

ASSEMBLY, No. 2475

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 3, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman SHANIQUE SPEIGHT

District 29 (Essex)

Assemblywoman ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT

District 31 (Hudson)

Assemblywoman ELIANA PINTOR MARIN

District 29 (Essex)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Caputo

SYNOPSIS

Requires teaching staff members and school board members to annually receive training on trauma-informed education.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/13/2020)

1 **AN ACT** concerning teacher and staff training on trauma-informed
2 education in public schools and supplementing chapter 26 of
3 Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

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8 1. As used in this act:

9 “Adverse childhood experiences,” or ACEs, mean potentially
10 traumatic events that occur in childhood, which may include:
11 experiencing violence or abuse; witnessing violence in the home or
12 community; or having a family member attempt or die by suicide.
13 ACEs also include aspects of the child’s environment that can
14 undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding such as growing
15 up in a household with: substance misuse; mental health problems;
16 instability due to parental separation; or household members who are
17 incarcerated. “Trauma-informed education” means a school-wide
18 approach to education and a classroom-based approach to student
19 learning that recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in
20 students, families, and staff and responds by fully integrating
21 knowledge about trauma-informed policies, professional learning,
22 procedures and practices for the purposes of recognizing the
23 presence and onset of trauma, resisting the reoccurrence of trauma,
24 and promoting resiliency; and

25 2. A school district shall annually provide information and
26 training to each teaching staff member and board member on the
27 concept of trauma-informed education, as a method to combat the
28 long-term effects of adverse childhood experiences on children’s
29 cognitive functioning, as well as on their physical, social,
30 emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. The district shall
31 utilize the guidelines and resources provided by the Department of
32 Education pursuant to section 3 of this act in meeting this
33 requirement.

34
35 3. a. The Department of Education shall develop and distribute
36 to school districts guidelines concerning trauma-informed
37 education. The purpose of the guidelines shall be to provide
38 direction to school districts in fulfilling the professional training
39 requirement established pursuant to section 2 of this act.

40 b. The guidelines shall include, but need not be limited to,
41 research-based information regarding:

42 (1) the impact of trauma on students’ educational experiences
43 and on the school and classroom culture;

44 (2) how to identify the signs of trauma in students;

45 (3) best practices for schools and classrooms regarding trauma-
46 informed approaches to education; and

1 (4) recognition of the impact of secondary trauma on school
2 employees.

3

4 4. This act shall take effect in the first full school year
5 following the date of enactment.

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STATEMENT

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10 This bill requires each school district to annually provide
11 information and training to each teaching staff member and board
12 member on the concept of trauma-informed education, as a method
13 to combat the long-term effects of adverse childhood experiences
14 on children's cognitive functioning, as well as on their physical,
15 social, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. Under the bill,
16 the district is directed to avail itself of the guidelines and resources
17 on this topic provided by the Department of Education pursuant to
18 the bill's provisions.

19 Additionally, the bill directs the Department of Education to
20 develop and distribute to school districts guidelines concerning
21 trauma-informed education. The purpose of the guidelines will be
22 to provide direction to school districts in fulfilling the professional
23 training requirement established pursuant to the bill's provisions.

24 Under the bill, the guidelines must include, but need not be
25 limited to, research-based information regarding:

- 26 • the impact of trauma on students' educational experiences
27 and on the school and classroom culture;
- 28 • how to identify the signs of trauma in students;
- 29 • best practices for schools and classrooms regarding trauma-
30 informed approaches to education; and
- 31 • recognition of the impact of secondary trauma on school
32 employees.