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

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I N A S S E M B L Y

March 17, 2014

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

AN ACT to direct the commissioner of education to establish an online learning advisory committee to make recommendations on establishing a statewide online and blended learning program

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

Section 1. Legislative intent. The legislature recognizes that there is a demonstrated need to reevaluate the delivery of education in New York state in light of educational advancements and a more technologically driven economy. In light of academic discrepancies for those in the most rural and underrepresented areas within the state as well as the unstable economic times, we believe that there is a need to advance emerging technologies and the potential for implementation of a statewide online and blended learning program. This will provide an opportunity to highlight the state's most successful programs and make them universally accessible. A statewide online and blended learning program will not only have the potential to provide equal educational opportunities to the most remote areas of the state, but help all students as they transition into a competitive marketplace.

S 2. The commissioner of education, in consultation with the New York state broadband program office of the empire state development corporation, the New York state energy research and development authority and the public service commission, shall establish an online learning advisory committee which shall develop recommendations for establishment of a statewide online and blended learning program. Such advisory committee shall be composed of 12 members appointed by the commissioner of education. Provided that of such 12 members: three members shall be appointed upon the recommendation of the governor, three members shall be appointed upon the recommendation of the temporary president of the senate, three members shall be appointed upon the recommendation of the speaker of the assembly, and the remaining members shall be appointed in the sole discretion of the commissioner of education. The members of the committee shall have demonstrated experience with or expertise in one of the following areas: private or public online providers, accreditation of programming, boards of cooperative educational services, school administration, educational delivery in a rural setting, existing online

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

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and blended learning program development, institutions of higher education, or as a teacher certified pursuant to article 61 of the education law. The recommendations of the advisory committee shall include, but not be limited to:

(a) definitions of online and blended learning;

(b) connecting modules throughout the state in order to create a statewide online and blended learning system including, but not limited to, remote and rural school districts;

(c) model school district policies, as well as model agreements to be used by school districts in implementation of an online and blended learning program including, but not limited to, agreements that address billing, fees, responsibilities of online course providers and school districts;

(d) best practices from throughout the state that can be modeled and replicated;

(e) implementation guidelines and policies for schools without online and blended learning programs;

(f) state and federal funding opportunities for online and blended learning programs, as well as a review of state aid to online and blended learning programs;

(g) regulatory review and development of new regulations pertaining to online and blended learning programs;

(h) content and course evaluation;

(i) identifiable academic programming suited for online and blended learning that have been eliminated from course offerings within the past five years including, but not limited to, foreign language courses, technology classes, art and music, and career and college ready programs;

(j) partnerships with institutions of higher education for workforce opportunities using online and blended learning;

(k) teaching and professional development requirements including recommendations regarding licensure, and compliance with current state laws;

(l) technology support, including but not limited to, technological delivery and broadband access to remote and underrepresented geographic areas;

(m) quality assessment and licensing of online providers;

(n) operational and administrative support guidelines;

(o) addressing barriers to the implementation of online and blended learning programs; and

(p) local school district flexibility including recommendations for compliance with seat-time and graduation requirements.

S 3. The members of the advisory committee shall receive no compensation for their services, but shall be allowed their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties pursuant to this act.

S 4. The advisory committee shall convene on or before August 1, 2014 to develop its recommendations. On or before January 1, 2015, the committee shall submit a preliminary report of its recommendations for consideration in the executive budget for the 2015-16 state fiscal year, and, on or before October 1, 2015, shall submit a final report of its recommendations to the governor, the temporary president of the senate, the speaker of the assembly and the chairs of the legislative commission on the development of rural resources.

S 5. This act shall take effect immediately.