

1610--A

2013-2014 Regular Sessions

I N S E N A T E

(PREFILED)

January 9, 2013

Introduced by Sen. PARKER -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Finance -- recommitted to the Committee on Finance in accordance with Senate Rule 6, sec. 8 -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT in relation to establishing the commission on education in the twenty-first century; and providing for the repeal of such provisions upon expiration thereof

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. Commission established. (a) There is hereby created in the
2 executive department a commission to be known as the "commission on
3 education in the twenty-first century", hereafter referred to as the
4 "commission", which shall be charged with examining the system of school
5 districts and the delivery of education related services in New York
6 state and recommending changes to that system in light of factors
7 submitted pursuant to section four of this act and any additional
8 factors established by the commission.
9 (b) The commission shall consist of eighteen statewide members, and
10 regional members appointed pursuant to section six of this act. The
11 eighteen statewide members shall be appointed as follows: (i) two
12 members shall be appointed by the temporary president of the senate;
13 (ii) two members shall be appointed by the speaker of the assembly;
14 (iii) one member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the
15 senate; (iv) one member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the
16 assembly; (v) two members shall be appointed by the governor; and (vi)
17 ten members shall be appointed by the board of regents. The board of
18 regents shall designate the chair from among the statewide members of
19 the commission.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *ITALICS* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [] is old law to be omitted.

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1 (c) The members of the commission shall receive no compensation for
2 their services as members, but shall be allowed their actual and neces-
3 sary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. Members of
4 the commission shall be considered public officers for purposes of
5 section 17 of the public officers law.

6 (d) The commission shall begin to act forty-five days after this act
7 shall have become a law. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the
8 members of the commission entitled to vote on the matter under consider-
9 ation. Approval of any matter shall require the affirmative vote of a
10 majority of the members voting thereon.

11 (e) The statewide members of the commission shall adopt by-laws for
12 the management and regulation of its affairs.

13 S 2. Appointments to commission. The legislative leaders and the
14 governor shall submit their appointments to the board of regents, and
15 the board of regents shall make appointments, no later than forty-five
16 days after this act becomes a law. If any such appointment is not made
17 by such date, the person or board responsible for making the appointment
18 pursuant to subdivision (b) of section one of this act may make the
19 appointment after that date, but the vacant appointment shall not count
20 for calculation of a quorum until it is filled. Vacancies in the commis-
21 sion shall be filled in the same manner as the member whose vacancy is
22 being filled was appointed.

23 S 3. Commission staff and agency liaison. (a) The commissioner of
24 education shall designate such employees of the state education depart-
25 ment as are reasonably necessary to provide support services to the
26 commission. The commission, acting by the chair of the commission, may
27 employ additional staff and consultants, who shall be paid from amounts
28 available to the commission for that purpose.

29 (b) The commissioner of education shall appoint one or more represen-
30 tatives of the department of education to serve as liaison between such
31 department and the commission. All state agencies, public authorities
32 and public benefit corporations shall provide such assistance as may be
33 reasonably requested by the chair of the commission.

34 S 4. Factors and information for consideration. (a) The commissioner
35 of education shall submit to the commission, no later than ninety days
36 after this act becomes a law, a list of factors to be considered in its
37 deliberations, which shall include but not be limited to: (i) geography,
38 including physical proximity and the size of the current school
39 districts and boards of cooperative educational services in each region
40 of the state; (ii) demographics, including student enrollment trends and
41 the composition and nature of communities in the current school
42 districts and boards of cooperative educational services in each region
43 of the state; (iii) economics, including existing collaborations to be
44 preserved or enhanced and opportunities to deliver commodities and
45 services through boards of cooperative educational services or other
46 entities; (iv) transportation and the potential for regional transporta-
47 tion services; (v) special education and the potential for regional
48 special education services; (vi) population density; and (vii) other
49 unique circumstances including the need to preserve existing or develop-
50 ing relationships, meet the needs of students, maximize educational
51 opportunities for students, assure local control, maintain the character
52 of community schools and ensure equitable access to rigorous programs
53 for all students.

54 (b) The commissioner of education may submit additional relevant
55 factors to be considered in the deliberations of the commission. The

1 commission may also adopt additional factors to be considered in its
2 deliberations.

3 S 5. Deliberations of commission. The deliberations, meetings and
4 other proceedings of the commission and any committee thereof shall be
5 governed by article 7 of the public officers law. Any one or more
6 members of a committee may participate in a meeting of such committee by
7 means of a conference telephone, conference video or similar communi-
8 cations equipment allowing all persons participating in the meeting to
9 hear each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall
10 constitute presence in person at a meeting. At any meetings of the
11 commission conducted by means of a conference telephone, conference
12 video or similar communications equipment, other than executive
13 sessions, the public shall be given an opportunity to listen. If a meet-
14 ing other than an executive session is to be conducted by means of a
15 conference telephone, conference video or similar communications equip-
16 ment, the public notice for the meeting shall inform the public that
17 such equipment will be used, and identify the means by which the public
18 may listen to such meeting.

19 S 6. Regional input. (a) There shall be eight regional members of the
20 commission for each region established pursuant to this section. For
21 each region, two regional members shall be appointed by the governor,
22 two regional members shall be appointed by the temporary president of
23 the senate, two regional members shall be appointed by the speaker of
24 the assembly, and two regional members shall be appointed by the board
25 of regents. Regional members shall be considered to be members of the
26 commission for purposes of this act, provided that:

27 (i) Regional members shall vote and be counted for quorum purposes
28 only when the commission is acting on recommendations relating solely to
29 the regional members' respective region; and

30 (ii) Regional members shall not be considered to be members of the
31 commission for purposes of participation in commission meetings, except
32 where items relating specifically to that member's region are on the
33 agenda of a commission meeting.

34 (b) For purposes of this act, there shall be six regions:

35 (i) Long Island, consisting of the Eastern Suffolk, Nassau and Western
36 Suffolk boards of cooperative educational services;

37 (ii) New York City;

38 (iii) Hudson Valley, consisting of the Dutchess, Orange-Ulster,
39 Putnam-Northern Westchester, Rockland, Southern Westchester, Sullivan
40 and Ulster boards of cooperative educational services;

41 (iv) Eastern, consisting of the Capital Region, Clinton-Essex-Warren-
42 Washington, Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego, Franklin-Essex-Hamilton,
43 Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery, Otsego-Delaware-Schoharie-Greene, Questar
44 III, St. Lawrence-Lewis and Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex
45 boards of cooperative educational services;

46 (v) Central, consisting of the Broome-Tioga, Cayuga-Onondaga, Jeffer-
47 son-Lewis-Hamilton-Herkimer-Oneida, Herkimer-Hamilton-Fulton-Oswego,
48 Madison-Oneida, Oneida-Herkimer-Madison, Onondaga-Cortland-Madison,
49 Oswego, Schuyler, Chemung, Tioga and Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga boards of
50 cooperative educational services;

51 (vi) Western, consisting of the Cattaraugus-Allegany-Erie-Wyoming,
52 Erie 1, Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus, Genesee Valley, Monroe 1, Monroe
53 2-Orleans, Ontario-Seneca-Yates-Cayuga-Wayne, Orleans-Niagara and Great-
54 er Southern Tier boards of cooperative educational services.

55 (c) The commission shall establish a regional advisory committee for
56 each region. The maximum number of members of each regional advisory

1 committee shall be determined by the commission. Members of each
2 regional advisory committee shall be appointed in equal numbers by the
3 governor, the temporary president of the senate, the speaker of the
4 assembly and the board of regents. The governor, the temporary president
5 of the senate, the speaker of the assembly, and the board of regents
6 shall submit to the commission their appointments to the regional advisory
7 committees no later than ninety days after this act shall have
8 become a law. If any such appointment is not made by such date, the
9 person or board responsible for making such appointment may make the
10 appointment after that date, but the vacant appointment shall not count
11 for calculation of a quorum until such position is filled. Vacancies in
12 regional advisory committees shall be filled in the same manner as the
13 member whose vacancy is being filled was appointed. The regional advisory
14 committees shall begin to act ninety days after this act shall have
15 become a law.

16 (d) Each regional advisory committee upon consideration of demograph-
17 ic, geographic, educational and fiscal indicators within each board of
18 cooperative educational services region, shall develop recommendations
19 for reconfiguring such region's school districts and administrative
20 functions to align educational services with regional and local needs.
21 In carrying out its functions, a regional advisory committee shall
22 foster discussions among, and conduct formal public hearings with requi-
23 site public notice to solicit input from, local stakeholders' interests,
24 including but not limited to, school district administrators, district
25 superintendents and superintendents of schools, teachers, school board
26 members, parents, students, non-pedagogical school support personnel,
27 representatives from post-secondary institutions and other pertinent
28 groups and individuals. In developing its recommendations, each regional
29 advisory committee shall as far as practicable estimate the efficiencies
30 that may be derived from such school district or administrative recon-
31 figuration. On November 15, 2015, each regional advisory committee shall
32 transmit to the commission a report containing its recommendations,
33 which shall include specific recommendations for school district and
34 administrative reconfigurations. Such recommendations shall include but
35 not be limited to: delivery of commodities and services; pupil transpor-
36 tation; specialized professional development; maintenance; insurance
37 procurement; payroll administration; human resources and employee bene-
38 fit coordination; cooperative purchasing coordination; centralization of
39 business operations; printing services; state aid planning; textbook
40 purchasing and substitute teacher coordination; safety and risk manage-
41 ment; the units of school administration to be included in the reconfig-
42 ured school district; the units of school administration that will be
43 transferred to the board of cooperative educational services; size,
44 composition and apportionment of the governing body; the composition,
45 powers and duties of any local school committees to be created; the
46 disposition of real and personal school property; the disposition of
47 existing school indebtedness and lease-purchase; the assignment of
48 school personnel contracts, school collective bargaining agreements and
49 other school contractual obligations; the disposition of existing school
50 funds and existing financial obligations, including undesignated fund
51 balances, trust funds, reserve funds and other funds appropriated for
52 school purposes; a transition plan that addresses the development of a
53 budget for the first school year and interim personnel policies; an
54 estimate of the cost savings to be achieved through reconfiguration and
55 how costs will be reduced; recommended dates by which such actions
56 should occur; necessary investments, if any, that should be made in each

1 case to carry out the regional advisory committee's recommendations; and
2 the regional advisory committee's justification for its recommendations,
3 including the use of any factors developed pursuant to section four of
4 this act.

5 (e) The failure of any regional advisory committee to perform the
6 duties imposed by this section shall not affect the obligation of the
7 commission to perform the duties imposed by section seven of this act.

8 S 7. Commission recommendations. (a) The commission, upon consider-
9 ation of demographic, geographic, educational and fiscal indicators
10 within each board of cooperative educational services region, shall
11 develop recommendations for reconfiguring school districts and adminis-
12 trative functions to align educational services with regional and local
13 needs. In carrying out its functions, the commission shall collaborate
14 with the regional advisory committees insofar as practicable to foster
15 discussions among, and conduct formal public hearings with requisite
16 public notice to solicit input and recommendations from statewide and
17 regional stakeholder interests including but not limited to school
18 district administrators, district superintendents and superintendents of
19 schools, teachers, school board members, parents, students, non-pedagog-
20 ical school support personnel, representatives from post-secondary
21 institutions and other pertinent groups and individuals. The commission
22 shall formally solicit recommendations from school district administra-
23 tors, district superintendents and superintendents of schools, teachers,
24 school board members, parents, students, non-pedagogical school support
25 personnel, representatives from post-secondary institutions and other
26 interested parties in each region of the state, and it shall take into
27 account such recommendations and the recommendations of the regional
28 advisory committees during its deliberations. In developing its recom-
29 mendations, the commission shall as far as practicable estimate the
30 efficiencies that may be derived from such school district and adminis-
31 trative reconfiguration, and shall consider the recommendations of the
32 regional advisory committees.

33 (b) The commission shall make recommendations relating to school
34 district and administrative reconfiguration, within each region. The
35 regional commission members shall vote as members of the commission only
36 when the commission is acting on recommendations relating solely to the
37 regional commission members' region.

38 (c) Such recommendations shall include but not be limited to: delivery
39 of commodities and services; pupil transportation; specialized profes-
40 sional development; maintenance; insurance procurement; payroll adminis-
41 tration; human resources and employee benefit coordination; cooperative
42 purchasing coordination; centralization of business operations; printing
43 services; state aid planning; textbook purchasing and substitute teacher
44 coordination; safety and risk management; the units of school adminis-
45 tration to be included in the reconfigured school district; the units of
46 school administration that will be transferred to the board of cooper-
47 ative educational services; size, composition and apportionment of the
48 governing body; the composition, powers and duties of any local school
49 committees to be created; the disposition of real and personal school
50 property; the disposition of existing school indebtedness and lease-pur-
51 chase; the assignment of school personnel contracts, school collective
52 bargaining agreements and other school contractual obligations; the
53 disposition of existing school funds and existing financial obligations,
54 including undesignated fund balances, trust funds, reserve funds and
55 other funds appropriated for school purposes; a transition plan that
56 addresses the development of a budget for the first school year and

1 interim personnel policies; an estimate of the cost savings to be
2 achieved through reconfiguration and how costs will be reduced; recom-
3 mended dates by which such actions should occur; necessary investments,
4 if any, that should be made in each case to carry out the commission's
5 recommendations; the commission's response to the recommendations of the
6 regional advisory committees; and the commissioner's justification for
7 its recommendations, including the use of the factors pursuant to
8 section four of this act.

9 (d) On or before December 1, 2015, the commission shall transmit to
10 the governor and the legislature a report containing its recommenda-
11 tions, which shall include specific recommendations for school districts
12 to be reconfigured and specific recommendations for administrative
13 services to be transferred to boards of cooperative educational
14 services. Upon the transmission of the report to the governor and the
15 legislature the commission shall be dissolved.

16 S 8. Implementation of recommendations. (a) Notwithstanding any
17 contrary provision of law, rule or regulation related to the reconfigur-
18 ing of school districts and administrative services the commissioner of
19 education shall take all actions necessary to implement, in a reason-
20 able, cost-efficient manner, the recommendations of the commission
21 pursuant to subdivisions (b) and (c) of section seven of this act. Such
22 school districts and boards of cooperative educational services shall
23 submit to the commissioner of education, at a time and in a form as
24 determined by the commissioner of education, an acceptable plan of
25 reconfiguration in accordance with applicable regulations.

26 (b) The provisions of subdivision (a) of this section shall not apply:
27 (i) unless the governor has transmitted the commission's report under
28 section seven of this act with his or her written approval of the recom-
29 mendations of the commission pursuant to subdivisions (b) and (c) of
30 section seven of this act to the commissioner of education and transmit-
31 ted a message to the legislature stating his or her approval of the
32 report on or before December 5, 2015; and (ii) if a majority of the
33 members of each house of the legislature vote to adopt a concurrent
34 resolution rejecting the recommendations of the commission pursuant to
35 subdivisions (b) and (c) of section seven of this act in their entirety
36 by December 31, 2015, after receiving a message from the governor under
37 this subdivision. In no event shall the commissioner of education begin
38 to implement the recommendations of the commission pursuant to subdivi-
39 sions (b) and (c) of section seven of this act prior to December 31,
40 2015.

41 S 9. The commission shall be authorized and entitled to receive any
42 grants offered pursuant to section 54 of the state finance law.

43 S 10. Severability clause. If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdi-
44 vision, section or part of this act shall be adjudged by any court of
45 competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect,
46 impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in
47 its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section
48 or part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which such judg-
49 ment shall have been rendered. It is hereby declared to be the intent of
50 the legislature that this act would have been enacted even if such
51 invalid provisions had not been included herein.

52 S 11. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire and be
53 deemed repealed June 30, 2017.