STATE OF NEW YORK

582

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 6, 2021

Introduced by Sens. BENJAMIN, PERSAUD -- 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 establishing the commission on African American history and achievement

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 817 to read as follows:

§ 817. African American history and achievement. 1. The commission on African American history and achievement; established. (a) The commission on African American history and achievement, referred to in this section as the commission, is hereby created and established. The commission shall consist of thirteen members, including the commissioner, or his or her designee, the chancellor of New York city schools, or his or her designee, the chancellor of the state university of New York, or his or her designee, and the chancellor of the board of regents, or his or her designee, three members appointed by the governor, three members appointed by the temporary president of the senate, and three members appointed by the speaker of the assembly. Appointed members shall include but not be limited to teachers, including K-12 educators, historians, and those with a background in African American history, arts, or culture.

(b) Each member shall serve for a term of three years and shall be eligible for reappointment. A vacancy occurring other than by expiration of term shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment for the unexpired term.

(c) The members of the commission shall serve without compensation but shall be entitled to reimbursement for all necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

(d) The commissioner, or his or her designee, shall serve as the chair and the chancellor of New York city schools, or his or her designee, shall serve as the vice-chair of the commission. The presence of a

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

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majority of the authorized membership of the commission shall be required for the conduct of official business.

(e) The department shall provide technical assistance and data to the commission as may be necessary for the commission to carry out its responsibilities pursuant to this section.

2. Duties and responsibilities of the commission. (a) The commission shall be tasked with developing and recommending curriculum that incorporates the contributions and achievements made by African Americans as part of New York's education curriculum, including but not limited to the women's abolitionist movement, the Harlem Renaissance, the Buffalo anti-slavery movement, and the suffrage movement for African American Long Islanders. In furtherance of this goal, the commission shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

(i) To survey and review current elementary and secondary education curriculum as it relates to contributions and achievements of African Americans throughout American and state history;

(ii) To develop recommendations on additional curriculum and instruction for grades kindergarten through twelve that incorporate the contributions and achievements made by African Americans throughout American and New York state history; and

(iii) Prepare reports for the governor and legislature regarding its findings and recommendations on current curriculum and incorporating additional instruction on the contributions and achievements made by African Americans throughout American and New York state history.

(b) The commission shall submit an annual report, beginning August first, two thousand twenty-two, to the governor, the commissioner, the temporary president of the senate, the speaker of the assembly, the chair of the senate education committee, and the chair of the assembly education committee on its findings and recommendations.

3. African American history and achievement curriculum or instruction. (a) The commissioner, in conjunction with other appropriate agencies, shall establish African American history and achievement curriculum or instruction for school districts based on the recommendations of the commission. The content shall be age appropriate and shall be developed according to the needs and abilities of pupils at successive grade levels in order to provide materials, and information in African American history and achievement. The commissioner shall annually review the commission's recommendations and make updates to curriculum as appropriate.

(b) Schools may include the above materials as a component of its history curriculum or any other way the school deems appropriate.

§ 2. Section 2590-h of the education law is amended by adding a new subdivision 56 to read as follows:

56. Ensure that all students in the city district, the charter schools in the city of New York authorized by article fifty-six of this chapter, and the nonpublic schools in the city of New York providing instruction in accordance with section thirty-two hundred four of this chapter, as part of the instruction in awareness of African American history since the year sixteen hundred nineteen pursuant to section eight hundred seventeen of this chapter, shall visit sites which educate about these historical events.

§ 3. This act shall take effect immediately, provided, however, that the amendments to section 2590-h of the education law made by section two of this act shall not affect the expiration and reversion of such section and shall expire and be deemed repealed therewith.