

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE TO
SENATE SUBSTITUTE FOR
SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
SENATE, Nos. 1135 and 1186
STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: SEPTEMBER 27, 1996

The Senate Substitute for the Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill Nos. 1135 and 1186 of 1996 addresses compulsory school attendance by students who have not earned a high school diploma. The bill, in its Senate Substitute form, allows a municipality to require that a child between the ages of six and 18, who has not earned a diploma, attend the public schools of the district. This would be done through the adoption of a municipal ordinance and a board of education resolution in the school district responsible for educating the students from the municipality.

The current upper age for compulsory school attendance is 16 years for students who have not graduated from high school. This is a statewide requirement.

There are no data compiled on how many students actually "drop out" of school as opposed to moving out of a school district or enrolling in a non-public school. However, on a statewide basis, the average district nongraduation rate for students completing the eighth grade is almost 17 percent when measured four years later. This translates into roughly 14,000 students of high school age leaving school each year, for various reasons. In some urban districts, the rates are much higher.

For those attending school, the statewide average cost per pupil is estimated to be \$10,344 in the 1996-97 school year. Of this average amount, the State share is estimated at \$3,981, the local share at \$6,115 and the federal share at \$248. These figures would vary for any given school district.

Because this bill is optional at the local level, the Office of Legislative Services is unable to determine its eventual costs. These would depend on how many municipalities and school districts require compulsory school attendance to age 18, the actual dropout rate in those communities at the current time, the per-pupil support in the school district educating the municipality's students, and whether or not family or student migration takes place between communities requiring school attendance until age 18 and those not adopting such a requirement.

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of

SCS for S1135

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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.