SYNOPSIS
Requires Commissioner of Education to prepare learning loss report and report on public school operations during COVID-19 public health emergency.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.
S3214 RUIZ, TURNER

AN ACT concerning public schooling during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

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

1. a. The Commissioner of Education shall require each school district to submit data on student academic outcomes within 30 days of the effective date of this act. The data shall be used by the commissioner to develop a learning loss report that identifies and quantifies the impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency on student academic outcomes.

   The data shall be provided for all students enrolled in the school district in the time period beginning on the date of the school district’s closure in March of 2020 and ending on the effective date of this act, unless otherwise specified by the commissioner.

   b. Within 60 days of the effective date of this act, the Commissioner of Education shall prepare and submit to the Governor and to the Legislature, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), a learning loss report that summarizes the data collected pursuant to subsection a. of this section. The learning loss report shall:

      (1) identify and quantify the impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency on overall student academic outcomes, and shall include an analysis disaggregated by district size, grade level, and academic subject, where practicable; and

      (2) identify and quantify the impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency on student achievement disparities that existed prior to the public health emergency, and shall include an analysis of student academic outcomes disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, eligibility for free or reduced price lunch under the National School Lunch Program, eligibility for special education services, and English language learner designation, where practicable.

   c. The commissioner’s use of data collected pursuant to this section shall be restricted to the purposes of this section.

2. a. The Commissioner of Education shall require each school district to submit data and information related to the continuation of school services during the COVID-19 public health emergency. The school district shall submit the data and information to the commissioner within 90 days of the effective date of this act. The data and information shall be provided for the time period beginning on the date of the school district’s closure in March of 2020 and ending on the effective date of this act. The data and information shall include, but need not be limited to:

      (1) the dates of any extended and intermittent pauses of academic instruction taken as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency;
(2) a description of the instructional format provided by the school district, such as remote, hybrid, or in-person;
(3) for any remote learning provided, data on the amount of class time students spent in synchronous and asynchronous learning formats;
(4) data on class sizes for each instructional format used by the district and the amount of any small group or one-on-one instruction delivered;
(5) the percentage of students and teachers with access to reliable Internet and technology at the beginning of the reporting period and at the time of reporting, and a description of the school district’s efforts to ensure all teachers and each student in a household have access to reliable Internet and their own laptop, tablet, or device;
(6) the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for each year from 2017 through 2020, and the number of 2020 high school graduates who did not meet the graduation assessment requirement that was waived by Executive Order No. 117 of 2020, and who qualified for graduation through an alternate pathway;
(7) information on any standardized assessment administered to students in the fall of 2020;
(8) the attendance rates and attendance policy applied by the school district;
(9) information on the continuity of special education services during this time period including identification of any accommodations or services that were suspended, limited, or created due to the COVID-19 public health emergency;
(10) a description of the professional development opportunities provided to school district teachers and staff;
(11) the number of students who received free or reduced-price meals, and the number of students who received free or reduced-price meals over the same period in the prior year;
(12) information on the type and participation rates of any district-sponsored child care programs;
(13) information on current and projected teacher shortages, detailing shortages by school, grade level, and subject area; and
(14) types of social-emotional supports provided to students, teachers, and staff and participation rates of these programs.

Where available, the school district shall provide data that is disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, eligibility for free or reduced price lunch under the National School Lunch Program, eligibility for special education services, English language learner designation, and grade level.

b. Within 120 days of the effective date of this act, the Commissioner of Education shall prepare and submit to the Governor and to the Legislature, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), a final report that summarizes the information and data collected pursuant to subsection a. of this
section. The final report shall be a comprehensive overview of the
continuation of school services during the COVID-19 public health
emergency.

c. The commissioner’s use of data collected pursuant to this
section shall be restricted to the purposes of this section.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill requires the Commissioner of Education to prepare two
reports on the impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency on
public schooling. The first report will be a learning loss report that
identifies and quantifies the impact of the COVID-19 public health
emergency on student academic outcomes. The second report will
be a report on the continuation of school services during the same
period.

Under the bill, the commissioner must collect data on student
academic outcomes from all school districts within thirty days of
the bill’s effective date. The commissioner will require each
school district to submit the required data within 30 days of the
bill’s effective date. The data must be provided for all students
enrolled in the school district in the time period beginning on the
date of the school district’s closure in March of 2020 and ending on
the bill’s effective date, unless otherwise specified by the
commissioner. The bill directs the commissioner to prepare
and submit a report to the Governor and to the Legislature within 60
days of the bill’s effective date. The learning loss report must:

(1) identify and quantify the impact of the COVID-19 public
health emergency on overall student academic outcomes, and
include an analysis disaggregated by district size, grade level, and
academic subject, where practicable; and

(2) identify and quantify the impact of the COVID-19 public
health emergency on student achievement disparities that existed
prior to the public health emergency, and include an analysis of
student academic outcomes disaggregated by race, ethnicity,
gender, eligibility for free or reduced price lunch under the National
School Lunch Program, eligibility for special education services,
and English language learner designation, where practicable.

The bill restricts the commissioner’s use of the collected data to
the bill’s purposes.

The bill also directs the commissioner to require each school
district to submit data and information related to the continuation of
school services during the COVID-19 public health emergency.
The school district must submit the data and information to the
commissioner within 90 days of the bill’s effective date. The data
and information must be provided for the time period beginning on
the date of the school district’s closure in March of 2020 and ending on the bill’s effective date. Under the bill, the required data will include, but need not be limited to:

- the dates of any extended and intermittent pauses of academic instruction taken as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency;
- a description of the instructional format provided by the school district;
- for any remote learning provided, data on the amount of class time students spent in synchronous and asynchronous learning formats;
- data on class sizes for each instructional format used by the district and the amount of any small group or one-on-one instruction delivered;
- data and information on student and teacher access to reliable Internet and technology;
- high school graduation rates;
- information on any standardized assessment administered to students in the fall of 2020;
- the attendance rates and attendance policy applied by the school district;
- information on the continuity of special education services;
- a description of the professional development opportunities provided to school district teachers and staff;
- the number of students who received free or reduced-price meals;
- information on any district-sponsored child care programs;
- information on current and projected teacher shortages; and
- types of social-emotional supports provided to students, teachers, and staff and participation rates of these programs.

Where available, the school district must provide data that is disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, eligibility for free or reduced price lunch under the National School Lunch Program, eligibility for special education services, English language learner designation, and grade level.

The bill provides that within 120 days of the bill’s effective date, the commissioner must prepare and submit to the Governor and the Legislature a final report that summarizes the collected information. The final report will be a comprehensive overview of the continuation of school services during the COVID-19 public health emergency. The bill limits the commissioner’s use of the collected data and information to the bill’s purposes.