

CHAPTER 228

AN ACT establishing the New Jersey Reading Disabilities Task Force.

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

1. The Legislature finds and declares that:
 - a. Approximately 85% of all children who receive special education services have basic deficits in language and reading; and
 - b. Many students with reading disabilities are never properly diagnosed and do not receive the necessary specialized educational programs; and
 - c. It is in the public interest for the State to establish a New Jersey Reading Disabilities Task Force to study instructional practices and strategies that benefit students with reading disabilities and examine the ways in which current State policies affect this population.

2. a. There is hereby established the New Jersey Reading Disabilities Task Force. The purpose of the task force shall be to study and evaluate practices for diagnosing, treating, and educating children with reading disabilities and examine how current statutes and regulations affect these students in order to develop recommendations to be presented to the Governor and Legislature.
 - b. The task force shall consist of 13 members as follows:
 - (1) the Commissioners of Education and Human Services, or their designees, who shall serve ex officio;
 - (2) 11 members who shall be appointed no later than the 30th day after the effective date of this act, as follows:
 - (a) five persons appointed by the Governor, who shall include: one person upon the recommendation of the New Jersey branch of the Learning Disabilities Association of America; one person upon the recommendation of the New Jersey branch of the International Dyslexia Association; one person upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Speech-Language-Hearing Association; one person upon the recommendation of the New Jersey Education Association; and one member of the public with demonstrated expertise in issues relating to the work of the task force;
 - (b) two members of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate, no more than one of whom shall be of the same political party;
 - (c) two members of the General Assembly, appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, no more than one of whom shall be of the same political party; and
 - (d) two members of the public, one selected by the President of the Senate and one selected by the Speaker of the General Assembly, with demonstrated expertise in issues relating to the work of the task force.

- Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled in the same manner provided by the original appointments.
 - c. The Commissioner of Education, or the commissioner's designee, shall serve as the chairperson of the task force. The task force shall organize as soon as practicable following the appointment of its members and shall select a vice-chairperson from among its members. The chairperson shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the task force.
 - d. The public members shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties and within the limits of funds available to the task force.

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

f. The task force may meet and hold hearings at the places it designates during the sessions or recesses of the Legislature.

3. The task force shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L. 1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), along with any legislative bills that it desires to recommend for adoption by the Legislature, no later than 12 months after the initial meeting of the task force.

4. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon the issuance of the task force report.

Approved January 16, 2010.