

Date: _____

To: Senator Shirley K. Turner
Chair Senate Education Committee
1440 Pennington Road
Ewing, NJ 08618

Re: **Bills S412: Requires each board of education to employ a certain number of Substance Awareness Coordinators.**

Dear Honorable Senator Turner:

Bill S412 may be the piece of legislation that has the most impact on the children of New Jersey in many years. During this time of increased stress, many students and families are in need of crisis intervention for substance abuse and mental health issues as well as for violence in the schools. Families and students coping with these issues turn to the substance awareness coordinator as a first line of defense and a source of help.

While we understand that people are concerned about auto insurance, taxes and health care costs we also understand that many of our young people are turning to substances as a way to deal with the stress around them. While politicians promise quick fixes during campaigns, we as Substance Awareness Coordinators realize there is no such silver bullet.

The Department of Education created the role of Substance Awareness Coordinator (SAC), because they recognized the need for such specialized personnel to be present in the schools. In fact, the New Jersey Administrative Code spells out the requirement for formal prevention, education and intervention procedures dealing with students who may have issues related to substance use/abuse. It is the Substance Awareness Coordinator's responsibility to see that students and their families receive the education, intervention, and referrals dictated by that part of the Code. Yet, many schools do not have a substance awareness coordinator in their school or even in their district. In many cases school staff members are failing to recognize the signs and symptoms of substance abuse, and in other situations, they are simply ignoring the problem. Is it really a wonder that HSPA scores are not what they should be?

Bill S412 requires that school districts provide substance awareness coordinators in adequate numbers. As a result, this bill will increase the delivery of services related to prevention education, intervention, referral and support services for all schools in our state.

I respectfully request your kind attention to this very serious issue of substance abuse in our schools.

Respectfully,

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip _____

County of Residence: _____

Date: _____

To: Craig A. Stanley - Chair Assembly Education Committee
1200 Clinton Avenue
Suite 140
Irvington, NJ 07111

Re: **Bill A615 Requires each board of education to employ a certain number of Substance Awareness Coordinators.**

Dear Honorable Assemblyman Stanley:

Bill A615 may be the piece of legislation that has the most impact on the children of New Jersey in many years. During this time of increased stress, many students and families are in need of crisis intervention for substance abuse and mental health issues as well as for violence in the schools. Families and students coping with these issues turn to the substance awareness coordinator as a first line of defense and a source of help.

While we understand that people are concerned about auto insurance, taxes and health care costs we also understand that many of our young people are turning to substances as a way to deal with the stress around them. While politicians promise quick fixes during campaigns, we as Substance Awareness Coordinators realize there is no such silver bullet.

The Department of Education created the role of Substance Awareness Coordinator (SAC), because they recognized the need for such specialized personnel to be present in the schools. In fact, the New Jersey Administrative Code spells out the requirement for formal prevention, education and intervention procedures dealing with students who may have issues related to substance use/abuse. It is the Substance Awareness Coordinator's responsibility to see that students and their families receive the education, intervention, and referrals dictated by that part of the Code. Yet, many schools do not have a substance awareness coordinator in their school or even in their district. In many cases school staff members are failing to recognize the signs and symptoms of substance abuse, and in other situations, they are simply ignoring the problem. Is it really a wonder that HSPA scores are not what they should be?

Bill A615 requires that school districts provide substance awareness coordinators in adequate numbers. As a result, this bill will increase the delivery of services related to prevention education, intervention, referral and support services for all schools in our state.

I respectfully request your kind attention to this very serious issue of substance abuse in our schools.

Respectfully,

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip _____

County of Residence: _____