

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1018

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 7, 2020

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 1018.

This bill establishes a ten-member task force to examine, evaluate, and make recommendations regarding discipline policies and practices in New Jersey public schools, including any racial disparities in the implementation of those policies and the effectiveness of the policies. The task force will consist of 10 members. One member will be appointed by the Commissioner of Education or a designee. Seven members will be appointed by the Governor, who will 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. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the General Assembly will each appoint a public member with specialized knowledge or expertise in issues related to school discipline practices.

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

- 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;
- 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;
- 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”;

- study other best practices or emerging research regarding improving school climate and creating positive and nondiscriminatory school discipline practices;
- 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
- provide recommendations for legislation concerning school discipline policies and practices.

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