

# ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### **ASSEMBLY, No. 4856**

with committee amendments

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 25, 2021

The Assembly Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 4856 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill establishes accessibility standards for the Internet websites and web services of school districts, charter schools, renaissance schools, and the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf (“public school”).

Specifically, the bill requires the Internet website and web services of every public school to comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA, or the most up-to-date version of the guidelines. The WCAG guidelines provide standards through which digital content may be accessible for persons with disabilities. In June 2018, the WCAG 2.1 guidelines were issued to improve accessibility guidance for three major groups: users with cognitive or learning disabilities, users with low vision, and users with disabilities on mobile devices.

Under the bill, the Commissioner of Education would be required to establish a procedure for determining whether an Internet website or web service complies with the WCAG guidelines. The Office of Information Technology in the Department of Education would be responsible for issuing certifications of compliance to attest that an Internet website or web service complies with these requirements.

The bill provides that when a public school establishes or significantly improves an Internet website or web service after the effective date of this bill, the school would be required to receive a certification of compliance from the office before the website may be considered operational. The bill also requires the office to recertify the compliance of each Internet website or web service operated by a public school every two years following initial certification.

As defined in this bill, the term “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 public school through the Internet.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to make the provisions of the bill applicable to the Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf. The committee also amended the bill to change its effective date to the first day of the sixth month following the date of enactment.