

ASSEMBLY, No. 5954

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 8, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman AURA K. DUNN

District 25 (Morris and Somerset)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes the Post-Pandemic Education Recovery and Acceleration Task Force.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT establishing the Post-Pandemic Education Recovery and
2 Acceleration Task Force.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. a. There is established the Post-Pandemic Education
8 Recovery and Acceleration Task Force. The purpose of this task
9 force shall be to study pandemic-related learning loss and to assist
10 in the development of a Statewide education recovery and
11 acceleration framework for students across the State.

12 b. The task force shall consist of 17 members as follows:

13 (1) The Commissioner of Education, or a designee, who shall
14 serve ex officio;

15 (2) Eight public members, each of whom shall have educational
16 experience and expertise related to the purpose of the task force,
17 including: two members appointed by the Senate President, two
18 members appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate, two
19 members appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, and
20 two members appointed by the Minority Leader of the General
21 Assembly; and

22 (3) Eight members appointed by the Governor, including: one
23 member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey School
24 Boards Association; one member upon the recommendation of the
25 New Jersey Education Association; one member upon the
26 recommendation of the New Jersey Association of School
27 Administrators; one member upon the recommendation of the
28 American Federation of Teachers New Jersey; one member upon
29 the recommendation of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors
30 Association; one member upon the recommendation of the New
31 Jersey Public Charter Schools Association; and two members of the
32 public who have specialized knowledge or expertise in issues related
33 to the purpose of the task force.

34 c. The appointments to this task force shall be made within 30
35 days of the effective date of this act. Vacancies in the membership
36 of the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original
37 appointments were made. Members of the task force shall serve
38 without compensation but shall be reimbursed for necessary
39 expenditures incurred in the performance of their duties as members
40 of the task force within the limits of funds appropriated or
41 otherwise made available to the task force for its purposes.

42 d. The task force shall organize as soon as practicable, but no
43 later than 30 days following the appointment of its members. The
44 task force shall choose a chairperson from among its members and
45 shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the task
46 force.

1 e. The task force shall hold meetings at the request of the
2 chairperson and shall hold a minimum of three public meetings,
3 which shall each be held in the northern, central, and southern
4 regions of the State. The task force shall invite public comment,
5 including testimony at its meetings, on the issues the task force is
6 required to address as part of its responsibilities, in a manner that
7 encourages public participation. The meetings may take place in-
8 person or through remote means.

9 f. The Department of Education shall provide such stenographic,
10 clerical, and other administrative assistants, and such professional
11 staff as the task force requires to carry out its work.

12
13 2. It shall be the duty of the task force to develop a Statewide
14 education recovery and acceleration framework for students across
15 the State of New Jersey. The task force shall study and consider
16 issues, including, but not limited to, the following:

17 a. an assessment of learning loss, including an evaluation of
18 available data on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on overall
19 student academic outcomes, as well as an evaluation of available
20 data on the impact of the pandemic on student achievement
21 disparities that existed prior to the pandemic;

22 b. an analysis of potential opportunity gaps during the
23 pandemic, including, but not limited to, the effects on students
24 brought on by the lack of access to technology, in-person learning
25 versus virtual learning, absentee rates, consideration of how to
26 provide for students who have left the education setting, the lack of
27 stable housing and transportation, access to healthy food and
28 nutrition, and health and wellness resources;

29 c. evidence-based strategies for learning acceleration, including
30 the development of a framework that identifies and responds to the
31 strengths and needs of the school system, students, and families;

32 d. the perceptions of teachers, parents, administrators, and staff
33 of potential opportunity gaps and outcome areas for recovery; and

34 e. the development of a practical approach to ensuring that the
35 acceleration and recovery strategies and framework are accessible
36 to all students, including the State's most vulnerable populations.

37
38 3. The task force shall issue a final report detailing its findings
39 and recommendations to the Governor, and to the Legislature
40 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1) no later
41 than one year after the task force organizes.

42
43 4. This act shall take effect immediately, and shall expire 30
44 days after the task force issues its final report.

STATEMENT

This bill establishes the Post-Pandemic Education Recovery and Acceleration Task Force. The purpose of the task force is to study available data on pandemic-related learning loss, and to develop a Statewide education recovery and acceleration framework for students across the State of New Jersey.

The task force will consist of 17 members, including: the Commissioner of Education or a designee; eight public members, each of whom shall have educational experience and related to the purpose of the task force, with two each appointed by the Senate President, the Minority Leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the General Assembly, and the Minority Leader of the General Assembly; and eight members appointed by the Governor, including one member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey School Boards Association, one member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Education Association, one member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, one member upon the recommendation of the American Federation of Teachers New Jersey, one member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, one member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Public Charter Schools Association, and two members of the public who have specialized knowledge or expertise in issues related to the purpose of the task force.

Under the bill, the duty of the task force is to provide recommendations and develop a framework for education recovery and acceleration. The task force shall study and consider issues, including, but not limited to, the following:

- an assessment of learning loss, including an evaluation of available data on the impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency on overall student academic outcomes, as well as an evaluation of available data on the impact of the public health emergency on student achievement disparities that existed prior to the public health emergency;
- an analysis of potential opportunity gaps during the pandemic, including, but not limited to, the effects on students brought on by the lack of access to technology, in-person learning versus virtual learning, absentee rates, consideration of how to provide for students who have left the education setting, the lack of stable housing and transportation, access to healthy food and nutrition, and health and wellness resources;
- evidence-based strategies for learning acceleration, including the development of a framework that identifies and responds to the strengths and needs of the school system, students, and families;

- 1 • the perceptions of teachers, parents, administrators, and
 - 2 staff of potential opportunity gaps and outcome areas for
 - 3 recovery;
 - 4 • the development of a practical approach to ensuring that
 - 5 the acceleration and recovery strategies and framework
 - 6 are accessible to all students, including some the State's
 - 7 most vulnerable populations.
- 8 The bill requires that the task force will issue a final report
- 9 detailing its findings and recommendations to the Governor, and to
- 10 the Legislature, no later than one year after the organization of the
- 11 task force.