

CHAPTER 107

AN ACT establishing a task force on the prevention of sexual abuse of children and supplementing chapter 36 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:36-25.7 Task force on the prevention of, response to sexual abuse of children.

1. a. There is established within the Department of Education a task force on the prevention of, and response to, sexual abuse of children. The purpose of the task force shall be to study and make recommendations for reducing the prevalence and impact of child sexual abuse in the State, including recommendations for school policies and training concerning child sexual abuse prevention and response.

b. The task force shall consist of the following 17 members:

- (1) the Commissioner of Education, or a designee;
- (2) the Commissioner of the Department of Children and Families, or a designee;
- (3) the President of the State Board of Education, or a designee; and

(4) 14 public members appointed by the Governor, in consultation with the Department of Education, who shall include the following:

(a) a representative from: the New Jersey School Boards Association; a New Jersey teachers union; the New Jersey Association of School Administrators; the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association; the New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault; Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey; New Jersey Child Assault Prevention (NJCAP); the New Jersey Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers; and the New Jersey Children's Alliance;

(b) a licensed therapist trained to counsel or treat child sexual abuse victims;

(c) a New Jersey county prosecutor;

(d) an individual who has experience and expertise in the field of harassment, intimidation, and bullying policies;

(e) a parent of a student enrolled in an elementary or secondary school in New Jersey; and

(f) an individual who is a survivor of child sexual abuse.

The appointment of public members shall reflect the geographic diversity of the State.

c. Public members of the task force shall serve for a term of three years, except that of the initial appointments, four public members shall serve for one year, five public members shall serve for two years, and five public members shall serve for three years. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments were made. Members are eligible for reappointment to the task force.

d. The Commissioner of Education, or a designee, shall serve as chairperson of the task force. The task force shall meet at the call of the chairperson. The task force shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the task force. The task force, in its discretion, may divide its membership into subcommittees in the course of carrying out its duties.

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

C.18A:36-25.8 Provision of staff.

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

b. 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 for its purposes.

C.18A:36-25.9 Consultation with State agencies, departments.

3. In executing its duties under this act, the task force shall consult with the employees of the Department of Children and Families who work on child protection matters, the New Jersey State Police, the State Board of Education, and any other State agency or department necessary to accomplish the task force's responsibilities.

C.18A:36-25.10 Duties of task force.

4. a. It shall be the duty of the task force to make recommendations for reducing child sexual abuse in this State. The task force shall also make recommendations for school policies and training that address the sexual abuse of children. In making its recommendations, the task force shall do the following:

- (1) gather information concerning child sexual abuse throughout the State;
- (2) receive reports and testimony from individuals, State and local agencies, community-based organizations, and other public and private organizations;
- (3) review steps taken and programs established in other states to reduce child sexual abuse;
- (4) create goals for State policy that are aimed at preventing child sexual abuse;
- (5) create recommendations and guidelines for school policies addressing sexual abuse of children. The recommendations and guidelines shall be flexible enough to allow accommodation for local autonomy and values;
- (6) review current instructional programs or curricula provided in New Jersey schools on issues related to child sexual abuse, and create recommendations for a sample curriculum to be utilized by school districts;
- (7) create recommendations and guidelines for school personnel to respond appropriately to students affected by sexual abuse, including any recommendations for teacher professional development and training on this issue;
- (8) create recommendations and guidelines for age-appropriate, evidence-based child sexual abuse awareness, including guidelines for utilizing appropriately trained professionals to provide the student instruction and teacher training on this issue;
- (9) create recommendations and guidelines for providing educational material to parents and guardians on the warning signs of child sexual abuse and information on assistance and referrals or resources; and
- (10) develop a child sexual abuse protocol to be utilized by all community partners in order to help identify, prevent, and investigate child sexual abuse.

b. The recommendations described in subsection a. of this section may include proposals for specific statutory changes and methods to foster cooperation among State agencies and between the State and local government. The recommendations also may identify opportunities for collaboration among State and local agencies, community-based organizations, and other public and private organizations to provide prevention education services.

c. The task force shall present any recommendations and guidelines concerning school policies, updates to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, and school personnel, as developed pursuant to paragraphs (5), (6), and (7) of subsection a. of this section, to the State Board of Education for consideration and possible adoption.

C.18A:36-25.11 Report to Governor, Legislature.

5. The task force shall issue a report of its recommendations to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than 18 months after the organization of the task force.

The task force shall issue reports of any new or updated recommendations on at least a biennial basis.

C.18A:36-25.12 Creation of educational materials.

6. The Department of Education shall create educational materials for parents and guardians based upon the recommendations developed by the task force pursuant to paragraph (9) of subsection a. of section 4 of this act. The department shall provide the educational materials to local Parent Teacher Associations throughout the State for presentation to their members.

7. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved May 10, 2019.