STATE OF NEW YORK

687

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 8, 2025

Introduced by Sen. MARTINEZ -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed 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:

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

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

(a) the creation of a peer-support program with the special education, psychology, social work, or other relevant department that would assign a peer or trained mentor to a student with autism spectrum disorder to provide academic support, social guidance and assistance with accommodations. Such peer-support program may further include a plan to gradually increase independence as the student matriculates;

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

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

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

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(d) the training of faculty and staff on school accommodation policies, procedures and best practices to assist students with autism spectrum disorder;

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

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

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

§ 6235. Establishment of a transitional pathway program. A transitional pathway program may be created to encourage accessibility and inclusivity in higher education for students with autism spectrum disorder. The city university may establish such program through the city university office of disabilities, the office of university life and other relevant departments. Such transitional pathway program may include but not be limited to:

(a) the creation of a peer-support program with the special education, psychology, social work, or other relevant department that would assign a peer or trained mentor to a student with autism spectrum disorder to provide academic support, social guidance and assistance with accommodations. Such peer-support program may further include a plan to gradually increase independence as the student matriculates;

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

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

(d) the training of faculty and staff on school accommodation policies, procedures and best practices to assist students with autism spectrum disorder;

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

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

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