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DELAWARE STATE SENATE  
151st GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE BILL NO. 82

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO PUBLIC SCHOOL REGISTRATION.

1 WHEREAS, currently there are 29 school districts and charter schools that provide kindergarten services, there are  
2 42 school districts and charter schools that accept students in grades kindergarten through 12, and many school districts and  
3 charter schools provide preschool services; each with its own registration process, and most of which use paper forms  
4 requiring in-person completion; and

5 WHEREAS, the initial registration process is burdensome and confusing for families registering their child for the  
6 first time in Delaware and data do not transfer when children change schools; and

7 WHEREAS, the process is burdensome for school districts and charter schools to handle paperwork and manual  
8 entry; and

9 WHEREAS, creating early registration will help children be prepared to start school on the first day, by ensuring  
10 they have all the necessary forms completed; and

11 WHEREAS, early registration will enable additional months of engagement and preparation with families,  
12 including opportunities to conduct outreach well in advance of the school year and targeted outreach to those that are not  
13 yet registered or engaged; and

14 WHEREAS, early registration helps school districts and charter schools by giving them accurate student counts,  
15 which drive teacher hiring, supplies, classroom set up, scheduling, and accurate and efficient bus routes and transportation  
16 scheduling; and

17 WHEREAS, early registration helps families take advantage of choice slots, which often close by the first week in  
18 January; and

19 WHEREAS, approximately 1 in 3 Delaware public school students exercise school choice, electing to attend other  
20 schools within their district of residence, or choice-out of their district to another public school; and

21 WHEREAS, 3 out of 4 Delaware parents or caregivers, before the COVID-19 pandemic, describe the kindergarten  
22 registration process as “hard” or “extremely hard”, and almost all Spanish speaking parents (98%) said the registration  
23 process was “hard” or “extremely hard”; and

WHEREAS, families may live in one school district and move before the start of the school year, or choice into another school district or a charter school and must fill out duplicate paperwork; and

WHEREAS, a 2020 report from Tech Impact found that creating a uniform registration system would be beneficial to school districts to modernize and meet the needs of families; and

WHEREAS, school districts and charter schools should control the local implementation of welcoming families and students into their schools, continuing to hold their own open houses, school readiness events, and implementing screening through locally determined strategies; and

WHEREAS, the State currently operates a common data system and school choice portal; and

WHEREAS, the State currently requires school districts and charter schools to collect some common information.

NOW, THEREFORE:

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

Section 1. Amend Part I, Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

Chapter 4A. Uniform Public School Registration Process.

§ 401A. Definitions.

For purposes of this chapter:

(1) “Charter school” means a public school established under Chapter 5 of this title.

(2) “Department” means the Department of Education.

(3) “Parent” means a natural parent, an adoptive parent, any person legally charged with the care or custody of a student under 18 years of age, or any person who has assumed responsibility for the care of a student under 18 years of age including any person acting as a caregiver pursuant to the provisions of § 202(f) of this title.

(4) “Public school” means a school district or charter school.

(5) “Receiving local education agency” means as defined under § 402 of this title.

(6) “School district” means a clearly defined geographic subdivision of the State organized for the purpose of administering public education in that area and includes a district specifically created to administer a system of vocational or technical education.

§ 402A. Establishment of a uniform public school registration process.

(a) The Department shall establish a uniform public school registration process to be used by a parent to register a child for school in the public school system for the first time. The process must meet the requirements under §§ 403A and 404A of this title.

(b) Beginning the 2023 through 2024 school year, all public schools shall use the uniform public school registration process and shall enable registration access to that year, and each subsequent school year, before the application period for the school district enrollment choice program under § 403 of this title begins.

(c) The Department shall seek feedback from public schools and parents to guide ongoing improvements to the uniform public school registration process.

§ 403A. Uniform public school registration process and information collection requirements.

(a) The uniform public school registration process established under § 402A of this title must meet both of the following:

(1) Be available through the Internet and in paper form.

(2) Be available in English and Spanish.

(b) The uniform public school registration process established under § 402A of this title may be made available in languages in addition to English and Spanish.

(c) The uniform public school registration process established under § 402A of this title must include all of the documents required to be completed by a parent who is registering a child for public school for the first time and must permit a public school to require additional information or documents.

(d) If a child is entering pre-kindergarten or kindergarten, the uniform public school registration process established under § 402A of this title must collect information related to the types of early learning experiences the child has had before entering pre-kindergarten or kindergarten, including the duration and time attended for each experience.

§ 404A. Internet-based uniform public school registration process requirements.

(a) The Internet-based uniform public school registration process established under § 403A of this title must do all of the following:

(1) Require a parent to do the following:

a. Complete the online registration process.

b. Provide proof of immunizations.

c. Provide a completed common statewide physical exam form that includes all up-to-date American Academy of Pediatrics Bright Futures Schedule of Periodicity screening and preventative recommended measures.

d. Provide a birth certificate.

e. Provide proof of residency documents.

f. Provide a completed statewide, approved developmental screening that includes social and emotional components and is less than 12 months old at the time of submission or complete the developmental screening as part of the registration process.

(2) Collect the date a parent registers a child for the first time.

(3) Report the number of children registered during a given month.

(4) Enable information provided by a parent to be transferred, with parental approval, to another public school when a child's school district of residence changes or a parent applies to enroll the parent's child in a receiving local education agency under Chapter 4 of this title.

(5) Permit any relevant personal document, including a birth certificate, required by a public school to be uploaded using the Internet-based uniform public school registration process.

(b) A public school shall provide computer access so that a parent may use the Internet-based uniform public school registration process to register a child for school in the public school system for the first time.

§ 405A. Department duties.

The Department shall:

(1) Provide training on the uniform public school registration process established under this chapter to public school employees who are assigned to assist parents with the uniform public school registration process.

(2) Issue guidelines for privacy of information submitted as part of the uniform public school registration process.

§ 406A. Regulatory authority.

The Secretary of the Department may promulgate regulations necessary to implement this chapter.

Section 2. Report on enabling data provided through the Internet-based uniform public school registration process to be shared with and integrated into other databases.

(a) The Department of Education shall report on the feasibility of connecting the Internet-based uniform public school registration process with the following:

(1) The Department's school choice website.

(2) The State's system for immunizations.

(3) The State's system for birth certificates.

(4) Any other Internet-based system that is used to collect student data by the State; the Department; a licensed child care provider, including Head Start; or a public school serving preschool through age 21.

- 111 (b) The Department of Education shall provide the report required under subsection (a) of this Section no later  
112 than March 14, 2022, to all of the following:
- 113 (1) The Governor.
  - 114 (2) The President Pro Tempore of the Senate.
  - 115 (3) The Speaker of the House of Representatives.
  - 116 (4) The Chairs of the Senate and House Education Committees.
  - 117 (5) The Controller General.
  - 118 (6) The Director and Legislative Librarian of the Division of Research of Legislative Council.

#### SYNOPSIS

This Act codifies the Department of Education's ("Department") current efforts to establish a uniform public school registration process and requires that, beginning with the 2023 through 2024 school year, all public schools shall use the uniform public school registration process. This registration process will simplify the process for families, enable public schools to engage with families and plan in advance of the school year, and integrate data systems to eliminate duplication of effort.

This Act requires the uniform public school registration process to be Internet-based and in paper form and in English and Spanish and may be in other languages. This Act also requires that certain information must be provided in the process and that the Internet-based uniform public school registration process must include certain features.

In addition, this Act requires the Department to provide training to certain school district and charter school employees regarding the uniform public school registration process and issue guidelines for privacy of information submitted as part of the registration process.

Finally, this Act requires the Department to report to the Governor and General Assembly, no later than March 14, 2022, on the Department's ability to connect the Internet-based uniform public school registration process to other Internet-based systems that are used to collect student data by the State; the Department; a licensed child care provider, including Head Start; or a public school serving preschool through age 21.

Author: Senator Lockman