



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1207

Resolution calling upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.2969, the GED Program Accountability Act, an Act that would provide more accountability and reporting of data regarding GED enrollment.

By Council Members Jackson, Brewer, Cabrera, Chin, Fidler, James, Koppell, Koslowitz, Levin, Mendez, Vann, Williams, Wills and Halloran

Whereas, According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), in 2008-2009, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) discharged nearly 50,000 students; and

Whereas, There are many reasons that a student may be discharged by the DOE, such as aging out of the system, moving out of New York City, admission to a parochial or private school, admission to parenting programs due to pregnancy, admission to a high school equivalency program, or death; and

Whereas, According to the Office of the New York State Comptroller, the DOE is classifying some students as discharged without sufficient documentation to support a discharge classification, causing the DOE's reported graduation rate to appear to be higher than the actual graduation rate; and

Whereas, In New York City, discharged students are not counted when a school's graduation or dropout rates are calculated; and

Whereas, High school graduation and dropout rates are publicly reported and are regarded as important indicators of a school's effectiveness; and

Whereas, Advocates and elected officials have questioned whether discharging students has become a quick solution to address problematic students; and

Whereas, In New York City, students who are failing academically, have poor attendance, or behavioral

issues are pushed out of the school system without being offered support services first; and

Whereas, High school equivalency programs allow individuals who have not been awarded a high school diploma the ability to obtain a general equivalency diploma (GED); and

Whereas, In order to obtain a GED, the individual is tested on five subject areas: reading, writing, social studies, science, and mathematics; and

Whereas, According to the American Council on Education (ACE), the GED tests are field-tested on graduating high school seniors before reaching their final test form; and

Whereas, According to ACE, only 60 percent of graduating high schools seniors pass the GED tests on their first attempt; and

Whereas, The number of students discharged into GED programs is unclear, as is the number of discharged students who successfully complete such programs; and

Whereas, It is important that all students discharged to GED programs as well as any other discharge classifications be appropriately documented in order to maintain accurate graduation and dropout rates; and

Whereas, Legislation has been introduced in the New York State Legislature that would require such reporting; and

Whereas, On January 21, 2011, Assembly Member Keith Wright (D-Manhattan) introduced A.2969, legislation that would authorize the State Commissioner of Education to require the New York State Education Department to report on the number and percentage of New York City high school students discharged to GED programs and the number and percentage of successful completions of all GED programs that the DOE discharges students into; and

Whereas, Such report would be provided to the New York State Legislature and the New York City Council on an annual basis; and

Whereas, Such data could be further utilized to help determine appropriate policies to ensure that every student is given the opportunity to succeed, and to help increase graduation rates in both high schools and GED

programs; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign A.2969, the GED Program Accountability Act, an Act which would provide more accountability and reporting of data regarding GED enrollment.

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