

SENATE, No. 1609

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 13, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator RICHARD J. CODEY

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes commission to study effects on adolescents of smart phone and social media usage in school.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ACT** establishing the Commission on the Effects of Smart Phone
2 and Social Media Usage on Adolescents.

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 Commission on the Effects of
8 Smart Phone and Social Media Usage on Adolescents. The purpose
9 of the commission is to study the extent of smart phone and social
10 media usage in public schools, and to determine the effects that use
11 has on the physical and emotional health and academic performance
12 of students.

13 b. The commission shall consist of 15 members as follows:

14 (1) the Commissioner of Education, ex officio, or a designee;

15 (2) one public member appointed by the President of the Senate
16 and one public member appointed by the Minority Leader of the
17 Senate, both of whom shall have demonstrated expertise in issues
18 relating to the work of the commission;

19 (3) one public member appointed by the Speaker of the General
20 Assembly and one public member appointed by the Minority Leader
21 of the General Assembly, both of whom shall have demonstrated
22 expertise in issues relating to the work of the commission; and

23 (4) 10 members appointed by the Governor, including one
24 representative from each of the following organizations: the New
25 Jersey School Boards Association, the New Jersey Principals and
26 Supervisors Association, the New Jersey Association of School
27 Administrators, the New Jersey Education Association, the New
28 Jersey Parent-Teacher Association, Advocates for Children of New
29 Jersey, the New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition, and the New
30 Jersey Association of School Psychologists; and two parents of
31 students enrolled in a public school.

32
33 2. Appointments to the commission shall be made within 30
34 days after the effective date of this act. Vacancies in the
35 membership of the commission shall be filled in the same manner
36 as the original appointments were made. Members of the
37 commission shall serve without compensation, but shall be
38 reimbursed for necessary expenditures incurred in the performance
39 of their duties as members of the commission within the limits of
40 funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the commission
41 for its purposes.

42
43 3. The commission shall organize as soon as practicable
44 following the appointment of its members, but not later than 60
45 days after the effective date of this act. The commission shall
46 choose a chairperson from among its members and shall appoint a
47 secretary who need not be a member of the commission. The
48 commission shall meet at least quarterly.

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

8
9 5. It shall be the duty of the commission to determine:

10 a. the extent of smart phone and social media usage in public
11 schools, including the average amount of time students in various
12 age groups spend each day in school on electronic devices;

13 b. the effects that use has on the emotional health of students,
14 including incidents of harassment, intimidation or bullying, or other
15 disruptive or violent behaviors;

16 c. the effects that use has on the academic performance of
17 students;

18 d. the effects that use has on the physical health of students,
19 including incidents of depression, sleep deprivation, weight loss or
20 gain, or high blood pressure;

21 e. the establishment of smart phone and social media usage
22 standards, including limiting the amount of time students spend on
23 electronic devices during the school day; and

24 f. any other proposals concerning the use of smart phones and
25 social media that the commission feels would help improve the
26 physical and emotional health and the academic performance of
27 students.

28
29 6. The commission shall issue a final report of its findings and
30 recommendations to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant
31 to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than one
32 year after the commission organizes.

33
34 7. This act shall take effect immediately, and the commission
35 shall expire 30 days after the submission of its report.

36 37 38 STATEMENT

39
40 This bill establishes the Commission on the Effects of Smart
41 Phone and Social Media Usage on Adolescents. Under the bill, the
42 commission will consist of 15 members including: the
43 Commissioner of Education, or a designee; one public member
44 appointed by the President of the Senate and one public member
45 appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate; one public member
46 appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly and one public
47 member appointed by the Minority Leader of the General
48 Assembly; and 10 members appointed by the Governor, including

1 one representative from each of the following organizations: the
2 New Jersey School Boards Association, the New Jersey Principals
3 and Supervisors Association, the New Jersey Association of School
4 Administrators, the New Jersey Education Association, the New
5 Jersey Parent-Teacher Association, Advocates for Children of New
6 Jersey, the New Jersey School-Age Care Coalition, and the New
7 Jersey Association of School Psychologists; and two parents of
8 students enrolled in a public school.

9 It will be the duty of the commission to determine:

- 10 • the extent of smart phone and social media usage in public
11 schools, including the average amount of time students in
12 various age groups spend each day in school on electronic
13 devices;
- 14 • the effects that use has on the emotional health of students,
15 including incidents of harassment, intimidation or bullying,
16 or other disruptive or violent behaviors;
- 17 • the effects that use has on the academic performance of
18 students; and
- 19 • the effects that use has on the physical health of students,
20 including incidents of depression, sleep deprivation, weight
21 loss or gain, or high blood pressure.

22 The bill directs the commission to issue a final report of its
23 findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature
24 no later than one year after its organizational meeting. The
25 commission will expire 30 days after the submission of the final
26 report.