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

6142

2015-2016 Regular Sessions

I N A S S E M B L Y

March 16, 2015

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

AN ACT in relation to the establishment of a pilot program to match certain children in foster care with adult mentors 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:

Section 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the office of children and family services shall conduct a pilot program in five school districts throughout the state with the highest population of children in foster care who are fourteen years of age or older under which the office contracts with a private or nonprivate entity to pair children in foster care who are fourteen years of age or older with volunteer adult mentors in order to foster relationships of support and guidance in preparation for the children's transition to adult living.

S 2. The private or nonprivate entity selected by the office to administer the program must have a demonstrated record of successfully providing services similar to those provided under the program.

S 3. An individual who volunteers as a mentor under the program is subject to state and national criminal background checks.

S 4. Qualified volunteer mentors include graduate students in social welfare, education, psychology, educational psychology programs or in other relevant academic disciplines who are certified to teach or provide counseling.

S 5. The office of children and family services shall encourage substitute care providers to facilitate participation in the program by a child who chooses to voluntarily participate in the program.

S 6. The commissioner of children and family services may adopt rules for the administration of this act.

S 7. The office of children and family services shall report to the governor and members of the legislature not later than January 1, 2017,

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

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on the activities conducted under the pilot program. The report must include the office of children and family services' recommendations on improvements to the program and whether the program should be continued on a statewide basis.

S 8. The office of children and family services shall contract with a non-profit organization or public institution of higher education located in the geographic area serviced by the pilot program for the institution to conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of the program. The institution selected to conduct an evaluation under this section shall report its findings to the governor and members of the legislature not later than January 1, 2017. The report must include the institution's assessment of the effectiveness of the program and recommendations on improvements to the program and whether the program should be continued on a statewide basis.

S 9. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire and be deemed repealed January 1, 2018.