



1.25.18

Position Statement S-1055 (Turner, Ruiz)

Requires full-day kindergarten in all school districts and establishes uniform age requirement for enrollment in kindergarten.

The New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) believes that full day kindergarten benefits students and starts children on the road to a better education.

NJSBA also believes; however, that full-day kindergarten should not be mandated by the State unless state funds are provided to meet the need for necessary additional facilities and staff. Technical assistance from the Department of Education and financial incentives including state funds for program planning, staff development, and renovation or construction of suitable kindergarten classrooms should be made available to districts converting from a half-day to full-day program. Unfortunately, S-1055 as currently constructed does not address these issues.

Without providing additional funding to compliment the directive to adopt full-day kindergarten, this legislation as currently constructed amounts to an unfunded mandate. Local school boards will be required to make funds available for necessary increases in staffing as well as renovations and/or construction of new classrooms to meet the new demand of full-day kindergarten.

Additionally, it should be noted S-1055 does not speak to the two percent levy cap. As such, local school boards will required to make cuts to existing school programs in order to meet these new requirements.

NJSBA supports the goals of S-1055; however, without the addressing the issues of funding, NJSBA cannot support the bill at this time. We ask that S-1055 not be considered by this committee until we address these concerns with the sponsor so that the bill can achieve its early childhood education goals without unduly burdening local school boards and property tax payers.