

ASSEMBLY, No. 406

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman EDWARD H. THOMSON

District 30 (Monmouth and Ocean)

Assemblyman SEAN T. KEAN

District 30 (Monmouth and Ocean)

SYNOPSIS

Allows school district to develop delayed building evacuation plan to investigate source of fire alarm activation prior to evacuation.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** concerning the evacuation of school buildings and
2 supplementing chapter 41 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. Notwithstanding any law, rule or regulation to the
9 contrary, the Director of the Division of Fire Safety in the
10 Department of Community Affairs, in consultation with the
11 Commissioner of Education, shall develop guidelines to allow
12 school districts to develop plans for the delayed evacuation of
13 school buildings that are equipped with an adequate level of fixed
14 fire protection. The guidelines shall establish safety procedures,
15 protocols, and a predetermined amount of time for trained,
16 designated school building staff to investigate the source of fire
17 alarm activation prior to evacuating the school building.

18 b. A school district which elects to develop a delayed
19 evacuation plan pursuant to subsection a. of this section shall
20 develop the plan in consultation with the local fire and law
21 enforcement agencies.

22 In order to be eligible to develop a delayed evacuation plan, a
23 school district shall, at a minimum, provide that:

24 (1) the school building is protected throughout by a complete
25 automatic sprinkler system, or with a fire alarm having complete
26 corridor smoke detection and point-addressable technology that
27 displays the alarm location at the fire alarm control panel and at all
28 annunciator panels; and

29 (2) the school building's fire alarm system utilizes a positive
30 alarm sequencing that delays the notification appliance from
31 activating, including horns and strobes, while trained personnel
32 investigate the source of the fire alarm signal.

33 In developing a delayed evacuation plan, a school district may
34 include a system of cameras throughout the school building that
35 allows trained, designated school building staff to monitor the
36 school building and more easily identify the source of the fire alarm
37 activation.

38 c. A delayed evacuation plan developed by a school district
39 shall be approved by the Director of the Division of Fire Safety
40 prior to implementation. The director shall annually review and
41 direct the school district to update as appropriate the delayed
42 evacuation plan to verify that the minimum requirements
43 established pursuant to this section and any rules promulgated
44 pursuant to this section are met.

45 d. The Commissioner of the Department of Community
46 Affairs, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education, shall

1 promulgate rules pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act,"
2 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), to effectuate the provisions of
3 this act.

4
5 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

6
7
8 STATEMENT

9
10 This bill allows school districts to develop plans for the delayed
11 evacuation of school buildings that are equipped with an adequate
12 level of fixed fire protection. Under the bill, the Director of the
13 Division of Fire Safety in the Department of Community Affairs, in
14 consultation with the Commissioner of Education, will develop
15 guidelines for the plans, and a school district which elects to
16 develop a delayed evacuation plan must develop the plan in
17 consultation with the local fire and law enforcement agencies.

18 Under the bill, school districts will only be eligible to develop a
19 delayed evacuation plan if:

- 20 • the school building is protected throughout by a complete
21 automatic sprinkler system, or with a fire alarm having
22 complete corridor smoke detection and point-addressable
23 technology that displays the alarm location at the fire
24 alarm control panel and at all annunciator panels; and
25 • the school building's fire alarm system utilizes a positive
26 alarm sequencing that delays the notification appliance
27 from activating, including horns and strobes, while
28 trained personnel investigate the source of the fire alarm
29 signal.

30 Under the bill, in developing a delayed evacuation plan, a school
31 district may include a system of cameras throughout the school
32 building that allows trained, designated school building staff to
33 monitor the school building and more easily identify the source of
34 the fire alarm activation.

35 A delayed evacuation plan developed by a school district must be
36 approved by the Director of the Division of Fire Safety prior to
37 implementation.

38 During several school shootings, including the school shooting at
39 Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida on
40 February 14, 2018, the shooter activated the school's fire alarm and
41 waited for the students to leave their classrooms to have easier
42 access to the students. This bill allows school districts to develop
43 delayed evacuation plans to allow trained, designated staff members
44 to investigate the causes of fire alarm activation prior to evacuating
45 the school building.