



NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

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TESTIMONY REGARDING S-1055

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Submitted By: Melanie Schulz, NJASA Director of Governmental Affairs

NJASA is fully supportive of full-day kindergarten in all districts.

In fact, full-day kindergarten for all children is one of our top goals in our Vision 2020 plan.

However, S-1055, as written, would have a devastating effect on school districts if it takes the form of an unfunded mandate.

To illustrate, let me share the concerns of Dr. David Aderhold, Superintendent of the West Windsor-Plainfield School District. The district would need 30 additional classrooms by the 2020-2021 school year, in addition to the 30 teachers. They would need building expansions – which means passing a referendum. These are just a few of the enormous logistical issues. Please take this into consideration.

Districts are moving to full-day programs, albeit slowly. The latest data (2017-2017 school year) shows the following:

	2016-17	
Half-Day Children	9,694	11.7%
Full-Day Children	73,158	88.3%
% of K Children Served	82,852	

	519	Total Districts with K
91.9%	477	Districts with Full-Day K
1.5%	8	Districts with Full-Day and Half-Day
6.6%	34	Districts with Half-Day

We do, however, appreciate the implementation amendments, but caution that some of the provisions and timelines could be problematic.

Additionally, there are no dollars attached to this legislation; nor is it reasonable to think these changes could be implemented in the time frame proscribed.

Many districts that currently only offer half- day kindergarten programs are over capacity in all of their school buildings because of enrollment growth and they do not have any excess space.

To offer full-day kindergarten, they would have to build more classrooms, potentially affecting the implementation timelines.

A few districts that have attempted to add these classrooms and/or implement full-day kindergarten programs via referendum have seen these ballot questions defeated.

Absent a successful referendum, class sizes at grades 1 - 3 may have to dramatically increase in order to free up staff and classrooms for full-day kindergarten implementation.

On top of all this, due to increasing enrollment, districts do not have the ability to add staff within the parameters of the 2% tax levy cap.

In short, this bill would be great if it is accompanied by full funding for its implementation and time to look at its effect on population shifts in the district, as well as a change in the effective date. Without funding, it would have a significant adverse impact on school districts.

Thank you.