



NJPSA Testimony
On
Temperature Control Guidelines For Schools (A-1030 ((Jasey / Wolfe / McKnight))
Before the
Assembly Education Committee
June 20, 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to share the perspective of the statewide membership of the NJ Principals and Supervisors Association on A-1030 (Jasey / Wolfe / McKnight) which requires Boards of Education to adopt a policy establishing temperature control standards and guidelines for school district facilities.

NJPSA believes that all students should have access to a safe and secure learning environment. Our members, as school leaders, strive to maintain such an environment on a daily basis. We are sensitive to the need to, and our responsibility in, ensuring a safe classroom environment, including issues related to temperature as well as air quality. We deeply recognize the impact of such factors on learning.

Nonetheless, Mother Nature – either in the form of cold or heat – can sometimes intervene. NJPSA’s members, while vigilant in addressing temperature issues, are sometimes thwarted by the seasons. While acting expeditiously, particularly in our older schools, addressing issues can be difficult given the size of a school and the number of classrooms impacted by a temperature related event.

As such, we are happy to support the legislation before you as it seeks to utilize existing air quality control standards and processes, developed by Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health (PEOSH), under the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Moreover, it ensures that every district has a process in place to address those hot AND cold days that challenge us.

We are equally pleased to see the joint development of guidance by the Departments of Education and Health to help inform districts on the best ways to address situations where the temperatures or air quality in our buildings may not be optimal. This is essential to sharing the best ideas to address physical plant challenges.

Similarly, we appreciate the legislation’s recognition of the limitations imposed in addressing temperature related events by fire and safety regulation. Such regulation can forestall some options, such as space heaters, given fire concerns, as an example. Other restrictions may exist due to the physical structure or age of a building.

We believe this legislation is an important part of the fabric of ensuring our students have the learning environment they need to learn, grow and thrive. We thank the sponsors, and our fellow stakeholders, for their work on this critical legislation.