STATE OF NEW YORK

278--A

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 4, 2023

Introduced by Sens. GOUNARDES, ADDABBO, BRISPORT, HARCKHAM, HOYLMAN-SIGAL, KRUEGER, SALAZAR -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on 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 a course of instruction and learning expectations on climate education in all public pre-kindergarten, elementary and secondary schools

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 818 to read as follows:

§ 818. Courses of instruction and learning standards for climate education. 1. The commissioner shall prescribe age-appropriate courses of instruction and related learning standards for the skilled instruction of topics associated with climate education to be taught in all public pre-kindergarten programs and public elementary and secondary schools. When relevant, such courses of instruction and learning standards shall prioritize traditional, indigenous, and local knowledge and expertise. Consistent with the New York state climate action council's scoping plan, such courses of instruction and learning expectations shall include, but not be limited to, the principles and concepts related to the following topics:

a. The causes of climate change, including the greenhouse effect and anthropogenic sources of greenhouse gasses, especially the burning of fossil fuels;

b. The impacts of climate change on:

(i) the environment, including:

(A) Atmosphere - effects on local climates, weather patterns, and storm intensity;

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

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(B) Oceans - effects on sea life and global weather patterns; and
(C) Land - effects on natural habitats and the survival of flora and fauna; and
(ii) social, cultural, economic, health and political systems including but not limited to:
(A) public health including mental and physical impacts;
(B) environmental justice and injustice;
(C) food production and fresh water supplies;
(D) consumption and waste; and
(E) climate migration; and
c. Actions required to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, including but not limited to:
(i) renewable energy generation;
(ii) sustainable low carbon lifestyles, manufacturing, development, and circular economies; and
(iii) climate resiliency - options and strategies for, planning for and adapting to changing climates.
2. The commissioner shall prescribe courses of instruction and learning expectations for climate education aligned with existing or new standards of instruction as set forth by the department. Climate education shall be included in, but not limited to:
a. Science and engineering;
b. English language arts;
c. Social studies;
d. Health and physical education;
e. Mathematics;
f. Career readiness and occupational studies;
g. Family and consumer sciences;
h. Visual and performing arts; and
i. World languages.
3. a. The commissioner shall develop age-appropriate instruction and learning standard resources and technical assistance for schools to provide to students in all pre-kindergarten, elementary and secondary schools to carry out the provisions of this section.
b. The department shall make instruction and learning standard resources publicly available electronically on the department's internet website.
4. The commissioner shall:
a. establish both a timeline for professional learning and educator readiness in accordance with New York state's decarbonization goals as outlined in section 75-0107 of environmental conservation law, and a plan for ongoing teacher support, peer exchange, and evaluation;
b. require a designated number of relevant professional development hours/continuing teacher and leader education (CTLE) in climate education for all in-service teachers; and
c. establish expectations for pre-service teacher education programs for the teaching of climate change for all teacher certification programs in New York state.
5. The commissioner shall establish an office of climate education and workforce development within sixty days of the effective date of this section. The board of regents shall be responsible for overseeing the office and ensuring that it:
a. regularly engages with New York state teachers, indigenous communities, BIPOC communities, informal and alternative educators, and non-governmental education organizations about the office's goals and services;

b. creates career and technical education (CTE) and green workforce development programs;

c. supports professional development for in-service and pre-service teachers;

d. develops and facilitates the administration of assessment instruments related to climate education; and

e. assists the commissioner in providing the necessary resources and technical assistance for all schools to carry out the provisions of this section.

6. The board of regents shall develop and implement clear strategies for assessing the effectiveness and implementation of climate education teaching and student learning across all grade levels and subject areas.

§ 2. This act shall take effect on the first of July next succeeding the date on which it shall have become a law.