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### **Governor Murphy Signs New Bills into Law Affecting School Districts**

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New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy recently signed numerous bills into law in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The following bills are of immediate interest to New Jersey School Districts:

1. A3848/S2301 prohibits employers, during the current COVID-19 pandemic, from terminating, refusing to reinstate, or otherwise punishing employees who request to or take time off from work based on the recommendation of a medical professional that the employee has, or is likely to have, an infectious disease which may infect others at the workplace.
2. A3840/S2281 requires school districts that are directed to close due to the COVID-19 pandemic to provide school meals or meal vouchers to all students enrolled in the district who are eligible for the free and reduced price school lunch and school breakfast programs.
3. A3849/S2302 amends the Open Public Records Act (OPRA) to provide that during a period of emergency, a record custodian for a public entity is required only to make a reasonable effort to respond to a request for access to a government record within seven (7) business days, or as soon as possible thereafter, as the circumstances permit. (Ordinarily, the custodian must grant access to a government record or deny such a request as soon as possible, but not later than seven (7) business days after receiving the request, provided that the record is currently available and not in storage or archived. Access to certain government records, such as budgets and bills, ordinarily must be granted immediately.)
4. A3850/S2294 permits public bodies to conduct meetings electronically during periods of emergency. The bill also allows public bodies to provide notice of the meetings electronically during that time, but requires public bodies who exercise this option (*i.e.*, those that provide only electronic notice) to limit public business conducted at those meetings, to the extent practicable, to “matters necessary for the continuing operation of government and that relate to the applicable emergency declaration.”

For any questions related to this new legislation or related issues, please contact the school law attorneys at SPSK