

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE:

No

VETO MESSAGE:

No

GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING:

Yes

FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:

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REPORTS:

No

HEARINGS:

No

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:

Yes

"NJ law requires mental health instruction in grades K-12,"
Associated Press State Wire: New Jersey (NJ) - August 9, 2019

RWH/JA

P.L. 2019, CHAPTER 222, *approved August 9, 2019*
Senate Committee Substitute for
Senate, Nos. 2861 and 3081

1 **AN ACT** concerning the health education curriculum in public
2 schools and supplementing chapter 35 of Title 18A of the New
3 Jersey Statutes.

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

7
8 1. a. A school district shall ensure that its health education
9 programs for students in grades kindergarten through 12 recognize
10 the multiple dimensions of health by including mental health and
11 the relation of physical and mental health so as to enhance student
12 understanding, attitudes, and behaviors that promote health, well-
13 being, and human dignity. The instruction in mental health shall be
14 adapted to the age and understanding of the students and shall be
15 incorporated as part of the district's implementation of the New
16 Jersey Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and
17 Physical Education. The instruction shall include, as appropriate,
18 information on substance abuse provided pursuant to the
19 implementation of these standards and to section 1 of P.L.2016,
20 c.46 (C.18A:40A-2.1).

21 b. The State Board of Education shall review and update the
22 New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health
23 and Physical Education to ensure the incorporation of instruction in
24 mental health in an appropriate place in the curriculum for students
25 in grades kindergarten through 12. In its review, the State board
26 shall consult with mental health experts including, but not limited
27 to, representatives from the Division of Mental Health and
28 Addiction Services in the Department of Human Services.

29
30 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
31 the 2020-2021 school year.

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36 _____
37 Requires health curriculum for public school students in grades
kindergarten through 12 to include instruction on mental health.

SENATE, No. 2861

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED AUGUST 27, 2018

Sponsored by:

Senator KRISTIN M. CORRADO

District 40 (Bergen, Essex, Morris and Passaic)

SYNOPSIS

Requires school districts to provide instruction on mental health as part of health education curriculum.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



S2861 CORRADO

2

1 AN ACT concerning mental health education in public schools and
2 supplementing chapter 35 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

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

7
8 1. a. The board of education of a school district shall provide
9 instruction on mental health as part of the district's implementation
10 of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive
11 Health and Physical Education. The health instruction provided by
12 a school district shall recognize the multiple dimensions of health
13 by including mental health and the relationship of physical and
14 mental health so as to enhance student understanding, attitudes, and
15 behaviors that promote health, well-being, and human dignity.

16 b. Within 180 days of the effective date of this act, the State
17 Board of Education shall review and update the New Jersey Student
18 Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and Physical
19 Education to ensure the incorporation of instruction in mental
20 health in an appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary
21 school, middle school, and high school students. In its review, the
22 State board shall consult with mental health experts including, but
23 not limited to, representatives from the Division of Mental Health
24 and Addiction Services in the Department of Health.

25
26 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

27

28

29

STATEMENT

30

31 This bill requires school districts to provide instruction on
32 mental health as part of their implementation of the New Jersey
33 Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and Physical
34 Education. Under the bill, the health instruction provided by a
35 school district must recognize the multiple dimensions of health by
36 including mental health and the relationship of physical and mental
37 health so as to enhance student understanding, attitudes, and
38 behaviors that promote health, well-being, and human dignity.

39 The bill directs the State Board of Education, within 180 days of
40 the bill's effective date, to review and update the New Jersey
41 Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and Physical
42 Education to ensure the incorporation of instruction in mental
43 health in an appropriate place in the curriculum of elementary
44 school, middle school, and high school students. In its review, the
45 State board is directed to consult with mental health experts
46 including, but not limited to, representatives from the Division of
47 Mental Health and Addiction Services in the Department of Health.

SENATE, No. 3081

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 18, 2018

Sponsored by:

Senator RICHARD J. CODEY

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE

District 19 (Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Requires health curriculum for public school students in grades kindergarten through 12 to include instruction on mental health.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



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13 being, and human dignity. The instruction in mental health shall be
14 adapted to the age and understanding of the students and shall be
15 incorporated as part of the district's implementation of the New
16 Jersey Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and
17 Physical Education.

18 b. The Department of Education, in consultation with the
19 Department of Health, shall develop guidelines for school districts
20 for education programs on mental health in accordance with
21 subsection a. of this section. The guidelines shall recommend
22 educational resources and instructional materials suitable for each
23 grade level, and shall be reviewed and updated on a periodic basis.
24

25 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply to
26 the first full school year following the date of enactment.
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29 STATEMENT
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31 This bill requires school districts to ensure that their health
32 education programs for students in grades kindergarten through 12
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47 a periodic basis.

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
SENATE, Nos. 2861 and 3081

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 10, 2019

The Assembly Education Committee reports favorably Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill Nos. 2861 and 3081.

This bill requires school districts to ensure that their health education programs for students in grades kindergarten through 12 recognize the multiple dimensions of health by including mental health and the relation of physical and mental health so as to enhance student understanding, attitudes, and behaviors that promote health, well-being, and human dignity. Under the bill, the instruction in mental health must be adapted to the age and understanding of the students and will be incorporated as part of the school district's implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and Physical Education. The instruction in mental health must also include, as appropriate, information on substance abuse. Pursuant to current law, information on substance abuse is incorporated as part of the district's implementation of these standards.

The bill directs the State Board of Education to review and update the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and Physical Education to ensure the incorporation of instruction in mental health in an appropriate place in the curriculum of students in grades kindergarten through 12. In its review, the State board is directed to consult with mental health experts including, but not limited to, representatives from the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services in the Department of Human Services.

As reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Assembly Committee Substitute for Assembly Bill Nos. 4446 and 4592, which also was reported by the committee on this same date.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR **SENATE, Nos. 2861 and 3081**

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 4, 2019

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports a Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill Nos. 2861 and 3081.

This substitute requires school districts to ensure that their health education programs for students in grades kindergarten through 12 recognize the multiple dimensions of health by including mental health and the relation of physical and mental health so as to enhance student understanding, attitudes, and behaviors that promote health, well-being, and human dignity. Under the substitute, the instruction in mental health must be adapted to the age and understanding of the students and will be incorporated as part of the school district's implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and Physical Education. The instruction in mental health must also include, as appropriate, information on substance abuse. Pursuant to current law, information on substance abuse is incorporated as part of the district's implementation of these standards.

The substitute directs the State Board of Education to review and update the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and Physical Education to ensure the incorporation of instruction in mental health in an appropriate place in the curriculum of students in grades kindergarten through 12. In its review, the State board is directed to consult with mental health experts including, but not limited to, representatives from the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services in the Department of Human Services.

ASSEMBLY, No. 4446

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 17, 2018

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman GARY S. SCHAER

District 36 (Bergen and Passaic)

Assemblywoman JOANN DOWNEY

District 11 (Monmouth)

Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:

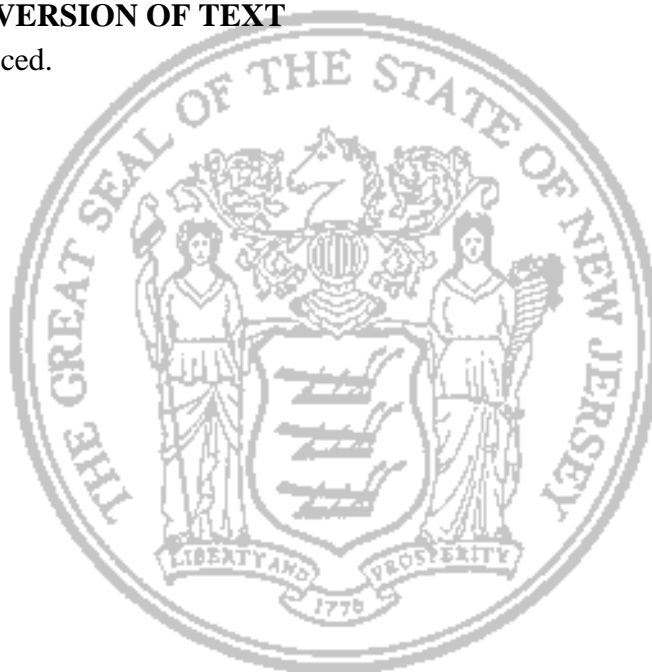
**Assemblyman Giblin, Assemblywomen Murphy, Vainieri Huttle and
Assemblyman S.Kean**

SYNOPSIS

Requires school districts to provide instruction on mental health as part of health education curriculum.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/26/2019)

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SENATE, No. 3081

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
218th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 18, 2018

Sponsored by:

Senator RICHARD J. CODEY

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE

District 19 (Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

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47 a periodic basis.

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Requiring Mental Health Education and Establishing a Pilot Program Testing Later Start Times in New Jersey Schools

08/9/2019

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed legislation that will require all New Jersey public schools to include mental health instruction in K through 12 health curriculums. The bill (S2861) aims to enhance student understanding, attitudes, and behaviors related to mental health to promote well-being. Governor Murphy also took action on legislation (S3160) that will require the Department of Education to establish a four-year pilot program testing later school start times for high school students.

“We are striving to do all that we can to improve health and wellness for our students,” **said Governor Murphy**. “By ensuring that children in grades K through 12 learn about mental health, we can promote a healthier future for New Jersey. Research also shows that academic progress may be negatively impacted by starting school too early. By testing the viability of changing start times, we are exploring ways to improve learning outcomes for New Jersey students.”

S2861 will require the State Board of Education to review and update the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and Physical Education to ensure that mental health education is incorporated in an age-appropriate way in K through 12 health curriculums. The legislation was sponsored by Senators Kristin Corrado, Richard Codey, and Joseph Vitale and Assemblymembers Gary Schaer, John McKeon, Joann Downey, Raj Mukherji and Daniel Benson.

S3160 will assess how shifting start times would impact districts overall, including how extracurricular activities may be impacted and how transportation to and from school would be affected. Under the legislation, Commissioner of Education Lamont Repollet will select five school districts to participate in the pilot program. Those school districts must include urban, suburban, and rural areas of the state. The legislation was sponsored by Senator Richard Codey and Assemblymembers Mila Jasey, Valerie Vainieri Huttler, and Carol Murphy.

“These new laws are a great example of educational equity at work,” **said Education Commissioner Lamont O. Repollet**. “Educating students about mental health prioritizes approaches like social and emotional learning programs that give students the necessary skills to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, and make responsible decisions. It’s an important step toward building positive school climates and supportive learning environments for all of our students. The pilot program on later start times for high school students will also allow the Department of Education to gain important impact on how students and families would be impacted by changes to the school day.”

Regarding A4496/S2861:

“This legislation is long overdue,” **said Senator Joseph Vitale**. “It has taken our society a long time to recognize the crucial piece of wellbeing that is mental health. We try to prepare our children by teaching them about science, math, English and physical health. It is time to add mental health to the essential learning for a well-rounded young adult and I am glad the Governor is taking action to make this the case in New Jersey.”

“Mental health is just as important as physical health. Adolescence can be a confusing and stressful time. We need to make sure teens are comfortable asking for support. The enactment of this legislation will play a critical role in breaking the stigma of mental illness in schools, helping our children to grow and mature into successful young women and men,” **said Senator Kristin Corrado**.

“It’s incredibly important that students understand the many dimensions of health, from exercise to mental health and wellness,” **said Assemblyman Gary Schaer**, a prime sponsor of the bill. “Educating children about these issues from a young age will help them gain a deeper understanding of how to care for their mental health as they get older.”

“One in five children ages 13 to 18 have, or will have, a serious mental illness in their lives,” **said Assemblyman John McKeon**. “In any given classroom, there’s bound to be students living with a mental health issue, from ADHD to depression to anxiety. Some may not have been diagnosed or treated. Through lessons on mental health, we may

help some youth feel less alone or be encouraged to seek the help they need.”

“Mental health conditions are much more common than many people realize, yet there continues to be a stigma around it,” **said Assemblywoman Joann Downey**. “Hopefully by raising awareness for mental health issues in a classroom setting, we can reduce the stigma and instill greater empathy for generations to come.”

“People struggling with their mental health face unique challenges every day,” **said Assemblyman Raj Mukherji**. “Not only will adequate education help students with and without mental health conditions better understand those challenges, but teachers may find ways to connect with students with mental health diagnoses on a deeper level.”

“As rates of teen suicide and addiction continue to rise, we need to find ways to engage youth about these issues, beginning with comprehensive lessons in schools,” **said Assemblyman Dan Benson**. “Students will learn how to recognize the signs of mental illness and where they can go for help. These tools may be incredibly important if they find themselves struggling or see a friend who needs help.”

Regarding S3160/A4865:

“Adolescents are not getting enough sleep to live up to their full academic potential, and early school start times are to blame,” **said Senator Richard Codey**. “Numerous studies by the CDC and the American Medical Association support that early school start times conflict with the physical and psychological growth of adolescents. This isn’t just an idea, research backs up this problem. The negative effects of not getting enough sleep will cause mental health issues within students. This is one of the reasons we need to educate students on mental health in order to help those who suffer from its effects.”

“Teens are operating on too little sleep to the detriment of their physical, social, emotional and ultimately academic well-being,” **said Assemblywoman Mila Jasey**. “With later school start times, students could get a little more sleep giving them just the extra boost they need for success. It’s a strategy that has great potential to work in our largely diverse state and merits our attention.”

“Our school schedules should reflect the needs of our students,” **said Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle**. “So often, our children are attending school on far less sleep than what is medically recommended. This pilot program will give us a deeper understanding of how a later start to the school day may impact students – especially in regards to academic performance. This law is supported by advocates and experts alike, including the American Academy of Pediatrics.”

“The purpose of school and education is to maximize human potential,” **said Assemblywoman Carol Murphy**. “When students are not well rested they aren’t showing up to school in best mindset to learn. For that reason, it’s imperative we take on task of pinpointing feasible ways to better meet the needs of our teens. If changing high school start times by an hour makes a difference, it’s an avenue we definitely need to explore.”
Education advocates spoke in favor of both bills:

“These new laws recognize that our students’ mental health and wellbeing are important and deserve our attention and support,” **said NJEA President Marie Blistan**. “We thank the legislators who supported them and Governor Murphy for signing them today.”

“Legislation to include mental health information, including substance abuse awareness, in age-appropriate education is a positive step in that direction and we look forward to working on its implementation. Research has also shown that developing teenagers may perform better with additional time in the morning for sleep. Innovating by testing the implementation of these promising findings should be done collaboratively in conjunction with community needs and prioritizing students healthy growth over competing time demands of athletics and extracurriculars,” **said AFTNJ President Donna M. Chiera**. “Taken together, these bills show what can be accomplished when the voices of educators are considered along with relevant research so that students needs are foremost considerations in the legislative process.”

“We thank Governor Murphy and the bill sponsors for their work in this critical area,” **said NJSBA Executive Director Dr. Lawrence S. Feinsod**. “NJSBA’s upcoming report on mental health service in the public schools, *Building a Foundation for Hope*, supported this legislation. It is important that our students develop ways to cope with life’s challenges. Including mental health within the existing curriculum is a logical step.”

“Parents across our state applaud Governor Murphy and the legislature for these bills, which will help address the mental health epidemic in our public schools,” **said Julie Borst, Executive Director of Save Our Schools**. “Mental health instruction from K through 12th grade is critical to building awareness and encouraging treatment. And, as the research unequivocally documents, later school start times for high school students improve mental health, physical safety and learning. This is exactly the kind of bipartisan legislation that benefits all of our children.”