



March 14, 2022

## Position Statement

### Concerning

#### **A-1181 (Jasey, Timberlake, Moen) Requires high school students to complete financial aid applications.**

The New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), a federation of all local school boards in the state, believes the authority for management of public schools should rest with local boards of education and State authority over school districts should not exceed the scope necessary to fulfill the constitutional mandate for a thorough and efficient system of free public education.

The NJSBA has the following concerns about A-1181:

- **A-1181 appears to be a pilot program; the bill should clearly state this intention.** The bill says that this requirement begins with the juniors in the 2022-23 school years and for two more successive years. The NJSBA seeks clarification concerning the duration of this pilot program. Not only are many pilot programs of limited duration but they also have a limited number of voluntary or required participants. The pilot program outlined in A-1181 would apply to every district in the state.
- **A-1181 places a new requirement on students and their parents.** As a condition of receiving the high school diploma, parents or the adult student must submit a financial aid form, unless a waiver is sought. This mandatory non-curricular requirement is unlike other similar requirements. For instance, *N.J.S.A. 18A:36-27* requires the board of education of each school district and the appropriate school officials in each nonpublic school to provide a voter registration form, a summary of voter registration eligibility requirements, and material describing the role of a citizen and the importance of voting to each eligible high school pupil prior to the graduation date for the school year. *N.J.S.A. 18A:36-27* does not mandate that the student actually register to vote in order to graduate. Similarly, A-1181 should not require the filing of a financial aid form to graduate high school, it should only require the provision of information necessary to file the forms should the parent wish to do so.

The NJSBA applauds the sponsors for the provisions of A-1181 that speak to student discipline and board liability. These provisions are clear and provide needed direction for boards of education and their employees.

**The NJSBA thanks the sponsors and this committee for their consideration of these concerns. The NJSBA remains committed to working with the sponsors on this well-intentioned bill as it advances through the legislative process.**