Sponsored by:
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District 29 (Essex)
Senator  JAMES BEACH
District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

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SYNOPSIS
Requires Internet websites and web services of school districts, charter schools, renaissance schools, and the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf to be accessible to persons with disabilities.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As reported by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on December 16, 2021, with amendments.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/9/2021)
AN ACT concerning the accessibility of public school websites and web services and supplementing chapter 36 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

1. a. 1[Any Internet website or web service of a] No1 school district, charter school, 1[or]1 renaissance school 1, or the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf4 shall 1[comply] make available to the enrolled students of the district or school or to the public an Internet website or web service unless the Internet website or web service complies4 with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA 1[,]1 or the most up-to-date version of the guidelines 1if the guidelines are approved by the Commissioner of Education, or any other applicable guidelines or requirements as may be designated or approved by the Commissioner of Education1.

b. The Commissioner of Education shall establish a procedure to 2[depend whether] obtain a statement of assurance that shall be submitted by the school district, charter school, renaissance school, or the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf concerning the accessibility compliance status of2 the Internet website or web service of a school district, charter school, 1[or]1 renaissance school 1, or the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf4 2[complies with the requirements of this section]2. The 1[Office of Information Technology in the]1 Department of Education shall be responsible for 2[issuing certifications of compliance, which certifications] collecting the statements of assurance, which2 shall attest that an Internet website or web service complies with the requirements of 1[the] this1 section 2[and shall post such information on the Department of Education’s Internet website which shall be updated every two years2].

c. (1) If a school district, charter school, 1[or]1 renaissance school 1, or the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf4 establishes 1[or significantly improves]1 an Internet website or web service after the effective date of this act, the public school shall 2[receive a certification of compliance from] submit the statement of assurance to2 the 1[office before the Internet website or web service may be considered operational] department1. 1[An Internet website or web service established by a school district, charter school, renaissance school, or the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf 2[before or after the effective date of this act shall be]

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets 1[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:
Senate SED committee amendments adopted November 8, 2021.
Senate SBA committee amendments adopted December 16, 2021.
permitted to operate while pending receipt of the certification of compliance from the statement of assurance by the department.

(2) Every two years following initial certification, the office shall the effective date of this act, a school district, charter school, renaissance school, or the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf shall certify or recertify submit the statement of assurance attesting to the compliance of each Internet website or web service operated by a school district, charter school, or the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf with the requirements of this section.

d. Nothing in this section shall be construed to bar, exclude, or otherwise affect any right or action that exists under the “Law Against Discrimination,” P.L.1945, c.169 (C.10:5-1 et seq.).

e. As used in this section, “Internet website or web service” includes any webpage, website, web service, online curriculum, or online third party or open educational resource product that is made available to enrolled students or the public by a school district, charter school, or the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf through the Internet.

2. This act shall take effect immediately on the first day of the sixth month next following the date of enactment, but the Commissioner of Education may take any anticipatory administrative action in advance as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.