

SENATE, No. 2780

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED AUGUST 3, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator LINDA R. GREENSTEIN

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Requires teaching staff members and school board members to annually receive training on trauma-informed education.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ACT** concerning teacher and staff training on trauma-informed
2 education in public schools and supplementing chapter 26 of
3 Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

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8 1. As used in this act:

9 “Adverse childhood experiences,” or ACEs, mean potentially
10 traumatic events that occur in childhood, which may include:
11 experiencing violence or abuse; witnessing violence in the home or
12 community; or having a family member attempt or die by suicide.
13 ACEs also include aspects of the child’s environment that can
14 undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding such as
15 growing up in a household with: substance misuse; mental health
16 problems; instability due to parental separation; or household
17 members who are incarcerated. “Trauma-informed education”
18 means a school-wide approach to education and a classroom-based
19 approach to student learning that recognizes the signs and
20 symptoms of trauma in students, families, and staff and responds by
21 fully integrating knowledge about trauma-informed policies,
22 professional learning, procedures and practices for the purposes of
23 recognizing the presence and onset of trauma, resisting the
24 reoccurrence of trauma, and promoting resiliency; and

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26 2. A school district shall annually provide information and
27 training to each teaching staff member and board member on the
28 concept of trauma-informed education, as a method to combat the
29 long-term effects of adverse childhood experiences on children’s
30 cognitive functioning, as well as on their physical, social,
31 emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. The district shall
32 utilize the guidelines and resources provided by the Department of
33 Education pursuant to section 3 of this act in meeting this
34 requirement.

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36 3. a. The Department of Education shall develop and distribute
37 to school districts guidelines concerning trauma-informed
38 education. The purpose of the guidelines shall be to provide
39 direction to school districts in fulfilling the professional training
40 requirement established pursuant to section 2 of this act.

41 b. The guidelines shall include, but need not be limited to,
42 research-based information regarding:

43 (1) the impact of trauma on students’ educational experiences
44 and on the school and classroom culture;

45 (2) how to identify the signs of trauma in students;

46 (3) best practices for schools and classrooms regarding trauma-
47 informed approaches to education; and

1 (4) recognition of the impact of secondary trauma on school
2 employees.

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4 4. This act shall take effect in the first full school year
5 following the date of enactment.

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STATEMENT

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10 This bill requires each school district to annually provide
11 information and training to each teaching staff member and board
12 member on the concept of trauma-informed education, as a method
13 to combat the long-term effects of adverse childhood experiences
14 on children's cognitive functioning, as well as on their physical,
15 social, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. Under the bill,
16 the district is directed to avail itself of the guidelines and resources
17 on this topic provided by the Department of Education pursuant to
18 the bill's provisions.

19 Additionally, the bill directs the Department of Education to
20 develop and distribute to school districts guidelines concerning
21 trauma-informed education. The purpose of the guidelines will be
22 to provide direction to school districts in fulfilling the professional
23 training requirement established pursuant to the bill's provisions.

24 Under the bill, the guidelines must include, but need not be
25 limited to, research-based information regarding:

- 26 • the impact of trauma on students' educational experiences
27 and on the school and classroom culture;
- 28 • how to identify the signs of trauma in students;
- 29 • best practices for schools and classrooms regarding trauma-
30 informed approaches to education; and
- 31 • recognition of the impact of secondary trauma on school
32 employees.