

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 2698

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 22, 2020

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 2698 (1R).

This bill requires the State to enter into contracts and coordinate with certain cooperative purchasing systems to assist public schools (i.e., school districts, charter schools, and renaissance schools) and county colleges in the purchase of COVID-19 related goods and services.

Under the bill, the Director of the Division of Purchase and Property in the Department of the Treasury, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education and the Secretary of Higher Education, would be required to award contracts for the procurement of COVID-19 related goods and services by public schools and county colleges. The bill also requires the director to coordinate with the lead agency of any State-approved cooperative purchasing system that includes a public school or county college to provide for the procurement of COVID-19 related goods and services. The bill permits the State to award contracts to more than one bidder.

Additionally, the bill permits public schools and county colleges to purchase COVID-19 related goods and services, without advertising for bids, through any contract that is (1) entered into by the Division of Purchase and Property, or (2) made available through a State-approved cooperative purchasing system of which the school or college is a member. The bill also requires the Department of Education and the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education to coordinate the purchase of COVID-19 related goods and services by public schools and county colleges, respectively.

As reported by the committee, Senate Bill No. 2698 (1R) is identical to Assembly Bill No. 4461 (2R), which also was reported by the committee on this date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds the cost for the State to enter into contracts for the purchase of COVID-19 related materials that school districts and county colleges may purchase, but are not required to purchase under this bill, to be indeterminate at this time.

The OLS cannot make an estimate because it does not have information regarding the readiness and needs of each of the 584 school districts, 88 charter schools, three renaissance schools, or 18 public community colleges in New Jersey; the amount each has already spent on COVID-19 preparation and if these preparations meet guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); the amount of CARES Act funding each district was allocated for Person Protection Equipment (PPE); and the amount spent to date, or additional needs for other COVID-19 materials, supplies, or staffing.