STATE OF NEW YORK

6277

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

March 12, 2021

Introduced by M. of A. HUNTER, STIRPE, BARRON, SOLAGES, WILLIAMS, WALKER, MAGNARELLI, JEAN-PIERRE, ROZIC, HYNDMAN, JONES, KIM, O'DONNELL, JOYNER, SEAWRIGHT, DiPIETRO -- Multi-Sponsored by -- M. of A. COOK, THIELE -- read once and referred to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing a task force on safety in school transportation

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

Section 1. The education law is amended by adding a new section 3638 to read as follows:

§ 3638. Task force on safety in school transportation. 1. There is hereby created a task force on safety in school transportation with the purpose of reviewing and promoting safety in school transportation.

2. The task force shall consist of eighteen members appointed as follows: five members appointed by the governor, five members appointed by the temporary president of the senate, and five members appointed by the speaker of the assembly. The task force shall also include the commissioner or his or her designee; the commissioner of transportation or his or her designee; and the commissioner of the department of motor vehicles or his or her designee. The members appointed to the task force shall include, but not be limited to, education and community stakeholders, parents, teachers, administrators, school bus drivers and other school bus personnel.

3. It shall be the duty of the task force to study and issue recommendations related to student safety in school transportation. The task force shall review and make recommendations on:

a. existing state laws, regulations, and programs that address school bus safety, and make recommendations for their improvement, including any recommendations necessary to ensure pedestrian safety and the safety of students;

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

LBD05193-01-1

b. examining the possibility of requiring a state department or office to conduct a biannual review of all aspects of school bus safety and to issue recommendations for additional action or oversight, as appropriate;

c. developing a plan to phase in any school bus safety measures recommended by the task force through retrofitting and prospective vehicle purchases, and identify the potential application of vehicle sensor technology to improve school bus safety;

d. identifying best practices for the designation of school bus stops;

e. the current safety status of students who walk to and from school and identify strategies that support safe pedestrian behavior by students between their homes and schools, including as they walk to and from bus stops and board and exit buses;

f. identifying safety protocols to be followed by school bus drivers and school bus aides, including safeguards to ensure that protocols are followed when a substitute driver or school bus aide is assigned to a school bus;

g. developing recommendations to curb illegal passing of school buses; and

h. determining if there is a need for additional public education programs that promote school bus safety.

4. Vacancies in the membership of the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments were made. The members of the task force shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

5. The task force shall organize as soon as is practical upon the appointment of a majority of its members. The chair of the task force shall be designated by a simple majority vote of all members of the task force.

6. The department shall provide staff and related support services to the task force. The task force shall also be entitled to call upon the services of any state, county, or municipal department, board, commission or agency, as may be available to it for these purposes, and to incur such traveling and other miscellaneous expenses as it may deem necessary for the proper execution of its duties and as may be within the limit of funds appropriated or otherwise made available to it for these purposes. The task force may meet and hold hearings at such places as it shall designate.

7. The task force shall create a final report regarding all findings and recommendations to be delivered on or before December thirty-first, two thousand twenty-two to the governor, the temporary president of the senate, the speaker of the assembly, the chair of the senate education committee, the chair of the assembly education committee, the chair of the senate transportation committee and the chair of the assembly transportation committee.

§ 2. This act shall take effect immediately.