

CHAPTER 170

AN ACT establishing the “High School to College Readiness Commission.”

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

1. There is established a High School to College Readiness Commission for the purpose of examining issues and developing recommendations to enhance student preparation for postsecondary education, and to raise the awareness of students and parents on the admission requirements and the financial and other issues associated with postsecondary education. The commission shall consist of 18 members as follows: the Commissioner of Education, ex officio, or a designee; the Secretary of Higher Education, ex officio, or a designee; the Executive Director of the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority, ex officio, or a designee; 11 members appointed by the Governor, including a representative of the New Jersey School Boards Association, a representative of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, a representative of the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, two representatives of the New Jersey Education Association, two representatives of the American Federation of Teachers New Jersey, a representative of the New Jersey Parent-Teacher Association, a representative of the New Jersey Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools, and two parents of students enrolled in a public school; two members appointed by the President of the Senate, including a representative of the State colleges and universities established pursuant to chapter 64 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes, and a representative of the public research universities; and two members appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, including a representative of the county colleges, and a representative of the independent institutions of higher education.

2. Appointments to the commission shall be made within 30 days of the effective date of this act. Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments were made. Members of the commission shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties within the limits of funds made available to the commission for its purposes.

3. The commission shall organize as soon as practicable, but no later than 30 days following the appointment of the members. The commission shall choose a chairperson from among its members and shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the commission.

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

5. It shall be the duty of the commission to study and develop recommendations on issues related to enhancing student preparation for postsecondary education and raising the awareness of students and parents on the admission requirements and the financial and other issues associated with postsecondary education, including:

a. the development of guidelines for high school students to create individual graduation plans which identify the courses necessary to meet State and local graduation requirements and college admission requirements;

b. the promotion of dual enrollment programs in which high schools partner with institutions of higher education to offer coursework that may be applied towards both high school graduation requirements and postsecondary degrees;

c. the expansion of access to advanced placement courses to increase the number of high school students who have the opportunity to earn college credit while enrolled in high school;

d. the expansion of financial literacy instruction for high school students and their parents to ensure that the instruction is provided continuously throughout a student's enrollment in high school, and that the instruction includes information on available State and federal tuition assistance programs, grants, scholarships, student loan programs, and issues concerning student loan debt and the requirements associated with the repayment of that debt;

e. the early identification of students who are at risk of not being college-ready by the time of high school graduation, and the development and implementation of effective support services and remediation to provide those students with the necessary skills; and

f. any other proposals that the commission feels would increase the preparedness of high school students for postsecondary education.

6. The commission shall issue a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than one year following its organizational meeting.

7. This act shall take effect immediately, and the commission shall expire 30 days after the submission of its report.

Approved July 21, 2017.