

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE TO  
**ASSEMBLY, No. 912**  
**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: AUGUST 1, 1997

Assembly Bill No. 912 of 1996 requires boards of education to establish programs to identify gifted and advanced students and to provide a curriculum to address their needs. The identification program, which applies to grades kindergarten through 12, would seek to identify students with abilities in such areas as exceptional creative thinking, leadership and communication, and the performing arts. In adopting the program, the board of education would solicit the input and participation of parents and teachers and would conduct public hearings. The identification program would be implemented no later than the 1998-99 school year. A curriculum to address the needs of the students would be implemented in the 1998-99 school year for grades kindergarten through six, and in the 1999-2000 school year for grades seven through 12. The curriculum may include pull-out classes, cluster groupings across grade and age levels, special schools such as magnet schools, and co-curricular activities. An eligible student would be required to spend at least 200 minutes a week in the curriculum program. This bill further provides that if it is determined by the Commissioner of Education or by a court of the State that a school district has failed to comply with the provisions of the bill, the commissioner may order whatever budgetary changes are necessary to implement the identification and curriculum programs.

The Office of Legislative Service (OLS) notes that the monitoring of the identification program and curriculum would be included in the annual evaluation of each school district as now required under New Jersey statutes, and therefore, no additional State costs would be required. There would be additional costs to the local school districts to establish programs to identify gifted and advanced students as well as to provide a curriculum to address those students' needs. However, OLS cannot estimate these costs to the local districts.

Information provided by the Department of Education (DOE) indicates that with regard to the cost of identifying gifted and advanced students, the existing pre-school performance report, on-going evaluation of students, and academic test results could be used to evaluate students. Additional costs would only occur when additional staff time is necessary or a formal test is given to determine IQ and age/grade level performance. The IQ test would cost approximately \$300 per student and it is usually given to 5 to 10 percent of the academically gifted students. DOE also notes that the cost of providing a gifted program varies. Whereas a large district is more likely to be able to establish a magnet school or homogeneous

class with little or no increase in staff time/costs, a smaller district has fewer resources and may incur more costs for a less effective program. DOE further indicates that some school districts already have their gifted programs in compliance with the requirements set forth in the bill. Therefore, additional costs in those districts would be minimal.

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67.