

ASSEMBLY, No. 4607

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 20, 2024

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman AL BARLAS

District 40 (Bergen, Essex and Passaic)

Assemblyman CHRISTOPHER P. DEPHILLIPS

District 40 (Bergen, Essex and Passaic)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes Special Education Transportation Task Force.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT establishing the Special Education Transportation Task
2 Force.

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

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7 1. As used in this act, “school bus” means every motor vehicle
8 operated by, or under contract with, a public or governmental
9 agency, or religious or other charitable organization or corporation,
10 or privately operated for compensation for the transportation of
11 children to or from school for secular or religious education, which
12 complies with the regulations of the Department of Education
13 affecting school buses, including “School Vehicle Type I” and
14 “School Vehicle Type II” as defined pursuant to R.S.39:1-1.

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16 2. a. There is established the Special Education Transportation
17 Task Force. The purpose of the task force shall be to study and
18 make recommendations on best practices for the transportation of
19 students who receive special education and related services,
20 including identifying and responding to medical and behavioral
21 emergencies experienced by these students.

22 b. The task force shall consist of the following 18 members:

23 (1) the Commissioner of Education, or a designee;

24 (2) the Director of the Office of Special Education within the
25 Department of Education, or a designee;

26 (3) the Special Education Ombudsman, or a designee;

27 (4) the Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or
28 Developmental Disabilities and their Families, or a designee; and

29 (5) 14 public members appointed by the Governor, in
30 consultation with the Commissioner of Education, who shall
31 include the following:

32 (a) a representative from the New Jersey School Boards
33 Association, the New Jersey Association of School Administrators,
34 the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association, and the
35 SPAN Parent Advocacy Network;

36 (b) a nurse practitioner/clinical nurse specialist with special
37 education experience;

38 (c) a physical therapist with experience in transportation safety
39 specific to the physical requirements of various physical disability
40 classifications;

41 (d) a behavior specialist with experience addressing the risks
42 associated with autism or emotional regulation impairment
43 classifications, and strategies to address those risks;

44 (e) an individual employed by a school district in the State as a
45 director of special education services;

46 (f) two individuals who serve on child study teams at public
47 schools in the State;

1 (g) two individuals who serve as bus aides on school buses that
2 provide transportation to students who receive special education
3 and related services; and

4 (h) two parents with children who have received or are receiving
5 special education and related services that include transportation
6 services.

7 c. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled
8 in the same manner as the original appointments were made.

9 d. The task force shall organize within 90 days of the date of
10 enactment of this act. The task force shall select a chairperson and
11 a vice-chairperson from among its members and shall appoint a
12 secretary who need not be a member of the task force. A majority
13 of the membership of the task force shall constitute a quorum for
14 the transaction of task force business. The task force may meet and
15 hold hearings at the place or places as it shall designate.

16 e. Members of the task force shall serve without compensation,
17 but may be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the
18 performance of their duties as members of the task force within the
19 limits of funds appropriated or otherwise made available to the task
20 force for its purposes.

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22 3. a. The Department of Education shall provide such
23 stenographic, clerical, and other administrative assistants, and such
24 professional staff as the task force requires to carry out its work.

25 b. The task force shall be entitled to call to its assistance and
26 avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or
27 municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it
28 may require and as may be available for its purposes.

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30 4. a. It shall be the duty of the task force to study and make
31 recommendations as to best practices for the transportation of
32 students who receive special education and related services. The
33 task force shall also make recommendations as to appropriate
34 policies and training of school staff and school bus staff that
35 address preventing, identifying, and responding to medical and
36 behavioral emergencies that occur while transporting students who
37 receive special education and related services on a school bus. In
38 making its recommendations, the task force shall:

39 (1) review best practices in other states;

40 (2) review current school transportation policies specific to
41 students who receive special education and related services; and

42 (3) identify areas of concern for the transportation of these
43 students, including those related to safety, access to necessary
44 equipment, communication with parents and legal guardians, and
45 staffing needs.

46 b. The recommendations described in subsection a. of this
47 section may include proposals for specific statutory changes and
48 methods to foster cooperation between parents and school districts

1 in providing appropriate transportation services to students who
2 receive special education and related services.

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4 5. The task force shall issue a report of its recommendations to
5 the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164
6 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature no later than 12 months after the
7 organization of the task force.

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9 6. This act shall take effect immediately and expire upon the
10 issuance of the report by the task force pursuant to section 5 of this
11 act.

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STATEMENT

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16 This bill establishes the Special Education Transportation Task
17 Force. The purpose of the task force is to study and make
18 recommendations for best practices in transporting students who
19 receive special education and related services, including preventing,
20 identifying, and responding to medical and behavioral emergencies.

21 The task force is to consist of 18 members, including the
22 Commissioner of Education, the Director of the Office of Special
23 Education within Department of Education, the Special Education
24 Ombudsman, the Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or
25 Developmental Disabilities and their Families, and 14 public
26 members to be appointed by the Governor in consultation with the
27 commissioner.

28 The bill directs the task force to study and make
29 recommendations as to best practices for the transportation of
30 students who receive special education and related services,
31 including recommendations as to appropriate policies and training
32 of school staff and school bus staff that address preventing,
33 identifying, and responding to medical and behavioral emergencies
34 that occur while transporting these students on a school bus. In
35 undertaking its work under the provisions of the bill, the task force
36 is to: (1) review best practices in other states; (2) review current
37 school transportation policies specific to students who receive
38 special education and related services; and (3) identify areas of
39 concern for transportation of these students, including those related
40 to safety, access to necessary equipment, communication with
41 parents and legal guardians, and staffing needs.

42 Pursuant to the provisions of the bill, the task force is to issue a
43 report of its recommendations to the Governor and Legislature no
44 later than 12 months after the organization of the task force.