

ASSEMBLY, No. 1940

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED MAY 6, 1996

By Assemblywoman TURNER

1 AN ACT concerning training requirements for school bus drivers and  
2 supplementing chapter 3 of Title 39 of the Revised Statutes.

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

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7 1. a. Except as provided in N.J.S.18A:39-20 for provisional  
8 employment, no board of education, private school or contractor  
9 shall approve or assign a person as a driver or substitute driver of a  
10 school bus who has not successfully completed an approved school  
11 bus driver training program within one year of the effective date of  
12 this act or within one year of initial employment as a school bus driver  
13 after the effective date of this act.

14 b. The training program, which may be operated by the Department  
15 of Education, the driver's employer upon approval of the division, or  
16 by a drivers' school licensed by the director pursuant to P.L.1951,  
17 c.216 (C.39:12-1 et seq.), shall provide a minimum of 20 hours of  
18 course work and behind-the-wheel instruction. The program shall  
19 emphasize, but not be limited to, the responsibilities of drivers for the  
20 safety of school children, passenger control, defensive driving,  
21 accidents and emergencies, emergency driving techniques, first aid,  
22 field trips and transporting handicapped children.

23 c. Guidelines for the training shall be established by the division,  
24 in consultation with the Office of Highway Traffic Safety in the  
25 Department of Law and Public Safety and the Department of  
26 Education. The division shall also establish continuing education  
27 requirements for training recertification prior to commercial driver  
28 license renewal, which shall include a minimum of 20 hours of  
29 refresher course work. The cost of the training shall be borne by the  
30 employer of the school bus driver.

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32 2. This act shall take effect on the first day of the fifth month after  
33 enactment.

## 1 STATEMENT

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3 This bill would require that in addition to the current requirements  
4 for becoming licensed as a commercial driver, a person who drives  
5 children in a school bus, whether employed by a board of education,  
6 a private school, or a contractor, must successfully complete a 20  
7 hour program of classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction. Upon  
8 license renewal, the driver must be recertified after completion of an  
9 additional 20-hour refresher course.

10 The training program could be conducted by the State Department  
11 of Education, the driver's employer if its course is approved by the  
12 Division of Motor Vehicles, or by a licensed private driver education  
13 school. The program would be particularly focused on the special  
14 responsibilities of school bus drivers for the safety of their passengers.  
15 The course would also deal with such skills as passenger control, field  
16 trips, and transporting handicapped pupils. Employers would assume  
17 the cost of instruction.

18 This bill addresses concerns about the adequacy of school bus  
19 driver preparation expressed after the recent accidental death of a  
20 seven-year-old girl while crossing in front of a school bus. According  
21 to the New Jersey School Boards Association, five other children have  
22 been killed in New Jersey in the last eight years in this manner. There  
23 are about 15,000 public school bus drivers in the State.

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Requires training for school bus drivers.