

**SENATE RESOLUTION No. 86**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**218th LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED JUNE 18, 2018

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator M. TERESA RUIZ**

**District 29 (Essex)**

**Senator LINDA R. GREENSTEIN**

**District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senator Gopal**

**SYNOPSIS**

Urges public and nonpublic schools to annually provide parents opportunity to observe school security drill.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/22/2019)**

1   **SENATE RESOLUTION** urging public and nonpublic schools to  
2       annually provide parents an opportunity to observe a school  
3       security drill.  
4  
5   **WHEREAS**, Concern over the issue of school security has dramatically  
6       increased over the last 20 years as the number of school shooting  
7       incidents has tragically risen; and  
8   **WHEREAS**, The events at Sandy Hook Elementary School in  
9       Newtown, Connecticut on December 12, 2012 particularly shocked  
10      the conscience of the Nation and refocused the attention of law  
11      enforcement and school officials on additional actions that could be  
12      taken to upgrade the security of school buildings and prepare staff  
13      and students to protect themselves in the event of an active shooter  
14      situation; and  
15   **WHEREAS**, This heightened concern led to the establishment of the  
16      New Jersey School Security Task Force pursuant to the  
17      Legislature's approval of P.L.2013, c.142. The task force was  
18      charged with identifying physical and cyber vulnerabilities and  
19      potential breaches of security in public schools, and to make  
20      recommendations to improve school safety and security; and  
21   **WHEREAS**, While many of the task force recommendations were  
22      enacted, attention was particularly focused on the issue of school  
23      security drills and the training of school staff to ensure their ability  
24      and the ability of students to react swiftly and surely to a crisis  
25      situation; and  
26   **WHEREAS**, State law at N.J.S.18A:41-1 requires each public and  
27      nonpublic school to conduct at least one school security drill each  
28      month within school hours, including any summer months during  
29      which the school is open for instructional purposes; and  
30   **WHEREAS**, Pursuant to the report of the New Jersey School Security  
31      Task Force, in 2016 that section of law was amended to require that  
32      a law enforcement officer be present at a minimum of one school  
33      security drill in each school year in order to make recommendations  
34      on any improvements and changes to school security drill  
35      procedures that the officer may deem advisable; and  
36   **WHEREAS**, State law at section 2 of P.L.2009, c.178 (C.18A:41-7) was  
37      also amended at that time to require that all school employees,  
38      rather than just teaching staff members, receive training on school  
39      safety and security that includes instruction on security drills. The  
40      annual training provided to school employees must be conducted  
41      collaboratively by the district or nonpublic school and emergency  
42      responders including law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical  
43      services personnel, in order to identify weaknesses in school safety  
44      and security policies and procedures and increase the effectiveness  
45      of emergency responders; and  
46   **WHEREAS**, While the Centers for Disease Control found that in 2016,  
47      90 percent of public schools had a plan in place to address the issue

1 of active shooter situations, the anxiety of students and their parents  
2 and guardians has continued to escalate especially in light of the  
3 recent school violence and accompanying loss of life in Parkland,  
4 Florida and Santa Fe, Texas; and

5 **WHEREAS**, As the emphasis on school security drills has increased, the  
6 question of the impact of unannounced drills on student anxiety has  
7 been raised and debated. While parents and guardians acknowledge  
8 the critical need for such drills, some have expressed concern that  
9 the unannounced drills are frightening, especially for younger  
10 students; and

11 **WHEREAS**, While school and law enforcement officials acknowledge  
12 this concern, they feel that students have proven resilient and that  
13 the value of these drills in preparing students and staff for crisis  
14 situations outweighs the concern and will serve to mitigate student  
15 panic in the case of an actual event; and

16 **WHEREAS**, It is possible that some degree of parental concern may be  
17 connected to the fact that parents are not familiar with the drill  
18 process. While parents are notified through email and other forms  
19 of communication after the drill has been conducted, this  
20 notification does not provide them with a complete understanding  
21 of drill procedures and what may be required of their child during a  
22 drill; and

23 **WHEREAS**, Annually offering parents and guardians an opportunity to  
24 observe a school security drill at such time as is determined  
25 appropriate by the public or nonpublic school could help to  
26 alleviate parental anxiety by educating parents on drill procedures  
27 and the actions taken by school staff to both protect and support  
28 students during these monthly drills; now, therefore,

29  
30 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the Senate of the State of New Jersey:*

31  
32 1. This House urges public and nonpublic schools to annually  
33 provide the parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school  
34 with the opportunity to observe a school security drill in order to  
35 allay their concerns in regard to any possible negative impact of the  
36 drills on students and to reinforce parental understanding of the  
37 importance and value of unannounced drills in preparing students  
38 and staff to effectively respond to crisis situations.

39  
40 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,  
41 shall be transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the  
42 Commissioner of Education who shall forward copies of the  
43 resolution to the board of education of each school district and the  
44 chief school administrator of each nonpublic school.

STATEMENT

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3       This resolution urges public and nonpublic schools to annually  
4 provide the parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school  
5 the opportunity to observe a school security drill. The purpose  
6 would be to allay the concerns of parents that unannounced school  
7 security drills may be frightening, especially for younger students,  
8 and have a negative impact on a student's sense of well-being.  
9 These parental concerns may be connected to the fact that parents  
10 are not familiar with the drill process. While parents are notified  
11 through email and other forms of communication after the drill has  
12 been conducted, this notification does not provide them with an  
13 understanding of drill procedures and what may be required of their  
14 child during a drill. While school and law enforcement officials  
15 acknowledge this concern, they feel that students have proven to be  
16 resilient and that the value of these drills in preparing students and  
17 staff for crisis situations outweighs these concerns and will serve to  
18 mitigate student panic in the case of an actual event. Annually  
19 offering parents and guardians an opportunity to observe a school  
20 security drill at such time as is determined appropriate by the public  
21 or nonpublic school could help to alleviate parental anxiety by  
22 educating parents on drill procedures and the actions taken by  
23 school staff to both protect and support students during these  
24 monthly drills.