STATE OF NEW YORK

63

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 4, 2023

Introduced by Sen. HARCKHAM -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to direct the education department to study, review and report on the geographic cost variation of counties in the Hudson Valley labor force region to determine the appropriateness of the region cost index values for purposes of the public school foundation aid formula

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

Section 1. Legislative intent. The legislature hereby finds that the introduction of the regional cost index into the state public school aid formula provided a regional approach to recognizing the difference in labor market costs. In a June 7, 2006 report to the board of regents subcommittee on state aid, state education department staff noted in the combination of the city of New York and Long Island that there was "evidence that these two areas actually function as a single labor market region. With professionals, especially those in the education professions, moving to jobs across the lines between New York city and Long Island, it is necessary to consider this entire region as a single area, with similar wage costs". At this same time, the education department decided to keep the county of Westchester within the Hudson Valley for the regional cost index calculation. In 2016, this state enacted a new law to increase the minimum wage across the state. This legislation included the county of Westchester along with the counties of Nassau and Suffolk, in phasing in such wage increases, setting a new precedent that should be considered by the education department with regard to which labor market the county of Westchester should be included in.

§ 2. The education department shall, in consultation with the department of labor, study and review the geographic cost variations of the counties located in the Hudson Valley labor force region to determine the appropriateness of the regional cost index values used within the

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

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public school foundation aid formula, as well as county placement in the Hudson Valley region. Specifically, the education department shall consider the movement of the county of Westchester currently within the Hudson Valley region into the Long Island/New York city region. Such department shall consult with the department of labor to review labor costs for the Hudson Valley region and the Long Island/New York city region.

The education department shall also review the regional costs associated with construction and study the impact on applying an up to date cost index on public school building aid reimbursement.

§ 3. The education department shall, on or before April 1, 2025, report the findings, conclusions and recommendations of such study to the governor, temporary president of the senate and speaker of the assembly.

§ 4. This act shall take effect immediately.