STATE OF NEW YORK

9173

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

October 17, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. McDONALD, ROMERO -- read once and referred to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing a pilot learner engagement and attendance program of New York (LEAP-NY) in certain school districts of the state

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 3214-a to read as follows:

§ 3214-a. Learner engagement and attendance pilot program. 1. Establishment. The commissioner shall establish a three-year pilot program, to be known as the "learner engagement and attendance program of New York (LEAP-NY)".

2. Eligible districts. Eligibility for participation in the program shall be limited to the one hundred largest school districts in the state, located outside of a city with a population of one million or more, as determined annually by aggregate student enrollment within a district's boundaries.

3. Selection of participants. From among the eligible districts, the commissioner shall select fifteen districts to participate in the program. Selection shall be made on a competitive basis, pursuant to an application process established by the commissioner. In awarding participation and funding, the commissioner shall consider:

a. the severity of absenteeism challenges in the district;

b. the district's proposed plan for implementing outreach and engagement strategies, including home visits, case management, and coordination with community-based organizations; and

c. the capacity of the district to collect and report data on student attendance and program outcomes.

4. Funding. Program funds shall be awarded competitively to selected districts, subject to appropriation, and shall be used exclusively for

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

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activities designed to reduce chronic absenteeism, improve family engagement, and connect students and families with necessary academic and non-academic supports.

5. Outreach teams. a. Each participating district shall establish learner engagement and attendance teams, comprised of trained staff and, where feasible, community partners.

b. Teams shall conduct outreach to students who have:

(1) accumulated five consecutive unreported or unexcused absences on instructional days;

(2) accumulated ten or more total unreported or unexcused absences on instructional days within a semester, or within the first two months of the school year; or

(3) met other appropriate criteria for outreach, as determined by the learner engagement and attendance team.

c. Outreach may include direct phone calls, home visits, and/or in-person meetings with the student and family.

d. Each team shall include at a minimum one family engagement specialist or social worker, one representative from the local county social services department or a community-based organization with expertise in child welfare prevention, and may also include teachers, administrators, parents, and community-based organization staff.

6. Case management and support. a. Teams shall assess the underlying causes of a student's absenteeism, including but not limited to, transportation barriers, housing or food insecurity, health or mental health needs, and caregiving responsibilities.

b. Teams shall connect families to appropriate services, including but not limited to community-based organizations, local social services, and school-based supports. Each participating district shall be responsible for identifying and maintaining a directory of available community-based organizations and service providers within its region, and for establishing referral processes to ensure families are connected effectively and consistently. The department may issue regulations or guidance to support districts in fulfilling these responsibilities.

c. Each chronically absent student shall have a written re-engagement plan, developed in consultation with the student and family.

7. Data use and monitoring. a. Each participating district shall implement or enhance systems to track student attendance daily, identify chronically absent students, and provide data to the department.

b. Attendance data shall be reviewed weekly by engagement teams to prioritize interventions.

8. State support and training. The department shall provide training, technical assistance, and model protocols for outreach, home visiting, and case management, including trauma-informed and culturally responsive practices.

9. Restricted practices. Interventions under this section shall be supportive in nature. Referral to truancy proceedings, child protective services, or law enforcement shall only be considered after the failure of an initial intervention.

10. Reporting. a. Each participating district shall annually submit to the commissioner a report including:

(1) chronic absenteeism rates before and during implementation;

(2) disaggregated data by grade, race/ethnicity, disability status, and English learner status;

(3) the number of home visits and family outreach contacts completed; and

(4) a description of supports and services provided to families.

b. The commissioner shall transmit an interim report to the governor and the legislature one year after the effective date of this section, and a final report no later than two years after the effective date of this section with analysis of program effectiveness and recommendations on whether to expand the program statewide.

§ 2. This act shall take effect one year after it shall have become a law.