

STATE OF NEW YORK

1733

2017-2018 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 10, 2017

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

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to required instruction in non-public schools

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Subdivision 2 of section 3204 of the education law, as
2 amended by chapter 827 of the laws of 1982, is amended to read as
3 follows:

4 2. Quality and language of instruction; text-books. Instruction may be
5 given only by a competent teacher. In the teaching of the subjects of
6 instruction prescribed by this section, English shall be the language of
7 instruction, and text-books used shall be written in English, except
8 that for a period of three years, which period may be extended by the
9 commissioner with respect to individual pupils, upon application there-
10 for by the appropriate school authorities, to a period not in excess of
11 six years, from the date of enrollment in school, pupils who, by reason
12 of foreign birth or ancestry have limited English proficiency, shall be
13 provided with instructional programs as specified in subdivision two-a
14 of this section and the regulations of the commissioner. The purpose of
15 providing such pupils with instruction shall be to enable them to devel-
16 op academically while achieving competence in the English language.
17 Instruction given to a minor elsewhere than at a public school shall be
18 at least substantially equivalent to the instruction given to minors of
19 like age and attainments at the public schools of the city or district
20 where the school is located or if home schooled, where the minor
21 resides.

22 § 2. The education law is amended by adding a new section 3204-a to
23 read as follows:

24 § 3204-a. Instruction required in non-public schools. 1. All students
25 attending a non-public school shall be given instruction that is

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

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1 substantially equivalent to the instruction that is given to students of
2 similar age and attainment in the district in which the school is
3 located. A non-public school is not required to use the curriculum of
4 the school district in which they are located but must provide students
5 with instruction that is similar in rigor, allotted time, and subject.

6 2. If there is an allegation that a non-public school's instruction is
7 not substantially equivalent to the instruction of the public school
8 district, a written complaint may be filed with the commissioner by a
9 current or former student, parent of a current or former student,
10 current or former teacher, administrator or employee of a non-public
11 school or a resident of the school district that such non-public school
12 is located. The complaint must include the complainant's name, address,
13 non-public school name, non-public school's address, relationship to the
14 non-public school, description of the non-public school's failure to
15 provide appropriate education, and evidence of the curriculum, content
16 of instruction or any other documentation or proof that the school
17 failed to provide substantially equivalent instruction.

18 3. Upon receipt of a complaint pursuant to this section, the commis-
19 sioner shall substantiate such complaint to determine whether a valid
20 claim exists. The commissioner shall notify the district superintendent
21 and non-public school administrator, and request documentation pertain-
22 ing to the school's instruction, including but not limited to,
23 description of curriculum, class instruction materials, testing program,
24 and schedule of classes. The non-public school administrator must
25 respond to the request for documentation in a time period specified by
26 the commissioner. In the course of the investigation, the department
27 may, during any reasonable hour, conduct unannounced school visits at
28 the non-public school to observe instruction. The visitations shall
29 include observation of classrooms, discussions with school staff and
30 students, and review of curriculum documents. The non-public school
31 authorities shall not refuse access to the department for the purpose of
32 a visitation pursuant to this section.

33 4. The commissioner may consult with the district superintendent
34 during the investigation and may request documents needed as part of
35 such investigation.

36 5. Following an investigation, the commissioner shall issue a report
37 on their findings of whether the non-public school is providing instruc-
38 tion that is substantially equivalent to the school district in which it
39 is located. The report shall include all documentation submitted by the
40 non-public school and if school visitations were made, all observations
41 and notes from such visits.

42 6. If the commissioner determines that a non-public school has failed
43 to provide substantially equivalent instruction to the public school
44 pursuant to this section, the commissioner shall take any of the follow-
45 ing actions, either individually or in combination:

46 (a) The commissioner may issue an order that provides the non-public
47 school with a corrective action plan. The corrective action plan shall
48 compel the non-public school to take immediate steps to implement an
49 appropriate curriculum that provides students with substantially equiv-
50 alent instruction pursuant to this section.

51 (b) The commissioner may place a temporary education observer at the
52 non-public school to ensure that appropriate instruction is provided to
53 students.

54 (c) The commissioner may, if applicable, place the non-public school's
55 registration on probation until the non-public school demonstrates that

1 their instruction and curriculum is substantially equivalent to the
2 school district which they are located in.

3 (d) The commissioner may withhold any apportionment or grant of
4 mandated services aid until any actions or orders are satisfied.

5 (e) The commissioner may permanently revoke the non-public school's
6 registration or if not registered, prohibit the school from operating.

7 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately.