



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

Senator Metzger and Assemblymember Jacobson Introduce Legislation Expanding Excelsior Scholarship to Part-Time and Vocational Students

JEN METZGER January 26, 2020

| ISSUE: **EXCELSIOR SCHOLARSHIP, VOCATIONAL STUDENTS, SUNY, CUNY, HIGHER EDUCATION**



Middletown, NY...Senator Metzger (SD-42) and Assemblymember Jonathan Jacobson (AD-104) announced legislation today to expand the Excelsior Scholarship Program to part-time students attending State University of New York (SUNY) and City University of New York (CUNY) institutions (A7486/S5821). The bill would also extend scholarship eligibility to full- and part-time students enrolled in a Board of Educational Services (BOCES) or any other approved vocational program at a SUNY or CUNY college.

“We have an urgent need here in New York to address the affordability crisis facing current and future college students, and the legislation I sponsor with Assemblymember Jacobson to extend the Excelsior Program to part-time students seeks to do just that. Every young person in New York deserves access to higher education without having to sacrifice putting food on the table or being forced to take on unsustainable student debt,” **said Senator Metzger.** “This is not a problem that we can solve overnight, but I think we can all agree that allowing part-time students to benefit from tuition assistance under the Excelsior Program will make college more accessible for many more students than the program does today.”

Current law allows full-time students to receive \$5,500 per year through the Excelsior program. Metzger and Jacobson’s bill would allow part-time students to receive up to \$2,750 per year. If a student does not earn their two-year, four-year or five-year degree for any reason, they will not suffer any penalties under the proposed legislation.

Assemblymember Jacobson said, “A person’s finances should not dictate whether or not they can pursue an education. But the unfortunate truth is that many students cannot afford to attend school full-time because they also need to support themselves with a job—particularly those who are already in the workforce and want to back to school to improve their skills or learn new ones. The legislation I have introduced will allow more New Yorkers to earn a degree or acquire training on a more realistic schedule, while allowing them to meet their financial responsibilities. Unfortunately, when someone decides to go back to school, their bills do not magically disappear.”

Dr. Robert DuFour, Superintendent of Sullivan BOCES wrote, “This is a tremendous opportunity, especially for our adult learners. Very often, people can’t go to college. Their jobs get in the way. Excelsior scholarships are wonderful, but their requirements are very stringent. By making this available to part-time students and adult learners who can attend

a certificated program at BOCES, we're going to open up new options to improve our regional work force and build our economies."

Dr. William Hecht, Superintendent of Orange-Ulster BOCES, was unable to attend, but wrote, "As a provider of adult education programs, Orange-Ulster BOCES fully supports the expansion of the Excelsior Scholarship Program. Many of our current and prospective adult students are looking for a nearby, practical route to furthering their education. They must pursue further education on a part-time basis in order to continue supporting themselves and their families. The expansion of this program would enable many more adults to achieve their dreams and to ultimately lead better lives."

Rockland BOCES Chief Operating Officer Dr. Mary Jean Marsico also wrote to say, "Expanding Excelsior to include BOCES programs will make it easier for many adult learners to continue their education without a crushing financial burden. As we all know, the students most in need of financial help are not currently eligible for the Excelsior Scholarship. BOCES are economic engines for our communities, and this measure will help to keep our programs affordable to our residents."

Jacobson and Metzger made their announcement at the Middletown campus of SUNY Orange, where they were joined by Sullivan BOCES Superintendent, Dr. Robert DuFour; Orange-Ulster BOCES Assistant Superintendent, Terry Reynolds; and Dutchess BOCES Superintendent, Dr. Richard Hooley, and Administrator for Adult Education, Elizabeth Hayter. Frederick Watson, President of the SUNY Orange Board of Trustees, Trustee Tom Hunter, and Orange County Legislators, Minority Leader, Michael Paduch, and Joel Sierra were also in attendance.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2019-S5821

- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Expands eligibility for the New York state excelsior scholarship award to certain applicants enrolled on a part-time basis or in a BOCES or other approved vocational program

May 15, 2019

In Senate Committee [Higher Education](#)

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Do you support this bill?
