

CHAPTER 203

AN ACT concerning opportunities for world language instruction and credit toward high school graduation requirements for certain world language courses and supplementing chapter 35 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

1. The Legislature finds and declares that:
 - a. New Jersey is home to over 100 ethnic groups and there are approximately 125 different world languages used by persons living in this State to describe, interpret and give meaning to their world.
 - b. We live in a world that is increasingly interdependent creating the need for educated citizens who are multilingual and who have multicultural sensitivities.
 - c. Persons engaging in commerce in this State are finding that their markets are no longer limited to an area where one language is predominant, but that markets in this State and in the United States and in many different parts of the world require the use of different world languages and an understanding of the cultures of which those languages are an integral part to effectively carry out commercial transactions.
 - d. In such a world it is important to provide a variety of opportunities for public school pupils to learn different languages and to provide recognition, including credit toward a high school diploma, for those pupils who take advantage of these opportunities.
 - e. The resources of local school districts are limited and, as such, it is not practicable to expect local school districts to develop and teach the variety of world languages in which local community groups may wish their children and youth to receive instruction.
 - f. Many of these local community groups are well equipped to provide instruction in a world language and the culture which forms, shapes and provides meaning for that world language.
 - g. It is therefore in the interest of the people of this State that the Department of Education establish a committee to develop a plan which would provide students in the public schools the opportunity to receive instruction in and graduation credit for a world language not taught in the public school district.
2. There is created in the Department of Education the World Language Instruction Committee. The committee shall consist of 15 members selected as follows: the Commissioner of Education or the commissioner's designee; two members to be appointed by the President of the Senate, who shall not be of the same political party; two members to be appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, who shall not be of the same political party; seven public members appointed by the Governor, three of whom shall be from the higher education academic community with experience in world language instruction; and one member each from the New Jersey Education Association; the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association; and the New Jersey School Boards Association.
3. All appointments shall be made within 30 days after the effective date of this act. Vacancies in the membership of the committee shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments were made. Members of the committee shall serve without compensation.
4. The Commissioner of Education or the commissioner's designee, shall serve as the committee's chair and shall convene the committee within 30 days after the appointment of its members. The committee shall select a vice-chair from among its members and a secretary who need not be a member of the committee.
5. The committee shall develop a plan which provides public school pupils with opportunities for instruction in a wide variety of world languages, including instruction in world languages provided by qualified entities other than school districts. The committee shall consider and include proposals in the plan regarding, but not limited to, the following items:
 - a. the identification of Statewide proficiency standards for world languages;
 - b. the use of other world language programs currently in operation in other states;
 - c. procedures for use by a local school district in working with another entity desiring to

provide instruction in a world language to a resident pupil of that district;

- d. identification of the cost elements of the plan for the State and local districts; and
- e. implementation of the plan as a Statewide or a pilot program.

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

7. The committee may meet and hold hearings at the place or places it designates and shall issue its plan to the State Board of Education not later than eight months after the effective date of this act.

C.18A:35-4.18 Credit for world language course not offered by public school.

8. A pupil who is enrolled in a public high school within the State who wishes to take a world language course not offered in the resident public school district may complete and receive credit toward high school graduation for a world language course offered by a religious organization or any other nonpublic school organization or entity. In order to receive credit for the course, the pupil shall meet local district proficiency requirements.

9. This act shall take effect immediately, except section 8 shall take effect July 1 next following submission of the committee's plan to the State Board of Education. Sections 1 through 7 shall expire 30 days after the committee submits its plan to the State Board of Education.

Approved August 8, 2001.