

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 5126

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 25, 2021

The Assembly Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 5126.

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.

As reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 3214, which was also reported by the committee on this same date.