

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 1992

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 16, 2023

The Assembly Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1992 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill establishes the Commission on the Effects of Social Media Usage on Adolescents.

Under the amended bill, the commission will consist of 19 members including: the Commissioner of Education, or a designee; one public member appointed by the President of the Senate and one public member appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate; one public member appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly and one public member appointed by the Minority Leader of the General Assembly; and 14 members appointed by the Governor, including one representative from each of the following organizations: the New Jersey School Boards Association, the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, the New Jersey Education Association, the New Jersey Parent-Teacher Association, Advocates for Children of New Jersey, the New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition, and the New Jersey Association of School Psychologists; a member with demonstrated expertise in the collection, usage and analysis of data concerning social media; a school nurse from the New Jersey State School Nurses Association; two public school students; and two parents of students enrolled in a public school.

The duty of the commission is to determine:

- the extent of social media usage in and out of public schools, including the average amount of time students in various age groups spend each day in and out of school on electronic devices;
- the effects that use has on the emotional health of students, including incidents of depression, anxiety, body dysmorphia, harassment, intimidation or bullying, or other disruptive or violent behaviors;
- the effects that use has on the academic performance of students; and
- the effects that use has on the physical health of students, including incidents of sleep deprivation, weight loss or gain, or high blood pressure.

The bill directs the commission to issue a final report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature no later than one year after its organizational meeting. The commission will expire 30 days after the submission of the final report.

This bill was prefiled for introduction in the 2022-2023 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

As reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 715, which was amended and reported by the committee on this same date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- remove references to smart phones, including retitling the commission as the “Commission on the Effects of Social Media Usage on Adolescents”;
- increase the membership of the commission from 15 to 19 members by adding a member with demonstrated expertise in the collection, usage and analysis of data concerning social media, a school nurse from the New Jersey State School Nurses Association, and two public school students to the membership of the commission;
- adding the provision that the commission will study the effects of social media in and out of public schools;
- adding that the emotional health of students may include incidents of depression, anxiety, and body dysmorphia, and removing the inclusion of incidents of depression from physical health; and
- adding to the duties of the commission the determination of effective strategies to mitigate the adverse effects of social media usage on student health and academic performance.