

[First Reprint]

**ASSEMBLY, No. 2352**

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**217th LEGISLATURE**

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 4, 2016

**Sponsored by:**

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**Assemblyman Wolfe, Assemblywomen Caride, McKnight, Lampitt and  
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**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 reported by the Assembly Education Committee on December 4, 2017, with amendments.

**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 1/9/2018)**

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:*

7  
8 1. Section 3 of P.L.1995, c.235 (C.18A:7E-3) is amended to read  
9 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 commissioner  
23 deems appropriate;

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

27 (9) a written narrative by the school principal or a designee which  
28 describes any special achievements, events, problems or initiatives of  
29 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, <sup>1</sup>**[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 school  
38 days in the school year, or in the case of a student who enrolls in the  
39 school after the beginning of the school year, 10 percent of the total  
40 number of days from the date of enrollment until the end of the school  
41 year. The calculation of "chronically absent" shall not include  
42 absences due to a student's ongoing illness, medical, psychiatric, or  
43 other disability, provided that a physician or other medical  
44 professional provides written documentation confirming that the  
45 student's condition requires absences beyond the number of days

**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.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

<sup>1</sup>Assembly AED committee amendments adopted December 4, 2017.

1 permitted by the school district’s policy. It shall be the duty of the  
 2 school to verify this information to ensure that these absences are not  
 3 counted toward the school’s calculation of “chronically absent. In the  
 4 case of a county vocational school district, the calculation of  
 5 “chronically absent” shall not include students enrolled in the county  
 6 vocational school district on a shared-time basis”] as defined in rules  
 7 and regulations promulgated by the Commissioner of Education within  
 8 90 days of the effective date of P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the  
 9 Legislature as this bill)<sup>1</sup> ; and

10 (13) the number and percentage of students who received a  
 11 disciplinary suspension; and

12 b. the school district, as appropriate:

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

14 (2) percent of budget allocated for salaries and benefits of  
 15 administrative personnel;

16 (3) percent of budget allocated for salaries and benefits of  
 17 teachers;

18 (4) percentage increase over the previous year for salaries and  
 19 benefits of administrative and instructional personnel;

20 (5) the number of administrative personnel and the ratio of  
 21 administrative personnel to instructional personnel;

22 (6) a profile of the most recent graduating class concerning their  
 23 educational or employment plans following graduation; and

24 (7) any other information which the commissioner deems  
 25 appropriate.

26 For the purposes of this section, the Commissioner of Education  
 27 shall establish a uniform methodology for the reporting of the data  
 28 concerning administrative personnel on a full-time equivalent basis.

29 (cf: P.L.2014, c.71)

30

31 2. (New section) a. As used in this section, “chronically absent”  
 32 <sup>1</sup> means a student’s attendance record includes a total number of  
 33 absences, including excused absences, unexcused absences, and  
 34 absences due to disciplinary actions, that meets or exceeds 10 percent  
 35 of the total number of school days in the school year, or in the case of  
 36 a student who enrolls in the school after the beginning of the school  
 37 year, 10 percent of the total number of days from the date of  
 38 enrollment until the end of the school year. The calculation of  
 39 “chronically absent” shall not include absences due to a student’s  
 40 ongoing illness, medical, psychiatric, or other disability, provided that  
 41 a physician or other medical professional provides written  
 42 documentation confirming that the student’s condition requires  
 43 absences beyond the number of days permitted by the school district’s  
 44 policy. It shall be the duty of the school to verify this information to  
 45 ensure that these absences are not counted toward the school’s  
 46 calculation of “chronically absent.” In the case of a county vocational  
 47 school district, the calculation of “chronically absent” shall not include  
 48 students enrolled in the county vocational school district on a shared-

1 time basis] shall be defined in rules and regulations promulgated by  
2 the Commissioner of Education within 90 days of the effective date of  
3 P.L. , c. (C. ) (pending before the Legislature as this bill)<sup>1</sup>.

4 b. In the event that 10 percent or more of the students enrolled in  
5 a public school are chronically absent, the school shall <sup>1</sup>[convene a  
6 Chronic Absenteeism Coalition. The coalition shall include at least  
7 one parent and one teacher from the school community, and such other  
8 members as determined by the principal of the school. The purpose of  
9 the coalition shall be to regularly review and monitor school chronic  
10 absenteeism and]<sup>1</sup> develop a corrective action plan to improve  
11 absenteeism rates. <sup>1</sup>[The coalition shall review school chronic  
12 absenteeism without examining individual student information. In  
13 developing the] The<sup>1</sup> corrective action plan <sup>1</sup>[, the coalition]<sup>1</sup> shall  
14 <sup>1</sup>[address how the school can] include, but need not be limited to, the  
15 following<sup>1</sup> :

16 (1) <sup>1</sup>[communicate clearly and often to parents on the importance  
17 of school attendance;

18 (2) establish contact with parents when children begin to show a  
19 pattern of absences;

20 (3) identify] identifying<sup>1</sup> problems and barriers to school  
21 attendance <sup>1</sup>[and develop] ;

22 (2) developing<sup>1</sup> recommendations to address <sup>1</sup>[them] the  
23 problems and barriers to school attendance that have been identified<sup>1</sup> ;  
24 <sup>1</sup>[and

25 (4) foster positive school relationships with families]

26 (3) outlining communication strategies to educate and inform  
27 parents on the importance of school attendance;

28 (4) establishing protocols on informing and engaging parents when  
29 a child begins to show a pattern of absences; and

30 (5) reviewing school policies to ensure that they support improved  
31 school attendance<sup>1</sup> .

32 <sup>1</sup>[The coalition shall annually present to the board of education its  
33 findings and recommendations until the percentage of the student body  
34 that is chronically absent falls below ten percent] In developing the  
35 corrective action plan, the school shall solicit input from parents of  
36 students currently attending the school. The solicitation shall include,  
37 at a minimum, a parental survey that includes questions related to  
38 parents' beliefs regarding the reasons why students are chronically  
39 absent and recommendations on the best ways to improve attendance.  
40 In developing the corrective action plan, the school shall engage the  
41 school's parent organization, if one exists, in identifying the causes of  
42 the school's high absenteeism rate and possible solutions. If there is  
43 no parent organization at the school, the school shall hold a public  
44 meeting to provide parents with an opportunity to provide input during  
45 the development of the corrective action plan.

46 c. The school shall present the corrective action plan to the board  
47 of education. The school shall annually review and revise the

1 corrective action plan, and present the revisions to the board, until the  
2 percent of students who are chronically absent is less than 10 percent<sup>1</sup>.

3

4 3. (New section) The Commissioner of Education shall  
5 annually review the chronic absenteeism rates of each school and  
6 school district, as included on the School Report Cards issued  
7 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1995, c.235 (C.18A:7E-2), and report  
8 on the rates to the State Board of Education.

9

10 4. This act shall take effect immediately.