

**SENATE, No. 3245**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**216th LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 5, 2015

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator DIANE B. ALLEN**

**District 7 (Burlington)**

**Senator M. TERESA RUIZ**

**District 29 (Essex)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senator Turner**

**SYNOPSIS**

Requires Commissioner of Education to include data on chronic absenteeism and disciplinary suspensions on School Report Card and requires public schools to make certain efforts to combat chronic absenteeism.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 11/17/2015)**

1 AN ACT concerning student attendance records, amending  
2 P.L.1995, c.235, and supplementing chapter 38 of the Title 18A  
3 of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

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8 1. Section 3 of P.L.1995, c.235 (C.18A:7E-3) is amended to  
9 read as follows:

10 3. Report cards issued pursuant to section 2 of this act shall  
11 include, but not be limited to, the following information for:

12 a. the school district and for each school within the district, as  
13 appropriate:

14 (1) results of the elementary assessment programs;

15 (2) results of the Early Warning Test;

16 (3) results of the High School Proficiency Test;

17 (4) daily attendance records for students and professional staff;

18 (5) student graduation and dropout rates;

19 (6) annual student scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test;

20 (7) total student enrollment, percentage of limited English  
21 proficient students, percentage of students in advanced placement  
22 courses, and any other school characteristics which the  
23 commissioner deems appropriate;

24 (8) instructional resources including teacher/student ratio,  
25 average class size and amount of instructional time per day, as  
26 calculated by formulas specified by the commissioner;

27 (9) a written narrative by the school principal or a designee  
28 which describes any special achievements, events, problems or  
29 initiatives of the school or district;

30 (10) data identifying the number and nature of all reports of  
31 harassment, intimidation, or bullying; **[and]**

32 (11) indicators of student career readiness;

33 (12) the number and percentage of students who were chronically  
34 absent, where chronically absent means a student's attendance  
35 record includes a total number of absences, including excused  
36 absences, unexcused absences, and absences due to disciplinary  
37 actions, that meets or exceeds 10 percent of the total number of  
38 school days in the school year, or in the case of a student who  
39 enrolls in the school after the beginning of the school year, 10  
40 percent of the total number of days from the date of enrollment until  
41 the end of the school year; and

42 (13) the number and percentage of students who received a  
43 disciplinary suspension; and

44 b. the school district, as appropriate:

**EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

**Matter underlined thus is new matter.**

- 1 (1) per pupil expenditures and State aid ratio;
- 2 (2) percent of budget allocated for salaries and benefits of  
3 administrative personnel;
- 4 (3) percent of budget allocated for salaries and benefits of  
5 teachers;
- 6 (4) percentage increase over the previous year for salaries and  
7 benefits of administrative and instructional personnel;
- 8 (5) the number of administrative personnel and the ratio of  
9 administrative personnel to instructional personnel;
- 10 (6) a profile of the most recent graduating class concerning their  
11 educational or employment plans following graduation; and
- 12 (7) any other information which the commissioner deems  
13 appropriate.

14 For the purposes of this section, the Commissioner of Education  
15 shall establish a uniform methodology for the reporting of the data  
16 concerning administrative personnel on a full-time equivalent basis.

17 (cf: P.L.2014, c.71)

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19 2. (New section) a. As used in this section, “chronically  
20 absent” means a student’s attendance record includes a total number  
21 of absences, including excused absences, unexcused absences, and  
22 absences due to disciplinary actions, that meets or exceeds 10  
23 percent of the total number of school days in the school year, or in  
24 the case of a student who enrolls in the school after the beginning of  
25 the school year, 10 percent of the total number of days from the  
26 date of enrollment until the end of the school year.

27 b. In the event that 10 percent or more of the students enrolled  
28 in a public school are chronically absent, the school shall convene a  
29 Chronic Absenteeism Coalition. The coalition shall include at least  
30 one parent and one teacher from the school community, and such  
31 other members as determined by the principal of the school. The  
32 purpose of the coalition shall be to regularly review and monitor  
33 school chronic absenteeism and develop a corrective action plan to  
34 improve absenteeism rates. In developing the corrective action  
35 plan, the coalition shall address how the school can:

36 (1) communicate clearly and often to parents on the importance  
37 of school attendance;

38 (2) establish contact with parents when children begin to show a  
39 pattern of absences;

40 (3) identify problems and barriers to school attendance and  
41 develop recommendations to address them; and

42 (4) foster positive school relationships with families.

43 The coalition shall annually present to the board of education its  
44 findings and recommendations until the percentage of the student  
45 body that is chronically absent falls below ten percent.

46

47 3. (New section) The Commissioner of Education shall  
48 annually review the chronic absenteeism rates of each school and

1 school district, as included on the School Report Cards issued  
2 pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1995, c.235 (C.18A:7E-2), and report  
3 on the rates to the State Board of Education.

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5 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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10 This bill requires that, in the event that ten percent or more of the  
11 students enrolled in a public school are chronically absent, the  
12 school must convene a Chronic Absenteeism Coalition. The  
13 coalition must include at least one parent and one teacher from the  
14 school community, and such other members as determined  
15 appropriate by the principal. The purpose of the coalition will be to  
16 regularly review and monitor school chronic absenteeism and  
17 develop a corrective action plan to improve absenteeism rates. The  
18 coalition must annually present its findings and recommendations to  
19 the board of education until the percentage of the student body that  
20 is chronically absent falls below ten percent.

21 The bill also requires the Commissioner of Education to include  
22 on School Report Cards data on the number and percentage of  
23 students who were chronically absent and the number and  
24 percentage of students who received a disciplinary suspension. The  
25 commissioner must annually review the chronic absenteeism rates  
26 of each school and school district and report on the rates to the State  
27 Board of Education.

28 As used in the bill, "chronically absent" means a student's  
29 attendance record includes a total number of absences, including  
30 excused absences, unexcused absences, and absences due to  
31 disciplinary actions, that meets or exceeds 10 percent of the total  
32 number of school days in the school year, or in the case of a student  
33 who enrolls in the school after the beginning of the school year, 10  
34 percent of the total number of school days from the date of  
35 enrollment until the end of the school year.