

**NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION
submitted in accordance with Assembly Rule III, Sec 1(f)**

BILL NUMBER:

SPONSOR: Bronson

TITLE OF BILL:

An act to establish the Rochester city school district empowerment act.

PURPOSE:

This act utilizes certain recommendations listed in the Rochester city school district's distinguished educator report as a framework to improve student outcomes, increase family and community engagement, and improve the district's systems, structures, and operations.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS:

Section 1. Provides title of act as the "Rochester city school district empowerment act".

Section 2. States the legislative intent of the act.

Section 3. Defines terms used in the act, including the following: commissioner, board of education, superintendent, and school district.

Section 4. Requires the Rochester city school district superintendent to develop a strategic plan to convert all schools that have been designated as comprehensive support and improvement schools by the commissioner from the most recent school accountability data to community schools to provide expanded health, mental health, and other services to students and their families.

Section 5. Requires every member of the Rochester city school district school board of education to, in addition to the training currently required by 2102-a of the education law, annually complete a minimum of twelve hours of training on the roles and responsibilities of board members. Such training shall include education on ethics, public relations, cultural sensitivity and responsiveness, dispute resolution, governance, and the appropriate role of board members, the board president, and the superintendent.

Section 6. Requires the board of education and the superintendent of schools to jointly develop written guidelines clearly delineating the powers and duties of the board of education and the superintendent. Written guidelines must be consistent with the current powers and duties authorized in education law, regulations and this act. In the event of a disagreement between the board of education and the superintendent or amongst board members including disagreements arising from a failure to adhere to guidelines established, the board of education or the superintendent must initiate mediation.

Section 7. Requires the board of education and superintendent to develop a long term strategic academic improvement plan within 60 days from the enactment of the act. The plan would include a set of goals with appropriate benchmarks and measurable objectives to address areas where improvements are needed in the school district including but not limited to communication, the education of English language learners, the education of students with disabilities, professional development, financial stability, and parent engagement.

Section 8. Establishes the Rochester city school district children's advisory council. The advisory council shall provide advice and guidance to the superintendent with the mission of improving education outcomes of all students within the district. Members of the council would include, but not be limited to, community groups and experts in the areas of mental health and trauma informed learning, English language learners and dual language learners, education for children with disabilities, and culturally responsive teaching.

Section 9. Clarifies that nothing in this act shall be construed to abrogate or affect any provision of a collective bargaining agreements pursuant to article 14 of the civil service law.

Section 10. Sets forth the effective date.

JUSTIFICATION:

For far too long, the Rochester city school district has historically underperformed. In August 2018, the commissioner of education appointed a distinguished educator, Dr. Jamie Aquino, who conducted a review of the Rochester city school district and proposed a series of recommendations related to the areas of governance and leadership, teaching and learning, professional development, district operations, special education, English language learners, and parent and community engagement. His report, issued on November 14, 2018, specifically mentions the creation and/or implementation of thirteen long-term plans to guide the district's approach to improving student outcomes, including but not limited to a five-year strategic plan, comprehensive communication plan, professional development plan, and comprehensive parent engagement plan.

The distinguished educator has made it clear that the Rochester city school district needs support and community partnerships to improve the district's systems, structures and operations and to address gaps in student services and academic performance. The challenges faced by the Rochester City School District require comprehensive solution that focuses on the needs of the students. This legislation would begin the process of laying a foundation to implement the recommendations put forth in Dr. Aquino's report.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

New bill.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

To be determined.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

Immediately.