



Willingboro Public Schools

"Where Excellence is the Expectation"

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Bridge Year Pilot Program

Dear Parents/Guardians of Students in the Classes of 2021 (seniors) and 2022 (juniors),

On June 26, 2020, Governor Murphy signed into law P.L. 2020 c. 41 establishing the Bridge Year Pilot Program (Bridge Year). The purpose of this program is to provide students in the graduating classes of 2021 and 2022 with the opportunity to offset disruptions to learning opportunities and participation in extracurricular activities that might have resulted from the closure of schools to in-person instruction in Spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the Bridge Year, certain students in the classes of 2021 and 2022 who have met all of their state and local graduation requirements may defer graduation from high school for one year to participate in an additional year of academic courses and extracurricular activities immediately following their senior year. This additional year is known as the "Bridge Year." During the student's Bridge Year, the student must remain enrolled in the high school he/she attended as a junior. In addition, the student must be 19 years old or younger during the entirety of the Bridge Year; a student who would turn 20 years old before the end of the Bridge Year is not eligible to participate. The one exception is for a student with disabilities who will turn 20 years old during the Bridge Year due to services provided under the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

The Bridge Year sets forth a series of academic and extracurricular requirements and opportunities for participating students. The following are the expectations for each semester of the Bridge Year.

Semester One (September through January)

- Students must take between 9 and 12 credits;
- The credits can be obtained from Willingboro High School and/or Rowan College at Burlington County (RCBC);
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for payment of courses at RCBC; the county college shall charge students a maximum of \$145.00 per credit inclusive of all fees, except that fees associated with specific courses or with the use of on-campus science laboratories may be charged at a maximum of \$45.00 per course;
- College courses will be added to the high school transcript, but will not count toward the GPA;
- Three credits can be obtained from a four-year institution of higher education offered at any high school in the State or at any other location to fulfill the student's credit requirement. Under the law, public institutions of higher education are required to accept all applicable credits that a student who completes the Bridge Year earned during his/her Bridge Year. Parents are responsible for the cost for these three credits;

- Students must maintain a GPA of 2.0 or higher;
- Students do not need to participate in health, safety, and physical education as required by N.J.S.A. 18A:35-5, 7, and 8 (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)1.vi);
- Students can not participate in fall or winter athletics sanctioned by the New Jersey Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA); and
- Students can participate in extracurricular activities.

Semester Two (February through June)

- Students must take between 9 and 12 credits;
- The credits can only be obtained from RCBC; Bridge Year students will be considered as non-matriculated students;
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for payment of courses taken at RCBC, the county college shall charge students a maximum of \$145.00 per credit inclusive of all fees, except that fees associated with specific courses or with the use of on-campus science laboratories may be charged at a maximum of \$45.00 per course;
- College courses will be added to the high school transcript, but will not count toward the GPA;
- Three credits can be obtained from a four-year institution of higher education offered at any high school in the State or at any other location to fulfill the student's credit requirement. Under the law, public institutions of higher education are required to accept all applicable credits that a student who completes Bridge Year earned during his/her Bridge Year. Parents are responsible for the cost for these three credits;
- Students must maintain a GPA of 2.0 or higher;
- Students do not need to participate in health, safety, and physical education as required by N.J.S.A. 18A:35-5, 7, and 8 (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)1.vi);
- Students can participate in Spring athletics sanctioned by the New Jersey Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA); and
- Students can participate in extracurricular activities.

Subject to the availability of funds in the annual appropriations act, Bridge Year students will be eligible for a financial aid grant under the Community College Opportunity Grant Program (CCOG) if they meet all applicable eligibility requirements. Notably, Bridge Year students are waived from the CCOG requirement to be enrolled in a course of study or a curriculum leading to a degree or certificate. For additional information on higher education grant and scholarship opportunities, please visit the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) Grants and Scholarships webpage [NJ Grants Home | New Jersey Student Financial Aid | HESAA](#).

Students who participate in the Bridge Year Program will be provided with an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and will have the support of a Bridge Year Liaison.

The high school diploma will reflect the date that the student met the district and state graduation requirements (June 2021 or June 2022). However, the diploma will not be issued until after the Bridge Year has concluded. Bridge Year students can participate in the graduation ceremony at the end of their senior year or at the end of their Bridge Year. All Bridge Year students are required to adhere to the Willingboro Public Schools Attendance and Code of Conduct policies.

If you are interested in your child participating in the Bridge Year Program, you must notify your child's school counselor at whsguidance@wboe.net by 3:00 p.m. on Monday, February 15, 2021.

An information session is scheduled for Thursday, February 4, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. Please use the following link to attend the information session: <https://meet.google.com/dha-egtj-xms>.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Neely Hackett

Dr. Neely Hackett
Superintendent