

## CHAPTER 224

**AN ACT** establishing a pilot program in the Department of Education on later school start times for high school students.

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

1. a. The Commissioner of Education shall establish a four-year pilot program on later school start times for high school students. The purpose of the program shall be to implement later school start times for high school students in selected school districts and to study the issues, benefits, and options for instituting a later start time to the school day for high school students. The pilot program shall:

(1) implement the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics on the establishment of later school start times;

(2) include an assessment of the health, academic, and safety benefits associated with establishing later start times in high schools; and

(3) evaluate any potential negative impacts on school districts and families that may be associated with a later school start time, including issues related to transportation and after-school activities such as athletics, clubs, and other extracurricular activities, and consider strategies for addressing potential problems.

b. A board of education of a school district that includes grades 9 through 12 that wants to participate in the pilot program shall submit an application to the commissioner. The application shall provide information on the number of students in the high school, the current start time to the school day for high school students, the rate of absenteeism and tardiness for the district's high school students, and an assessment of teacher satisfaction and student engagement and attentiveness. The application shall detail how the implementation of a later start to the school day will serve to benefit high school students.

c. The commissioner shall select five school districts to participate in the pilot program, including at least one high school in each of the northern, central, and southern regions of the State, and shall seek a cross section of school districts from urban, suburban, and rural areas of the State.

d. At the conclusion of the pilot program, the commissioner shall submit a report to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), the Legislature. The report shall include, but need not be limited to: the number of students who participated in the pilot program; the start times of the school day for the high school students who participated in the program before and after participation in the pilot program; the impact the program has had on reducing tardiness and absenteeism; an assessment of the health, academic, and safety benefits associated with establishing later start times; an evaluation of any potential negative impacts on school districts and families that may be associated with a later school start time; and the commissioner's recommendation on the adoption of later school start times for all high school students.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved August 9, 2019.