

# ASSEMBLY, No. 4779

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY

### 216th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 16, 2015

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman REED GUSCIORA**

**District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)**

**Assemblywoman L. GRACE SPENCER**

**District 29 (Essex)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Assemblyman Caputo**

**SYNOPSIS**

Requires Commissioner of Education to declare educational state of emergency for certain districts with low proficiency rates in language arts and literacy and provides for corrective measures.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/4/2015)**

1 AN ACT concerning the authority of the Commissioner of Education  
2 and supplementing chapter 7F of Title 18A of the New Jersey  
3 Statutes.

4  
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
6 *of New Jersey:*

7  
8 1. a. The Commissioner of Education shall declare an  
9 educational state of emergency for a school district in which, for at  
10 least 75 percent of the schools in the district, 65 percent or more of  
11 the students in the school to whom a State assessment was  
12 administered have not achieved proficiency in the English language  
13 arts/literacy subject area of the State assessment.

14 b. Upon declaring an educational state of emergency pursuant  
15 to subsection a. of this section, the commissioner is authorized to  
16 distribute supplementary State aid to the school district, which shall  
17 be in addition to the State aid payable to the district pursuant to  
18 P.L.2007, c.260 (C.18A:7F-43 et al.) or any other law. The  
19 supplementary State aid shall be used for the specific purpose of  
20 establishing a mandatory after school program for students in  
21 grades kindergarten through three, the duration of which is two and  
22 a half hours from the end of the school day, which is designed to  
23 increase student proficiency in English language arts and literacy.  
24 The supplementary aid shall also be used for establishing voluntary  
25 literacy programs for students in other grades, including after  
26 school programs and summer programs.

27 c. When an educational state of emergency is declared for a  
28 school district, the executive county superintendent of schools shall  
29 hold a public meeting of interested stakeholders for the district  
30 including, but not limited to, parents, students, teachers, school  
31 administrators, community leaders, and business leaders. The  
32 purpose of the meeting shall be to discuss community involvement  
33 and potential corrective measures to address the district's low  
34 proficiency rate in English language arts and literacy.

35 d. A school district that establishes programs to increase  
36 student proficiency in English language arts and literacy pursuant to  
37 subsection b. of this section shall continue to implement the  
38 programs for a minimum of three years or for as long as the school  
39 district meets the criteria of subsection a. of this section, whichever  
40 is longer.

41  
42 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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45 STATEMENT

46  
47 This bill requires the Commissioner of Education to declare an  
48 "educational state of emergency" for school districts with very low

1 proficiency rates in English language arts and literacy. Under the  
2 bill, an educational state of emergency must be declared for a  
3 district in which, for at least 75 percent of the schools in the district,  
4 65 percent or more of the students in the school have not achieved  
5 proficiency in the English language arts/literacy portion of the State  
6 assessment.

7 The bill authorizes the commissioner, upon declaring an  
8 educational state of emergency, to distribute supplementary State  
9 aid to the school district, which will be in addition to the aid the  
10 district receives under the State school funding law, P.L.2007, c.260  
11 (C.18A:7F-43 et al.), or any other law. The supplementary aid will  
12 be used for the specific purpose of establishing a mandatory after  
13 school program for students in grades kindergarten through three  
14 that is designed to increase student proficiency in English language  
15 arts and literacy. The supplementary aid will also be used for  
16 establishing voluntary literacy programs for students in other  
17 grades, including after school programs and summer programs. A  
18 school district will be required to implement these programs for a  
19 minimum of three years, or for as long as the district continues to  
20 meet the bill's criteria for an educational state of emergency,  
21 whichever is longer.

22 The bill also directs the executive county superintendent of  
23 schools to hold a public meeting when an educational state of  
24 emergency is declared for a school district in order to discuss  
25 community involvement and potential corrective measures to  
26 address the district's low proficiency rate in English language arts  
27 and literacy. The meeting will include interested stakeholders for  
28 the district, including parents, students, teachers, school  
29 administrators, community leaders, and business leaders.