

ASSEMBLY, No. 1935

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

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SYNOPSIS

Requires school districts to institute policies to improve emergency communications to increase school security.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/16/2020)

1 **AN ACT** concerning school security and supplementing chapter 41
2 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

3

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

6

7 1. A school district shall provide to all persons employed or
8 assigned by the school district to school security positions, a two-
9 way radio for communicating directly with emergency responders.
10 The two-way radio shall be capable of having a dedicated channel
11 separate from the regular operational police frequencies.

12

13 2. A school district shall develop procedures to notify parents,
14 and such other persons as deemed appropriate by the school district,
15 of school emergency situations through multiple communication
16 platforms including, but not limited to, telephone calls, text
17 messages, and mass email.

18

19 3. A school district shall test the functionality of all of its
20 emergency communication systems, including strength of signals
21 and calls to a 9-1-1 emergency telephone system and to emergency
22 responders' radios within the school, on at least a monthly basis.

23

24 4. The Commissioner of Education shall develop strategies to:

25 a. Encourage school districts to review and update their school
26 safety and security plans to ensure that they clearly identify who is
27 responsible for contacting the primary emergency response agency
28 in the event of any emergency and that they employ plain language
29 to notify the school population that an emergency condition exists;

30 b. Encourage school districts to implement measures to ensure
31 that all teachers and other school employees have the ability to
32 communicate with the school administration while school is in
33 session. The means of communication may be in the form of
34 classroom telephones, portable radios, intercom systems, cell
35 phones, or other such means as determined by the school district;
36 and

37 c. Encourage the use of new technologies to allow
38 communication among all essential personnel during school
39 emergencies. The commissioner shall review the viability of
40 various technologies to enhance safety, including camera feeds of
41 school facilities directly to police patrol cars; panic buttons in
42 schools that are a direct line to the local police department; and
43 dedicated school emergency frequencies for walkie-talkies.

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45 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

The bill requires each school district to:

- provide all persons employed or assigned to school security positions with a two-way radio for communicating directly with emergency responders;
- develop procedures to notify parents and other appropriate persons of school emergency situations through multiple communication platforms, such as telephone calls, text messages, and mass email; and
- test the functionality of all of its emergency communication systems on at least a monthly basis.

The bill also requires the Commissioner of Education to develop strategies to encourage:

- school districts to review and update their existing school safety and security plans to ensure that they clearly identify who is responsible for contacting the primary emergency response agency in the event of any emergency and that they employ plain language to notify the school population that an emergency condition exists;
- school districts to implement measures to ensure that all teachers and other school employees have the ability to communicate with the school administration while school is in session. The means of communication may be in the form of classroom telephones, portable radios, intercom systems, cell phones, or other such means as determined by the school district; and
- the use of new technologies to allow communication among all essential personnel during school emergencies.