

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 4975

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 12, 2020

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 4975, with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill postpones the comprehensive review of certain school districts under the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC) until the 2021-2022 school year.

Under current law, each school district is required to undergo a comprehensive review under the State monitoring system, the NJQSAC. Each school district is currently required to undergo the comprehensive review once every three years according to a schedule established by the Commissioner of Education. As a result, only a certain number of school districts undergo comprehensive reviews during any given year.

As amended, the bill would postpone until the 2021-2022 school year the comprehensive review of districts that are: 1) required to undergo a comprehensive review in the 2020-2021 school year; and 2) were designated as high performing districts in those districts' most recent comprehensive reviews. Under current law, a district that is found to satisfy 80 percent to 100 percent of the quality performance indicators in each of the five key components of school district effectiveness is issued a letter of recognition designating the district as a high performing district.

If a high performing school district undergoes a comprehensive review during the 2021-2022 school year as a result of the postponement provided in the bill, the district would be required to undergo its next review as if the postponement had not occurred.

As amended, the bill also stipulates that a school district that is required to undergo a comprehensive review in the 2020-2021 school year and was not designated as a high performing district in its most recent comprehensive review will undergo a comprehensive review in the 2020-2021 school year. The bill provides, however, that such a district may postpone its comprehensive review until the 2021-2022 school year if the district provides written notification to the Commissioner of Education that it is not able to complete the review due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. If a school district chooses to postpone its comprehensive review, then the district would

undergo its next following comprehensive review as if the postponement had not occurred.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- remove a provision of the bill providing for the postponement of a school district's comprehensive review if the district's review was scheduled to be conducted in the 2019-2020 school year but was not completed due to the COVID 19-related school closures;
- require that a school district that was designated as a high performing district in its most recent comprehensive review would not have to undergo its next review until the 2021-2022 school year, if the district was scheduled to undergo a review in the 2020-2021 school year;
- clarify that a school district that is required to undergo a comprehensive review in the 2020-2021 school year but was not designated as a high performing district in its most recent comprehensive review will undergo a comprehensive review in the 2020-2021 school year. However, such a school district may postpone its review until the 2021-2022 school year if the district provides written notification to the Commissioner of Education that it is not able to complete the review due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- provide that if a school district that is required to undergo a comprehensive review in the 2020-2021 school year and that was not designated as a high performing district in its most recent comprehensive review chooses to postpone its comprehensive review until the 2021-2022 school year, then the district would undergo its next following comprehensive review three years after the school year in which its review was originally scheduled to take place; and
- remove a provision of the bill which permitted a school district to request and receive an exemption from the postponement of the comprehensive review under the bill.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This bill is not certified as requiring a fiscal note.