

**ASSEMBLY, No. 3162**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**219th LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 24, 2020

**Sponsored by:**  
**Assemblywoman CAROL A. MURPHY**  
**District 7 (Burlington)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Requires local units of government to provide access to “user-friendly” budget information through link included on home page Internet site.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning budget information made available by local  
2 units of government and amending P.L.2007, c.53,  
3 N.J.S.18A:22-8, N.J.S.40A:4-10, and P.L.2007, c.63.

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

7  
8 1. Section 4 of P.L.2007, c.53 (C.18A:7F-5.3) is amended to  
9 read as follows:

10 4. a. In addition to other items prescribed by the  
11 Commissioner of Education pursuant to subsection c. of section 5 of  
12 P.L.1996, c.138 (C.18A:7F-5), the Commissioner of Education shall  
13 require a school district to submit annually with the budget, the  
14 following items as supporting documentation in regard to the  
15 superintendent of schools, the assistant superintendent of schools,  
16 the school business administrator, and any employee with an annual  
17 salary that exceeds \$75,000 who is not a member of a collective  
18 bargaining unit:

19 (1) a detailed statement of the employment contract terms for  
20 these school employees, including, but not limited to, the duration  
21 of the contract and all forms of compensation provided for under  
22 the contract;

23 (2) the annualized cost of all benefits provided to these school  
24 employees, including, but not limited to, all allowances, bonuses  
25 and stipends, and all contributions made by the school district  
26 towards the costs of health, dental, life and other types of insurance,  
27 medical and reimbursement plans, and retirement plans which  
28 exceed the contributions for the costs of these items made on behalf  
29 of a teaching staff member under a collective bargaining agreement  
30 with the board;

31 (3) a detailed statement of any benefits provided for in the  
32 employment contract with these school employees which are to be  
33 conferred after or upon the separation from the school district; and

34 (4) a detailed statement of any form of in-kind or other form of  
35 remuneration provided to these school employees which is not  
36 otherwise included in the employee's salary or benefits.

37 b. The items required to be submitted pursuant to subsection a.  
38 of this section shall be **【provided for public inspection】** accessible  
39 through a link that is prominently displayed on the home page of  
40 the school district's Internet site, if one exists, in a "user-friendly"  
41 format using plain language, and on the Department of Education's  
42 Internet site in an easily accessible location. The Commissioner of  
43 Education shall promulgate a "user-friendly," plain language format  
44 for the use of local districts for this purpose.

45 (cf: P.L.2007, c.53, s.4)

46  
47 2. N.J.S.18A:22-8 is amended to read as follows:

1 18A:22-8. The budget shall be prepared in such detail and upon  
2 such forms as shall be prescribed by the commissioner and to it  
3 shall be annexed a statement so itemized as to make the same  
4 readily understandable, in which shall be shown:

5 a. In tabular form there shall be set forth the following:

6 (1) The total expenditure for each item for the preceding school  
7 year, the amount appropriated for the current school year adjusted  
8 for transfers as of February 1 of the current school year, and the  
9 amount estimated to be necessary to be appropriated for the ensuing  
10 school year, indicated separately for each item as determined by the  
11 commissioner;

12 (2) The amount of the surplus account available at the beginning  
13 of the preceding school year, at the beginning of the current school  
14 year, and the amount anticipated to be available for the ensuing  
15 school year;

16 (3) The amount of revenue available for budget purposes for the  
17 preceding school year, the amount available for the current school  
18 year as of February 1 of the current school year, and the amount  
19 anticipated to be available for the ensuing school year in the  
20 following categories:

21 (a) Total to be raised by local property taxes

22 (b) Total State aid

23 (i) Equalization aid

24 (ii) Special education categorical aid

25 (iii) Transportation aid

26 (iv) Preschool education aid

27 (v) Security aid

28 (vi) Adjustment aid

29 (vii) Other (detailed at the discretion of the commissioner)

30 (c) Total federal aid

31 (i) Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20  
32 U.S.C.s.2701 et seq.)

33 (ii) Students with disabilities

34 (iii) Impact Aid

35 (iv) Vocational

36 (v) Other (detailed at the discretion of the commissioner)

37 (d) Other sources (detailed at the discretion of the  
38 commissioner).

39 b. (Deleted by amendment, P.L.1993, c.117).

40 c. In the event that the total expenditure for any item of  
41 appropriation is equal to \$0.00 for: (1) the preceding school year,  
42 (2) the current school year, and (3) the amount estimated to be  
43 necessary to be appropriated for the ensuing school year, that item  
44 shall not be required to be published pursuant to N.J.S.18A:22-11.

45 d. The instruction function of the budget shall be divided at a  
46 minimum into elementary (K-5), middle school (6-8), and high  
47 school (9-12) cost centers, each of which shall be further divided by

1 the core curriculum content areas. The commissioner shall phase in  
2 these requirements as soon as practicable.

3 e. The budget as adopted for the school year pursuant to  
4 section 5 of P.L.1996, c.138 (C.18A:7F-5) shall be provided for  
5 public inspection on the school district's Internet site, if one exists  
6 **【, and】** . The budget shall also be made available in print and  
7 through a link that is prominently displayed on the home page of  
8 the school district's Internet site, if one exists, in a "user-friendly"  
9 format using plain language. The Commissioner of Education shall  
10 promulgate a "user-friendly," plain language budget summary  
11 format for the use of school districts for this purpose.

12 (cf: P.L.2017, c.131, s.22)

13  
14 3. N.J.S.40A:4-10 is amended to read as follows:

15 40A:4-10. No budget or amendment thereof shall be adopted  
16 unless the director shall have previously certified his approval  
17 thereof. Final adoption shall be by resolution adopted by a majority  
18 of the full membership of the governing body, and may be by title  
19 where the procedures required by N.J.S.40A:4-8 and N.J.S.40A:4-9  
20 or section 12 of P.L.1995, c.259 (C.40A:4-6.1), as applicable, have  
21 been followed.

22 The budget shall be adopted in the case of a county not later than  
23 February 25, and in the case of a municipality not later than March  
24 20 of the calendar fiscal year or September 20 of the State fiscal  
25 year, except that the governing body may adopt the budget at any  
26 time within 10 days after the director shall have certified his  
27 approval thereof and returned the same, if such certification shall be  
28 later than the date of the advertised hearing.

29 If, in the case of a municipality which operates on the State fiscal  
30 year, the governing body fails to adopt the budget within the  
31 permitted time, the chief financial officer of the local unit shall so  
32 notify the director the next working day after the expiration of the  
33 permitted time.

34 Copies of the budget, as adopted, in such form and in such  
35 quantity as determined by the Local Finance Board, shall be  
36 transmitted to the director within three days after adoption.

37 Upon adoption, the budget shall constitute an appropriation for  
38 the purposes stated therein and an authorization of the amount to be  
39 raised by taxation for the purposes of the local unit.

40 The adopted budget and "user-friendly," plain language budget  
41 summary shall be provided for public inspection and accessible  
42 through a link that is prominently displayed on the home page of  
43 the local unit's Internet website, if one exists, or, if one does not  
44 exist, the budget and "user-friendly," plain language budget  
45 summary shall be provided for public inspection and accessible  
46 through a link that is prominently displayed on the Internet website  
47 of the Department of Community Affairs **【, and** made available  
48 online and in print as required by this section in a "user-friendly"

1 summary format using plain language<sup>1</sup>. In addition to the current  
2 year adopted budget, the local unit's adopted budgets and "user-  
3 friendly," plain language budget summaries of the immediately  
4 preceding three budget years also shall be provided for public  
5 inspection and accessible through a link that is prominently  
6 displayed on the local unit's Internet website, if one exists, or, if one  
7 does not exist, those budgets also shall be provided for public  
8 inspection and accessible through a link that is prominently  
9 displayed on the Internet website of the Department of Community  
10 Affairs. Any adopted budget posted online pursuant to this section  
11 shall remain posted online for the duration of the local budget year.  
12 The Local Finance Board shall promulgate a "user-friendly," plain  
13 language summary format for use by local units for this purpose  
14 pursuant to section 39 of P.L.2007, c.63 (C.40A:5-48).  
15 (cf: P.L.2015, c.95, s.15)

16  
17 4. Section 39 of P.L.2007, c.63 (C.40A:5-48) is amended to  
18 read as follows:

19 39. a. The Local Finance Board shall promulgate "user-  
20 friendly," plain language budget summary forms for the use of  
21 counties, municipalities, local authorities, and fire districts. The  
22 board shall also promulgate a procedure for the submission by each  
23 of these local government units of the required budget summary  
24 form to the Division of Local Government Services in the  
25 Department of Community Affairs following the adoption of the  
26 annual budget.

27 b. The plain language budget summary shall provide the public  
28 with information in summary form about the budget of the local  
29 unit and shall include, in addition to an abbreviated version of the  
30 formal budget adopted by the local unit, such statistical information  
31 as the board determines to be useful for the public's understanding  
32 of the local unit's fiscal matters and condition, and shall also  
33 include, but shall not be limited to the following information, for  
34 both the local unit's current budget year and the previous budget  
35 year, as the Local Finance Board determines appropriate to the local  
36 unit: all line items of appropriation aggregated by service type; the  
37 property tax rate; the property tax collection rate; the assessed value  
38 and taxable value of all real property located in the local unit; the  
39 amount of bonded indebtedness of the local unit; revenues by major  
40 category; description of unusual revenues or appropriations, with a  
41 description of the circumstances of the revenues or appropriations;  
42 a list of shared service agreements in which the local unit is  
43 participating; and the number and amount of outstanding long-term  
44 tax exemptions and abatements, and the amount of revenue derived  
45 therefrom.

46 c. The plain language budget summary shall be submitted to  
47 the division in such form as determined by the Local Finance  
48 Board, and, upon its receipt of the summary, the division shall make

1 the summary available to the public through **【an】** a link that is  
2 prominently displayed on the Internet website maintained by the  
3 division. The information on the website shall be presented as data  
4 that can be downloaded by the public for comparative purposes  
5 using commonly-used software.  
6 (cf: P.L.2007, c.63, s.39)  
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8 5. This act shall take effect on the 90th day after the date of  
9 enactment.  
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STATEMENT

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14 This bill requires that a budget adopted by a county,  
15 municipality, or school district be made available in a user-friendly  
16 format and accessible through a link that is prominently displayed  
17 on the home page of the Internet site if one exists.