

STATE OF NEW YORK

9540

IN ASSEMBLY

January 14, 2026

Introduced by M. of A. SANTABARBARA -- read once and referred to the Committee on Higher Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing the transitional pathway program for students in higher education with autism spectrum disorder

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

1 Section 1. The education law is amended by adding a new section 355-f
2 to read as follows:

3 § 355-f. Establishment of a transitional pathway program. A transi-
4 tional pathway program may be created to encourage accessibility and
5 inclusivity in higher education for students with autism spectrum disor-
6 der. The state university may establish such program through the state
7 university office of disabilities, the office of university life and
8 other relevant departments. Such transitional pathway program may
9 include but not be limited to:

10 (a) the creation of a peer-support program with the special education,
11 psychology, social work, or other relevant department that would assign
12 a peer or trained mentor to a student with autism spectrum disorder to
13 provide academic support, social guidance and assistance with accommo-
14 modations. Such peer-support program may further include a plan to gradu-
15 ally increase independence as the student matriculates;

16 (b) the provision of accommodation policies and resources for students
17 with disabilities, particularly students with autism spectrum disorder,
18 via the school website and within application and orientation materials
19 for all current and prospective students;

20 (c) a separate orientation held for students with autism spectrum
21 disorder;

22 (d) the training of faculty and staff on school accommodation poli-
23 cies, procedures and best practices to assist students with autism spec-
24 trum disorder;

25 (e) an evaluation of current accommodation policies and procedures to
26 ensure legal compliance and assess if such considers the abilities and
27 limitations of students with autism spectrum disorder and modify if

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

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1 needed. This may further include the establishment of protocol for the
2 parents and guardians of students with autism spectrum disorder to
3 provide assistance to the student as such student matriculates; and

4 (f) a mechanism for students with autism spectrum disorder to build
5 community and support each other which may include the provision of
6 quiet, low-stimulating areas on campus.

7 § 2. The education law is amended by adding a new section 6235 to read
8 as follows:

9 § 6235. Establishment of a transitional pathway program. A transi-
10 tional pathway program may be created to encourage accessibility and
11 inclusivity in higher education for students with autism spectrum disor-
12 der. The city university may establish such program through the city
13 university office of disabilities, the office of university life and
14 other relevant departments. Such transitional pathway program may
15 include but not be limited to:

16 (a) the creation of a peer-support program with the special education,
17 psychology, social work, or other relevant department that would assign
18 a peer or trained mentor to a student with autism spectrum disorder to
19 provide academic support, social guidance and assistance with accommo-
20 inations. Such peer-support program may further include a plan to gradu-
21 ally increase independence as the student matriculates;

22 (b) the provision of accommodation policies and resources for students
23 with disabilities, particularly students with autism spectrum disorder,
24 via the school website and within application and orientation materials
25 for all current and prospective students;

26 (c) a separate orientation held for students with autism spectrum
27 disorder;

28 (d) the training of faculty and staff on school accommodation poli-
29 cies, procedures and best practices to assist students with autism spec-
30 trum disorder;

31 (e) an evaluation of current accommodation policies and procedures to
32 ensure legal compliance and assess if such considers the abilities and
33 limitations of students with autism spectrum disorder and modify if
34 needed. This may further include the establishment of protocol for the
35 parents and guardians of students with autism spectrum disorder to
36 provide assistance to the student as such student matriculates; and

37 (f) a mechanism for students with autism spectrum disorder to build
38 community and support each other which may include the provision of
39 quiet, low-stimulating areas on campus.

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