ASSEMBLY, No. 5058

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 19, 2020

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman HERB CONAWAY, JR.
District 7 (Burlington)
Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE
District 37 (Bergen)
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District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Co-Sponsored by:
Assemblyman DePhillips and Assemblywoman Murphy

SYNOPSIS

Requires school districts to provide instruction on dangers of electronic cigarette usage as part of New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and Physical Education.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/16/2020)

AN ACT concerning the public school curriculum and supplementing chapter 35 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

1. a. Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, each school district shall incorporate instruction on the dangers of electronic cigarette usage into the health education curriculum for students in grades six through 12 as part of the district's implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and Physical Education.

b. The instruction shall provide students with, at a minimum:

(1) statistics on the amount of nicotine in electronic cigarettes manufactured by different companies;

(2) information on how the use of electronic cigarettes in middle school and high school may lead to addiction to regular cigarettes, other tobacco products, and drugs;

(3) information on the physical health effects of inhaling certain chemicals that can be found in electronic cigarettes including, but not limited to, nicotine, cannabidiol, tetrahydrocannabinol, diacetyl, and formaldehyde; and

(4) information on the provisions of the "New Jersey Smoke-Free Air Act," P.L.2005, c.383 (C.26:3D-55 et seq.), which prohibits the use of electronic cigarettes on school grounds.

c. The Commissioner of Education shall provide school districts with sample learning activities and resources designed to promote awareness of the dangers of electronic cigarette usage.

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill would require each school district to incorporate instruction on the dangers of electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) usage into the health education curriculum for students in grades six through 12 as part of the district's implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and Physical Education. The instruction would provide students with information on, at a minimum: the amount of nicotine that can be found in e-cigarettes manufactured by different companies; how the use of e-cigarettes during adolescence can lead to addiction; the physical health effects of inhaling certain chemicals that can be found in e-cigarette products; and the provisions of the "New Jersey Smoke-Free Air Act."

The use of e-cigarettes among middle school and high school students has become a major public health concern as the use of such devices has increased greatly over recent years. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Tobacco Survey
indicates that, in 2011, just 1.5 percent of high school students in the United States used e-cigarettes; in 2017, that number increased to 11.7 percent. Similarly, in 2011, just 0.6 percent of middle school students in the United States used e-cigarettes; in 2017, that number went up to 3.3 percent.

While the use of e-cigarettes has become a popular trend among young people across the country, research indicates that using e-cigarettes during youth can have negative health effects. For one, most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is the addictive drug found in regular cigarettes, cigars, and other tobacco products. Reports have shown that nicotine levels in e-cigarettes are highly variable, with some reaching levels near regular cigarettes. A 2016 United States Surgeon General report asserted that using nicotine in adolescence can harm the developing brain and may increase the risk for future addiction to regular cigarettes, other tobacco products, and drugs. In addition, e-cigarettes can contain several other substances, including cannabidiol, tetrahydrocannabinol, diacetyl, and formaldehyde, which may be harmful to young users.

Lastly, what many students using e-cigarettes on school grounds might not be aware of is that, pursuant to the "New Jersey Smoke-Free Air Act," the use of e-cigarettes on school property is prohibited.