

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR

SENATE, Nos. 2861 and 3081

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 4, 2019

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports a Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill Nos. 2861 and 3081.

This substitute requires school districts to ensure that their health education programs for students in grades kindergarten through 12 recognize the multiple dimensions of health by including mental health and the relation of physical and mental health so as to enhance student understanding, attitudes, and behaviors that promote health, well-being, and human dignity. Under the substitute, the instruction in mental health must be adapted to the age and understanding of the students and will be incorporated as part of the school district's implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and Physical Education. The instruction in mental health must also include, as appropriate, information on substance abuse. Pursuant to current law, information on substance abuse is incorporated as part of the district's implementation of these standards.

The substitute directs the State Board of Education to review and update the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and Physical Education to ensure the incorporation of instruction in mental health in an appropriate place in the curriculum of students in grades kindergarten through 12. In its review, the State board is directed to consult with mental health experts including, but not limited to, representatives from the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services in the Department of Human Services.