

SENATE, No. 1452

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 19, 1996

By Senator PALAIA

1 AN ACT establishing a special education funding task force and
2 making an appropriation therefor.

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

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7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. State aid for special education funding has been virtually frozen
9 since fiscal year 1993 despite skyrocketing costs, most significantly
10 those for out-of-district placements.

11 b. There has been a change in the thinking of many professionals
12 in the field of special education toward supporting a funding system
13 that focuses on the program provided to the pupil, rather than on the
14 disabling condition.

15 c. The New Jersey Special Education Study Commission in its
16 1984 report recommended that any special education funding formula
17 should rely on carefully determined program costs, taking into account
18 variations in the cost of delivery throughout the State, and the cost of
19 services that lie beyond the control of the local school district.

20 d. The formation of a task force to study the actual costs of
21 special education will facilitate the delivery of cost-effective and
22 educationally successful programs for children requiring special
23 education programming under a program-based funding system.

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25 2. There is created a task force to be known as the "Task Force on
26 Special Education Funding." The task force shall consist of 14
27 members who shall have professional or academic expertise in the area
28 of school finance and public education, and at least eight of whom
29 shall also have professional or academic expertise in the area of special
30 education. The members shall be selected as follows: two members to
31 be appointed by the President of the Senate, which members shall not
32 be of the same political party; two members to be appointed by the
33 Speaker of the General Assembly, which members shall not be of the
34 same political party; two members to be appointed by the Governor,
35 which members shall not be of the same political party; and one
36 member each to be appointed by the Arc of New Jersey; the New
37 Jersey Developmental Disabilities Council; the New Jersey Association

1 of School Administrators; the New Jersey Association of School
2 Business Officials; the New Jersey Education Association; the New
3 Jersey Parent-Teacher Association; the New Jersey Principals and
4 Supervisors Association; and the New Jersey School Boards
5 Association.

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7 3. All appointments shall be made within 30 days after the effective
8 date of this act. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall
9 be filled in the same manner as the original appointments were made.
10 Members of the task force shall serve without compensation.

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12 4. The task force shall organize within 30 days after the
13 appointment of its members and shall select a chairperson and a vice
14 chairperson from among its members and a secretary who need not be
15 a member of the task force.

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17 5. It shall be the duty of the task force to study the actual costs of
18 providing: special education to pupils placed in regular education
19 programs with related services; part-time special education; full-time
20 special education; and early preventive and intervention services. The
21 task force shall determine the appropriate levels of special education
22 aid for these program formats and services, taking into consideration
23 local variations in the cost of the delivery of the services and the cost
24 of services that lie beyond the control of the local district. Based upon
25 its research, the task force shall recommend to the Legislature the
26 appropriate cost factors and add-ons pursuant to the provisions of
27 P.L. , c. (C.)(now pending before the Legislature as Senate Bill
28 No. of 1996).

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30 6. Staff and related support services shall be provided to the task
31 force by the Department of Education. The task force shall also be
32 entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the
33 employees of any State, county or municipal department, board,
34 bureau, commission or agency as it may require and as may be
35 available to it for its purposes.

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37 7. The task force may meet and hold hearings at the place or places
38 it designates during the sessions or recesses of the Legislature and
39 shall issue a final report of its findings to the Governor, the
40 Legislature, and the Joint Committee on the Public Schools no later
41 than 120 days following its organizational meeting.

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43 8. There is appropriated \$5,000 from the General Fund to the task
44 force to effectuate the purposes of this act.

