

ASSEMBLY, No. 1278

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 1996 SESSION

By Assemblyman COLLINS

1 AN ACT creating a State program for agricultural vocational education
2 and supplementing chapter 54 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

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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. a. The Legislature of the State of New Jersey recognizes that
9 agriculture is a basic and important industry in the State; that
10 agriculture is of central importance to the welfare and economic
11 stability of the State; and that the maintenance of this vital industry
12 requires a continued source of trained and qualified individuals for
13 employment in agriculture and agribusiness.

14 b. The Legislature declares that it is within the best interests of the
15 people of the State that a comprehensive vocational education
16 program in agriculture shall be created and maintained by the State's
17 public school system in order to ensure an adequate supply of trained
18 and skilled individuals and to ensure appropriate representation of
19 racial and ethnic groups in all phases of the industry.

20 c. It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage the inclusion of
21 a State program for agricultural education in the curriculum of the
22 State public school system and make this program readily available to
23 all school districts.

24 d. Although this act does not create any new mandates, it is the
25 intent of the Legislature that school districts are strongly advised to
26 follow the guidelines set forth in this act.

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28 2. There is created in the State Department of Education a Bureau
29 of Agricultural Vocational Education to assist school districts in the
30 establishment and maintenance of educational programs in agriculture.
31 The bureau shall provide services such as, but not limited to,
32 development and dissemination of curriculum materials, teacher
33 training, and consultative services to local school districts.

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35 3. The Bureau of Agricultural Vocational Education shall be under

1 the immediate supervision of a director who shall be appointed by the
2 commissioner. The director is responsible for the administration of
3 this State program throughout the public school system and assuring
4 that the program complies with the requirements of federally assisted
5 vocational education.

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7 4. a. Any decrease in federal assistance to vocational education in
8 this State shall be applied to this bureau in the same proportion as all
9 other programs so funded.

10 b. The staff of the bureau shall include an appropriate number of
11 program specialists in vocational agricultural education. To the extent
12 it is possible, program specialists shall be geographically located in
13 those areas most readily accessible to the school districts they assist.
14 At least one program specialist shall be responsible for the
15 coordination of the State program. At least one program specialist
16 shall be responsible for the coordination of the activities of the student
17 agricultural organization known as the New Jersey Association of
18 Future Farmers of America.

19 c. The department shall staff the bureau in compliance with this act
20 by reassigning priorities in staff assignments within the department so
21 that no new costs to the State are incurred.

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23 5. The commissioner shall establish and convene an advisory
24 council of agriculturalists who are representative of the various and
25 diverse areas of the agricultural industry in New Jersey. The
26 commissioner shall appoint members to this council in consultation
27 with the State Secretary of Agriculture. This council shall develop
28 recommendations for State programs in agricultural vocational
29 education for presentation to the Governor and the Legislature for
30 their review and to the State Board of Education for its approval and
31 adoption. Recommendations shall include, but not be limited to, the
32 development of a curriculum and a strategy for the purpose of
33 establishing a source of trained and qualified individuals in agriculture,
34 a strategy for encouraging the inclusion of the State program in
35 vocational agricultural education in the curriculum throughout the
36 State public school system, and a consumer education outreach
37 strategy regarding the importance of agriculture in New Jersey. The
38 advisory council shall serve without compensation.

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40 6. The Commissioner of the State Department of Education shall
41 adopt rules and regulations that are necessary to implement the
42 provisions of this act in accordance with the "Administrative
43 Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.).

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45 7. Nothing in this act or in the rules and regulations adopted
46 pursuant thereto shall condition the receipt of any federal or State

1 funds by a school district upon the inclusion of the vocational
2 agricultural education program in its curriculum.

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4 8. This act shall take effect on the 90th day following enactment.

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STATEMENT

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9 This bill creates a Bureau of Agricultural Vocational Education in
10 the State Department of Education to assist school districts in the
11 establishment of an agricultural vocational education program. A
12 director, appointed by the commissioner, shall administer the program.
13 The staff of the bureau will include program specialists in vocational
14 agricultural education, located throughout the State, to provide
15 assistance to school districts.

16 The bill provides that at least one program special is to be
17 responsible for the coordination of the State program. Also, the bill
18 provides that at least one program specialists is to coordinate the
19 student agricultural organization known as the Future Farmers of
20 America.

21 Finally, the bill requires the Commissioner of Education to establish
22 and convene an advisory council of agriculturalists to develop
23 recommendations regarding the program. The commissioner is
24 required to appoint members to this council in consultation with the
25 Secretary of Agriculture.

26 The purpose of this bill is to maintain the agricultural industry in
27 this State because of its importance to the State's welfare and
28 economic stability. This is accomplished by developing a State
29 program in agricultural education and encouraging the inclusion of
30 that program in the curriculum of the public schools throughout the
31 State. Thus, the creation of the Bureau of Agricultural Vocational
32 Education will help to ensure that there is an adequate supply of
33 trained and skilled individuals for employment in agriculture and
34 agribusiness.

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39 Creates a Bureau of Agricultural Vocational Education in the
40 Department of Education.