

ASSEMBLY, No. 914

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 1996 SESSION

By Assemblyman ROCCO

1 AN ACT concerning professional development schools in special needs
2 districts, supplementing chapter 36 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes and making an appropriation.

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

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8 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Professional
9 Development School Pilot Program Act."

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11 2. The Legislature finds and declares that:

12 a. Professional development schools are individual schools where
13 teachers and researchers generate new knowledge and approaches to
14 education and then put that knowledge into practice;

15 b. Professional development schools can serve as the impetus for
16 change in the school environment through an emphasis on teaching and
17 learning and as a direct measure of accountability through school
18 improvement;

19 c. Professional development schools will increase the effectiveness
20 of school systems in the State by improving the quality of teachers
21 entering the profession and those already in the profession, linking
22 university research efforts with educational practice in the schools and
23 reforming schools through partnerships with institutions of higher
24 education;

25 d. The special needs districts have been identified by the
26 Legislature and the Supreme Court as in need of new programs and
27 strategies in order to improve the quality of education in these
28 districts; and

29 e. The institutions of higher education in the State are an
30 underutilized resource in the improvement of education in the public
31 schools.

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33 3. a. There is established a Professional Development School Pilot
34 Project in the special needs districts defined in section 3 of P.L.1990,
35 c.52 (C.18A:7D-3). Beginning in the 1995-96 school year, each

1 special needs district shall develop and implement one professional
2 development school at the elementary level in conjunction with an
3 institution of higher education in the State. Each special needs district
4 with a resident enrollment of more than 10,000 pupils shall establish
5 an additional professional development school beginning in the
6 1997-98 school year.

7 b. Each special needs district, along with its designated institution
8 of higher education, shall submit to the Commissioner of Education,
9 by June 1 of the school year preceding the school year in which the
10 school is to be established, a plan to operate the professional
11 development school. The plan shall also set forth the funding required
12 therefor. The plan shall be prepared in consultation with teaching
13 staff, parents, and community and business groups. The Commissioner
14 of Education shall approve the plan along with any modifications
15 which he deems necessary and set the level of State funding therefor.

16 c. The purpose of each professional development school shall be
17 to serve as a model for school reform and as an accountability measure
18 for school improvement in the special needs districts. The goals of the
19 professional development schools shall be to educate pupils, prepare
20 new teachers, develop innovative teaching practices, conduct research,
21 provide inservice practice, and disseminate educational innovations.
22 The professional development schools shall emphasize preservice and
23 inservice programs in teacher preparation and training, parental and
24 community involvement in the education process and collaborative
25 research.

26 d. Each special needs district shall report annually to the
27 Commissioner of Education on the following accountability measures
28 for each professional development school:

- 29 (1) Standardized test scores;
- 30 (2) Grade scores;
- 31 (3) Graduation and retention rates;
- 32 (4) Daily attendance rates;
- 33 (5) Incidents involving suspension or expulsion;
- 34 (6) Enrollment in post secondary institutions;
- 35 (7) Levels of parental involvement;
- 36 (8) Degree to which curriculum has been expanded or improved;
- 37 (9) Number of teenage pregnancies;
- 38 (10) Number of incidents of alcohol and drug use;
- 39 (11) Levels of teacher/staff morale; and
- 40 (12) Any other standard required by the commissioner.

41 The Commissioner of Education shall make modifications in any
42 district's professional development school plan which may be necessary
43 in the event of inadequate achievement of any of the above standards.

44 e. On or before January 30, 1999 the Commissioner of Education
45 shall report to the Governor and the Legislature on the success of the
46 professional development schools and whether the pilot program

1 should be continued, expanded, modified or terminated.

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3 4. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department
4 of Education the sum of \$9,000,000 to be distributed to special needs
5 districts and institutions of higher education in order to effectuate the
6 purposes of this act.

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8 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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13 This bill establishes a "Professional Development School Pilot
14 Project" in the special needs school districts. Under the bill's
15 provisions, beginning with the 1995-96 school year each special needs
16 district will be required to develop and implement a professional
17 development school at the elementary level in conjunction with an
18 institution of higher education in the State. Also, each special needs
19 district with an enrollment of more than 10,000 pupils will be required
20 to establish an additional professional development school two years
21 later. By June 1st preceding the school year in which the school is to
22 be established, the special needs school district, along with its
23 designated institution of higher education, is to submit a plan which
24 outlines the operation of the professional development school. The
25 commissioner must approve the plan and set the level of funding
26 required for the school's operation.

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28 A professional development school is a school where teachers from
29 the public schools and researchers from the higher education
30 community generate new knowledge about education and then put that
31 knowledge into practice through teacher training and community
32 involvement. The professional development schools established under
33 the bill will have six main goals: to educate pupils, prepare new
34 teachers, develop innovative teaching practices, conduct research,
35 provide inservice practice, and disseminate educational innovations.
36 The professional development schools are to serve as both a model for
37 school reform and an accountability measure for school improvement.

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39 The bill provides that each special needs district is to report
40 annually to the Commissioner of Education on certain accountability
41 standards in order to assess the effectiveness of the professional
42 development schools. If the accountability standards are not met, the
43 commissioner may make appropriate modifications to the district's
44 professional development school plan.

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46 The Commissioner of Education is to report to the Governor and
the Legislature on or before June 30, 1999 as to the success of the
professional development schools and whether the program should be
expanded or modified. The bill appropriates \$9,000,000 to the

1 Department of Education to fund the establishment of the professional
2 development schools.

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7 Provides for the creation of professional development schools in
8 special needs districts; appropriates \$9,000,000.