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I N   S E N A T E

July 14, 2010

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

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  
23    the commission shall be considered public officers for purposes of  
24    section 17 of the public officers law.  
25    (d) The commission shall begin to act forty-five days after this act  
26    shall have become a law. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the  
27    members of the commission entitled to vote on the matter under consider-

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

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1 ation. Approval of any matter shall require the affirmative vote of a  
2 majority of the members voting thereon.

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

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

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

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

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

46 (b) The commissioner of education may submit additional relevant  
47 factors to be considered in the deliberations of the commission. The  
48 commission may also adopt additional factors to be considered in its  
49 deliberations.

50 S 5. Deliberations of commission. The deliberations, meetings and  
51 other proceedings of the commission and any committee thereof shall be  
52 governed by article 7 of the public officers law. Any one or more  
53 members of a committee may participate in a meeting of such committee by  
54 means of a conference telephone, conference video or similar communi-  
55 cations equipment allowing all persons participating in the meeting to  
56 hear each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall

1 constitute presence in person at a meeting. At any meetings of the  
2 commission conducted by means of a conference telephone, conference  
3 video or similar communications equipment, other than executive  
4 sessions, the public shall be given an opportunity to listen. If a meet-  
5 ing other than an executive session is to be conducted by means of a  
6 conference telephone, conference video or similar communications equip-  
7 ment, the public notice for the meeting shall inform the public that  
8 such equipment will be used, and identify the means by which the public  
9 may listen to such meeting.

10 S 6. Regional input. (a) There shall be eight regional members of the  
11 commission for each region established pursuant to this section. For  
12 each region, two regional members shall be appointed by the governor,  
13 two regional members shall be appointed by the temporary president of  
14 the senate, two regional members shall be appointed by the speaker of  
15 the assembly, and two regional members shall be appointed by the board  
16 of regents. Regional members shall be considered to be members of the  
17 commission for purposes of this act, provided that:

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

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

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

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

28 (ii) New York City;

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

32 (iv) Eastern, consisting of the Capital Region, Clinton-Essex-Warren-  
33 Washington, Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego, Franklin-Essex-Hamilton,  
34 Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery, Otsego-Delaware-Schoharie-Greene, Questar  
35 III, St. Lawrence-Lewis and Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex  
36 boards of cooperative educational services;

37 (v) Central, consisting of the Broome-Tioga, Cayuga-Onondaga, Jeffer-  
38 son-Lewis-Hamilton-Herkimer-Oneida, Herkimer-Hamilton-Fulton-Oswego,  
39 Madison-Oneida, Oneida-Herkimer-Madison, Onondaga-Cortland-Madison,  
40 Oswego, Schuyler, Chemung, Tioga and Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga boards of  
41 cooperative educational services;

42 (vi) Western, consisting of the Cattaraugus-Allegany-Erie-Wyoming,  
43 Erie 1, Erie 2-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus, Genesee Valley, Monroe 1, Monroe  
44 2-Orleans, Ontario-Seneca-Yates-Cayuga-Wayne, Orleans-Niagara and Great-  
45 er Southern Tier boards of cooperative educational services.

46 (c) The commission shall establish a regional advisory committee for  
47 each region. The maximum number of members of each regional advisory  
48 committee shall be determined by the commission. Members of each  
49 regional advisory committee shall be appointed in equal numbers by the  
50 governor, the temporary president of the senate, the speaker of the  
51 assembly and the board of regents. The governor, the temporary president  
52 of the senate, the speaker of the assembly, and the board of regents  
53 shall submit to the commission their appointments to the regional advi-  
54 sory committees no later than ninety days after this act shall have  
55 become a law. If any such appointment is not made by such date, the  
56 person or board responsible for making such appointment may make the

1 appointment after that date, but the vacant appointment shall not count  
2 for calculation of a quorum until such position is filled. Vacancies in  
3 regional advisory committees shall be filled in the same manner as the  
4 member whose vacancy is being filled was appointed. The regional advisory  
5 committees shall begin to act ninety days after this act shall have  
6 become a law.

7 (d) Each regional advisory committee upon consideration of demographic,  
8 ic, geographic, educational and fiscal indicators within each board of  
9 cooperative educational services region, shall develop recommendations  
10 for reconfiguring such region's school districts and administrative  
11 functions to align educational services with regional and local needs.  
12 In carrying out its functions, a regional advisory committee shall  
13 foster discussions among, and conduct formal public hearings with requisite  
14 public notice to solicit input from, local stakeholders interests,  
15 including but not limited to, school district administrators, district  
16 superintendents and superintendents of schools, teachers, school board  
17 members, parents, students, non-pedagogical school support personnel,  
18 representatives from post-secondary institutions and other pertinent  
19 groups and individuals. In developing its recommendations, each regional  
20 advisory committee shall as far as practicable estimate the efficiencies  
21 that may be derived from such school district or administrative reconfiguration.  
22 On November 15, 2011, each regional advisory committee shall  
23 transmit to the commission a report containing its recommendations,  
24 which shall include specific recommendations for school district and  
25 administrative reconfigurations. Such recommendations shall include but  
26 not be limited to: delivery of commodities and services; pupil transportation;  
27 specialized professional development; maintenance; insurance  
28 procurement; payroll administration; human resources and employee benefit  
29 coordination; cooperative purchasing coordination; centralization of  
30 business operations; printing services; state aid planning; textbook  
31 purchasing and substitute teacher coordination; safety and risk management;  
32 the units of school administration to be included in the reconfigured  
33 school district; the units of school administration that will be  
34 transferred to the board of cooperative educational services; size,  
35 composition and apportionment of the governing body; the composition,  
36 powers and duties of any local school committees to be created; the  
37 disposition of real and personal school property; the disposition of  
38 existing school indebtedness and lease-purchase; the assignment of  
39 school personnel contracts, school collective bargaining agreements and  
40 other school contractual obligations; the disposition of existing school  
41 funds and existing financial obligations, including undesignated fund  
42 balances, trust funds, reserve funds and other funds appropriated for  
43 school purposes; a transition plan that addresses the development of a  
44 budget for the first school year and interim personnel policies; an  
45 estimate of the cost savings to be achieved through reconfiguration and  
46 how costs will be reduced; recommended dates by which such actions  
47 should occur; necessary investments, if any, that should be made in each  
48 case to carry out the regional advisory committee's recommendations; and  
49 the regional advisory committee's justification for its recommendations,  
50 including the use of any factors developed pursuant to section four of  
51 this act.

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

55 S 7. Commission recommendations. (a) The commission, upon consideration  
56 of demographic, geographic, educational and fiscal indicators

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

24 (b) The commission shall make recommendations relating to school  
25 district and administrative reconfiguration, within each region. The  
26 regional commission members shall vote as members of the commission only  
27 when the commission is acting on recommendations relating solely to the  
28 regional commission members' region.

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

(d) On or before December 1, 2011, the commission shall transmit to the governor and the legislature a report containing its recommendations, which shall include specific recommendations for school districts to be reconfigured and specific recommendations for administrative services to be transferred to boards of cooperative educational services. Upon the transmission of the report to the governor and the legislature the commission shall be dissolved.

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

(b) The provisions of subdivision (a) of this section shall not apply: (i) unless the governor has transmitted the commission's report under section seven of this act with his or her written approval of the recommendations of the commission pursuant to subdivisions (b) and (c) of section seven of this act to the commissioner of education and transmitted a message to the legislature stating his or her approval of the report on or before December 5, 2011; and (ii) if a majority of the members of each house of the legislature vote to adopt a concurrent resolution rejecting the recommendations of the commission pursuant to subdivisions (b) and (c) of section seven of this act in their entirety by December 31, 2011, after receiving a message from the governor under this subdivision. In no event shall the commissioner of education begin to implement the recommendations of the commission pursuant to subdivisions (b) and (c) of section seven of this act prior to December 31, 2011.

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

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

S 11. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire and be deemed repealed June 30, 2013.