

Proposed Amendment to Assembly Bill No. 218 (First Reprint)
by Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson

Add a preamble to the bill preceding the enacting clause to read as follows:

WHEREAS, The Legislature recognizes that it is of utmost importance that the public schools in this State are built and maintained in a manner which provides the greatest protection to pupils from harm; and

WHEREAS, Each school must be built and maintained to meet or exceed recommended safety standards and be designed to anticipate and protect against modern threats; and

WHEREAS, Academic achievement of pupils is adversely affected when the pupils do not feel safe from harm; and

WHEREAS, Acts of violence which occur at schools have devastating effects on pupils which may include depression, fear and inappropriate behavior; and

WHEREAS, Efforts must be taken to mitigate acts of violence at schools; and

WHEREAS, Licensed social workers, school psychologists and other certified or licensed mental or behavioral health professionals who are employed by schools help ensure the safety of pupils, can prevent violent and other inappropriate actions by pupils and address the overall well-being of pupils by assessing the needs of pupils and providing pupils with necessary mental health services, counseling and other assistance; and

WHEREAS, Each school district must ensure that administrators, teachers and other staff are properly trained regarding the appropriate response to a crisis and crisis management and prevention of violence and emergency response planning so that all schools are prepared to respond appropriately to a crisis or emergency and to quickly mitigate any effects of such a crisis or emergency; now, therefore,