Sponsored by:
Senator VIN GOPAL
District 11 (Monmouth)
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District 40 (Bergen, Essex, Morris and Passaic)

SYNOPSIS
Permits school districts to define excused absences from school to include illness based on student’s mental or behavioral health and requires Commissioner of Education to develop guidelines for defining excused absence for this reason.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.
AN ACT concerning excused absences from public school and supplementing chapter 36 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

1. a. A school district in developing, adopting, and implementing policies and procedures regarding attendance of students at school may define an excused absence from school to include an absence for an illness of the student based on the mental or behavioral health of the student.

b. The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the Commissioner of Health, shall develop guidelines on defining an excused absence from school for a student’s illness based on the mental or behavioral health of the student. The guidelines shall include the supporting documentation that may be required by the school district upon the student’s return to school after an absence for an illness based on the mental or behavioral health of the student for the absence to be considered an excused absence.

2. This act shall take effect on the first day of the second full school year following the date of enactment, but the Commissioner of Education may take such anticipatory administrative action in advance thereof as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.

STATEMENT

This bill provides statutory authority for a school district, in developing, adopting, and implementing its policies and procedures regarding attendance of students at school, to define an excused absence from school to include an absence for an illness of the student based on the mental or behavioral health of the student. The bill requires the Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the Commissioner of Health, to develop guidelines on defining an excused absence from school for a student’s illness based on the mental or behavioral health of the student. The guidelines will include the supporting documentation that may be required by the school district upon the student’s return to school after an absence for an illness based on the mental or behavioral health of the student for the absence to be considered an excused absence.