concerning administrative personnel on a full-time equivalent basis. (cf: P.L.2018, c.23, s.1)

12. This act shall take effect immediately.
Under current law, P.L. 1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-1 et seq.), the Commissioner of Education and the State Board of Education are required to establish a program of standards for graduation from high school, including the development of a Statewide assessment test in reading, writing, and computational skills. The State graduation proficiency test is required to be administered to all 11th grade students, and to any 11th or 12th grade student who has not yet demonstrated proficiency on the test.

This bill amends the provisions of current law concerning the graduation proficiency test to provide for the development or designation of a Statewide assessment or assessments in reading, writing, and computational skills. The bill also eliminates the requirement that the assessment be administered specifically in the 11th grade. Under the bill, the State will be required to administer an assessment or assessments designed to test high school proficiency and college and career readiness, and any student who initially does not demonstrate proficiency on the assessment or assessments must be given an opportunity to retest. The bill contains a grandfather provision for students in the graduating classes of 2019 and 2020, providing that these students will be deemed to have met graduation assessment requirements if they satisfy the State Board of Education regulations that were in place as of December 30, 2018 concerning graduation assessment requirements for the class of 2019.

The bill also amends current law to provide that a student who has not met all graduation standards but who has met all credit, curriculum, and attendance requirements, must have taken the graduation proficiency assessment or assessments in order to be eligible for a comprehensive assessment of proficiencies utilizing techniques other than standardized tests as provided in section 3 of P.L. 1979, c.241 (C.18A:7C-3).