STATE OF NEW YORK

3289

2019-2020 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

January 29, 2019

Introduced by M. of A. BICHOTTE, ABINANTI, COOK, DINOWITZ, GALEF, GOTTFRIED, M. G. MILLER, SIMON, JAFFEE, OTIS, McDONOUGH, HYNDMAN, LIFTON -- Multi-Sponsored by -- M. of A. GLICK, RAIA, RAMOS, THIELE -- read once and referred to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to the enrollment of students at charter schools, the suspension of students at charter schools and the administration of charter schools

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

Section 1. Paragraph (h) of subdivision 2 of section 2851 of the education law, as added by chapter 4 of the laws of 1998, is amended to read as follows:

(h) The rules and procedures by which students may be disciplined, including but not limited to expulsion or suspension from the school, which shall be consistent with the requirements of [~~due process~~] **section thirty-two hundred fourteen of this chapter** and with federal laws and regulations governing the placement of students with disabilities**, and pursuant to subdivision four of section twenty-eight hundred fifty-four of this article. The application shall also include a code of conduct consistent with section twenty-eight hundred one of this title**.

§ 2. Subdivision 4 of section 2851 of the education law is amended by adding a new paragraph (f) to read as follows:

(f) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty-three of this article, an audit report by an independent certified public accountant or independent public accountant on the operations of the charter school, including compliance with the applicable provisions of this chapter and the not-for-profit corporation law, and with all other applicable laws, regulations and charter provisions.

§ 3. Section 2851 of the education law is amended by adding a new subdivision 6 to read as follows:

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

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6. Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision four of this section, no charter shall be renewed if the charter school has failed to:

(a) meet the student achievement goals for the school educational program, as required in the application;

(b) improve student learning and achievement; or

(c) materially further the purposes set forth in subdivision two of section twenty-eight hundred fifty of this article.

§ 4. Paragraph (d) of subdivision 2 of section 2854 of the education law, as added by chapter 4 of the laws of 1998, is amended to read as follows:

(d) A student may withdraw from a charter school at any time pursuant to a written form created by the department in which the parent or legal guardian of the student certifies that the parent or legal guardian is willingly and knowingly withdrawing the student from the charter school without any undue pressure or influence by any owner or employee of the charter school, and enroll in a public school. A charter school may refuse admission to any student who has been expelled or suspended from a public school until the period of suspension or expulsion from the public school has expired, consistent with the requirements of due process.

§ 5. Section 2854 of the education law is amended by adding a new subdivision 4 to read as follows:

4. Suspension of a student. (a) A charter school shall suspend an enrolled student pursuant to subdivisions two-a and three of section thirty-two hundred fourteen of this chapter, and only in accordance with the procedures set forth in this subdivision.

(b) The principal of the charter school where the student attends shall have the power to suspend the student for a period not to exceed five school days pursuant to the due process procedures set forth in paragraph b of subdivision three of section thirty-two hundred fourteen of this chapter. The student or the person in parental relation to such student may appeal the final decision of the principal to the board of trustees of the charter school.

(c)(i) No student enrolled in a charter school may be suspended for a period in excess of five school days unless such student and the person in parental relation to such student shall have had an opportunity for a hearing, upon reasonable notice, at which such student shall have the right of representation by counsel, with the right to question witnesses against such student and to present witnesses and other evidence on his or her behalf.

(ii) Where a student has been suspended in accordance with this paragraph, the charter school shall, within five days of the suspension, inform the superintendent of the school district or, in the city school district of the city of New York, of a community school district, where the charter school is located shall, upon being notified of the suspension, who shall forthwith designate a hearing officer to hear and determine the proceeding. The hearing officer shall be authorized to administer oaths and to issue subpoenas in conjunction with the proceeding before him or her. A record of the hearing shall be maintained, but no stenographic transcript shall be required and a tape recording shall be deemed a satisfactory record. The hearing officer shall make findings of fact and a recommendation on the appropriate measure of discipline to the chief executive officer of the charter school. The chief executive officer may reject, confirm or modify the conclusions of the hearing officer. A parent may appeal the decision of the chief executive officer to the board of trustees of the charter school.

(d) A student with a disability as such term is defined in section forty-four hundred one of this chapter or a student presumed to have a disability for discipline purposes, may be suspended or removed from his or her current educational placement for violation of school rules only in accordance with the procedures established in paragraph g of subdivision three of section thirty-two hundred fourteen of this chapter, the regulations of the commissioner implementing such paragraph, and subsection (k) of section 1415 of title 20 of the United States code and the federal regulations implementing such statute, as such federal law and regulations are from time to time amended.

(e) Any teacher shall have the power and authority to remove a disruptive student pursuant to the procedures set forth in subdivision three-a of section thirty-two hundred fourteen of this chapter.

(f) Procedure after suspension. Where a student has been suspended pursuant to this subdivision and such student is of compulsory attendance age, immediate steps shall be taken for his or her attendance upon instruction at home or elsewhere.

§ 6. Paragraph (c) of subdivision 1 of section 2854 of the education law, as amended by section 10-b of part A of chapter 56 of the laws of 2014, is amended to read as follows:

(c) A charter school shall be subject to the financial audits, the audit procedures, and the audit requirements set forth in the charter, and shall be subject to audits of the comptroller of the city school district of the city of New York for charter schools located in New York city, and to the audits of the comptroller of the state of New York for charter schools located in the rest of the state, at his or her discretion, with respect to the school's financial operations. Any such audits shall include an audit to determine whether the financing received by the charter school pursuant to section twenty-eight hundred fifty-six of this article is consistent with the number of qualified students who are eligible to enroll, and are actually enrolled in such charter school, including whether such enrolled students meet the residency requirements for enrollment. In the event of an overpayment, the office of the state comptroller shall be authorized to recover the excess in payment by deducting from any state funds which become due to such charter school or refer the matter to the state attorney general to initiate a civil action against the charter school to recover the overpayment. Such procedures and standards shall be consistent with generally accepted accounting and audit standards. Independent fiscal audits shall be required at least once annually.

§ 7. The opening paragraph and paragraphs (a) and (e) of subdivision 1 of section 2855 of the education law, the opening paragraph and paragraph (a) as amended and paragraph (e) as added by chapter 101 of the laws of 2010, are amended to read as follows:

The charter entity, or the board of regents, [~~may~~] shall terminate a charter upon any of the following grounds:

(a) When a charter school's outcome on student assessment measures adopted by the board of regents equals or falls below the level that would allow the commissioner to revoke the registration of another public school, and student achievement on such measures has not shown improvement over the preceding three school years;

(e) [~~Repeated failure~~] Failure to comply with the requirement to meet or exceed enrollment and retention targets of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program pursuant to targets established by the board of regents or the board of trustees of the

state university of New York[~~, as applicable~~] **pursuant to subparagraph (i) of paragraph (b) of subdivision nine-a of section twenty-eight hundred fifty-two of this article**. Provided, however, if no grounds for terminating a charter are established pursuant to this section other than pursuant to this paragraph, and the charter school demonstrates that it has made extensive efforts to recruit and retain such students, including outreach to parents and families in the surrounding communities, widely publicizing the lottery for such school, and efforts to academically support such students in such charter school, then the charter entity or board of regents may retain such charter.

§ 8. Paragraph (a) of subdivision 2, and subdivisions 4 and 5 of section 2857 of the education law, paragraph (a) of subdivision 2 as amended and subdivision 5 as added by chapter 101 of the laws of 2010, subdivision 4 as added by chapter 4 of the laws of 1998, are amended to read as follows:

(a) a charter school report card, which shall include measures of the comparative academic and fiscal performance of the school, as prescribed by the commissioner in regulations adopted for such purpose. Such measures shall include, but not be limited to, **the total number of openings for new students at the beginning of the school year, by grade; the total number of applicants for each such opening; the total number of students accepted for the school year; the number of students accepted for enrollment who are English language learners, are eligible for the free or reduced price lunch program or are students with disabilities; the number of students who were dismissed, expelled, dropped out or withdrew during the school year, including the reasons for the dismissal or withdrawal;** graduation rates[~~, dropout rates,~~]**;** performance of students on standardized tests[~~,~~]**;** college entry rates[~~,~~]**; the total number of teachers and administrators employed at the school at the beginning of the school year and the number of teachers and administrators who were terminated, dismissed or resigned during the reporting period, and the reasons therefor; the annual salary paid to each teacher and administrator of the school; and** total spending per pupil and administrative spending per pupil. Such measures shall be presented in a format that is easily comparable to similar public schools. In addition, the charter school **and the commissioner** shall ensure that such information is easily accessible to the community including making it publicly available by transmitting it to local newspapers of general circulation**, posting it on the department's website** and making it available for distribution at board of trustee meetings.

4. The board of regents shall review the educational effectiveness of the charter school approach authorized by this article and the effect of charter schools on the public and nonpublic school systems. Not later than December thirty-first, two thousand [~~three~~] **twenty, and every two years thereafter**, the [~~board of regents~~] **commissioner** shall report to the governor, the temporary president of the senate, the speaker of the assembly and the board of regents with recommendations to modify, expand, or terminate that approach. Such report shall include, for each charter school, a copy of the school's mission statement[~~,~~]**;** attendance statistics**; dismissal, expulsion** and dropout rates[~~,~~]**;** student performance on standardized assessment tests[~~,~~]**;** projections of financial stability[~~,~~]**; the number of students with disabilities, English language learners and students who are eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program; the total amount spent for administrative expenses;** and, wherever practicable, comparisons to other public schools **located in the**

same school district or, in the city school district of New York, the same community school district.

5. The [~~**board of regents**~~] **commissioner** shall on an annual basis review and make available to school districts best educational practices employed by charter schools. **If the commissioner fails to identify any best practices employed by charter schools, the commissioner shall report such absence or lack of best practices in the report required pursuant to subdivision four of this section.**

§ 9. Severability clause. If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section or part of this act shall be adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section or part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment shall have been rendered. It is hereby declared to be the intent of the legislature that this act would have been enacted even if such invalid provisions had not been included herein.

§ 10. This act shall take effect immediately.