

SENATE, No. 1018

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 30, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex)

Senator VIN GOPAL

District 11 (Monmouth)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Pou

SYNOPSIS

Establishes task force to examine school discipline practices including racial disparities and effectiveness.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/7/2020)

1 AN ACT establishing a task force to examine school discipline
2 practices.

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 a task force for the purpose of
8 examining, evaluating, and making recommendations regarding
9 discipline policies and practices in New Jersey public schools,
10 including any racial disparities in the implementation of the policies
11 and the effectiveness of the policies.

12 b. The task force shall consist of the following 10 members:

13 (1) the Commissioner of Education, or a designee;

14 (2) seven members appointed by the Governor, who shall
15 include: one member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey
16 School Boards Association; one member upon the recommendation
17 of the New Jersey Education Association; one member upon the
18 recommendation of the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors
19 Association; one member upon the recommendation of the New
20 Jersey Association of School Administrators; one member upon the
21 recommendation of the American Federation of Teachers New
22 Jersey; one member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey
23 Charter Schools Association; and one member of the public who
24 has specialized knowledge or expertise in issues related to school
25 discipline practices; and

26 (3) one member of the public appointed by the President of the
27 Senate and one member of the public appointed by the Speaker of
28 the General Assembly, both of whom have specialized knowledge
29 or expertise in issues related to school discipline practices.

30 c. Appointments to the task force shall be made within 30 days
31 of the effective date of this act. Vacancies in the membership of the
32 task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original
33 appointments were made.

34 d. Members of the task force shall serve without compensation,
35 but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenditures incurred in the
36 performance of their duties as members of the task force within the
37 limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the task
38 force for its purposes.

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40 2. a. The task force shall organize as soon as practicable, but
41 no later than 30 days following the appointment of its members.
42 The task force shall choose a chairperson from among its members
43 and shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the task
44 force.

45 b. The Department of Education shall provide such
46 stenographic, clerical, and other administrative assistants, and such
47 professional staff as the task force requires to carry out its work.
48 The task force also shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail

1 itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or
2 municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it
3 may require and as may be available for its purposes.

4
5 3. It shall be the duty of the task force to study, evaluate, and
6 make recommendations regarding school discipline policies and
7 practices in New Jersey. The task force shall:

8 a. examine discipline practices of school districts in the State
9 and any racial disparities or disproportionate impacts associated
10 with the discipline practices, including the impact of race on the
11 suspension or expulsion of students enrolled in preschool programs;

12 b. evaluate the effectiveness of school discipline practices in
13 the State in reducing problem behaviors and protecting the safety
14 and security of students and school staff;

15 c. study federal guidance on school discipline issued by the
16 United States Department of Education and the United States
17 Department of Justice, including the January 8, 2014 Dear
18 Colleague Letter on the Nondiscriminatory Administration of
19 School Discipline and the January 2014 document entitled "Guiding
20 Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and
21 Discipline";

22 d. study other best practices or emerging research regarding
23 improving school climate and creating positive and
24 nondiscriminatory school discipline practices;

25 e. provide recommendations to assist school districts in
26 improving school discipline policies and practices, including
27 ensuring that discipline practices are applied in an equitable and
28 nondiscriminatory manner; and

29 f. provide recommendations for legislation concerning school
30 discipline policies and practices.

31
32 4. The task force shall issue a final report of its findings and
33 recommendations to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant
34 to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than 12
35 months after the task force organizes.

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37 5. This act shall take effect immediately, and the task force
38 shall expire 30 days after the issuance of its report.

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41 STATEMENT

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43 This bill establishes a ten-member task force to examine,
44 evaluate, and make recommendations regarding discipline policies
45 and practices in New Jersey public schools, including any racial
46 disparities in the implementation of those policies and the
47 effectiveness of the policies. The task force will consist of 10
48 members. One member will be appointed by the Commissioner of

1 Education or a designee. Seven members will be appointed by the
2 Governor, who will include: one member upon the recommendation
3 of the New Jersey School Boards Association; one member upon
4 the recommendation of the New Jersey Education Association; one
5 member upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Principals and
6 Supervisors Association; one member upon the recommendation of
7 the New Jersey Association of School Administrators; one member
8 upon the recommendation of the American Federation of Teachers
9 New Jersey; one member upon the recommendation of the New
10 Jersey Charter Schools Association; and one member of the public
11 who has specialized knowledge or expertise in issues related to
12 school discipline practices. The President of the Senate and the
13 Speaker of the General Assembly will each appoint a public
14 member with specialized knowledge or expertise in issues related to
15 school discipline practices.

16 Under the bill, the task force is charged with studying,
17 evaluating, and making recommendations regarding school
18 discipline policies and practices in New Jersey. The task force will:

- 19 • examine discipline practices of school districts in the State
20 and any racial disparities or disproportionate impacts
21 associated with the discipline practices, including the impact
22 of race on the suspension or expulsion of students enrolled
23 in preschool programs;
- 24 • evaluate the effectiveness of school discipline practices in
25 the State in reducing problem behaviors and protecting the
26 safety and security of students and school staff;
- 27 • study federal guidance on school discipline issued by the
28 United States Department of Education and the United States
29 Department of Justice, including the January 8, 2014 Dear
30 Colleague Letter on the Nondiscriminatory Administration
31 of School Discipline and the January 2014 document entitled
32 “Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving
33 School Climate and Discipline”;
- 34 • study other best practices or emerging research regarding
35 improving school climate and creating positive and
36 nondiscriminatory school discipline practices;
- 37 • provide recommendations to assist school districts in
38 improving school discipline policies and practices, including
39 ensuring that discipline practices are applied in an equitable
40 and nondiscriminatory manner; and
- 41 • provide recommendations for legislation concerning school
42 discipline policies and practices.

43 The task force is required to issue a final report of its findings
44 and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature within 12
45 months of its organization.