

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 301

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 10, 2022

The Assembly Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 301 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill requires each school district to submit its current emergency communication policies and protocols to the Department of Education. The bill defines “emergency communication policies and protocols” as the procedures established to enable school administrators and security personnel to communicate with emergency responders, school staff, students, parents and guardians, and other school or school district stakeholders in the event of a school emergency. The bill further directs the department, in consultation with the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, the State Office of Emergency Management, and local law enforcement authorities, to review the emergency communication policies and protocols submitted by a school district to ensure compliance with all relevant State laws and regulations and, when necessary, make recommendations to the school district for improving the policies and protocols.

Under the bill, the school district is required to review, update, and resubmit its emergency communication policies and protocols to the department every five years. If an emergency incident occurs at a school district during the five-year period, the policies and protocols will be reviewed immediately.

The bill provides the department the authority to request any additional information about a school district’s emergency communication policies, protocols, equipment, or technology that it deems necessary.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2022-2023 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to change the submission date of the emergency communication policies to the first day of October of the first full school year following the effective date of the bill. The bill was also amended to allow the Department of Education to request

additional information from a school district at any time and remove the provision that the department may make unannounced visits to the school district. The bill was amended to define the “emergency communication policies and protocols” as the procedures established to enable school administrators and security personnel to communicate with emergency responders, school staff, students, parents and guardians, and other school or school district stakeholders in the event of a school emergency.