STATE OF NEW YORK

6881--A

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

April 13, 2021

Introduced by M. of A. L. ROSENTHAL -- read once and referred to the Committee on Higher Education -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing the "hunger-free campus act"; and making an appropriation therefor

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

Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "hunger-free campus act".

§ 2. The education law is amended by adding a new section 319 to read as follows:

§ 319. Hunger-free campus grant program. 1. The commissioner shall establish the hunger-free campus grant program pursuant to this section and regulations of the commissioner adopted for such purpose. Within the amounts appropriated for this purpose, the commissioner shall award grants on a competitive basis to public and private institutions for higher education which have one or more campuses that are designated by the commissioner as hunger-free campuses.

2. The purpose of the grant funding shall be to:

a. address student hunger;

b. leverage more sustainable solutions to address basic food needs on campus;

c. raise awareness of services currently offered on campus which address basic food needs; and

d. continue to build strategic partnerships at the local, state, and national levels to address food insecurity among students.

3. a. For a four-year institution to be designated as a hunger-free campus, such institution shall:

(i) establish a hunger task force which includes student representatives from the student body that meets a minimum of three times per academic year to set at least two goals with action plans;

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

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(ii) designate a staff member responsible for assisting students with enrollment in the state's supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP);

(iii) provide options for students to utilize SNAP benefits at campus stores or provide students with information on establishments in the surrounding area of campus where they can utilize SNAP EBT benefits;

(iv) participate in an awareness day campaign activity and plan a campus awareness event during the national hunger and homelessness awareness week;

(v) provide at least one physical food pantry on campus, or enable students to receive food through a separate, stigma-free arrangement;

(vi) develop a "swipe out hunger" student meal credit sharing program, or designate a certain amount of funds for free meal vouchers that might otherwise be raised through such a program; and

(vii) annually conduct a student survey on hunger, developed by the commissioner, and submit the results of the survey and a best practices campus profile to the commissioner at a time prescribed by the commissioner for inclusion in a comparative profile of each campus designated as a hunger-free campus. In the development of the survey, the commissioner shall utilize any existing surveys designed to collect information on food insecurity among students enrolled in public and private institutions of higher education.

b. For a two-year institution to be designated as a hunger-free campus, it shall meet all of the requirements for four-year institutions as set forth in paragraph a of this subdivision, with the exception of the requirements in subparagraphs (iii) and (vi) of such paragraph.

4. The commissioner shall allocate grant funding to each public and private institution of higher education that has one or more campuses designated by the commissioner as a hunger-free campus in accordance with the criteria established pursuant to subdivision three of this section. The commissioner shall determine the amount of each grant which shall be used by the institution to further address food insecurity among students enrolled in the institution.

5. The commissioner shall submit a report to the governor, the temporary president of the senate and the speaker of the assembly, no later than two years after the establishment of the hunger-free campus grant program. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the number and amounts of the grant awards, the impact the grant program has had on establishing additional hunger-free campuses at public and private institutions of higher education and reducing the number of students experiencing food insecurity, and recommendations on the expansion of the grant program.

§ 3. The sum of ten million dollars ($10,000,000) is hereby appropriated to the department of education from any moneys in the state treasury in the general fund to the credit of the state purposes account, not otherwise appropriated, and made immediately available, for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this act. Such moneys shall be payable on the audit and warrant of the comptroller on vouchers certified or approved by the commissioner of education in the manner prescribed by law.

§ 4. This act shall take effect immediately.