

1691

2015-2016 Regular Sessions

I N   S E N A T E

January 14, 2015

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Introduced by Sen. LIBOUS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law and the general construction law, in relation to abolishing the board of regents and transferring the power and duties thereof to the commissioner of education and providing for the appointment of such commissioner by the governor; and to repeal certain provisions of the education law relating to the board of regents

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

1     Section 1. Subdivision 4 of section 2 of the education law is amended  
2     to read as follows:  
3     4. Regents. The term "regents" means [board of regents of The Univer-  
4     sity of the State of New York] THE COMMISSIONER.  
5     S 2. Section 101 of the education law is amended to read as follows:  
6     S 101. Education department; regents of the university. There shall  
7     continue to be in the state government an education department. The  
8     department is charged with the general management and supervision of all  
9     public schools and all of the educational work of the state, including  
10    the operations of The University of the State of New York and the exer-  
11    cise of all the functions of the education department, of The University  
12    of the State of New York, [of the regents of the university] and of the  
13    commissioner of education and the performance of all their powers and  
14    duties, which were transferred to the education department by section  
15    three hundred twelve of the FORMER state departments law or shall have  
16    been prescribed by law before March sixteenth, nineteen hundred twenty-  
17    seven, whether in terms vested in such department or university or in  
18    any sub-department, division or bureau thereof or in such commissioner,  
19    board or officer, and such functions, powers and duties shall continue  
20    to be vested in the education department continued by this chapter and  
21    shall continue to be exercised and performed therein by or through the

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

LBD07224-01-5

1 appropriate officer, sub-department, division or bureau thereof, togeth-  
2 er with such functions, powers and duties as hereafter may be conferred  
3 or imposed upon such department by law. All the provisions of this  
4 chapter, in so far as they are not inconsistent with the provisions of  
5 this chapter as hereby amended or may be made applicable, shall apply to  
6 the education department continued by this chapter as hereby amended and  
7 to The University of the State of New York, [the board of regents of the  
8 university,] the commissioner of education and to the divisions, bureaus  
9 and officers in such department. The head of the department shall  
10 [continue to] be the [regents of The University of the State of New  
11 York, who shall appoint, and at pleasure may remove, the] commissioner  
12 of education. The commissioner shall continue to be the chief adminis-  
13 trative officer of the department. The [regents also] COMMISSIONER may  
14 appoint and, at pleasure, remove a deputy commissioner of education, who  
15 shall perform such duties as the [regents] COMMISSIONER may assign to  
16 him OR HER by rule and who, in the absence or disability of the commis-  
17 sioner or when a vacancy exists in the office of commissioner, shall  
18 exercise and perform the functions, powers and duties conferred or  
19 imposed on the commissioner by this chapter. [The regents of The  
20 University of the State of New York shall continue to constitute a board  
21 and The University of the State of New York, which was continued under  
22 such name by section two of article eleven of the constitution, shall  
23 continue to be governed and all its corporate powers to be exercised by  
24 such board.]

25 S 3. The education law is amended by adding a new section 101-c to  
26 read as follows:

27 S 101-C. REGENTS; ABOLISHED. 1. THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE  
28 STATE OF NEW YORK IS HEREBY ABOLISHED, AND ALL THE FUNCTIONS AND POWERS  
29 POSSESSED BY AND ALL OF THE OBLIGATIONS AND DUTIES OF SUCH REGENTS ARE  
30 TRANSFERRED AND ASSIGNED TO, ASSUMED BY AND DEVOLVED UPON THE COMMIS-  
31 SIONER OF EDUCATION.

32 2. WHEN THE TERM "REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK"  
33 OR ANY EQUIVALENT EXPRESSION THEREOF IS USED IN THIS CHAPTER, OR ANY  
34 OTHER LAW, RULE OR REGULATION, SUCH TERM SHALL BE DEEMED TO MEAN AND  
35 REFER TO THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION.

36 S 4. Section 102 of the education law is amended to read as follows:

37 S 102. Associate and assistant commissioners. The commissioner [of  
38 education] shall appoint[, subject to the approval of the regents,] such  
39 associate and assistant commissioners as he OR SHE shall deem necessary  
40 for the proper organization and general classification of the work of  
41 the department, and assign to such associate and assistant commissioners  
42 the work which shall be under their respective supervision.

43 S 5. Section 103 of the education law is amended to read as follows:

44 S 103. Divisions of department. By action of the [regents upon the  
45 recommendation of the] commissioner [of education] the department may be  
46 divided into divisions and bureaus. By like action new divisions and  
47 bureaus may be created and divisions and bureaus may be consolidated or  
48 abolished, and the administrative work of the department assigned to the  
49 several divisions and bureaus.

50 S 6. Section 104 of the education law is amended to read as follows:

51 S 104. Other officers and employees. The commissioner [of education,  
52 subject to the approval of the regents,] shall have power[, in conformi-  
53 ty with their rules,] to appoint all other needed officers and employees  
54 and fix their titles, duties and salaries.

55 S 7. Section 105 of the education law is amended to read as follows:

1 S 105. Removals and suspensions. [With the approval of the regents,  
2 the] THE commissioner [of education] may, at his OR HER pleasure, remove  
3 from office any assistant commissioner, or other appointive officer or  
4 employee; and[, when the regents are not in session, the commissioner  
5 may, during his pleasure,] suspend, without salary, any such officer or  
6 employee[, but not longer than till the adjournment of the succeeding  
7 meeting of the regents].

8 S 8. Section 106 of the education law is amended to read as follows:

9 S 106. Joint seal. The [regents of the university upon the recommen-  
10 dation of the] commissioner [of education] shall adopt, and may modify  
11 at any time, a seal, which shall be used in common as the seal of the  
12 education department and of the university; and copies of all records  
13 thereof and of all acts, orders, decrees and decisions made by [the  
14 regents or by] the commissioner [of education], and of [their] HIS OR  
15 HER official papers, and of the drafts or machine copies of any of the  
16 foregoing, may be authenticated under the said seal and shall then be  
17 evidence equally with and in like manner as the originals.

18 S 9. Section 108 of the education law is amended to read as follows:

19 S 108. State education building. The state education building shall  
20 be occupied exclusively by the education department, including the  
21 university, with the state library, the state museum, and its other  
22 divisions and bureaus, together with such other work with which the  
23 commissioner [of education and the regents have] HAS official  
24 relations[, as the regents may, in their discretion, provide for there-  
25 in], and such building and the offices of such department shall be main-  
26 tained at state expense under the charge and care of such department.

27 S 10. Section 201 of the education law is amended to read as follows:

28 S 201. Corporate name and objects. The corporation created in the year  
29 seventeen hundred eighty-four under the name of The Regents of the  
30 University of the State of New York, is hereby continued under the name  
31 of The University of the State of New York, AND SHALL BE SUBJECT TO THE  
32 SUPERVISION AND CONTROL OF THE COMMISSIONER. Its objects shall be to  
33 encourage and promote education, to visit and inspect its several insti-  
34 tutions and departments, to distribute to or expand or administer for  
35 them such property and funds as the state may appropriate therefor or as  
36 the university may own or hold in trust or otherwise, and to perform  
37 such other duties as may be intrusted to it. The said corporation shall  
38 have power to take, hold and administer real and personal property and  
39 the income thereof in trust for any educational, scientific, historical  
40 or other purpose within the jurisdiction of the [regents of The Univer-  
41 sity of the State of New York] COMMISSIONER.

42 S 11. Sections 202, 203, 204, 205, 206 and 207 of the education law  
43 are REPEALED.

44 S 12. Section 301 of the education law is REPEALED.

45 S 13. Section 302 of the education law is amended to read as follows:

46 S 302. How chosen. The commissioner [of education] shall be [elected  
47 by a majority vote of the regents. Residence without the state of New  
48 York shall not disqualify him from election] APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR  
49 WITH THE ADVICE AND CONSENT OF THE SENATE. THE COMMISSIONER SHALL SERVE  
50 AT THE PLEASURE OF THE GOVERNOR.

51 S 14. Section 303 of the education law is REPEALED.

52 S 15. The general construction law is amended by adding a new section  
53 42-a to read as follows:

54 S 42-A. REGENTS. WHEREVER THE TERM "REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE  
55 STATE OF NEW YORK" OR ANY EQUIVALENT EXPRESSION THEREOF IS USED IN ANY

1 PROVISION OF LAW, RULE OR REGULATION, SUCH TERM SHALL BE DEEMED TO MEAN  
2 AND REFER TO THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION.

3 S 16. Board of regents abolished. The Regents of the University of the  
4 State of New York is abolished. When the term "Regents of the University  
5 of the State of New York" or any equivalent expression thereof is used  
6 in the education law or any other law, such regents shall be deemed to  
7 mean and refer to the commissioner of education.

8 S 17. Transfer of functions. All of the functions and powers possessed  
9 by all and all of the obligations and duties of the board of regents are  
10 transferred and assigned to, assumed by and devolved upon the commis-  
11 sioner of education.

12 S 18. Continuity of authority. For the purposes of succession to all  
13 duties, functions, powers and obligations transferred and assigned to,  
14 devolved upon and assumed by the commissioner of education pursuant to  
15 this act, such commissioner shall be deemed and held to constitute the  
16 continuation of the board of regents.

17 S 19. Continuance of acts and decisions. All acts and decisions of the  
18 board of regents pertaining to the duties and functions transferred and  
19 assigned by this act, in force at the time of such transfer, assignment,  
20 assumption or devolution shall continue in full force and effect as acts  
21 and decisions of the commissioner of education until duly modified or  
22 abrogated by such commissioner.

23 S 20. Continuance of rules and regulations. All rules, regulations,  
24 acts, determinations and decisions of the board of regents pertaining to  
25 the functions transferred and assigned in this act, in force at the time  
26 of such transfer, assignment, assumption or devolution shall continue in  
27 force and effect as rules, regulations, acts, determinations and deci-  
28 sions of the commissioner of education in accordance with the context  
29 thereof, until duly modified or abrogated by such commissioner.

30 S 21. Completion of unfinished business. Any business or other matter  
31 undertaken or commenced by the board of regents pertaining to or  
32 connected with the duties, functions, powers and obligations transferred  
33 and assigned by this act to the commissioner of education, and pending  
34 on the effective date of this act, may be conducted and completed by the  
35 commissioner of education in the same manner and under the same terms  
36 and conditions and with the same effect as if conducted and completed by  
37 the board of regents.

38 S 22. Terms occurring in laws, contracts and other documents. Whenever  
39 the board of regents is referred to or designated in any law, contract  
40 or document pertaining to the duties, functions, powers and obligations  
41 transferred and assigned by this act to the commissioner of education,  
42 such reference or designation shall be deemed to mean and refer to such  
43 commissioner.

44 S 23. Pending actions and proceedings. No action pending at the time  
45 when this act shall take effect, brought by or against the board of  
46 regents shall be affected by any provision of this act, but the same may  
47 be prosecuted or defended by the education department and the commis-  
48 sioner of education, and the proper party shall, upon application to the  
49 court, be substituted as a party.

50 S 24. Codification of changes. The commissioner of education shall  
51 prepare or cause to be prepared for submission to the next regular  
52 session of the legislature a bill or bills which amend, add to or repeal  
53 appropriate laws so as to make such laws consistent with the provisions  
54 of this act.

55 S 25. This act shall take effect on the same date as a concurrent  
56 resolution amending the constitution, entitled "CONCURRENT RESOLUTION OF

1 THE SENATE AND ASSEMBLY proposing amendments to section 4 of article 5,  
2 section 4 of article 8 and section 2 of article 11 of the constitution,  
3 in relation to abolishing The Regents of the University of the State of  
4 New York".