

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 820

with Senate committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 20, 1996

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 820.

Senate Bill No. 820, as amended, establishes a program for a case study of the governance and organization of public school districts on a pilot basis, using a single county as a demonstration project. The study would be done in Hunterdon County.

The study would be undertaken by an advisory committee consisting of 28 members. The committee will conduct the organization and governance of the school districts within the county; examine possible inefficiencies resulting from the duplication of administrative functions and other causes; review the demographic patterns within the county with regard to space utilization within the schools; study the potential impact and cost effectiveness of an integrated technology system on the quality and availability of educational opportunities; examine possible alternatives to the current governance or organization of the county's school system, including a county-wide school district, the division and recombination of municipal school districts, alterations of the current regional high school structure, the establishment of county-wide magnet schools, the creation of charter schools or any other changes or innovations which would make the schools in the county more efficient; and review the statutes to determine what changes would be necessary or appropriate to facilitate structural changes in the organization and governance of the school districts within the county.

The committee must complete its study within 18 months after its first meeting and submit the report to the Governor and the Legislature.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

With the approval of the sponsor, the committee amended section 5 of the bill to include two additional areas of study for the committee and section 8 of the bill to clarify the distribution of the appropriation made in the bill.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill appropriates \$250,000 from the General Fund to Department of Education as a grant to the Advisory Committee created by the bill for its work.