

STATE OF NEW YORK

8528

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

October 15, 2025

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

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing a pilot learner engagement and attendance program of New York (LEAP-NY) in certain school districts of the state

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 3214-a
2 to read as follows:

3 § 3214-a. Learner engagement and attendance pilot program. 1. Estab-
4 lishment. The commissioner shall establish a three-year pilot program,
5 to be known as the "learner engagement and attendance program of New
6 York (LEAP-NY)".

7 2. Eligible districts. Eligibility for participation in the program
8 shall be limited to the one hundred largest school districts in the
9 state, located outside of a city with a population of one million or
10 more, as determined annually by aggregate student enrollment within a
11 district's boundaries.

12 3. Selection of participants. From among the eligible districts, the
13 commissioner shall select fifteen districts to participate in the
14 program. Selection shall be made on a competitive basis, pursuant to an
15 application process established by the commissioner. In awarding partic-
16 ipation and funding, the commissioner shall consider:

17 a. the severity of absenteeism challenges in the district;
18 b. the district's proposed plan for implementing outreach and engage-
19 ment strategies, including home visits, case management, and coordi-
20 nation with community-based organizations; and
21 c. the capacity of the district to collect and report data on student
22 attendance and program outcomes.

23 4. Funding. Program funds shall be awarded competitively to selected
24 districts, subject to appropriation, and shall be used exclusively for

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

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1 activities designed to reduce chronic absenteeism, improve family
2 engagement, and connect students and families with necessary academic
3 and non-academic supports.

4 5. Outreach teams. a. Each participating district shall establish
5 learner engagement and attendance teams, comprised of trained staff and,
6 where feasible, community partners.

7 b. Teams shall conduct outreach to students who have:

8 (1) accumulated five consecutive unreported or unexcused absences on
9 instructional days;

10 (2) accumulated ten or more total unreported or unexcused absences on
11 instructional days within a semester, or within the first two months of
12 the school year; or

13 (3) met other appropriate criteria for outreach, as determined by the
14 learner engagement and attendance team.

15 c. Outreach may include direct phone calls, home visits, and/or
16 in-person meetings with the student and family.

17 d. Each team shall include at a minimum one family engagement special-
18 ist or social worker, one representative from the local county social
19 services department or a community-based organization with expertise in
20 child welfare prevention, and may also include teachers, administrators,
21 parents, and community-based organization staff.

22 6. Case management and support. a. Teams shall assess the underlying
23 causes of a student's absenteeism, including but not limited to, trans-
24 portation barriers, housing or food insecurity, health or mental health
25 needs, and caregiving responsibilities.

26 b. Teams shall connect families to appropriate services, including but
27 not limited to community-based organizations, local social services, and
28 school-based supports. Each participating district shall be responsible
29 for identifying and maintaining a directory of available community-based
30 organizations and service providers within its region, and for estab-
31 lishing referral processes to ensure families are connected effectively
32 and consistently. The department may issue regulations or guidance to
33 support districts in fulfilling these responsibilities.

34 c. Each chronically absent student shall have a written re-engagement
35 plan, developed in consultation with the student and family.

36 7. Data use and monitoring. a. Each participating district shall
37 implement or enhance systems to track student attendance daily, identify
38 chronically absent students, and provide data to the department.

39 b. Attendance data shall be reviewed weekly by engagement teams to
40 prioritize interventions.

41 8. State support and training. The department shall provide training,
42 technical assistance, and model protocols for outreach, home visiting,
43 and case management, including trauma-informed and culturally responsive
44 practices.

45 9. Restricted practices. Interventions under this section shall be
46 supportive in nature. Referral to truancy proceedings, child protective
47 services, or law enforcement shall only be considered after the failure
48 of an initial intervention.

49 10. Reporting. a. Each participating district shall annually submit to
50 the commissioner a report including:

51 (1) chronic absenteeism rates before and during implementation;

52 (2) disaggregated data by grade, race/ethnicity, disability status,
53 and English learner status;

54 (3) the number of home visits and family outreach contacts completed;
55 and

56 (4) a description of supports and services provided to families.

1 b. The commissioner shall transmit an interim report to the governor
2 and the legislature one year after the effective date of this section,
3 and a final report no later than two years after the effective date of
4 this section with analysis of program effectiveness and recommendations
5 on whether to expand the program statewide.

6 § 2. This act shall take effect one year after it shall have become a
7 law.