

3801

2015-2016 Regular Sessions

I N S E N A T E

February 17, 2015

Introduced by Sen. SANDERS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, the state finance law, the public health law, the social services law, the correction law, the administrative code of the city of New York and the civil service law, in relation to high school equivalency diplomas

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

1 Section 1. The education law is amended by adding a new section 317-a
2 to read as follows:
3 S 317-A. HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY EXAMS. NO FEE SHALL BE ESTABLISHED
4 FOR ADMISSION TO ANY EXAM THAT WOULD AWARD A HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY
5 DIPLOMA OR ITS EQUIVALENT, AS DETERMINED BY THE COMMISSIONER.
6 S 2. Clause (ii) of subparagraph 8 of paragraph h of subdivision 2 of
7 section 355 of the education law, as added by chapter 327 of the laws of
8 2002, is amended to read as follows:
9 (ii) attended an approved New York state program for [general] HIGH
10 SCHOOL equivalency diploma exam preparation, received a [general] HIGH
11 SCHOOL equivalency diploma issued within New York state and applied for
12 attendance at an institution or educational unit of the state university
13 within five years of receiving a [general] HIGH SCHOOL equivalency
14 diploma issued within New York state; or
15 S 3. Subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (a-1) of subdivision 7 of section
16 6206 of the education law, as amended by chapter 260 of the laws of
17 2011, is amended to read as follows:
18 (ii) attended an approved New York state program for [general] HIGH
19 SCHOOL equivalency diploma exam preparation, received a [general] HIGH
20 SCHOOL equivalency diploma issued within New York state and applied for
21 attendance at an institution or educational unit of the city university
22 within five years of receiving a [general] HIGH SCHOOL equivalency
23 diploma issued within New York state; or

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

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1 S 4. Subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (a) of subdivision 7 of section
2 6206 of the education law, as amended by chapter 327 of the laws of
3 2002, is amended to read as follows:

4 (ii) attended an approved New York state program for [general] HIGH
5 SCHOOL equivalency diploma exam preparation, received a [general] HIGH
6 SCHOOL equivalency diploma issued within New York state and applied for
7 attendance at an institution or educational unit of the city university
8 within five years of receiving a [general] HIGH SCHOOL equivalency
9 diploma issued within New York state; or

10 S 5. Paragraph (ii) of subdivision 5 of section 6301 of the education
11 law, as amended by chapter 327 of the laws of 2002, is amended to read
12 as follows:

13 (ii) attended an approved New York state program for [general] HIGH
14 SCHOOL equivalency diploma exam preparation, received a [general] HIGH
15 SCHOOL equivalency diploma issued within New York state and applied for
16 attendance at an institution or educational unit of the state university
17 within five years of receiving a [general] HIGH SCHOOL equivalency
18 diploma issued within New York state; or

19 S 6. Subdivisions 2 and 3 of section 97-hhh of the state finance law,
20 as added by section 84 of part A of chapter 436 of the laws of 1997, are
21 amended to read as follows:

22 2. Notwithstanding any other law, rule or regulation to the contrary,
23 the state comptroller is hereby authorized and directed to receive for
24 deposit to the credit of the high school equivalency account, fees
25 established by the commissioner of education and approved by the direc-
26 tor of the budget to supplement administration of [the general educa-
27 tional development tests] HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY EXAMS for the high
28 school equivalency diploma.

29 3. Moneys of this account, following appropriation by the legislature,
30 shall be available to the state education department for services and
31 expenses related to the administration of [the general educational
32 development tests] HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY EXAMS for the high school
33 equivalency diploma.

34 S 7. Subdivision 4 of section 2807-g of the public health law, as
35 added by chapter 1 of the laws of 1999, is amended to read as follows:

36 4. Eligible programs shall include programs which provide one or more
37 of the following services in connection with training an eligible worker
38 to: (i) obtain a new position, (ii) continue to meet the requirements of
39 an existing position, or (iii) otherwise meet the requirements of the
40 changing health care industry: (a) assessments to help determine train-
41 ing needs; (b) remediation, including preparation in English for speak-
42 ers or writers of other languages, instruction in basic reading or math-
43 ematics, or completion of requirements for a [general] HIGH SCHOOL
44 equivalency diploma [(GED)]; (c) basic skills development; (d) reorien-
45 tation; and (e) skills and educational enhancement, including, where
46 appropriate, the provision of college level or college degree course
47 work. To the extent that an eligible program is providing services to
48 train eligible workers to obtain a new position or to continue to meet
49 the requirements of an existing position only, reimbursement shall also
50 be available to an eligible organization for the actual cost of any
51 employment or employment-related expenses incurred by the eligible
52 organization in fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of such
53 employees while they are engaged in such training programs.

54 S 8. Paragraph (k) of subdivision 1 of section 336 of the social
55 services law, as added by section 148 of part B of chapter 436 of the
56 laws of 1997, is amended to read as follows:

1 (k) satisfactory attendance at secondary school or a course of study
2 leading to a certificate of [general] HIGH SCHOOL equivalency in the
3 case of a recipient who has not completed secondary school or received
4 such certificate;

5 S 9. The opening paragraph of subparagraph (iv) of paragraph (d) of
6 subdivision 1 of section 803 of the correction law, as added by section
7 7 of chapter 738 of the laws of 2004, is amended to read as follows:

8 Such merit time allowance may be granted when an inmate successfully
9 participates in the work and treatment program assigned pursuant to
10 section eight hundred five of this article and when such inmate obtains
11 a [general] HIGH SCHOOL equivalency diploma, an alcohol and substance
12 abuse treatment certificate, a vocational trade certificate following at
13 least six months of vocational programming or performs at least four
14 hundred hours of service as part of a community work crew.

15 S 10. The opening paragraph of subparagraph (iv) of paragraph (d) of
16 subdivision 1 of section 803 of the correction law, as added by section
17 10-a of chapter 738 of the laws of 2004, is amended to read as follows:

18 Such merit time allowance may be granted when an inmate successfully
19 participates in the work and treatment program assigned pursuant to
20 section eight hundred five of this article and when such inmate obtains
21 a [general] HIGH SCHOOL equivalency diploma, an alcohol and substance
22 abuse treatment certificate, a vocational trade certificate following at
23 least six months of vocational programming or performs at least four
24 hundred hours of service as part of a community work crew.

25 S 11. Subdivision 19 of section 2 of the correction law, as amended by
26 chapter 63 of the laws of 1994, is amended to read as follows:

27 19. "Vocational and skills training facility" means a correctional
28 facility designated by the commissioner to provide a vocational and
29 skills training program ("VAST") to inmates who need such service before
30 they participate in a work release program. The VAST facility shall
31 provide intensive assessment, counseling, job search assistance and
32 where appropriate academic and vocational instruction to program partic-
33 ipants. Such assistance may include an assessment of any inmate's educa-
34 tion attainment level and skills aptitudes; career counseling and explo-
35 ration; the development of a comprehensive instructional plan including
36 identification of educational and training needs that may extend beyond
37 the date of entry into work release; instructional programs including
38 [GED] HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY EXAM preparation or post-secondary
39 instruction as appropriate; occupational skills training; life skills
40 training; employment readiness including workplace behavior; and job
41 search assistance. The department and the department of labor shall
42 jointly develop activities providing career counseling, job search
43 assistance, and job placement services for participants. Nothing
44 contained in this section shall be deemed to modify the eligibility
45 requirements provided by law applicable to inmates participating in a
46 work release program.

47 S 12. Subdivision c of section 3-209 of the administrative code of the
48 city of New York, as added by local law number 34 of the city of New
49 York for the year 2004, is amended to read as follows:

50 c. Registration of graduating seniors. The department of education of
51 the city of New York shall provide a postage paid board of elections of
52 the city of New York voter registration form to each graduating student
53 who receives a high school diploma, including but not limited to a
54 Regents, local, [general] HIGH SCHOOL equivalency or Individualized
55 Education Program diploma. The department shall deliver such voter

1 registration form to each graduating student at the same time and in the
2 same manner as it delivers diplomas to each such student.

3 S 13. Subdivision b of section 21-703 of the administrative code of
4 the city of New York, as added by local law number 23 of the city of New
5 York for the year 2003, is amended to read as follows:

6 b. If an applicant, recipient or participant who is eligible for
7 education or training as set forth in subdivision c of this section
8 expresses an intention or preference to the agency to enroll in educa-
9 tion, training or vocational rehabilitation, or if an applicant's,
10 recipient's or participant's assessment indicates that he or she lacks
11 basic literacy, a secondary school diploma, or a [general] HIGH SCHOOL
12 equivalency diploma [(GED)] or otherwise indicates that education,
13 training or vocational rehabilitation would enhance the individual's
14 ability to obtain and maintain employment, then the agency shall offer
15 such applicant, recipient or participant the opportunity to enroll in an
16 approved program or programs, provided that such approved program or
17 programs can be classified as countable work activities.

18 S 14. Paragraph (b) of subdivision 1 of section 58 of the civil
19 service law, as amended by chapter 244 of the laws of 2013, is amended
20 to read as follows:

21 (b) he or she is a high school graduate or a holder of a high school
22 equivalency diploma issued by an education department of any of the
23 states of the United States or a holder of a comparable diploma issued
24 by any commonwealth, territory or possession of the United States or by
25 the Canal Zone or a holder of a report from the United States armed
26 forces certifying his or her successful completion of A HIGH SCHOOL
27 EQUIVALENCY EXAM OR the tests of general educational development, high
28 school level;

29 S 15. Severability. The provisions of this act shall be severable, and
30 if the application of any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision,
31 section or part of this act to any person or circumstance shall be
32 adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such
33 judgement shall not necessarily affect, impair or invalidate the appli-
34 cation of any such clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section,
35 part of this act or remainder thereof, as the case may be, to any other
36 person or circumstance, but shall be confined in its operation to the
37 clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section or part thereof
38 directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment shall have
39 been rendered.

40 S 16. This act shall take effect January 1, 2016; provided, however,
41 that the amendments to paragraph (a-1) of subdivision 7 of section 6206
42 of the education law made by section three of this act shall be subject
43 to the expiration of such paragraph pursuant to section 16 of chapter
44 260 of the laws of 2011, as amended; provided further, that section four
45 of this act shall take effect on the same date as the reversion of para-
46 graph (a) of subdivision 7 of section 6206 of the education law as
47 provided in section 16 of chapter 260 of the laws of 2011, as amended;
48 and provided, further, that the amendments to subparagraph (iv) of para-
49 graph (d) of subdivision 1 of section 803 of the correction law made by
50 section nine of this act shall be subject to the expiration and rever-
51 sion of such section, when upon such date the provisions of section ten
52 of this act shall take effect.