[Second Reprint]

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 amended by the Senate on January 28, 2021.

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

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

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

1. a. There is established a task force for the purpose of examining, evaluating, and making recommendations regarding discipline policies and practices in New Jersey public schools, including any racial disparities in the implementation of the policies and the effectiveness of the policies.

b. The task force shall consist of the following [1]**[**10**]** 11[1] members:

(1) the Commissioner of Education, or a designee [1], and the Director of the Division on Civil Rights in the Department of Law and Public Safety, or a designee[1];

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

(3) one member of the public appointed by the [1]Governor upon recommendation of the[1] President of the Senate and one member of the public appointed by the [1]Governor upon recommendation of the[1] Speaker of the General Assembly, both of whom have specialized knowledge or expertise in issues related to school discipline practices.

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

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

2. a. The task force shall organize as soon as practicable, but

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.
Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:
[1]Senate floor amendments adopted January 11, 2021.
[2]Senate floor amendments adopted January 28, 2021.

no later than 30 days following the appointment of its members. The task force shall choose a chairperson from among its members and shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the task force.

b. The Department of Education shall provide such stenographic, clerical, and other administrative assistants, and such professional staff as the task force requires to carry out its work. The task force also shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it may require and as may be available for its purposes.

3. It shall be the duty of the task force to study, evaluate, and make recommendations regarding school discipline policies and practices in New Jersey [2], including but not limited to, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, use of physical restraint, and use of seclusion techniques[2] . The task force shall:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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