

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 3416

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 14, 2017

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 3416, with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill directs the Division of Fire Safety in the Department of Community Affairs to conduct a survey of fire suppression systems in all public and nonpublic school buildings in the State.

Under the bill, the survey is required to include the following information for each school building:

- (1) whether a fire suppression system is installed and operational;
- (2) the year in which an existing fire suppression system was installed and any year in which additional piping or standpipes were added to the system or an additional system was installed in the same structure;
- (3) the cost of curing any defect if an installed fire suppression system is not fully operational; and
- (4) the cost of a reinstallation or annual maintenance of a fire suppression system that is inadequate or not fully operational.

The bill requires the division to provide the results of the survey to the Department of Education, and to publish the survey on its Internet website, no later than the first day of the third January next following the date of enactment of the bill.

The purpose of this bill is to compile data and information necessary to evaluate the current state of fire suppression systems in public and nonpublic schools in New Jersey, and identify the potential costs associated with improving those systems that are inadequate or not fully operational.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The amendments require the Division of Fire Safety in the Department of Community Affairs to conduct the survey of fire suppression systems in school buildings rather than the Department of Education. The division will share the results of the survey with the Department of Education.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) estimates this bill may result in increased costs to the Division of Fire Safety in the Department of Community Affairs. The division may incur new costs associated with conducting a survey of fire suppression systems in all public and nonpublic school buildings. It is unclear if the division will need to hire additional personnel to assist in conducting tasks necessary to complete the survey and produce the final report. The division has informally indicated that its State and local fire code enforcement responsibilities make it unlikely that current staff could be reallocated to conduct individual inspections of fire suppression systems in all public and nonpublic school buildings.

The OLS notes that the State Uniform Fire Code requires annual inspection of all public school buildings with occupancy greater than 50 persons, which may afford an opportunity to utilize local inspection agencies in assisting with the survey. Doing so may entail cost reimbursements by the State.