

SENATE, No. 710

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator DAWN MARIE ADDIEGO

District 8 (Atlantic, Burlington and Camden)

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District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senators Bateman, Beach and Greenstein

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Task Force on Safety in School Transportation.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** establishing the Task Force on Safety in School
2 Transportation.

3

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

6

7 1. a. There is established the Task Force on Safety in School
8 Transportation. The task force shall consist of 17 members,
9 including the Commissioner of Education, ex officio, or a designee;
10 the Commissioner of Transportation, ex officio, or a designee; the
11 Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission,
12 ex officio, or a designee; the Director of the Division of Highway
13 Traffic Safety in the Department of Law and Public Safety, ex
14 officio, or a designee; and 13 members to be appointed by the
15 Governor, including: one school district transportation coordinator;
16 one representative of the New Jersey Association of School
17 Administrators, one representative of the New Jersey Education
18 Association, one representative of the New Jersey School Boards
19 Association, one representative of the New Jersey Principals and
20 Supervisors Association, one representative of the New Jersey
21 Association of School Business Officials; one representative of the
22 New Jersey School Bus Contractors Association; one representative of
23 the School Transportation Supervisors of New Jersey; three parents or
24 guardians of students including at least one parent of a student
25 receiving special education services; one public member who shall
26 have knowledge and expertise in ensuring safety in school
27 transportation; and one public member who shall be an expert on
28 the safety equipment available in school transportation vehicles.

29 b. It shall be the duty of the task force to study issues
30 associated with student safety in school transportation. The task
31 force shall:

32 (1) review existing State laws, regulations, and programs that
33 address school bus safety, and make recommendations for their
34 improvement, including any recommendations necessary to ensure that
35 the pedestrian safety record is routinely reviewed by an appropriate
36 State office;

37 (2) examine the possibility of requiring a State department or
38 office to conduct a biannual review of all aspects of school bus safety
39 and to issue recommendations for additional action or oversight, as
40 appropriate;

41 (3) review whether the recommendations of the Transportation
42 Task Force of the Commission on Business Efficiency of the Public
43 Schools, included in the 2006 report "Finding the Road: Selected
44 Issues in New Jersey Pupil Transportation," have been implemented,
45 and identify any barriers to their full implementation;

46 (4) develop a plan to phase in any school bus safety measures
47 recommended by the task force through retrofitting and prospective

- 1 vehicle purchases, and identify the potential application of vehicle
2 sensor technology to improve school bus safety;
- 3 (5) identify best practices for the designation of school bus
4 stops;
- 5 (6) identify strategies that support safe pedestrian behavior by
6 students between their homes and their bus stops, including as they
7 board and exit the bus;
- 8 (7) identify safety protocols to be followed by school bus
9 drivers and school bus aides, including safeguards to ensure that
10 protocols are followed when a substitute driver or school bus aide is
11 assigned to a school bus;
- 12 (8) develop recommendations to curb illegal passing of school
13 buses; and
- 14 (9) identify if there is a need for more public education
15 programs that promote school bus safety including targeted
16 programs for students, school bus drivers, other drivers, and
17 pedestrians.
- 18 c. All appointments to the task force shall be made within 30
19 days after the effective date of this act. Vacancies in the
20 membership of the task force shall be filled in the same manner as
21 the original appointments were made. The members of the task
22 force shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed,
23 within the limits of funds made available to the task force, for
24 necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.
- 25 d. The task force shall organize as soon as is practical upon the
26 appointment of a majority of its members. The task force shall
27 appoint a secretary who need not be a member. The task force shall
28 select a chair from among its members.
- 29
- 30 2. The Department of Education shall provide staff and related
31 support services to the task force. The task force shall also be
32 entitled to call upon the services of any State, county, or municipal
33 department, board, commission or agency, as may be available to it
34 for these purposes, and to incur such traveling and other
35 miscellaneous expenses as it may deem necessary for the proper
36 execution of its duties and as may be within the limit of funds
37 appropriated or otherwise made available to it for these purposes.
38 The task force may meet and hold hearings at such places as it shall
39 designate during the sessions or recesses of the Legislature.
- 40
- 41 3. The task force shall present a report of its findings and
42 recommendations to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant
43 to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than 12
44 months after its organization and shall cease to exist upon
45 submitting its report and recommendations to the Governor.
- 46
- 47 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill establishes the Task Force on Safety in School Transportation. Under the bill, the task force is charged with studying issues associated with student safety in school transportation. Specifically, the task force will:

(1) review existing State laws, regulations, and programs that address school bus safety and make recommendations for their improvement, including any recommendations necessary to ensure that the pedestrian safety record is routinely reviewed by an appropriate State office;

(2) examine the possibility of requiring a State department or office to conduct a biannual review of all aspects of school bus safety and to issue recommendations for additional action or oversight, as appropriate;

(3) review whether the recommendations of the Transportation Task Force of the Commission on Business Efficiency of the Public Schools, included in the 2006 report "Finding the Road: Selected Issues in New Jersey Pupil Transportation," have been implemented, and identify any barriers to their full implementation;

(4) develop a plan to phase in any safety measures recommended by the task force through retrofitting and prospective vehicle purchases and identify the potential application of vehicle sensor technology to improve school bus safety;

(5) identify best practices for the designation of school bus stops;

(6) identify strategies that support safe pedestrian behavior by students between their homes and their bus stops;

(7) identify safety protocols to be followed by school bus drivers and school bus aides;

(8) develop recommendations to curb illegal passing of school buses; and

(9) identify if there is a need for more public education programs that promote school bus safety.

The task force will consist of 17 members, including the Commissioner of Education, ex officio, or a designee; the Commissioner of Transportation, ex officio, or a designee; the Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission, ex officio, or a designee; the Director of the Division of Highway Traffic Safety in the Department of Law and Public Safety, ex officio, or a designee; and 13 members to be appointed by the Governor. The task force must present a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature no later than 12 months after its organization and will cease to exist upon submitting its report.