

STATE OF NEW YORK

3334

2019-2020 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 5, 2019

Introduced by Sen. JACKSON -- 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 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:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3 (b) improve student learning and achievement; or

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

39 (ii) Where a student has been suspended in accordance with this para-
40 graph, the charter school shall, within five days of the suspension,
41 inform the superintendent of the school district or, in the city school
42 district of the city of New York, of a community school district, where
43 the charter school is located shall, upon being notified of the suspen-
44 sion, who shall forthwith designate a hearing officer to hear and deter-
45 mine the proceeding. The hearing officer shall be authorized to adminis-
46 ter oaths and to issue subpoenas in conjunction with the proceeding
47 before him or her. A record of the hearing shall be maintained, but no
48 stenographic transcript shall be required and a tape recording shall be
49 deemed a satisfactory record. The hearing officer shall make findings of
50 fact and a recommendation on the appropriate measure of discipline to
51 the chief executive officer of the charter school. The chief executive
52 officer may reject, confirm or modify the conclusions of the hearing
53 officer. A parent may appeal the decision of the chief executive officer
54 to the board of trustees of the charter school.

55 (d) A student with a disability as such term is defined in section
56 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

1 hundred fifty-two of this article. Provided, however, if no grounds for
2 terminating a charter are established pursuant to this section other
3 than pursuant to this paragraph, and the charter school demonstrates
4 that it has made extensive efforts to recruit and retain such students,
5 including outreach to parents and families in the surrounding communi-
6 ties, widely publicizing the lottery for such school, and efforts to
7 academically support such students in such charter school, then the
8 charter entity or board of regents may retain such charter.

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

14 (a) a charter school report card, which shall include measures of the
15 comparative academic and fiscal performance of the school, as prescribed
16 by the commissioner in regulations adopted for such purpose. Such meas-
17 ures shall include, but not be limited to, the total number of openings
18 for new students at the beginning of the school year, by grade; the
19 total number of applicants for each such opening; the total number of
20 students accepted for the school year; the number of students accepted
21 for enrollment who are English language learners, are eligible for the
22 free or reduced price lunch program or are students with disabilities;
23 the number of students who were dismissed, expelled, dropped out or
24 withdrew during the school year, including the reasons for the dismissal
25 or withdrawal; graduation rates[~~7~~]; performance of
26 students on standardized tests[~~7~~]; college entry rates[~~7~~]; the total
27 number of teachers and administrators employed at the school at the
28 beginning of the school year and the number of teachers and administra-
29 tors who were terminated, dismissed or resigned during the reporting
30 period, and the reasons therefor; the annual salary paid to each teacher
31 and administrator of the school; and total spending per pupil and admin-
32 istrative spending per pupil. Such measures shall be presented in a
33 format that is easily comparable to similar public schools. In addition,
34 the charter school and the commissioner shall ensure that such informa-
35 tion is easily accessible to the community including making it publicly
36 available by transmitting it to local newspapers of general circulation,
37 posting it on the department's website and making it available for
38 distribution at board of trustee meetings.

39 4. The board of regents shall review the educational effectiveness of
40 the charter school approach authorized by this article and the effect of
41 charter schools on the public and nonpublic school systems. Not later
42 than December thirty-first, two thousand [~~three~~] twenty, and every two
43 years thereafter, the [~~board of regents~~] commissioner shall report to
44 the governor, the temporary president of the senate, the speaker of the
45 assembly and the board of regents with recommendations to modify,
46 expand, or terminate that approach. Such report shall include, for each
47 charter school, a copy of the school's mission statement[~~7~~]; attendance
48 statistics; dismissal, expulsion and dropout rates[~~7~~]; student perform-
49 ance on standardized assessment tests[~~7~~]; projections of financial
50 stability[~~7~~]; the number of students with disabilities, English language
51 learners and students who are eligible for the free and reduced price
52 lunch program; the total amount spent for administrative expenses; and,
53 wherever practicable, comparisons to other public schools located in the
54 same school district or, in the city school district of New York, the
55 same community school district.

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

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

16 § 10. This act shall take effect immediately.