

ASSEMBLY, No. 4574

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED AUGUST 25, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman PAMELA R. LAMPITT

District 6 (Burlington and Camden)

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblyman Caputo

SYNOPSIS

Requires closure of schools in school districts within county that reaches certain COVID-19 transmission rate or experiences certain increase in COVID-19 cases during 2020-2021 school year.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 9/24/2020)

1 AN ACT concerning the closing of public schools under certain
2 circumstances during the 2020-2021 school year.

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

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7 1. a. Notwithstanding any law, rule, or regulation to the
8 contrary, for the 2020-2021 school year, a school district shall, in
9 conjunction with the appropriate health agency or officer, close the
10 schools of the district for in-person instruction if:

11 (1) the most recently reported COVID-19 rate of transmission
12 for the county in which the school district is located is at or above
13 1.0; or

14 (2) the number of positive COVID-19 test results in the county
15 in which the school district is located increases by 10 percent or
16 more over the prior seven-day average.

17 b. A school district that closes its schools for in-person
18 instruction pursuant to subsection a. of this section shall keep the
19 schools closed until such time as the county is below the threshold
20 specified in paragraph (1) or paragraph (2) of subsection a. of this
21 section, as applicable, for 14 consecutive days.

22 c. As used in this section, "COVID-19 rate of transmission"
23 means the average number of persons infected with COVID-19 by
24 one person who has been infected with COVID-19, as calculated
25 and reported by the Department of Health.

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27 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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32 This bill would require all school districts within a county, in
33 conjunction with the appropriate health agency or officer, to close
34 their schools for in-person instruction during the 2020-2021 school
35 year if:

- 36 • the most recently reported COVID-19 rate of transmission
37 for the county is at or above 1.0; or
38 • the number of positive COVID-19 test results in the county
39 increases by 10 percent or more over the prior seven-day
40 average.

41 The bill defines the rate of transmission as the average number of
42 persons infected with COVID-19 by one person who has been
43 infected with COVID-19.

44 Under the bill, the school districts would keep their schools
45 closed for in-person instruction until the county is below the
46 specified thresholds for 14 consecutive days.

1 The purpose of the bill is to help ensure the health and safety of
2 students, teachers, and staff as schools reopen for in-person
3 instruction in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Using
4 epidemiological benchmarks to drive decisions regarding the
5 reopening and closing of schools recognizes that educational
6 decisions for the upcoming school year must consider public health
7 data to limit the impact of COVID-19 in school communities.