

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2192

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 1, 2018

The Assembly Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2192.

This bill requires that, if 10 percent or more of the students enrolled in a public school are chronically absent, the school must develop a corrective action plan to improve absenteeism rates. The bill requires that the plan include, but need not be limited to: (1) identifying problems and barriers to school attendance; (2) developing recommendations to address those problems and barriers; (3) outlining communication strategies to educate parents on the importance of school attendance; (4) establishing protocols on informing and engaging parents when a child begins to show a pattern of absences; and (5) reviewing school policies to ensure that they support improved school attendance. The bill requires that in developing the corrective action plan, the school must solicit input from parents through multiple means, including through the administration of a survey, engaging with the school's parent organization, and, if the school does not have a parent organization, holding a public meeting to provide parents with the opportunity to provide input. The bill requires the school to present its corrective action plan to the board of education. The school would annually review and revise the plan, and present the revisions to the board, until the percent of students who are chronically absent is less than 10 percent.

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

The term "chronically absent," as used in the bill, will be defined pursuant to rules and regulations promulgated by the Commissioner of Education within 90 days after enactment.