STATE OF NEW YORK

9946

IN SENATE

April 16, 2026

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

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing the New York state transportation modernization grant program and the transportation modernization advisory committee; and making an appropriation therefor

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

Section 1. Article 73 of the education law is amended by adding a new part 3-A to read as follows:

PART III-A

NEW YORK STATE TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION GRANT PROGRAM

Section 3639. Definitions.
3639-a. New York state transportation modernization grant program.
3639-b. Transportation modernization advisory committee.
3639-c. Application process.
3639-d. Reporting requirements.

§ 3639. Definitions. For the purposes of this part, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

1. "Charter school" shall mean a charter school established pursuant to article fifty-six of this chapter.

2. "Eligible entity" shall mean a county, city, town, public school district, charter school, child day care as such term is defined by section three hundred ninety of the social services law, board of cooperative educational services, non-profit organization, or any other entity deemed eligible by the advisory committee.

3. "New York state transportation modernization grant program" or "grant program" shall mean the New York state transportation modernization grant program established in section thirty-six hundred thirty-nine-a of this part.

4. "Parent" shall mean a person in parental relation to a child, as that term is defined by subdivision ten of section two of this chapter.

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

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5. "Transportation modernization advisory committee" or "advisory committee" shall mean the transportation modernization advisory committee established in section thirty-six hundred thirty-nine-b of this part.

6. "Upstate New York" shall mean all counties within the state other than Bronx, Queens, Kings, New York, Richmond, Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester.

§ 3639-a. New York state transportation modernization grant program. 1. There is hereby established in the department, the New York state transportation modernization grant program to improve the efficiency, accessibility and reliability of student transportation services in upstate New York.

2. (a) The parent of a student in upstate New York may apply to the advisory committee to participate in the grant program for monthly transportation grants not to exceed eighty dollars a month, except as otherwise provided by paragraph (b) of this subdivision, if the following conditions are met:

(i) The parent's child or children attend either:

(A) a public school; or

(B) a charter school; and

(ii) The parent either:

(A) has an annual household income equal to or less than three hundred percent of the federal poverty level, as adjusted annually for household size and expressed in equivalent annual salary thresholds; or

(B) lives within fifteen miles of the school district boundary of the selected school in subparagraph (i) of this paragraph, but transportation is not available to such parent's child pursuant to section thirty-six hundred thirty-five of this article.

(b) Subject to review and determination by the advisory committee, a parent transporting more than one student to a public school or charter school may apply for a monthly transportation grant in excess of eighty dollars.

3. An eligible entity located in upstate New York may apply to the advisory committee to participate in the grant program. Such eligible entities may use grant program awards to support the development and implementation of innovations in public school transportation, including, but not limited to, any of the following:

(a) transportation resource sharing with neighboring public school districts or charter schools, including through the use of coordinated routing, shared services, and joint transportation agreements;

(b) developing or contracting with transportation network companies, as such term is defined by section sixteen hundred ninety-one of the vehicle and traffic law;

(c) developing options for reducing costs and improving efficiencies while enhancing access to transportation for families, including exploring the use of fleet vehicles instead of buses and engaging neighborhood carpool strategies;

(d) developing and implementing alternative solutions to address transportation personnel shortages or related workforce challenges; and

(e) creating partnerships with other eligible entities to optimize transportation routes to reduce student ride times and ensure the safe and effective transportation of students to and from school.

4. Grants awarded pursuant to this section shall not be used to reimburse or support existing transportation programs, contracts or other agreements between public schools, charter schools and public transportation entities.

5. Any recipient of a grant awarded pursuant to this section that is found to have misappropriated funds shall be terminated from the grant program.

§ 3639-b. Transportation modernization advisory committee. 1. There is hereby established, in the department, the transportation modernization advisory committee to provide guidance, oversight and recommendations regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the grant program. Such advisory committee shall consist of fourteen members appointed by the governor as follows: (a) the commissioner, or their designee, who shall serve as chair; (b) the commissioner of transportation, or their designee; (c) two representatives of public school districts; (d) two representatives of charter schools; (e) two representatives of licensed childcare providers serving publicly funded students; (f) two representatives with expertise in transportation planning or logistics; (g) two parents of students eligible under the grant program; and (h) two representatives from a community-based organization with experience in student transportation access.

2. The advisory committee shall:

(a) review and evaluate grant program applications and grant program outcomes;

(b) develop recommendations to improve transportation efficiency, reduce costs and address workforce shortages;

(c) identify best practices in student transportation, including through the use of technology and alternative service models;

(d) ensure that grant program implementation prioritizes households earning at or below three hundred percent of the federal poverty level; and

(e) approve additional transportation-related activities consistent with the purposes of section thirty-six hundred thirty-nine-a of this part.

3. The advisory committee shall establish and maintain an administrative office to review and approve or deny grant program applications, disburse award funds to grant program recipients, and ensure that grant program awards are used for authorized purposes in accordance with section thirty-six hundred thirty-nine-a of this part.

4. The advisory committee shall submit an annual report by August first of each year to the governor, the temporary president of the senate, the speaker of the assembly, and the state comptroller detailing grant program performance, expenditures, and recommendations for improvement. Such annual report shall contain:

(a) practices used by grant program recipients to transport students to public schools and charter schools;

(b) a list of grant program recipients containing the awarded grant amount and a description of the purpose of the grant; and

(c) the number of students served by each grant program recipient.

5. The department, in consultation with the department of transportation and the advisory committee, shall promulgate any rules and regulations necessary to implement the provisions of this part.

6. The department, in consultation with the department of transportation and the advisory committee, shall ensure transparency in the administration of the grant program by publicly reporting grant program awards, participating entities, and any outcomes related to cost savings, efficiency improvements, and student access.

§ 3639-c. Application process. 1. Any parent or eligible entity seeking to participate in the grant program shall submit an application to the advisory committee in a form and manner designated by such commit-

tee. Each application shall contain an explanation of how the applicant proposes to use the awarded grant to:

(a) improve access to transportation for students attending a public school district or charter school; and

(b) support transportation innovations and efficiency solutions.

2. The committee shall rank applications for grant program awards based upon cost effectiveness, student safety, innovation, and the demonstrated need of an applicant.

§ 3639-d. Reporting requirements. A recipient of a grant award made pursuant to section thirty-six hundred thirty-nine-a of this part shall submit a report to the advisory committee in a form and manner designated by such committee. Such report shall include the following information:

1. the number of students served by the grant program award and the expenditure per student;

2. the geographic area served by the grant program award, including the geographic distance covered in total mileage;

3. an accounting of the use of grant program awards;

4. the involvement by stakeholders, if applicable; and

5. any other information as the advisory committee deems necessary.

§ 2. The sum of fifteen million dollars ($15,000,000), or so much thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated to the department of education out of any moneys in the state treasury in the general fund to the credit of the local assistance account, not otherwise appropriated, and made immediately available for the sole purpose of administering the transportation modernization grant program to assist public school districts, charter schools and certain eligible entities with modernizing transportation services, pursuant to part 3-A of article 73 of the education law, as added by section one of this act. Such moneys shall be payable on the audit and warrant of the comptroller on vouchers certified or approved by the commissioner of education in the manner prescribed by law.

§ 3. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law. Effective immediately, the addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implementation of this act on its effective date are authorized to be made and completed on or before such effective date.