

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

NYSAAP, District II, Chapters 1, 2 & 3



May 30, 2023

Memo of Support

Lockdown Drills in Schools A.06665/S.6537

The New York State American Academy of Pediatrics, representing more than 5,000 pediatricians from across the state, strongly supports A.06665/S.6537. 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.

The bill will:

- Require advance notice of lockdown drills to parents and guardians
- Provide accommodations for students with PTSD or other emotional or physical needs which may have a particularly negative experience with such drills
- Mandate school staff ensure an age-appropriate explanation of the drills is shared with students
- Provide thorough and standardized training for teachers and school staff on how best to conduct drills, including how to respond to students' physical, emotional, social, and developmental needs during such drills.

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.

We urge you to pass this bill this session and allow schools, students and parents to review their needs in terms of the frequency of lockdowns and the protocols for all involved.

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