

STATE OF NEW YORK

6080

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

March 5, 2025

Introduced by Sen. PARKER -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions

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.
20 (c) The members of the commission shall receive no compensation for
21 their services as members, but shall be allowed their actual and neces-
22 sary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. Members of

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

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1 the commission shall be considered public officers for purposes of
2 section 17 of the public officers law.

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

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

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

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

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

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

51 (b) The commissioner of education may submit additional relevant
52 factors to be considered in the deliberations of the commission. The
53 commission may also adopt additional factors to be considered in its
54 deliberations.

55 § 5. Deliberations of commission. The deliberations, meetings and
56 other proceedings of the commission and any committee thereof shall be

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

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

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

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

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

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

33 (ii) New York City;

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

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

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

47 (vi) Western, consisting of the Cattaraugus-Allegany-Erie-Wyoming,
48 Erie 1, Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus, Genesee Valley, Monroe 1, Monroe
49 2-Orleans, Ontario-Seneca-Yates-Cayuga-Wayne, Orleans-Niagara and Great-
50 er Southern Tier boards of cooperative educational services.

51 (c) The commission shall establish a regional advisory committee for
52 each region. The maximum number of members of each regional advisory
53 committee shall be determined by the commission. Members of each
54 regional advisory committee shall be appointed in equal numbers by the
55 governor, the temporary president of the senate, the speaker of the
56 assembly and the board of regents. The governor, the temporary president

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

12 (d) Each regional advisory committee upon consideration of demograph-
13 ic, geographic, educational and fiscal indicators within each board of
14 cooperative educational services region, shall develop recommendations
15 for reconfiguring such region's school districts and administrative
16 functions to align educational services with regional and local needs.
17 In carrying out its functions, a regional advisory committee shall
18 foster discussions among, and conduct formal public hearings with requi-
19 site public notice to solicit input from, local stakeholders' interests,
20 including but not limited to, school district administrators, district
21 superintendents and superintendents of schools, teachers, school board
22 members, parents, students, non-pedagogical school support personnel,
23 representatives from post-secondary institutions and other pertinent
24 groups and individuals. In developing its recommendations, each regional
25 advisory committee shall as far as practicable estimate the efficiencies
26 that may be derived from such school district or administrative recon-
27 figuration. On November 15, 2027, each regional advisory committee shall
28 transmit to the commission a report containing its recommendations,
29 which shall include specific recommendations for school district and
30 administrative reconfigurations. Such recommendations shall include but
31 not be limited to: delivery of commodities and services; pupil transpor-
32 tation; specialized professional development; maintenance; insurance
33 procurement; payroll administration; human resources and employee bene-
34 fit coordination; cooperative purchasing coordination; centralization of
35 business operations; printing services; state aid planning; textbook
36 purchasing and substitute teacher coordination; safety and risk manage-
37 ment; the units of school administration to be included in the reconfig-
38 ured school district; the units of school administration that will be
39 transferred to the board of cooperative educational services; size,
40 composition and apportionment of the governing body; the composition,
41 powers and duties of any local school committees to be created; the
42 disposition of real and personal school property; the disposition of
43 existing school indebtedness and lease-purchase; the assignment of
44 school personnel contracts, school collective bargaining agreements and
45 other school contractual obligations; the disposition of existing school
46 funds and existing financial obligations, including undesignated fund
47 balances, trust funds, reserve funds and other funds appropriated for
48 school purposes; a transition plan that addresses the development of a
49 budget for the first school year and interim personnel policies; an
50 estimate of the cost savings to be achieved through reconfiguration and
51 how costs will be reduced; recommended dates by which such actions
52 should occur; necessary investments, if any, that should be made in each
53 case to carry out the regional advisory committee's recommendations; and
54 the regional advisory committee's justification for its recommendations,
55 including the use of any factors developed pursuant to section four of
56 this act.

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

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

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

34 (c) Such recommendations shall include but not be limited to: delivery
35 of commodities and services; pupil transportation; specialized profes-
36 sional development; maintenance; insurance procurement; payroll adminis-
37 tration; human resources and employee benefit coordination; cooperative
38 purchasing coordination; centralization of business operations; printing
39 services; state aid planning; textbook purchasing and substitute teacher
40 coordination; safety and risk management; the units of school adminis-
41 tration to be included in the reconfigured school district; the units of
42 school administration that will be transferred to the board of cooper-
43 ative educational services; size, composition and apportionment of the
44 governing body; the composition, powers and duties of any local school
45 committees to be created; the disposition of real and personal school
46 property; the disposition of existing school indebtedness and lease-pur-
47 chase; the assignment of school personnel contracts, school collective
48 bargaining agreements and other school contractual obligations; the
49 disposition of existing school funds and existing financial obligations,
50 including undesignated fund balances, trust funds, reserve funds and
51 other funds appropriated for school purposes; a transition plan that
52 addresses the development of a budget for the first school year and
53 interim personnel policies; an estimate of the cost savings to be
54 achieved through reconfiguration and how costs will be reduced; recom-
55 mended dates by which such actions should occur; necessary investments,
56 if any, that should be made in each case to carry out the commission's

1 recommendations; the commission's response to the recommendations of the
2 regional advisory committees; and the commissioner's justification for
3 its recommendations, including the use of the factors pursuant to
4 section four of this act.

5 (d) On or before December 1, 2027, the commission shall transmit to
6 the governor and the legislature a report containing its recommenda-
7 tions, which shall include specific recommendations for school districts
8 to be reconfigured and specific recommendations for administrative
9 services to be transferred to boards of cooperative educational
10 services. Upon the transmission of the report to the governor and the
11 legislature the commission shall be dissolved.

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

22 (b) The provisions of subdivision (a) of this section shall not apply:
23 (i) unless the governor has transmitted the commission's report under
24 section seven of this act with their written approval of the recommenda-
25 tions of the commission pursuant to subdivisions (b) and (c) of section
26 seven of this act to the commissioner of education and transmitted a
27 message to the legislature stating their approval of the report on or
28 before December 5, 2027; and (ii) if a majority of the members of each
29 house of the legislature vote to adopt a concurrent resolution rejecting
30 the recommendations of the commission pursuant to subdivisions (b) and
31 (c) of section seven of this act in their entirety by December 31, 2027,
32 after receiving a message from the governor under this subdivision. In
33 no event shall the commissioner of education begin to implement the
34 recommendations of the commission pursuant to subdivisions (b) and (c)
35 of section seven of this act prior to December 31, 2027.

36 § 9. The commission shall be authorized and entitled to receive any
37 grants offered pursuant to section 54 of the state finance law.

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

47 § 11. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire and be
48 deemed repealed June 30, 2029.