

SENATE, No. 2799

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 6, 2022

Sponsored by:
Senator VIN GOPAL
District 11 (Monmouth)

SYNOPSIS

Requires school districts and nonpublic schools to develop emergency operations plans; requires school districts to provide instruction on environmental and natural disasters to students enrolled in grades kindergarten through 12.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning emergency preparedness in the schools and
2 supplementing chapter 40 of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

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8 1. a. The board of education of each school district and chief
9 school administrator of each nonpublic school shall develop and
10 coordinate an emergency operations plan to ensure the continuity of
11 essential school functions under all circumstances. The plan shall:

12 (1) identify a baseline of preparedness for all potential
13 emergencies, including fires, active shooters, natural disasters,
14 environmental disasters, and pandemics, to establish a viable
15 capability to perform essential functions during any emergency that
16 disrupts normal operations; and

17 (2) be coordinated with State and local authorities including, but
18 not limited to, the State Office of Emergency Management, local
19 law enforcement officers, county and local health officers, county
20 offices of emergency management, and other emergency
21 responders.

22 b. The plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following
23 components: identification of essential functions, programs, and
24 personnel; procedures to implement the plan; delegation of
25 authority and lines of succession; identification of alternative
26 facilities and related infrastructure, including those for
27 communications; identification and protection of vital records and
28 databases; and schedules and procedures for periodic tests, training,
29 and exercises. The plan shall be consistent with the local emergency
30 operations plan of the municipality or municipalities in which the
31 school district or nonpublic school is located.

32 c. The board of education or chief school administrator shall
33 adopt and submit for review an emergency operations plan to the
34 Commissioner of Education, the State Office of Emergency
35 Management, the Department of Health, and the Office of
36 Homeland Security and Preparedness within six months of the
37 effective date of this act. The board or administrator shall review,
38 update, and resubmit the plan to the offices every five years. If an
39 emergency incident occurs at a school or facility of the board or
40 nonpublic school during the five-year period, the plan shall be
41 reviewed as soon as practicable after the incident occurs.

42 d. The Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, the
43 State Office of Emergency Management, the Department of Health,
44 and the Commissioner of Education shall review the emergency
45 operations plan submitted by a board of education or chief school
46 administrator pursuant to subsection c. of this section and, when
47 necessary, shall in coordination with other State agencies make

1 recommendations to the board or administrator for improving the
2 plan.

3 e. Any plan prepared pursuant to this section shall not be
4 considered a government record as defined in section 1 of P.L.1995,
5 c.23 (C.47:1A-1.1) and shall not be available for public inspection,
6 copying, or the purchase of copies.

7
8 2. The board of education or chief school administrator of a
9 nonpublic school shall ensure that students enrolled in the school
10 district or nonpublic school annually receive appropriate instruction
11 related to the emergency operations plan adopted by the board of
12 education or chief school administrator pursuant to section 1 of this
13 act. The instruction shall include the expectations and
14 responsibilities of students in the event that an emergency occurs.

15
16 3. a. Each school district shall incorporate instruction on
17 environmental and natural disasters in the science, comprehensive
18 health and physical education, and social studies curricula for
19 students in grades K through 12 as part of the district's
20 implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

21 b. The instruction shall:

22 (1) provide information on the types of environmental and
23 natural disasters that have occurred, or which may occur, in the
24 State;

25 (2) help students to understand school emergency policies and
26 evacuation procedures; and

27 (3) focus on disaster preparedness, including how to make
28 disaster preparedness kits and plans.

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30 4. This act shall take effect immediately and section 3 shall
31 first apply in the first full school year after the date of enactment.

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STATEMENT

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36 This bill requires school districts and nonpublic schools to
37 develop emergency operations plans. The bill also requires school
38 districts to provide instruction on environmental and natural
39 disasters to students enrolled in grades kindergarten through 12.

40 Under the bill, the board of education of each school district and
41 the chief school administrator of each nonpublic school is required
42 to develop and coordinate an emergency operations plan to ensure
43 the continuity of essential school functions under all circumstances.
44 The plan is required to identify a baseline of preparedness for all
45 potential emergencies and be coordinated with State and local
46 authorities. The bill requires the plan to include, but not be
47 limited to, the following components: identification of essential
48 functions, programs, and personnel; procedures to implement the

1 plan; delegation of authority and lines of succession; identification
2 of alternative facilities and related infrastructure, including those
3 for communications; identification and protection of vital records
4 and databases; and schedules and procedures for periodic tests,
5 training, and exercises. The plan will be consistent with the local
6 emergency operations plan of the municipality or municipalities in
7 which the school district or nonpublic school is located.

8 The bill directs the board of education or chief school
9 administrator to adopt and submit for review an emergency
10 operations plan to the Commissioner of Education, the State Office
11 of Emergency Management, the Department of Health, and the
12 Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness within six months of
13 the bill's effective date. The board or administrator will be required
14 to review, update, and resubmit the plan to the offices every five
15 years. Under the bill, the Office of Homeland Security and
16 Preparedness, the State Office of Emergency Management, the
17 Department of Health, and the Commissioner of Education will be
18 required to review the emergency operations plans submitted and,
19 when necessary, make recommendations for a plan's improvement.

20 An emergency operation plan prepared pursuant to this bill will
21 not be considered a government record under the State's open
22 public records act and, therefore, will not be available for public
23 inspection, copying, or the purchase of copies.

24 The bill also requires the board of education or chief school
25 administrator of a nonpublic school to ensure that students enrolled
26 in the school district or nonpublic school annually receive
27 appropriate instruction related to the emergency operations plan
28 adopted by the board of education or chief school administrator.
29 The instruction will include the expectations and responsibilities of
30 students in the event that an emergency occurs.

31 Finally, this bill requires that each school district will
32 incorporate instruction on environmental and natural disasters in the
33 science, comprehensive health and physical education, and social
34 studies curricula for students in grades K through 12 as part of the
35 district's implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning
36 Standards.