

STATE OF NEW YORK

8902

IN SENATE

March 26, 2024

Introduced by Sen. OBERACKER -- 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 interregional enrollment of students in multiple school districts (Part A); and to amend the education law, in relation to the provision of cooperative and individualized educational services for students who are enrolled in multiple school districts (Part B)

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

1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as
2 the "EmpowerED Act: Empowering students and enhancing educational oppor-
3 tunities in New York".

4 § 2. Legislative findings and intent. According to the Census Bureau,
5 New York consistently allocates the highest per-student expenditure in
6 the nation. However, despite this significant investment, a substantial
7 number of our students are performing at or slightly below the national
8 average in state assessments. It is imperative that we prioritize
9 providing our students with every available opportunity to raise these
10 educational standards. To truly empower our education system, we must
11 enable school districts and students to embrace innovative educational
12 approaches that go beyond traditional norms. Students should have the
13 freedom to choose educational opportunities that best suit their indi-
14 vidual needs and aspirations. The "EmpowerED Act" aims to strengthen New
15 York's education system by granting students the ability to access
16 classes in any educational setting, be it a neighboring school district
17 or through remote learning. Furthermore, it expands itinerant teaching
18 services that BOCES programs offer to allow individual schools to more
19 efficiently allocate resources according to the unique needs of their
20 own district. This legislation will provide vital support to foster
21 collaboration among districts, benefiting students and improving the
22 overall education system in New York, while empowering students,
23 parents, and educators to shape their educational journey.

24 § 3. This act enacts into law major components of legislation neces-
25 sary to implement the "EmpowerED Act". Each component is wholly

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

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1 contained within a Part identified as Parts A through B. The effective
2 date for each particular provision contained within such Part is set
3 forth in the last section of such Part. Any provision in any section
4 contained within a Part, including the effective date of the Part, which
5 makes a reference to a section "of this act", when used in connection
6 with that particular component, shall be deemed to mean and refer to the
7 corresponding section of the Part in which it is found. Section five of
8 this act sets forth the general effective date of this act.

9

PART A

10 Section 1. Section 3202 of the education law is amended by adding a
11 new subdivision 9 to read as follows:

12 9. Interregional student enrollment. a. (i) Notwithstanding subdivi-
13 sion two of this section or any other law to the contrary, nonresidents
14 of a district may be admitted into the school or schools of a district
15 or city, upon the consent of the trustees or the board of education as
16 part of an interregional student enrollment program. The trustees or the
17 board of education shall establish an open enrollment application proc-
18 ess, during which nonresident students can access such application to
19 apply for enrollment in offered classes whether the student is part-time
20 or full-time. As used in this subparagraph, the term "part-time" shall
21 mean a nonresident student enrolled in a set of classes, whether such
22 classes are in-person or via distance learning, that are offered by a
23 school district where such student does not reside, and who also takes
24 classes in the school district where such student resides.

25 (ii) Participating districts shall provide transportation, as mandated
26 by the individualized education program of a student with a disability,
27 to the location necessary to receive required services specified in such
28 program.

29 b. The school district of a nonresident student shall be subject to a
30 maximum tuition as determined by the commissioner. The maximum tuition
31 shall vary based on the number of classes taken by the student and
32 whether such student is part-time or full-time. The maximum tuition
33 rates shall be set regionally to account for cost variations and ensure
34 fairness across participating school districts.

35 c. Nonresident students seeking enrollment shall submit applications
36 during the open enrollment window, as determined by the participating
37 school districts. The application process shall be facilitated by the
38 school districts, ensuring accessibility and fairness. Eligibility for
39 enrollment shall be based on factors, including but not limited to
40 available space, academic performance, and the needs of the student.
41 Priority shall be given to students who would benefit from specialized
42 programs or services not available in their resident district.

43 d. Participating school districts shall collaborate to ensure a seam-
44 less transfer of student records, including academic transcripts, health
45 records, and other relevant documentation necessary for such student's
46 educational continuity. School districts shall provide nonresident
47 students with access to appropriate educational programs, resources, and
48 support services, on par with those provided to resident students.

49 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

50

PART B

1 Section 1. Subparagraph 3 of paragraph bb of subdivision 4 of section
2 1950 of the education law, as amended by section 2 of part A of chapter
3 60 of the laws of 2000, is amended to read as follows:

4 (3) Such programs and services may include, but shall not be limited
5 to (a) expansion of itinerant teaching services in any courses of study
6 required under subdivision three of section thirty-two hundred four of
7 this chapter or advanced academic subject courses, provided that no
8 limitation shall exist that restricts or confines the length of time
9 that an itinerant teacher is authorized to provide such teaching
10 services pursuant to this paragraph; (b) academic course offerings at
11 regular board of cooperative educational services centers or at leased
12 sites during the school year or summer school periods, as requested by
13 component districts; (c) block scheduling to enable students to attend
14 classes at a board of cooperative educational services center for an
15 entire school day; (d) satellite offerings of specific concentrations or
16 specializations sponsored by boards of cooperative educational services
17 at local schools, with cross-contracting for services; (e) expanded use
18 of interactive television and other technologies to offer academic
19 courses on site or at component school districts; and (f) programs of
20 academic intervention services approved by the commissioner designed to
21 fulfill the academic intervention services requirement imposed by the
22 regulations of the commissioner, provided that in approving such
23 programs and services for the two thousand--two thousand one school year
24 or thereafter, the commissioner shall assure that the program or service
25 results in a cost savings to all participating districts, disregarding
26 any aid pursuant to subdivision five of this section.

27 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

28 § 4. Severability clause. If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdi-
29 vision, section or part of this act shall be adjudged by any court of
30 competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect,
31 impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in
32 its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, section
33 or part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which such judg-
34 ment shall have been rendered. It is hereby declared to be the intent of
35 the legislature that this act would have been enacted even if such
36 invalid provisions had not been included herein.

37 § 5. This act shall take effect immediately; provided, however, that
38 the applicable effective date of Parts A through B of this act shall be
39 as specifically set forth in the last section of such Parts.