



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 70

Resolution supporting A.5835/S.1029A, which would require the New York State Education Commissioner to conduct a statewide audit of compliance for arts instruction and report which schools are not in compliance with State arts education requirements, as well as establish a remediation process for schools that are not in compliance.

By Council Members Williams, Cumbo, Mendez, Richards and Rosenthal

Whereas, A substantial body of research demonstrates that a comprehensive arts education helps students learn more effectively in other subject areas, including math, science, reading, and writing; and

Whereas, Studies indicate that arts education helps students develop additional skill sets like critical thinking, creative expression, and problem solving; and

Whereas, Research has also shown that students who are highly involved in arts programs are much less likely to drop out of school and are more likely to achieve higher levels of academic success in college; and

Whereas, Recognizing the importance of arts education, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) mandates arts education requirements to foster more arts instruction in schools throughout the State and City; and

Whereas, NYSED requirements for arts education vary according to grade level; and

Whereas, At the elementary level, in grades 1-6, NYSED requires that students receive arts instruction in four disciplines including dance, music, theater and visual arts in every grade; and

Whereas, At the middle school level, in grades 7 and 8, NYSED expects that students achieve, by the end of grade 8, one half-unit of study in visual arts and one half-unit of study in music; and

Whereas, NYSED, however, has allowed New York City schools to offer any two of the art forms to meet the middle school requirements; and

Whereas, At the high school level, NYSED requires that all students successfully complete one unit or two credits from any of the four arts disciplines in order to graduate; and

Whereas, NYSED also requires a weekly time allocation for each grade and that all arts classes be taught by a certified arts teacher; and

Whereas, Currently, the State Education Department does not conduct a statewide audit of compliance for arts instruction, nor does not it provide a report that shows which schools are not in compliance; and

Whereas, A.5835/S.1029A, New York State legislation sponsored by Assemblyman Steve Englebright and Senator José Serrano, would require the State Education Commissioner to conduct a statewide audit of compliance for arts instruction and report which schools are not in compliance with State arts education requirements, as well as establish a remediation process for schools that are not in compliance; and

Whereas, The New York City Department of Education (DOE) began its first Annual Arts in Schools Report for the 2006-2007 school year in order to track arts education offerings in New York City public schools; and

Whereas, DOE's 2006-2007 Annual Arts in Schools Report revealed that only 4% of elementary schools and 29% of middle schools in New York City met NYSED arts education requirements, while almost half (46%) of high school graduates took three or more credits in the arts, exceeding the State graduation requirement of two credits; and

Whereas, According to the 2012-2013 Annual Arts in Schools report, the percentage of elementary schools that met State arts requirements in 2012-2013 increased to 58%; and

Whereas, The 2012-2013 Annual Arts in Schools report also showed that 81% percent of eighth-grade students were promoted and received arts instruction in two or more arts disciplines over the course of seventh and eighth grade, as required by NYSED; and

Whereas, Overall, New York City high schools have the highest percentage in arts compliance among all grade levels in the City, with 95% in 2012-2013 meeting the minimum requirements; and

Whereas, Even though the availability of arts instruction throughout the New York City public school system has increased, many schools still do not meet the arts requirements mandated by the State, particularly elementary and middle schools; and

Whereas, Moreover, it is difficult to determine whether New York City public schools are accurately meeting the State's arts education requirements because not all schools are reflected in the reports and the indicators to measure compliance have changed each year; and

Whereas, In addition, DOE has not formally established support systems that enable schools to be in compliance; and

Whereas, A statewide audit would allow for a standardized evaluation process for arts education compliance, and would appropriately track outcomes; and

Whereas, A remediation process would be of particular help to schools finding difficulty in meeting State arts requirements; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York supports A.5835/S.1029A, which would require the New York State Education Commissioner to conduct a statewide audit of compliance for arts instruction and report which schools are not in compliance with State arts education requirements, as well as establish a remediation process for schools that are not in compliance.

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