S T A T E O F N E W Y O R K

2296

2011-2012 Regular Sessions

I N A S S E M B L Y

January 18, 2011

Introduced by M. of A. CLARK -- read once and referred to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing a parent awareness week in all school districts

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

Section 1. Legislative intent. The legislature hereby finds and declares that a child's education is a responsibility shared by the school and family during the entire time the child spends in school; and to support the goal of the schools to educate all students effectively, the schools and parents must work as informed partners; and that although parents are diverse in culture, language, and needs, they are an integral component of a school's ability to provide for the educational success of their children; and that engaging parents is essential to improve student achievement; and that schools should foster and support active parental involvement and awareness.

S 2. The education law is amended by adding a new article 100 to read as follows:

ARTICLE 100

PARENT AWARENESS WEEK

SECTION 4950. PARENT AWARENESS WEEK; ESTABLISHED.
4951. STAFF DEVELOPMENT.
4952. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS.
4953. REVIEW OF PLAN.
4954. HIGHER EDUCATION.

S 4950. PARENT AWARENESS WEEK; ESTABLISHED. 1. DURING THE FIRST FIVE DAYS OF EACH SCHOOL YEAR, EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT AND EACH SCHOOL WITHIN ITS BOUNDARIES, IN COLLABORATION WITH PARENTS, SHALL ESTABLISH A PARENT AWARENESS WEEK INCLUDING PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES THAT ENHANCE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND REFLECT THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

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

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2. THE PARENT AWARENESS WEEK IN EACH SCHOOL SHALL:
A. INVOLVE PARENTS OF STUDENTS AT ALL GRADE LEVELS IN A VARIETY OF ROLES;
B. BE COMPREHENSIVE AND COORDINATED IN NATURE;
C. (1) RECOGNIZE THAT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL SHOULD BE REGULAR, TWO-WAY, AND MEANINGFUL.
(2) TO ENCOURAGE COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS THE SCHOOL SHALL PREPARE AN INFORMATIONAL PACKET TO BE DISTRIBUTED ANNUALLY TO THE PARENT, APPROPRIATE FOR THE AGE AND GRADE OF THE CHILD DESCRIBING:
(I) THE SCHOOL'S PARENT AWARENESS WEEK;
(II) THE RECOMMENDED ROLE OF THE PARENT, STUDENT, TEACHER, AND SCHOOL;
(III) WAYS FOR THE PARENTS TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THE SCHOOL AND HIS OR HER CHILD'S EDUCATION INCLUDING HOW AND WHERE THE PARENT COULD VOLUNTEER;
(IV) ACTIVITIES PLANNED THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR TO ENCOURAGE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT;
(V) A SYSTEM TO ALLOW THE PARENTS TO COMMUNICATE IN A REGULAR, TWO-WAY, AND MEANINGFUL MANNER WITH THE CHILD'S TEACHER AND THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL.
(3) TO ENCOURAGE COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS, THE SCHOOL SHALL SCHEDULE NO LESS THAN TWO PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES PER SCHOOL YEAR.
(4) THE SCHOOL MAY PLAN AND ENGAGE IN OTHER ACTIVITIES DETERMINED BY THE SCHOOL TO BE BENEFICIAL TO ENCOURAGE COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS;
D. PROMOTE AND SUPPORT RESPONSIBLE PARENTING.
E. (1) ACKNOWLEDGE THAT PARENTS PLAY AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN ASSISTING STUDENT LEARNING.
(2) TO HELP PARENTS IN ASSISTING STUDENTS, THE SCHOOL SHALL:
(I) SCHEDULE REGULAR "PARENTS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE" EVENINGS WHERE PARENTS ARE GIVEN A REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE SCHOOL AND AN OVERVIEW OF:
(A) WHAT STUDENTS WILL BE LEARNING;
(B) HOW STUDENTS WILL BE ASSESSED;
(C) WHAT PARENTS SHOULD EXPECT FOR THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATION; AND
(D) HOW PARENTS CAN ASSIST AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN HIS OR HER CHILD'S EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT; AND
(II) ENGAGE IN OTHER ACTIVITIES DETERMINED BY THE SCHOOL TO HELP PARENTS ASSIST IN HIS OR HER CHILD'S LEARNING;
F. WELCOME PARENTS IN THE SCHOOL AND SEEK PARENTAL SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE.
G. (1) RECOGNIZE THAT A PARENT IS A FULL PARTNER IN THE DECISIONS THAT AFFECT HIS OR HER CHILD AND FAMILY.
(2) TO ENCOURAGE PARENTS TO PARTICIPATE AS FULL PARTNERS IN THE DECISIONS THAT AFFECT HIS OR HER CHILD AND FAMILY, THE SCHOOL SHALL:
(I) INCLUDE IN THE SCHOOL'S POLICY HANDBOOK THE SCHOOL'S PROCESS FOR RESOLVING PARENTAL CONCERNS, INCLUDING HOW TO DEFINE THE PROBLEM, WHOM TO APPROACH FIRST, AND HOW TO DEVELOP SOLUTIONS;
(II) SPONSOR SEMINARS TO INFORM THE PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ABOUT HOW TO BE INVOLVED IN THE DECISIONS AFFECTING COURSE SELECTION, CAREER PLANNING, AND PREPARATION FOR POST-SECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES; AND
(III) ENGAGE IN OTHER ACTIVITIES THAT THE SCHOOL DETERMINES WILL ENCOURAGE PARENTS TO PARTICIPATE AS FULL PARTNERS IN THE DECISIONS THAT AFFECT HIS OR HER CHILD AND FAMILY;
H. (1) RECOGNIZE THAT COMMUNITY RESOURCES STRENGTHEN SCHOOL PROGRAMS, FAMILY PRACTICES, AND STUDENT LEARNING;
(2) TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES THE SCHOOL SHALL:

(I) CONSIDER RECRUITING ALUMNI FROM THE SCHOOL TO CREATE AN ALUMNI SUPPORT ORGANIZATION TO PROVIDE ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT;

(II) ENGAGE IN OTHER ACTIVITIES THAT THE SCHOOL DETERMINES WILL USE COMMUNITY RESOURCES TO STRENGTHEN SCHOOL PROGRAMS, FAMILY PRACTICES, AND STUDENT LEARNING; AND

I. SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, AND REGULAR EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM TO INVOLVE PARENTS IN THE DECISIONS AND PRACTICES OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT, USING TO THE DEGREE POSSIBLE, THE COMPONENTS LISTED IN THIS SECTION.

J. (1) THE SUPERVISING PRINCIPAL OF EACH SCHOOL IN A DISTRICT SHALL DESIGNATE ONE QUALIFIED STAFF MEMBER THAT IS WILLING TO SERVE AS A PARENT FACILITATOR TO ORGANIZE MEANINGFUL TRAINING FOR STAFF AND PARENTS PROMOTING AND ENCOURAGING A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE TO PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE SCHOOL AND TO UNDERTAKE EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT PARENTAL PARTICIPATION IS RECOGNIZED AS AN ASSET TO THE SCHOOL.

(2) THE QUALIFIED STAFF SERVING AS A PARENTAL FACILITATOR SHALL RECEIVE SUPPLEMENTAL PAY FOR THE ASSIGNED DUTIES AS REQUIRED BY LAW.

S 4951. STAFF DEVELOPMENT. ADMINISTRATORS OR QUALIFIED STAFF IN CHARGE OF IMPLEMENTING PARENT AWARENESS WEEK MUST HAVE SPECIAL EXPERIENCE OR THREE HOURS MANDATORY TRAINING ON HOW TO RELATE TO PARENTS, SUCH SPECIAL EXPERIENCE OR MANDATORY TRAINING TO BE CERTIFIED AND PROMULGATED BY THE COMMISSIONER.

S 4952. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS. 1. LIAISONS OF TEACHERS AND PARENTS SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR DISSEMINATING INFORMATION TO PARENTS REGARDING EVENTS TAKING PLACE DURING PARENT AWARENESS WEEK. LIAISONS SHALL BE FORMED BY EACH RESPECTIVE GROUP WITHIN EACH SCHOOL INVOLVED.

2. COMMUNICATIONS TO PARENTS REGARDING EVENTS OF THE WEEK SHALL BE BY PHONE, E-MAIL, NEWSLETTERS AND INFORMATION CARRIED HOME BY STUDENTS AS BEST DETERMINED BY EACH SCHOOL.

3. SCHOOLS ARE INSTRUCTED TO COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS IN A MANNER THAT FACILITATES UNDERSTANDING FOR PARENTS WITH A LANGUAGE BARRIER IF SUCH EXISTS.

4. PARENTS SHALL BE MADE AWARE OF SPECIFIC EVENTS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO ADMINISTERING AND GRADING OF TESTS AND PARENT ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES AND THE AVAILABILITY OF METHODS AND TOOLS OR MEANS OF COMMUNICATING WITH THE SCHOOL AND THEIR CHILDREN.

S 4953. REVIEW OF PLAN. 1. EACH YEAR, EVERY SCHOOL DISTRICT SHALL REVIEW AND UPDATE THE DISTRICT'S PARENT AWARENESS WEEK PLAN AND FILE A COPY OF THE DISTRICT'S PARENT AWARENESS WEEK PLAN WITH THE COMMISSIONER.

2. THE COMMISSIONER SHALL REVIEW EACH PLAN AND DETERMINE IF THE PLAN IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ARTICLE. IF THE COMMISSIONER DETERMINES THAT A SCHOOL DISTRICT IS NOT IN COMPLIANCE WITH THIS ARTICLE, THE COMMISSIONER SHALL SEND THE DISTRICT WRITTEN NOTIFICATION INDICATING ANY DEFICIENCIES IN THE DISTRICT'S PLAN NO LATER THAN JANUARY FIRST OF EACH YEAR AND ALLOW THE DISTRICT AN OPPORTUNITY TO CORRECT ANY DEFICIENCY.

S 4954. HIGHER EDUCATION. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL COLLABORATE WITH INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING TO INCORPORATE INTO TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS INFORMATION REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND HOW TO SUCCESSFULLY ENCOURAGE PARENTS TO BE PARTNERS IN THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATION. THE SCHOOLS SHALL MAINTAIN A RECORD OF THE PARENT'S ATTENDANCE, THE MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION AND HOW THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF SAID WEEK WERE CARRIED OUT.

S 2. This act shall take effect immediately.