

SENATE, No. 408

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2018 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator JOSEPH PENNACCHIO

District 26 (Essex, Morris and Passaic)

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Turner

SYNOPSIS

Directs school districts to establish policies and require training for employees on issues regarding child sexual abuse.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/15/2018)

1 AN ACT concerning child sexual abuse awareness and
2 supplementing chapter 36 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

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

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8 1. a. A school district shall establish a policy designed to
9 increase staff, student, and parent awareness of sexual abuse of
10 children. The policy shall address issues including knowledge of
11 warning signs that a child may be a sexual abuse victim, prevention
12 techniques, actions that a child victim should take to obtain
13 assistance, and available counseling options for students affected by
14 sexual abuse.

15 b. A school district's policy under subsection a. of this section
16 shall require that teachers and other school employees complete
17 training which includes, at a minimum, information regarding the
18 following:

19 (1) factors indicating that a child is at risk for sexual abuse;

20 (2) recognition of warning signs indicating that a child may be a
21 victim of sexual abuse;

22 (3) internal procedures for seeking assistance for a child who is a
23 victim of sexual abuse or is at risk for sexual abuse, including
24 referral to a school counselor, social worker, or another mental
25 health professional; and

26 (4) techniques for reducing a child's risk of sexual abuse.

27 c. A teaching staff member may satisfy in each professional
28 development cycle one or more hours of the professional
29 development requirement established by the State Board of
30 Education through participation in training programs on child
31 sexual abuse awareness and prevention.

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33 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
34 the first full school year following the date of enactment.

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STATEMENT

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39 This bill requires school districts to establish policies designed to
40 increase staff, student, and parent awareness of child sexual abuse.
41 The policy will address issues including knowledge of warning
42 signs that a child may be a sexual abuse victim, prevention
43 techniques, actions that a child victim should take to obtain
44 assistance, and available counseling options for students affected by
45 sexual abuse.

46 Under the bill, a school district's policy must require that
47 teachers and other school employees complete training that
48 includes, at a minimum, information on the following: (1) factors

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1 indicating that a child is at risk for sexual abuse; (2) recognition of
2 warning signs indicating that a child may be a victim of sexual
3 abuse; (3) internal procedures for seeking assistance for a child who
4 is a victim of sexual abuse or is at risk for sexual abuse, including
5 referral to available counseling options; and (4) techniques for
6 reducing a child's risk of sexual abuse.

7 The bill provides that a teaching staff member may satisfy in
8 each professional development cycle one or more hours of the
9 professional development requirement established by the State
10 Board of Education through participating in training programs on
11 child sexual abuse awareness and prevention.

12 This bill is similar to legislation adopted in Texas and referred to
13 as "Jenna's Law." The Texas law is named after a young woman,
14 Jenna Quinn, who is a sexual abuse survivor and an advocate for the
15 need for schools to provide training in child sexual abuse awareness
16 and prevention.