

CHAPTER 266

AN ACT requiring school districts to provide alternative education projects to pupils who choose not to participate in certain activities and supplementing chapter 35 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

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

C.18A:35-4.24 Definitions relative to alternative education projects.

1. As used in this act:

"Alternative education project" means the use of video tapes, models, films, books, computers, or any other tools which provide an alternative method for obtaining and testing the knowledge, information, or experience required by a course of study.

"Animal" means any living organism that is an invertebrate, or is in the phylum chordata or organisms which have a notochord and includes an animal's cadaver or severed parts of an animal's cadaver.

C.18A:35-4.25 Refusal to participate in certain school activities related to animal dissection, etc.

2. a. A public school pupil from kindergarten through grade 12 may refuse to dissect, vivisect, incubate, capture or otherwise harm or destroy animals or any parts thereof as part of a course of instruction.

b. A school shall notify pupils and their parents or guardians at the beginning of each school year of the right to decline to participate in the activities enumerated in subsection a. of this section and shall authorize parents or guardians to assert the right of their children to refuse to participate in these activities. Within two weeks of the receipt of the notice, the pupils, parents or guardians shall notify the school if the right to decline participation in the enumerated activities will be exercised.

c. Any pupil who chooses to refrain from participation in or observation of a portion of a course of instruction in accordance with this section shall be offered an alternative education project for the purpose of providing the pupil with the factual knowledge, information or experience required by the course of study. A pupil may refuse to participate in an alternative education project which involves or necessitates any harmful use of an animal or animal parts.

d. A pupil shall not be discriminated against, in grading or in any other manner, based upon a decision to exercise the rights afforded pursuant to this act.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 5, 2006.