

[First Reprint]

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR  
**SENATE, No. 2383**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**219th LEGISLATURE**

ADOPTED MAY 7, 2020

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**Spearman, Benson and Assemblywoman Jimenez**

**SYNOPSIS**

Requires Commissioner of Education to establish three-year “Bridge Year Pilot Program” for certain students who were impacted by public health state of emergency caused by coronavirus disease 2019.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As amended by the Senate on May 14, 2020.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/18/2020)

1 AN ACT requiring the Commissioner of Education to establish the  
2 Bridge Year Pilot Program.

3

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

6

7 1. As used in this act, “host high school” means the high school  
8 that a student, who pursues a bridge year pursuant to the provisions  
9 of this act, attended as a junior in high school.

10

11 2. a. The Commissioner of Education shall establish a three-  
12 year “Bridge Year Pilot Program,” under which each school district  
13 with a high school shall offer students in the graduating class of  
14 2021 and the graduating class of 2022 the opportunity to pursue a  
15 bridge year during the year immediately following their senior year  
16 of high school, in accordance with the provisions of this act. The  
17 purpose of the pilot program shall be to provide participating  
18 students an additional year to address learning loss and missed  
19 opportunities in extracurricular activities, including spring sports  
20 programs, as a result of the public health state of emergency caused  
21 by the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic.

22 A nonpublic school may elect to participate in the Bridge Year  
23 Pilot Program.

24 Under the pilot program, each high school in a school district  
25 shall designate a school staff member as a bridge year liaison to  
26 serve as the school’s central point of contact for students interested  
27 in pursuing a bridge year pursuant to this act and for students  
28 participating in a bridge year <sup>1</sup>【, as well as for county colleges and  
29 four-year institutions of higher education in which students may be  
30 enrolled in academic courses under the pilot program】<sup>1</sup>. Nothing in  
31 this subsection shall be construed to require a school district to hire  
32 an individual to serve as a bridge year liaison.

33 b. A student in the graduating class of 2021 or the graduating  
34 class of 2022 who has met all applicable high school graduation  
35 requirements by the end of the senior year of high school may  
36 <sup>1</sup>【elect】 defer graduation from high school<sup>1</sup> to pursue a bridge year.  
37 A student who intends to pursue a bridge year shall notify his host  
38 high school’s bridge year liaison of that intent no later than the first  
39 day of the second semester of the student’s senior year of high  
40 school. The host high school shall permit students participating in  
41 the bridge year to participate in graduation ceremonies with the  
42 graduating class of 2021 or class of 2022, as applicable, <sup>1</sup>【and to  
43 receive their diplomas】 but shall not issue diplomas to those  
44 students until the conclusion of the bridge year<sup>1</sup>. Nothing in this

**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:

<sup>1</sup>Senate floor amendments adopted May 14, 2020.

1 section shall be construed to require a student to pursue a bridge  
2 year. To be eligible to participate in the bridge year program, a  
3 student shall be 19 years of age or younger and shall not turn 20  
4 years of age at any time during the bridge year, except that a  
5 classified student shall be eligible to participate if the student will  
6 turn 20 years of age during the bridge year due to services provided  
7 pursuant to the student's individualized education program.

8 c. (1) A student pursuing a bridge year shall remain enrolled in  
9 the host high school while participating in the Bridge Year Pilot  
10 Program. A bridge year liaison shall develop, in consultation with a  
11 student pursuing a bridge year, an individual learning plan for the  
12 student. The individual learning plan shall define academic and co-  
13 curricular goals for the bridge year and detail activities and  
14 strategies for accomplishing those goals including, but not limited  
15 to, counseling, academic support, coursework, and co-curricular or  
16 athletic participation. During <sup>1</sup>~~each of~~<sup>1</sup> the fall <sup>1</sup>~~and spring~~<sup>1</sup>  
17 ~~semesters~~ semester<sup>1</sup> of the student's bridge year, the student shall  
18 take between nine and 12 credits at the host high school <sup>1</sup>~~if an~~<sup>1</sup>  
19 ~~institution of higher education offers courses at that location~~<sup>1</sup>, the  
20 county college that serves the county of the host high school, or a  
21 combination thereof. <sup>1</sup>During the spring semester of the student's  
22 bridge year, the student shall take between nine and 12 credits at the  
23 county college that serves the county of the host high school.<sup>1</sup> The  
24 credits taken by a student pursuant to this paragraph shall together  
25 form a coordinated sequence of academic content that prepares the  
26 student for high-skill, high wage, or in-demand occupations. At the  
27 conclusion of each semester of the bridge year, the host high school  
28 shall update the student's high school transcript to reflect any high  
29 school credits earned during the bridge year. For the purpose of  
30 enrolling in college credits pursuant to this paragraph, the student  
31 shall be considered a non-matriculated student of the county  
32 college. A student who pursues a bridge year and participates in a  
33 spring sport sanctioned by the New Jersey State Interscholastic  
34 Athletic Association pursuant to section 3 of this act shall enroll in  
35 <sup>1</sup>~~at least nine but~~<sup>1</sup> less than 12 <sup>1</sup>college<sup>1</sup> credits <sup>1</sup>, or otherwise be  
36 enrolled in a number of college credits as to not be considered a  
37 full-time college student,<sup>1</sup> in each of the fall and spring semesters  
38 during the student's bridge year.

39 (2) The student shall maintain a grade point average of 2.0 in  
40 order to remain in the Bridge Year Pilot Program. The county  
41 college or other institution of higher education which a student  
42 pursuing a bridge year is attending shall report at least quarterly to  
43 the bridge year liaison at a student's host high school, in a manner  
44 specified by the student's <sup>1</sup>~~individualized~~<sup>1</sup> individual<sup>1</sup> learning  
45 plan developed pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection,  
46 concerning the student's academic progress and performance.

1 (3) A county college shall charge students participating in a  
2 bridge year pursuant to this act a maximum of \$145 per credit  
3 inclusive of all fees, except that fees associated with specific  
4 courses or with the use of on-campus science laboratories may be  
5 charged at a maximum of \$45 per course.

6 (4) <sup>1</sup>[A student may take any portion of the credits required  
7 pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection at the student's host  
8 high school, in the event that the county college which the student  
9 is attending offers courses at the host high school.]<sup>1</sup> During a  
10 semester of the bridge year, a student may take three credits offered  
11 by a four-year institution of higher education at any high school in  
12 the State or at any other location to fulfill the student's credit  
13 requirement. The four-year institution shall charge the student no  
14 more than is permitted pursuant to paragraph (3) of this subsection  
15 and shall report to the student's bridge year liaison as required  
16 pursuant to paragraph (2) of this subsection.

17 d. Notwithstanding the requirement established under the  
18 <sup>1</sup>[Tuition Aid Grant Program pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71B-20 and  
19 under the New Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward  
20 Scholarship (NJSTARS) Program pursuant to section 5 of P.L.2004,  
21 c.59 (C.18A:71B-85),] Community College Opportunity Grant  
22 Program<sup>1</sup> to be enrolled <sup>1</sup>[as a full-time student]<sup>1</sup> in a course of  
23 study or a curriculum leading to a degree or certificate <sup>1</sup>and subject  
24 to the availability of funds in the annual appropriations act<sup>1</sup>, a  
25 student pursuing a bridge year <sup>1</sup>[pursuant to this act]<sup>1</sup> shall be  
26 eligible for a <sup>1</sup>[tuition] financial<sup>1</sup> aid grant <sup>1</sup>[or scholarship]<sup>1</sup>  
27 under the <sup>1</sup>[Tuition Aid Grant Program or the NJSTARS Program]  
28 Community College Opportunity Grant Program<sup>1</sup> if the student  
29 meets all other applicable eligibility requirements.

30 e. A public institution of higher education shall, pursuant to  
31 P.L.2007, c.175 (C.18A:62-46 et seq.), accept all applicable credits  
32 that a student, who completed a bridge year pursuant to this act,  
33 earned during the bridge year. An independent institution of higher  
34 education in the State may elect to accept the credits that a student  
35 earned during the bridge year.

36 f. In the event that a student initially decides to pursue a bridge  
37 year in the fall semester but does not continue the bridge year in the  
38 spring semester, the student's host high school shall release all final  
39 transcripts and other records as necessary and as may be requested.  
40 A student who decides not to continue the bridge year in the spring  
41 semester shall not be eligible to participate in a spring sports  
42 program or extracurricular activities pursuant to this act.

43  
44 3. a. A student who pursues a bridge year pursuant to this act  
45 shall be permitted to participate in a spring sport sanctioned by the  
46 New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association and  
47 extracurricular activities at the student's host high school. A

1 student pursuing a bridge year shall not be eligible to participate in  
2 any fall or winter sport sanctioned by the association. A student  
3 participating in a spring sport or extracurricular activity during his  
4 bridge year shall pay applicable student athletics and activities fees  
5 and be subject to the host high school's student code of conduct,  
6 athletic code of conduct, and any other applicable codes, rules or  
7 policies that other students participating in the spring sport or  
8 extracurricular activity at the host high school are required to  
9 follow. Notwithstanding the provisions <sup>1</sup>of<sup>1</sup> any law, rule, or  
10 regulation to the contrary, an insurer doing business in the State and  
11 issuing liability insurance policies to school districts shall provide  
12 coverage for students participating in a spring sport or  
13 extracurricular activity pursuant to this act, as part of a school  
14 district's liability insurance policy.

15 This section shall not be construed to supersede the governance  
16 or eligibility rules applicable to a particular extracurricular activity,  
17 except as otherwise provided in subsection c. of this section. This  
18 section shall also not be construed to supersede the governance or  
19 eligibility rules, which are established by a local, state, or national  
20 organization with bona fide authority over a particular  
21 extracurricular activity, that are applicable to that activity, except as  
22 otherwise provided in subsection c. of this section.

23 b. In order to participate in a spring sport during the bridge  
24 year, the student shall meet the current age participation  
25 requirements of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic  
26 Association. The student shall participate in the spring sport at the  
27 student's host high school and shall not be permitted to transfer to a  
28 different high school, even in the event that the student experiences  
29 a change in residence.

30 c. <sup>1</sup>~~["In the event that a student pursuing a bridge year elects to~~  
31 ~~participate in a spring sport"]~~ For students participating in a spring  
32 sport pursuant to this act<sup>1</sup>, the <sup>1</sup>~~["association"]~~ New Jersey State  
33 Interscholastic Athletic Association<sup>1</sup> shall be requested <sup>1</sup>~~["by the~~  
34 ~~student"]<sup>1</sup>~~ to waive the eight semester rule under which a student is  
35 not eligible for high school athletics after the expiration of eight  
36 consecutive semesters following the student's entrance into the  
37 ninth grade.

38 d. The association shall confer with the National Collegiate  
39 Athletic Association or any other athletic association, conference,  
40 or group or organization with authority over intercollegiate athletics  
41 to ensure that any student participating in a spring sport during a  
42 bridge year will be eligible to declare as a college recruit during the  
43 bridge year and participate in intercollegiate athletics.

44  
45 4. a. The State Board of Education shall promulgate  
46 regulations pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act,"

1 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), necessary to effectuate the  
2 provisions of this act.

3 b. The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority shall  
4 promulgate regulations, pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure  
5 Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), necessary to effectuate  
6 the provisions of subsection d. of section 2 of this act.

7

8 5. This act shall take effect immediately.