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

10035

I N A S S E M B L Y

June 10, 2014

Introduced by COMMITTEE ON RULES -- (at request of M. of A. Hikind) -- read once and referred to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to instruction in public schools relating to civility, citizenship and character

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

Section 1. Section 801-a of the education law, as amended by chapter 102 of the laws of 2012, is amended to read as follows:

S 801-a. Instruction in civility, citizenship and character education. The regents shall ensure that the course of instruction in grades kindergarten through twelve includes a component on civility, citizenship and character education. Such component shall instruct students on the principles of honesty, tolerance, personal responsibility, respect for others, with an emphasis on discouraging acts of harassment, bullying, discrimination, observance of laws and rules, courtesy, dignity and other traits which will enhance the quality of their experiences in, and contributions to, the community. Such component shall include instruction of safe, responsible use of the internet and electronic communications. The regents shall determine how to incorporate such component in existing curricula and the commissioner shall promulgate any regulations needed to carry out such determination of the regents. For the purposes of this section, "tolerance," "respect for others" and "dignity" shall include awareness and sensitivity to harassment, bullying, discrimination and civility [in the relations of] WITH AN EMPHASIS ON DISCOURAGING ACTS OF BULLYING AND WITH OUT REGARD TO THE REASONING FOR THEIR BEING BULLIED, TOWARD ALL STUDENTS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO people of different races, weights, national origins, ethnic groups, religions, religious practices, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientations, genders, and sexes. ANY STUDENT, PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN, EXPRESSING A MORAL OR RELIGIOUS OBJECTION TO THIS COURSE OF INSTRUCTION IN THIS SECTION, SHALL BE PROVIDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO UNDERTAKE AND COMPLETE AN ALTERNATIVE PROJECT THAT SHALL BE APPROVED BY SUCH STUDENT'S TEACHER. STUDENTS WHO PERFORM ALTERNATIVE PROJECTS WHO DO NOT ATTEND THIS COURSE OF INSTRUCTION SHALL NOT BE PENALIZED. THE BOARD OF EDUCA-

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

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TION OR TRUSTEES OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT SHALL DEVELOP A POLICY TO GIVE REASONABLE NOTICE TO ALL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THIS COURSE OF INSTRUCTION, AND STUDENTS' PARENTS OR LEGAL GUARDIANS ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS. SUCH NOTICE SHALL BE MADE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST AT THE SCHOOL AND DISTRIBUTED TO ALL PARENTS AND STUDENTS. NOTHING IN THIS SECTION SHALL APPLY TO PRIVATE, CHARTER, RELIGIOUS OR DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

S 2. This act shall take effect immediately.