

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 105

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 213th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 25, 2008

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman JOHN F. MCKEON

District 27 (Essex)

Assemblywoman CONNIE WAGNER

District 38 (Bergen)

Assemblyman JOSEPH J. ROBERTS, JR.

District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)

Assemblyman GARY S. SCHAEER

District 36 (Bergen, Essex and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

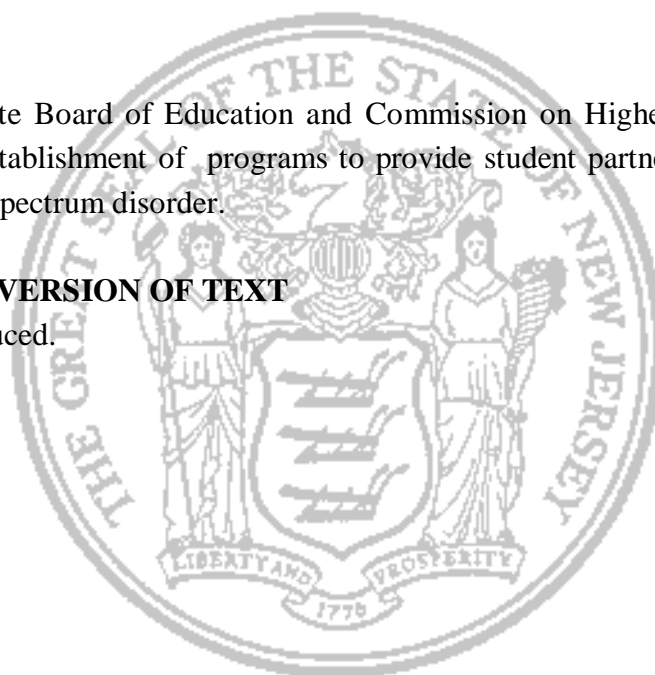
**Assemblywoman Voss, Assemblyman Johnson, Assemblywoman Vainieri
Huttle, Assemblyman Scalera, Assemblywoman Jasey, Assemblyman
Diegnan and Assemblywoman Pou**

SYNOPSIS

Urges State Board of Education and Commission on Higher Education to encourage establishment of programs to provide student partners for students with autism spectrum disorder.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/14/2008)

1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** urging the State Board of Education
2 and Commission on Higher Education to encourage the
3 establishment of programs to provide student partners for
4 students with autism spectrum disorder.

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6 **WHEREAS**, Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a complex
7 developmental disability that causes problems with social
8 interaction and communication; symptoms usually start before age
9 three and can cause delays or problems in many different skills that
10 develop from infancy to adulthood; and

11 **WHEREAS**, One of the primary characteristics of ASD is its
12 interference with a person's ability to communicate, interact
13 socially with others, or develop peer relationships; and

14 **WHEREAS**, While the severity of the disorder and social impairment
15 varies widely, in some cases, certain symptoms of the disorder may
16 be relieved by pairing a public school student with ASD with a
17 student "peer buddy" whom the school principal has identified as a
18 good match and a positive role model for other students; and

19 **WHEREAS**, Peer buddy programs have been successful in many New
20 Jersey school districts and their use should be encouraged
21 throughout the State; and

22 **WHEREAS**, The transition from high school to college can be
23 unsettling for any new college student, and perhaps more so for a
24 student with ASD; and

25 **WHEREAS**, Pairing a college student with ASD with a student partner
26 whose role is to facilitate interactions with professors and new peer
27 groups may ease the transition to college and promote academic
28 inclusion; and

29 **WHEREAS**, It is appropriate for this House to urge the State Board of
30 Education to encourage the establishment of peer buddy programs
31 in school districts and the Commission on Higher Education to
32 encourage institutions of higher education to pair students with
33 ASD with appropriate student partners; now, therefore,

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35 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New
36 Jersey:

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38 1. This House urges the State Board of Education, in
39 consultation with the Commissioner of Health and Senior Services
40 and representatives of entities that promote awareness about autism
41 and provide programs and services to people with autism, to
42 encourage the establishment in each school district of a peer buddy
43 program for children with autism spectrum disorder enrolled in
44 grades 7 through 12, including training for students and staff
45 affiliated with the program; and further urges the New Jersey
46 Commission on Higher Education to encourage public institutions
47 of higher education to establish programs to pair college students
48 with autism spectrum disorder with appropriate student partners.

1 2. Duly authenticated copies of this resolution, signed by the
2 Speaker of the General Assembly and attested by the Clerk of the
3 General Assembly, shall be transmitted to the members of the State
4 Board of Education, the Commissioner of Education, and the
5 members and executive director of the Commission on Higher
6 Education.

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STATEMENT

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11 This resolution urges the State Board of Education, in
12 consultation with the Commissioner of Health and Senior Services
13 and representatives of entities that promote awareness about autism
14 and provide programs and services to people with autism, to
15 encourage the establishment in each school district of a peer buddy
16 program for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) enrolled
17 in grades 7 through 12. The resolution further urges the New Jersey
18 Commission on Higher Education to encourage public institutions
19 of higher education to establish programs to pair college students
20 with ASD with appropriate student partners.

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One of the primary characteristics of ASD is its interference with a person's ability to communicate, interact socially with others, or develop peer relationships. The severity of the disorder and social impairment varies widely. In some cases, pairing a student with ASD with a peer buddy may help to relieve certain symptoms of the disorder. Such programs have been successful in many New Jersey school districts. Traditionally, a peer buddy would be a responsible student who functions as a positive role model for other students and a bridge to mainstream school life for the student with ASD. In the case of a college student with ASD, the availability of a student partner to assist in interactions with professors and new peer groups may ease the transition to college and promote academic inclusion.