

STATE OF NEW YORK

3270

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 24, 2025

Introduced by Sens. COONEY, ROLISON -- 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 the creation of an
adult high school workforce development demonstration project

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

1 Section 1. The education law is amended by adding a new article 107 to
2 read as follows:

ARTICLE 107

ADULT HIGH SCHOOL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Section 5300. Legislative findings.

5301. Definitions.

5302. Adult high school workforce development demonstration project.

5303. Term of project; option to make permanent.

10 § 5300. Legislative findings. Several states have successfully imple-
11 mented secondary education programs geared towards the unique needs of
12 adult learners and which lead to a high school diploma. By coupling
13 rigorous academic curricula, under the high school credit accrual model,
14 with training programs that lead to credentials for in-demand jobs and
15 extensive wraparound support services to address barriers to success,
16 these programs create an adult-oriented learning environment conducive
17 to success. The Legislature hereby declares that a properly structured
18 secondary education program for adult learners would reduce poverty
19 levels by helping such individuals transition to the workforce or to
20 post-secondary education.

21 The City of Rochester area has more than thirty-seven thousand work-
22 ing-age adults without high school diplomas or the equivalent, contrib-
23 uting to the fact that its poverty rate is higher than in all eighteen
24 "benchmark cities" of similar size and third-worst among the seventy-
25 five largest American cities. The child poverty rate in Rochester is

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

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1 forty-eight percent. Across the state, it is estimated there are more
2 than one million nine hundred thousand adults without high school diplo-
3 mas.

4 § 5301. Definitions. As used in this article:

5 1. "Adult high school workforce development demonstration project" or
6 "program" means a private or independent high school registered by the
7 department which provides adult learners with an appropriate academic
8 environment, career credentialing programs and access to wraparound
9 services provided by the operator or any entity partnered with such
10 operator to address barriers to enable adult learners to pursue and
11 obtain, subject to satisfactory completion of the requirements set forth
12 within this article, a high school diploma. Such program shall award
13 high school diplomas based on credit attainment in accordance with 8
14 NYCRR 100.5. For purposes of the program, such adult high school work-
15 force development demonstration project shall be located within the
16 corporate boundaries of the city of Rochester as defined by the official
17 city map maintained by the city of Rochester.

18 2. "Adult learner" means an individual over the age of twenty-one who
19 has not earned a high school diploma or its equivalent and who is
20 enrolled in a registered adult high school workforce development demon-
21 stration project.

22 3. "Operator" means a private nonprofit entity that establishes an
23 adult high school workforce development demonstration project pursuant
24 to this article.

25 4. "Wraparound services" means access to support services that are
26 provided to the adult learner and the adult learner's family, and may
27 include, but not be limited to, child care, transportation, housing
28 referrals, mental health services, crisis intervention services,
29 substance abuse and treatment services, and legal aid.

30 § 5302. Adult high school workforce development demonstration project.

31 1. There is hereby created under the authority and supervision of the
32 department an adult high school workforce development demonstration
33 project, the purpose of which is to establish a pathway for adults who
34 did not graduate from high school to earn a high school diploma and one
35 or more workforce credentials or industry certifications, as well as the
36 potential to earn postsecondary education credits in partnership with
37 both local community colleges and existing certification and credential-
38 ing providers.

39 2. Such program shall be a not-for-profit nonpublic school and shall
40 comply with all guidance regarding nonpublic schools as established by
41 the department. Such program shall follow the standard application proc-
42 ess for a new nonpublic school, as established by the department. The
43 department shall make reasonable efforts to expedite the review and
44 approval of any program created pursuant to this article.

45 3. The program shall:

46 (a) adopt a curriculum that is consistent with New York state learning
47 standards, and shall consist of the completion of twenty-two credit
48 hours with an equivalent measure of one hundred eight hours per credit;

49 (b) not issue a high school diploma to an adult learner unless such
50 adult learner has satisfied the minimum requirements set by the depart-
51 ment;

52 (c) consult with the New York state department of labor and may part-
53 ner with New York state's community colleges or other entities to
54 provide career and occupational educational courses that lead to indus-
55 try certifications, licenses, or credentials;

1 (d) provide all their services to adult learners at no cost to the
2 adult learners;

3 (e) provide face-to-face classroom instruction in a similar manner as
4 provided to kindergarten through twelfth grade students; and

5 (f) provide access to a life coach to every adult learner.

6 4. Under the program, the department may approve additional locations,
7 each of which may enroll a maximum of three hundred fifty adult lear-
8 ners.

9 5. The adult high school workforce development demonstration project
10 shall have an advisory board which shall consist of at least five
11 members, at least one of which shall be appointed by the department.

12 6. An adult high school workforce development program established
13 under this article shall not be considered a public school for state aid
14 purposes; however, program locations registered pursuant to this article
15 shall be eligible to receive public funding in the form of specific
16 appropriations, state and federal grants, and any other available work-
17 force development resources. Such programs may also accept private
18 contributions.

19 7. The department shall adopt rules and regulations necessary to
20 administer the program authorized by this article.

21 § 5303. Term of project; option to make permanent. 1. The adult high
22 school workforce development demonstration project authorized by this
23 article shall remain in effect for a minimum of five years after the
24 effective date of this article.

25 2. If the department determines that the program is serving its
26 intended purpose, the adult high school workforce development demon-
27 stration project shall, subject to the permission and authority of the
28 department, become permanent and shall be renamed the adult high school
29 workforce development program. Such program may be extended to addi-
30 tional regions of the state to operators who meet the requirements under
31 the program. The department shall make such determination in consulta-
32 tion with the operators, the members of the operators' advisory boards,
33 the department of labor, and other relevant stakeholders, no later than
34 six months prior to the end of the five-year period.

35 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.