

STATE OF NEW YORK

5025

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 18, 2025

Introduced by Sens. JACKSON, GONZALEZ -- 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 updating provisions
relating to dignity for all students; and making an appropriation
therefor

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

1 Section 1. Section 10 of the education law, as added by chapter 482
2 of the laws of 2010, is amended to read as follows:

3 § 10. Legislative intent. The legislature finds that students' ability
4 to learn and to meet high academic standards, and a school's ability to
5 educate its students, are compromised by incidents of discrimination or
6 harassment including bullying, taunting or intimidation. It is hereby
7 declared to be the policy of the state to afford all students in public
8 schools an environment free of discrimination and harassment, whether in
9 the school building or on the internet. The purpose of this article is
10 to foster civility in public schools and to prevent and prohibit conduct
11 which is inconsistent with a school's educational mission.

12 § 2. Paragraphs e and l of subdivision 1 of section 13 of the educa-
13 tion law, as added by chapter 102 of the laws of 2012, are amended and a
14 new paragraph m is added to read as follows:

15 e. require the school, when an investigation reveals any such verified
16 harassment, bullying or discrimination, to take prompt actions reason-
17 ably calculated to end the harassment, bullying or discrimination, elim-
18 inate any hostile environment, create a more positive school culture and
19 climate, prevent recurrence of the behavior, and ensure the safety of
20 the student or students against whom such harassment, bullying or
21 discrimination was directed. Such actions shall be consistent with the
22 guidelines created pursuant to subdivision four of this section and
23 shall take into consideration whether notification of persons in

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

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parental relation to the student who is the subject of such harassment is in the best interest of the student;

l. maintain current versions of the school district's policies created pursuant to this section on the school district's internet website, if one exists; and

m. include safe, responsible use of the internet and electronic communications; and

§ 3. Subdivision 5 of section 14 of the education law, as amended by chapter 90 of the laws of 2013, is amended to read as follows:

5. [~~The commissioner shall prescribe~~] Prescribe regulations that school professionals applying on or after December thirty-first, two thousand thirteen for a certificate or license, including but not limited to a certificate or license valid for service as a classroom teacher, school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, school administrator or supervisor or superintendent of schools shall, in addition to all other certification or licensing requirements, have completed training on the social patterns of harassment, bullying and discrimination, as defined in section eleven of this article, including but not limited to those acts based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex, the identification and mitigation of harassment, bullying and discrimination, and strategies for effectively addressing problems of exclusion, bias and aggression in educational settings.

§ 4. Section 15 of the education law, as amended by chapter 102 of the laws of 2012, is amended to read as follows:

§ 15. Reporting by commissioner and use of reports. 1. The commissioner shall create a procedure under which material incidents of harassment, bullying and discrimination on school grounds or at a school function are reported to the department at least on an annual basis. Such procedure shall provide that such reports shall, wherever possible, also delineate the specific nature of such incidents of harassment, bullying and discrimination, provided that the commissioner may comply with the requirements of this section through use of the existing uniform violent incident reporting system. In addition, the department may conduct research or undertake studies to determine compliance throughout the state with the provisions of this article.

2. The commissioner shall use such reports and data to identify schools and districts that are failing to meet the standards and objectives of this article. The commissioner shall promulgate policies and procedures for improving conditions at these schools to ensure proper training, support, and compliance with all requirements.

3. The commissioner shall deliver the report referenced in subdivision one of this section to the legislature every two years.

§ 5. The education law is amended by adding a new article 2-A to read as follows:

ARTICLE 2-A

STUDENT SUICIDE PREVENTION

Section 20. Legislative intent.

21. Definitions.

22. Policies, procedures, and guidelines.

23. Application.

24. Severability and construction.

§ 20. Legislative intent. The legislature finds and declares the following:

1 1. According to data from the federal centers for disease control and
2 prevention as reported in the year two thousand sixteen, suicide is the
3 second leading cause of death for youth and young adults ten to twenty-
4 four years of age, inclusive, in both the United States and in New York
5 state.

6 2. As children and teens spend a significant amount of their young
7 lives in school, the personnel who interact with them on a daily basis
8 are essential gatekeepers for recognizing warning signs of suicide and
9 making the appropriate referrals for help.

10 3. In a national survey conducted by the Jason Foundation, a teacher
11 was identified as the number one person to whom a student would turn to
12 help a friend who might be suicidal. It is imperative that when a young
13 person comes to a teacher for help, such teacher has the knowledge,
14 tools, and resources to respond correctly.

15 4. In the year two thousand eighteen, the federal centers for disease
16 control and prevention found in its Youth Risk Behavior Survey that
17 lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are almost four times more likely to
18 seriously consider attempting suicide, have made a suicide plan, or have
19 attempted suicide, than their heterosexual peers.

20 5. There are national hotlines available to help adults and youth,
21 including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning
22 (LGBTQ) youth, who are experiencing suicidal ideation or who are worried
23 about a family member or peer who may be at risk, including the National
24 Suicide Prevention Lifeline, the Crisis Text Line, the Trevor Project
25 Lifeline, and TrevorChat.

26 6. According to the Family Acceptance Project, research has found
27 that, for an LGBTQ youth, having at least one supportive adult can
28 reduce the youth's risk of suicide.

29 7. New York state schools face the serious issues of students at high
30 risk of suicide and death by suicide in the school communities. School
31 personnel must be supported by clear policies and procedures, which
32 serve as an easily-accessible roadmap, eliminate confusion over educator
33 roles and the referral process, and equip educators with the tools to
34 respond safely when a suicide does occur in the school community.

35 § 21. Definitions. For the purposes of this article, the following
36 terms shall have the following meanings:

37 1. "Crisis situation" means a situation where a teacher or other local
38 educational agency employee believes a student or other individual is in
39 imminent danger of a suicide attempt.

40 2. "LGBTQ" means individuals who identify, with regards to gender, as
41 being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning.

42 3. "Local educational agency" means a school district, board of coop-
43 erative educational services, school, or the education department.

44 4. "Suicide intervention" means specific actions schools can take in
45 response to suicidal behavior by a student, including, but not limited
46 to:

47 a. student supervision;
48 b. notification of parents or guardians;
49 c. crisis situation response protocols;
50 d. when and how to request an immediate mental health assessment or
51 emergency services; and
52 e. school re-entry procedures following a student mental health
53 crisis.

54 5. "Suicide postvention" means planned support and interventions
55 schools can implement after a suicide attempt or suicide death of a
56 member of the school community that are designed to:

1 a. reduce the risk of the spread of suicidal thoughts or intentions;
2 b. provide support for affected students and school-based personnel;
3 c. address the social stigma associated with suicide; and
4 d. disseminate factual information about suicide and its prevention.
5 6. "Suicide prevention" means specific actions schools can take to
6 recognize and reduce suicidal behavior, including, but not limited to:
7 a. identifying risks and protective factors for suicide and suicide
8 warning signs;
9 b. establishing a process by which students are referred to a mental
10 and behavioral health provider for help;
11 c. making available school-based and community-based mental health
12 supports;
13 d. providing the location of available online and community suicide
14 prevention resources, including local crisis centers and hotlines;
15 e. adopting policies and protocols regarding suicide prevention,
16 intervention, and postvention, school safety, and response to crisis
17 situations;
18 f. training for school personnel who interact directly with students
19 in recognizing suicide risks and warning signs and how to refer students
20 for further assessment and evaluation; and
21 g. instruction to students in problem-solving and coping skills to
22 promote students' mental, emotional, and social health and well-being,
23 and instruction in recognizing and appropriately responding to signs of
24 suicidal intent in others.
25 § 22. Policies, procedures, and guidelines. 1. The governing board or
26 body of every local educational agency that serves students in grades
27 seven to twelve, inclusive, shall, before the first day of August, two
28 thousand twenty-five, adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines on
29 student suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention for students
30 in such grades. Such policies, procedures, and guidelines shall be
31 developed in consultation with school and community stakeholders,
32 school-employed mental health professionals, and suicide prevention
33 experts, and shall include, but not be limited to:
34 a. methods to increase awareness of the relationship between suicide
35 and suicide risk factors, including, but not limited to:
36 i. mental health and substance use conditions;
37 ii. childhood abuse, neglect, or trauma;
38 iii. prolonged stress, including individual experiences such as bully-
39 ing, harassment, family or relationship stress, or other stressful life
40 events, as well as collective stressors such as systemic bias and
41 discrimination;
42 iv. exposure to another person's suicide, or sensationalized or graph-
43 ic accounts of suicide; and
44 v. previous suicide attempts or history of suicide within a student's
45 family;
46 b. identification of training opportunities on recognizing suicide
47 risks, and referral procedures available to school employees;
48 c. availability of expertise from school employees who have been
49 trained in recognizing suicide risks, and referral procedures;
50 d. how school employees should respond to suspicion, concerns, or
51 warning signs of suicide in students;
52 e. how school employees should respond to a crisis situation where a
53 student is in imminent danger to themself;
54 f. policies and protocols for communication with parents, including
55 those that specify what to do if parental notification is not in the
56 best interest of the student;

1 g. counseling services available within the school for students and
2 their families that are related to suicide prevention;

3 h. availability of information concerning crisis situation inter-
4 vention, suicide prevention, and mental health services in the community
5 for students and their families and school employees;

6 i. identification and development of partnerships with community
7 organizations and agencies for referral of students to health, mental
8 health, substance use, and social support services, including develop-
9 ment of at least one memorandum of understanding between the local
10 education agency and such an organization or agency in the community or
11 region;

12 j. development of a culturally competent plan to assist survivors of
13 attempted suicide and to assist students and school employees in coping
14 with an attempted suicide or a suicide death within the school communi-
15 ty; and

16 k. development of any other related program or activity for students
17 or school employees.

18 2. The policies, procedures, and guidelines adopted pursuant to subdi-
19 vision one of this section shall specifically address the needs of high-
20 risk groups, including, but not limited to, the following:

21 a. youth who have lost a friend or family member to suicide;

22 b. youth with disabilities or with chronic health conditions, includ-
23 ing mental health and substance use conditions;

24 c. youth experiencing homelessness or in out-of-home settings, such as
25 foster care; and

26 d. LGBTQ youth.

27 3. The policies, procedures, and guidelines adopted pursuant to subdi-
28 vision one of this section shall be written to ensure that a school
29 employee acts only within the authorization and scope of such employee's
30 credential or license. Nothing in this section shall be construed as
31 authorizing or encouraging a school employee to diagnose or treat mental
32 health conditions unless such employee is specifically licensed and
33 employed to do so.

34 4. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, no
35 cause of action may be brought for any loss or damage caused by any act
36 or omission resulting from the implementation of the provisions of this
37 article, or resulting from any training, or lack of training, required
38 by this article. Nothing in this article shall be construed to impose
39 any specific duty of care.

40 5. To assist local educational agencies in developing policies for
41 student suicide prevention, the department shall develop and maintain
42 model policies, procedures, and guidelines in accordance with this
43 section to serve as a guide for local educational agencies. Such model
44 policies, procedures, and guidelines shall be posted within thirty days
45 of their completion on the department's internet website, along with
46 relevant resources and information to support schools in developing and
47 implementing the policies, procedures, and guidelines required under
48 subdivision one of this section.

49 6. The governing board or body of a local educational agency that
50 serves students in grades seven to twelve, inclusive, shall review, at
51 minimum every fifth year following the effective date of this article,
52 its policies, procedures, and guidelines on student suicide prevention
53 and, if necessary, update such policies, procedures, and guidelines.

54 § 23. Application. The provisions of this article shall apply to all
55 private and public educational institutions in New York state.

1 § 24. Severability and construction. The provisions of this article
2 shall be severable, and if any court of competent jurisdiction declares
3 any phrase, clause, sentence or provision of this article to be invalid,
4 or its applicability to any government agency, person or circumstance is
5 declared invalid, the remainder of this article and its relevant appli-
6 cability shall not be affected. The provisions of this article shall be
7 liberally construed to give effect to the purposes thereof.

8 § 6. Section 801-a of the education law, as amended by section 102 of
9 the laws of 2012, is amended to read as follows:

10 § 801-a. Instruction in civility, citizenship ~~[and]~~, character educa-
11 tion, digital citizenship, and media literacy.

12 1. For the purposes of this section, the following terms shall have
13 the following meanings:

14 a. "Tolerance", "respect for others", and "dignity" shall include
15 awareness and sensitivity to harassment, bullying, discrimination, and
16 civility in the relations of people of different races, weights,
17 national origins, ethnic groups, religions, religious practices, mental
18 or physical abilities, sexual orientations, genders, and sexes.

19 b. "Digital citizenship" shall mean a diverse set of skills related to
20 current technology and social media, including the norms of appropriate,
21 responsible, and healthy behavior and focuses on empowering learners to
22 use online resources, applications, and spaces to improve communities
23 and curate a positive and effective digital footprint.

24 c. "Media literacy" shall mean the ability to use media and to access,
25 analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication and
26 encompasses the foundational skills that lead to digital citizenship.

27 2. The regents shall ensure that the course of instruction in grades
28 kindergarten through twelve includes a component on civility, citizen-
29 ship, and character education. Such component shall instruct students on
30 the principles of honesty, tolerance, personal responsibility, and
31 respect for others, with an emphasis on discouraging acts of harassment,
32 bullying, discrimination, observance of laws and rules, courtesy, digni-
33 ty, and other traits which will enhance the quality of their experiences
34 in, and contributions to, the community. Such component shall include
35 instruction of safe, responsible use of the internet and electronic
36 communications. The regents shall determine how to incorporate such
37 component in existing curricula and the commissioner shall promulgate
38 any regulations needed to carry out such determination of the regents.

39 ~~[For the purposes of this section, "tolerance," "respect for others" and~~
40 ~~"dignity" shall include awareness and sensitivity to harassment, bully-~~
41 ~~ing, discrimination and civility in the relations of people of different~~
42 ~~races, weights, national origins, ethnic groups, religions, religious~~
43 ~~practices, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientations, genders,~~
44 ~~and sexes.]~~

45 3. The regents, in conjunction with the commissioner, shall ensure
46 that the course of instruction in grades kindergarten through twelve
47 includes a component on media literacy. Such component shall include
48 instruction of internet safety, civility, and digital citizenship with a
49 focus on the principles of safe, responsible use of the internet and
50 electronic communications. The boards of education and trustees of the
51 cities and school districts of the state shall require instruction to be
52 given in media literacy by the teachers employed in the schools therein.
53 If available, instruction in media literacy shall be provided by library
54 media specialists employed by the schools therein.

55 4. The commissioner, in conjunction with the regents, shall incorpo-
56 rate existing state media literacy standards into the component

1 described in subdivision two of this section and create a clear and
2 coherent set of media literacy education standards, which shall include,
3 but not be limited to, the following skills, experiences, and competen-
4 cies:

5 a. reading experiences balanced between literature and informational
6 texts, which include both print and digital sources;

7 b. integration and evaluation of content and information presented in
8 diverse media and formats, including visual, quantitative, and oral;

9 c. use of technology and digital tools, including the internet, for
10 writing and drawing to increase learning and communication and to inter-
11 act and collaborate with others;

12 d. writing of informative and explanatory texts to examine and convey
13 complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effec-
14 tive selection, organization, and analysis of content, including multi-
15 media;

16 e. strategic use of digital media and visual displays to express
17 information and enhance understanding of presentations;

18 f. the ability to assess how point of view or purpose shapes the
19 content and style of a text, drawing on a wide range of global and
20 diverse texts;

21 g. gathering of relevant information from multiple sources and assess-
22 ing the credibility and accuracy of such sources, for the purpose of
23 integrating such information in writing without plagiarizing;

24 h. effectively communicating conclusions and taking informed action
25 based on such conclusions;

26 i. the ability to create, produce, respond, interpret, and connect
27 with artistic work and techniques;

28 j. managing information with a focus on the ability to access and use
29 information obtained from other people, community resources, and comput-
30 er networks and using technology to acquire, organize, and communicate
31 information by entering, modifying, retrieving, and storing data;

32 k. demonstration of digital citizenship by maintaining ethical deci-
33 sion making and behavior and avoid the spread of misinformation in the
34 exchange and use of information;

35 l. use of digital tools to communicate and work with others to build
36 knowledge, convey ideas, learn with others, create and revise collabora-
37 tive products, support individual learning, and contribute to the learn-
38 ing of others;

39 m. use of digital tools to create and revise simple, complex, and
40 multimedia digital artifacts;

41 n. identification of ways other people put their own information into
42 online spaces;

43 o. the ability to explain how actions in online spaces can have conse-
44 quences in other spaces and the connection between the persistence of
45 data on the internet, personal online identity, and personal privacy;

46 p. actively managing digital presence and digital footprint to reflect
47 an understanding of the permanence and potential consequences of actions
48 in online spaces;

49 q. designing and implementing strategies that support safety and secu-
50 rity of digital information, personal identity, property, and physical
51 and mental health when operating in the digital world;

52 r. identifying types of cyberbullying and developing strategies to
53 combat cyberbullying and harassment; and

54 s. any additional media literacy standards outlined in state depart-
55 ment publications or in the codes, rules and regulations of the state of
56 New York, as deemed necessary.

1 5. The commissioner, in conjunction with the regents, shall update the
2 New York state professional teaching standards to incorporate media
3 literacy and educate library media specialists and teachers on the rele-
4 vant standards of media literacy so that library media specialists and
5 teachers can effectively incorporate such standards into their curric-
6 ulums.

7 6. The commissioner, in conjunction with the regents, shall annually
8 review the media literacy standards set forth in this section to ensure
9 such standards capture the full range of skills, experiences, and compe-
10 tencies that research indicates is necessary for media literacy, and
11 shall update such standards as necessary.

12 7. The media literacy standards set forth in this section shall serve
13 as an overview of the state's interdisciplinary approach to media liter-
14 acy education and shall emphasize the importance of media literacy for
15 civic readiness.

16 § 7. Subdivision 1 of section 2801 of the education law, as amended by
17 chapter 402 of the laws of 2005, is amended to read as follows:

18 1. a. For purposes of this section, [~~school property~~] the following
19 terms shall have the following meanings:

20 (i) "School property" means:

21 (A) in or within any building, structure, athletic playing field,
22 playground, parking lot, or land contained within the real property
23 boundary line of a public elementary or secondary school; or

24 (B) in or on a school bus, as defined in section one hundred forty-two
25 of the vehicle and traffic law[~~; and a school function shall mean~~].

26 (ii) "School function" means a school-sponsored or school-authorized
27 [~~extra-curricular~~] extra curricular event or activity, regardless of
28 where such event or activity takes place, including any event or activ-
29 ity that may take place in another state.

30 b. This section shall also apply to cyberbullying, whether on or off
31 school property or at or away from a school function.

32 § 8. Subdivision 2 of section 3006-a of the education law, as added by
33 section 2 of subpart C of part EE of chapter 56 of the laws of 2015, is
34 amended and a new subdivision 4 is added to read as follows:

35 2. a. During each five-year registration period beginning on or after
36 July first, two thousand sixteen, an applicant for registration shall
37 successfully complete a minimum of one hundred hours of continuing
38 teacher and leader education, as defined by the commissioner. The
39 department shall issue rigorous standards for courses, programs, and
40 activities, that shall qualify as continuing teacher and leader educa-
41 tion pursuant to this section. For purposes of this section, a peer
42 review teacher, or a principal acting as an independent trained evalu-
43 ator, conducting a classroom observation as part of the teacher evalu-
44 ation system pursuant to section three thousand twelve-d of this article
45 may credit such time towards [~~his or her~~] their continuing teacher and
46 leader effectiveness requirements.

47 b. During each five-year registration period beginning on or after a
48 date which shall be determined by the commissioner, any teacher who is
49 an applicant for registration shall successfully complete a minimum of
50 five hours of professional development related to media literacy educa-
51 tion and any library media specialist shall complete a minimum of
52 fifteen hours of professional development related to media literacy
53 education, as defined by the commissioner. Such professional develop-
54 ment related to media literacy education shall be counted toward the one
55 hundred hours of continuing teacher and leader education required by
56 paragraph a of this subdivision. The commissioner shall require that:

1 (i) professional development related to media literacy education
2 incorporates the principles and practices of the department's culturally
3 responsive-sustaining framework;

4 (ii) professional development related to media literacy education is
5 provided by or in coordination with a library media specialist or an
6 employee from a school district's library system in every school
7 district;

8 (iii) library media specialists in every school district receive
9 specific training in how to provide professional development related to
10 media literacy education to teachers of all grade levels and subject
11 areas contained in their schools, which shall include instruction on how
12 to effectively integrate media literacy education into such teachers'
13 curricula; and

14 (iv) the department creates and provides model curricula and teaching
15 and professional development resources which incorporate media literacy
16 education on its website.

17 c. During each five-year registration period beginning on or after a
18 date which shall be determined by the commissioner, any teacher who is
19 an applicant for registration shall successfully complete a minimum of
20 five hours of professional development related to articles two and two-A
21 of this chapter. Such professional development shall be counted toward
22 the one hundred hours of continuing teacher and leader education
23 required by paragraph a of this subdivision. The commissioner shall
24 require that:

25 (i) professional development related to articles two and two-A of this
26 chapter incorporates the principles and practices of the department's
27 culturally responsive-sustaining framework;

28 (ii) professional development related to articles two and two-A of
29 this chapter is provided by or in coordination with a teacher or guid-
30 ance counselor in every school district; and

31 (iii) the department creates and provides model curricula and teaching
32 and professional development resources which incorporate the principles
33 and practices articulated in articles two and two-A of this chapter on
34 its website.

35 d. Nothing in this section shall limit the ability of local school
36 districts to agree pursuant to collective bargaining to additional hours
37 of professional development or continuing teacher or leader education
38 above the minimum requirements set forth in this section.

39 ~~[c]~~ e. A certified individual who has not satisfied the continuing
40 teacher and leader education requirements shall not be issued a five-
41 year registration certificate by the department and shall not practice
42 unless and until a registration or conditional registration certificate
43 is issued as provided in subdivision three of this section. For purposes
44 of this subdivision, "continuing teacher and leader education require-
45 ments" shall mean activities designed to improve the teacher or leader's
46 pedagogical and/or leadership skills, targeted at improving student
47 performance, including but not limited to formal continuing teacher and
48 leader education activities. Such activities shall promote the profes-
49 sionalization of teaching and be closely aligned to district goals for
50 student performance which meet the standards prescribed by regulations
51 of the commissioner. To fulfill the continuing teacher and leader educa-
52 tion requirement, programs must be taken from sponsors approved by the
53 department, which shall include but not be limited to school districts,
54 pursuant to the regulations of the commissioner.

55 4. For the purposes of this section, "library media specialist" shall
56 mean an individual employed by a school district as a library media

1 specialist pursuant to section 91.2 of title eight of the codes, rules
2 and regulations of the state of New York.

3 § 9. The sum of fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000), or so much
4 thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated to the department of
5 education out of moneys in the state treasury in the general fund to the
6 credit of the state purposes account, not otherwise appropriated, and
7 made immediately available, for the purposes of carrying out the
8 provisions of this act. Five million dollars (\$5,000,000) of such funds
9 shall be used for purposes including, but not limited to, the develop-
10 ment and distribution of teacher trainings, model lessons, and continu-
11 ing education classes. Five million dollars (\$5,000,000) of such funds
12 shall be used for purposes including, but not limited to, the develop-
13 ment and implementation of media literacy standards, teacher trainings,
14 and continuing professional development. Five million dollars
15 (\$5,000,000) of such funds shall be used for purposes including, but not
16 limited to, the development and distribution of policies, standards, and
17 trainings related to suicide prevention. Such moneys shall be payable on
18 the audit and warrant of the state comptroller on vouchers certified or
19 approved by the commissioner of the department of education in the
20 manner prescribed by law.

21 § 10. This act shall take effect immediately.