

7727--A

2013-2014 Regular Sessions

I N A S S E M B L Y

May 31, 2013

Introduced by M. of A. NOLAN -- read once and referred to the Committee on Education -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to a mental health education curriculum

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

1 Section 1. Legislative intent. The legislature recognizes the importance of providing a quality education to all New York students. Quality education must continue to include comprehensive health education. While schools presently provide instruction in health education, the legislature finds it important that the law provide the flexibility to reflect current learning standards and curriculum development as administered by the New York State Education Department and local school districts. Furthermore, it is important that statute recognize developing technology and existing curriculum materials to ensure that schools and teachers are provided with the most beneficial health education information, and that both health and mental health are taught with the idea of prevention, cure and control and without stigma or emotional harm. The law should provide flexibility to allow the commissioner of education to respond to the changing needs of the educational community to provide students with the tools and resources to live healthy lives, as it will only serve to improve educational performance and student outcomes.

17 S 2. Section 804 of the education law, as added by chapter 982 of the laws of 1977, the section heading as amended and subdivision 3-a as added by chapter 401 of the laws of 1998, subdivision 3 as amended by chapter 674 of the laws of 2004, and subdivision 4 as amended by chapter 181 of the laws of 2000, is amended to read as follows:

22 S 804. Health education [regarding alcohol, drugs, tobacco abuse and the prevention and detection of certain cancers]. 1. All schools [shall] ARE ENCOURAGED TO include, as an integral part of health education,

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

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1 instruction [so as to discourage the misuse and abuse of alcohol, tobac-
2 co, and other drugs and promote attitudes and behavior that enhance
3 health, well being, and human dignity.] IN THE UNDERSTANDINGS, ATTITUDES
4 AND BEHAVIORS WITH REGARD TO THE SEVERAL DIMENSIONS OF HEALTH. THIS
5 INSTRUCTION SHALL RELATE TO ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS, SAFETY,
6 MENTAL HEALTH, NUTRITION, DENTAL HEALTH, SENSORY PERCEPTION, DISEASE
7 PREVENTION AND CONTROL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH, CONSUMER
8 HEALTH, FIRST AID, AND OTHER HEALTH-RELATED AREAS. SUCH HEALTH EDUCATION
9 SHALL BE ADMINISTERED AND ASSESSED WITH THE GOALS OF PROVIDING STUDENTS
10 WITH THE NECESSARY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO: ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN PHYS-
11 ICAL FITNESS, PARTICIPATE IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY; AND MAINTAIN PERSONAL
12 HEALTH; ACQUIRE THE KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITY NECESSARY TO CREATE AND MAIN-
13 TAIN A SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT; UNDERSTAND AND MANAGE PERSONAL AND
14 COMMUNITY RESOURCES TO SUSTAIN OVERALL HEALTH.

15 1-A. SUCH HEALTH EDUCATION SHALL BE PROVIDED IN AN AGE-APPROPRIATE
16 MANNER BY THE REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHER, OR BY A TEACHER CERTIFIED TO
17 TEACH HEALTH EDUCATION.

18 1-B. THE COMMISSIONER SHALL PROMULGATE REGULATIONS TO FULFILL THE
19 REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION AND TO ENSURE THAT STUDENTS ARE PROPERLY
20 INSTRUCTED IN THESE AREAS VITAL TO ENSURING CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT OF
21 HEALTH SKILLS AND PROVIDING ACCESS TO AVAILABLE RESOURCES FOR PROMOTING
22 HEALTHY LIVING.

23 2. Instruction regarding alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs shall be
24 included in the health education provided for all elementary school
25 pupils and shall be taught by the regular classroom teachers or by
26 teachers certified to teach health education. Such instruction shall be
27 designed according to the needs and abilities of the pupils at succes-
28 sive grade levels with the purpose of developing desirable health behav-
29 ior, attitudes, and knowledge as well as self-reliance and problem solv-
30 ing capacity.

31 3. Instruction regarding alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, in addi-
32 tion to continued health guidance in the junior high school grades and
33 the senior high schools, shall be an integral part of a required health
34 education course at each of these levels in the secondary schools
35 curriculum. [Students shall be required to demonstrate knowledge in the
36 subject area through the use of a test, graded project or report, or any
37 other means prescribed by the school authorities regarding alcohol,
38 drugs, and tobacco.] Any such course shall be taught by teachers holding
39 a certificate to teach health. Related courses in the secondary school
40 curriculum shall be taught in a manner supportive of health education
41 regarding alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. In addition, instruction
42 regarding the dangers of driving while under the influence of alcohol or
43 drugs shall be an integral part of a required health education course in
44 the senior high schools. Such instruction shall be provided in all
45 senior high schools whether or not these schools also provide driver
46 education courses.

47 3-a. Instruction regarding methods of prevention and detection of
48 certain cancers, including but not limited to breast cancer, skin
49 cancer, testicular cancer and other cancers where certain preventive
50 measures have become generally accepted and certain detection methods
51 have been adopted and recommended generally to the public. Such instruc-
52 tion shall be an integral part of a required health education course at
53 the senior high school level, in addition to continued health guidance
54 in senior high schools. Any such course shall be taught by teachers
55 holding a certificate to teach health.

1 4. a. [The commissioner may prescribe in regulations such health
2 education courses which include instruction regarding alcohol, tobacco,
3 and other drugs as the commissioner may deem necessary and desirable for
4 the welfare of pupils and the community] THE COMMISSIONER SHALL PROMUL-
5 GATE REGULATIONS TO FULFILL THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION AND TO
6 ENSURE THAT STUDENTS ARE PROPERLY INSTRUCTED IN THESE AREAS VITAL TO
7 CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTH SKILLS AND PROVIDING ACCESS TO AVAIL-
8 ABLE RESOURCES FOR PROMOTING HEALTHY LIVING, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED
9 TO INSTRUCTION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SEEKING COUNSELING TO ADDRESS MENTAL
10 HEALTH ISSUES THAT ARE IMPACTING A STUDENT'S ABILITY TO LEARN. The
11 contents may be varied to meet the needs of particular school districts,
12 or portions thereof, and need not be uniform throughout the state,
13 provided, however, that school districts shall utilize either the
14 curriculum for health education instruction [regarding alcohol, tobacco
15 and other drugs] prescribed by the commissioner or a course approved by
16 the commissioner in accordance with criteria established by the commis-
17 sioner.

18 b. The commissioner shall make available an interpersonal violence
19 prevention education package for grades kindergarten through twelve,
20 which package may consist of student pamphlets, parent pamphlets, vide-
21 otapes and other informative materials to be distributed to school
22 districts, and shall encourage the use of such material as part of the
23 health or other related curricula or programs.

24 c. The regents shall review the health curriculum requirements in
25 existence on the effective date of this paragraph for the purpose of
26 streamlining such curriculum and identifying any outdated components
27 that may be eliminated or consolidated in order to ensure that students
28 have sufficient time and instruction to develop skills to address issues
29 of violence prevention and mental health. To the extent appropriate, the
30 regents shall modify the existing curriculum to provide greater focus on
31 the development of skills, by no later than middle school, that are
32 needed to recognize, cope with and address potentially violent inci-
33 dents, including an understanding of student's roles in emergency situ-
34 ations, what to do when confronted with another student who is [experi-
35 encing a mental health problem, and other related skills designed to
36 reduce the threat of violence in schools.] EXHIBITING BEHAVIOR THAT
37 CAUSES CONCERN OR ALARM FOR THE SAFETY OF THE STUDENT OR OTHERS.

38 5. School authorities shall provide the needed facilities, time, and
39 place for the instruction set forth herein and shall provide learning
40 aids and curriculum resource materials which contribute to effective
41 teaching methods and learning in health education [regarding alcohol,
42 tobacco, and other drugs].

43 6. All pre-service training programs in the state for elementary
44 teachers shall include adequate preparation regarding the instruction in
45 alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs set forth herein, and no teacher shall
46 be licensed except upon satisfactory demonstration of the competencies
47 included in the institutional proposals approved by the education
48 department.

49 7. Nothing contained in this section shall be deemed to diminish or
50 impair the duties of the commissioner with respect to the continuing
51 program for critical health problems established by chapter seven
52 hundred eighty-seven of the laws of nineteen hundred sixty-seven as
53 amended. The commissioner shall coordinate actions taken under authority
54 of this section with the provisions of said chapter as they relate to
55 health education in schools, inservice training and training programs,
56 and curriculum or syllabus development [regarding the deleterious

1 effects resulting from the use, misuse, and abuse of alcohol, tobacco,
2 and other drugs].
3 S 3. This act shall take effect immediately, provided that any rules
4 or regulations necessary for the implementation of this act shall be
5 promulgated and take effect 180 days after its enactment.