

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

NYSAAP, Chapters 1, 2 & 3



Memo of Support A.6665A/S.6537A

May 9, 2024

AAP strongly supports the implementation of A6665A/S6537A, to aid in ending the high frequency of lockdown drills in school systems.

The New York State American Academy of Pediatrics, representing more than 4,000 pediatricians from across the state, strongly supports A.06665A/S.6537A. This legislation would decrease the mandated frequency of lockdown drills and ensure that lockdown drills are significantly more effective in helping children both be safe and feel safe in their schools.

While lockdown drills are considered an important part of the safety functions of schools across New York State, it is important to understand the complications and frequent concerns accompanying the implementation of lockdown drills. These drills can have adverse effects on young children, ultimately creating unnecessary nightmares, paranoia, and an overall increase in stress levels and anxiety. Parents have reported numerous stories of their children texting them their wills or writing strongly-worded goodbye messages, showcasing their fear and anxiety in lockdown situations.

Current New York State law requires 4 lockdown drills per year per school. This historic mandate was passed in 2016 prior to an understanding that the drills themselves can induce trauma in many students. Also, there is no proof that multiple drills per year create a safer more protective environment for students or teachers. It is time, with the new information about the potential harm multiple lockdown drills can cause, to revisit this requirement and allow more flexibility in terms of the number of drills per year. It is also time to recognize that teachers and parents both play a significant role in children's safety and well-being in lockdown drill events. Passage of this bill will bring New York into the present in terms of affording all stakeholders input into the design and implementation of lockdown drills in the more than 700 school districts across the state.

The National American Academy of Pediatrics recommends eliminating children's involvement in high-intensity drills and exercises, prohibiting deception, making drills look real and to make accommodations to address individual child and youth needs.¹ Although this legislation does not eliminate drills, it would be a positive step in the right direction and we urge support for passage of this bill.

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¹ <https://rcraig@ny.acog.org ;publications.aap.org/aapnews/news/7243/AAP-Schools-should-avoid-high-intensity-live?autologincheck=redirected>