

ASSEMBLY, No. 4693

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 216th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 16, 2015

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE
District 37 (Bergen)

SYNOPSIS

Requires Commissioner of Education to include data on chronic absenteeism and disciplinary suspensions on School Report Card and requires public schools to make certain efforts to combat chronic absenteeism.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



A4693 VAINIERI HUTTLE

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1 AN ACT concerning student attendance records, amending
2 P.L.1995, c. 235, and supplementing chapter 38 of the Title 18A
3 of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

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8 1. Section 3 of P.L.1995, c.235 (C.18A:7E-3) is amended to
9 read as follows:

10 3. Report cards issued pursuant to section 2 of this act shall
11 include, but not be limited to, the following information for:

12 a. the school district and for each school within the district, as
13 appropriate:

14 (1) results of the elementary assessment programs;

15 (2) results of the Early Warning Test;

16 (3) results of the High School Proficiency Test;

17 (4) daily attendance records for students and professional staff;

18 (5) student graduation and dropout rates;

19 (6) annual student scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test;

20 (7) total student enrollment, percentage of limited English
21 proficient students, percentage of students in advanced placement
22 courses, and any other school characteristics which the
23 commissioner deems appropriate;

24 (8) instructional resources including teacher/student ratio,
25 average class size and amount of instructional time per day, as
26 calculated by formulas specified by the commissioner;

27 (9) a written narrative by the school principal or a designee
28 which describes any special achievements, events, problems or
29 initiatives of the school or district;

30 (10) data identifying the number and nature of all reports of
31 harassment, intimidation, or bullying; **[and]**

32 (11) indicators of student career readiness;

33 (12) the number and percentage of students who were chronically
34 absent, where chronically absent means a student's attendance
35 record includes a total number of absences, including excused
36 absences, unexcused absences, and absences due to disciplinary
37 actions, that meets or exceeds 10 percent of the total number of
38 school days in the school year, or in the case of a student who
39 enrolls in the school after the beginning of the school year, 10
40 percent of the total number of days from the date of enrollment until
41 the end of the school year; and

42 (13) the number and percentage of students who received a
43 disciplinary suspension; and

44 b. the school district, as appropriate:

45 (1) per pupil expenditures and State aid ratio;

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

- 1 (2) percent of budget allocated for salaries and benefits of
- 2 administrative personnel;
- 3 (3) percent of budget allocated for salaries and benefits of
- 4 teachers;
- 5 (4) percentage increase over the previous year for salaries and
- 6 benefits of administrative and instructional personnel;
- 7 (5) the number of administrative personnel and the ratio of
- 8 administrative personnel to instructional personnel;
- 9 (6) a profile of the most recent graduating class concerning their
- 10 educational or employment plans following graduation; and
- 11 (7) any other information which the commissioner deems
- 12 appropriate.

13 For the purposes of this section, the Commissioner of Education
14 shall establish a uniform methodology for the reporting of the data
15 concerning administrative personnel on a full-time equivalent basis.
16 (cf: P.L.2014, c.71)

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18 2. (New section) a. As used in this section, “chronically
19 absent” means a student’s attendance record includes a total number
20 of absences, including excused absences, unexcused absences, and
21 absences due to disciplinary actions, that meets or exceeds 10
22 percent of the total number of school days in the school year, or in
23 the case of a student who enrolls in the school after the beginning of
24 the school year, 10 percent of the total number of days from the
25 date of enrollment until the end of the school year.

26 b. In the event that 10 percent or more of the students enrolled
27 in a public school are chronically absent, the school shall convene a
28 Chronic Absenteeism Coalition. The coalition shall include at least
29 one parent and one teacher from the school community, and such
30 other members as determined by the principal of the school. The
31 purpose of the coalition shall be to regularly review and monitor
32 school chronic absenteeism and develop a corrective action plan to
33 improve absenteeism rates. In developing the corrective action
34 plan, the coalition shall address how the school can:

- 35 (1) communicate clearly and often to parents on the importance
- 36 of school attendance;
- 37 (2) establish contact with parents when children begin to show a
- 38 pattern of absences;
- 39 (3) identify problems and barriers to school attendance and
- 40 develop recommendations to address them; and
- 41 (4) foster positive school relationships with families.

42 The coalition shall annually present to the board of education its
43 findings and recommendations until the percentage of the student
44 body that is chronically absent falls below ten percent.

45

46 3. (New section) The Commissioner of Education shall
47 annually review the chronic absenteeism rates of each school and
48 school district, as included on the School Report Cards issued

1 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1995, c.235 (C.18A:7E-2), and report
2 on the rates to the State Board of Education.

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4 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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9 This bill requires that, in the event that ten percent or more of the
10 students enrolled in a public school are chronically absent, the
11 school must convene a Chronic Absenteeism Coalition. The
12 coalition must include at least one parent and one teacher from the
13 school community, and such other members as determined
14 appropriate by the principal. The purpose of the coalition will be to
15 regularly review and monitor school chronic absenteeism and
16 develop a corrective action plan to improve absenteeism rates. The
17 coalition must annually present its findings and recommendations to
18 the board of education until the percentage of the student body that
19 is chronically absent falls below ten percent.

20 The bill also requires the Commissioner of Education to include
21 on School Report Cards data on the number and percentage of
22 students who were chronically absent and the number and
23 percentage of students who received a disciplinary suspension. The
24 commissioner must annually review the chronic absenteeism rates
25 of each school and school district and report on the rates to the State
26 Board of Education.

27 As used in the bill, "chronically absent" means a student's
28 attendance record includes a total number of absences, including
29 excused absences, unexcused absences, and absences due to
30 disciplinary actions, that meets or exceeds 10 percent of the total
31 number of school days in the school year, or in the case of a student
32 who enrolls in the school after the beginning of the school year, 10
33 percent of the total number of school days from the date of
34 enrollment until the end of the school year.