

ASSEMBLY JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 5727

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 13, 2021

The Assembly Judiciary Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 5727.

This bill as amended requires that a school district must ensure that a school security drill that occurs when students are present:

- Includes clear, developmentally and age-appropriate messaging to students and staff at the conclusion of the drill that the event is a drill and that no current danger exists;
- does not expose students to content or imaging that is not developmentally or age-appropriate;
- is paired with trauma-informed approaches to address any student inquiries or concerns which may arise as a result of a school security drill;
- does not include the use of fake blood, real or prop firearms, or the simulations of gun shots, explosions, or other sounds or visuals that may induce panic or a traumatic response from a student or school district employee;
- does not require a student to role play as a victim, but may include first aid training in which students participate; and
- is accessible to students with disabilities and mental health conditions, and provides all necessary accommodations for these students.

The bill as amended provides that a school district would be required to provide written notification to the parent or guardian of a student enrolled in the district following completion of a school security drill. The notification would be provided to the parent or guardian by no later than the end of the school day on which the school security drill is conducted.

The bill provides that a school district may permit emergency personnel access to the buildings and grounds of its schools for school security drills that are scheduled outside of school hours and during such times as students are not present.

Under the bill as amended, a school district must review and update its school security drill procedures using a process that coincides with the review of the school safety and security plan developed pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:16-5.1 and collects input from

emergency personnel, parents and guardians of students enrolled in the district, teachers and staff employed in the district, mental health professionals, and student government representatives from multiple grade levels.

The amended bill also provides that a school district must annually track data on such measures and information as are required by the Commissioner of Education, and report the data to the commissioner.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

1. Delete the provision requiring that a school security drill may be conducted only after advance written notice has been provided to staff and the parents and guardians of enrolled students in the district;

2. Provide that the messaging to students and staff must be developmentally and age-appropriate;

3. Delete the provision that a school security drill not include the presence of emergency personnel not typically present at the school during school hours;

4. Require a school district to provide written notification to the parent or guardian of a student enrolled in the district following completion of a school security drill, which notice shall be provided by not later than the end of the school day on which the drill is conducted;

5. Remove the requirement that a school district review and update its security drill procedures every three years, and instead provide that the district must review and update the procedures using a process that coincides with the review of the school safety and security plan developed pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:16-5.1; and

6. Remove the requirement that a school district annually track data on the efficacy and the effects of the school security drills. Instead, a school district would be required to annually track data on such measures and information as are required by the Commissioner of Education, and report the data to the commissioner.

These amendments make this bill identical to Senate No. 3726 (2R).