

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 481 Session of 2023

INTRODUCED BY SOLOMON, MADDEN, SANCHEZ, CIRESI, KENYATTA, GUENST, HILL-EVANS, SHUSTERMAN, BRIGGS, FLEMING AND GREEN, MARCH 16, 2023

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, JULY 1, 2024

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An
2 act relating to the public school system, including certain
3 provisions applicable as well to private and parochial
4 schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the
5 laws relating thereto," in certification of teachers,
6 providing for "What is your Pennsylvania Story" continuing
7 professional development course; and, in terms and courses of
8 study, further providing for Holocaust, genocide and human
9 rights violations instruction.

10 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
11 hereby enacts as follows:

12 Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known
13 as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended by adding a
14 section to read:

15 Section 1221. "What is your Pennsylvania Story" Continuing
16 Professional Development Course.--(a) ~~The~~ TO THE EXTENT FUNDING <--
17 IS AVAILABLE, THE department shall develop and implement a
18 continuing professional development course on each student's
19 "What is your Pennsylvania Story" in anticipation of the United
20 States semiquincentennial that may be used by:

1 (1) Professional educators to satisfy the requirements of
2 section 1205.2.

3 (2) School or system leaders to satisfy the requirements of
4 section 1205.5.

5 ~~(3) Paraprofessionals to satisfy staff development~~ <--
6 ~~requirements under 22 Pa. Code § 14.105 (relating to personnel).~~

7 (b) The department shall develop the continuing professional
8 development course in a manner which provides professional
9 educators with information and strategies which can be
10 incorporated into instruction and general interactions with
11 students in order to encourage students to express who they are
12 as the United States approaches its semiquincentennial, which
13 shall include this Commonwealth's unique heritage of religious
14 freedom and relationship to the development of the Constitution
15 of the United States and may include students' experiences with
16 how the students and the students' families have navigated with
17 our democracy and religious freedoms.

18 (c) The continuing professional development course shall
19 enhance the ability of students to interact effectively with one
20 another as students in each county of this Commonwealth, and
21 students shall share "What is your Pennsylvania Story," which
22 may include the following:

23 (1) Awareness of a person's own cultural worldview.

24 (2) Attitude toward cultural differences.

25 (3) Knowledge of different cultural practices and
26 worldviews.

27 (4) Cross-cultural skills.

28 (d) The continuing professional development course shall be
29 research-based and include training on the following:

30 (1) Information and strategies, including listening to the

1 unique "What is your Pennsylvania Story" of students, to
2 encourage students to:

3 (i) Become more historically and culturally aware of this
4 Commonwealth's unique heritage of religious freedom.

5 (ii) Reject ethnic, cultural and religious biases.

6 (2) Resolving disputes between students that result from
7 ethnic and cultural disputes.

8 (3) Resolving disputes between students that result from
9 religious biases.

10 (4) The dynamics of prejudice and discrimination that impede
11 effective learning and dialogue principles for effective
12 communication.

13 (5) Civil rights awareness.

14 (6) Intellectual, physical and behavioral disability
15 awareness.

16 (e) Continuing professional development course materials may
17 include the following:

18 (1) Materials that educate students by introducing the
19 students to various cultures through the stories that students
20 relay about who the students are and how the students' families
21 weave into the Pennsylvania and United States experience.

22 (2) Teaching aids that allow students to explore cultures
23 through food, art, books, movies, dance, traditions and cross-
24 cultural experiences.

25 (3) Resources that allow students to explore the cultural
26 experience of other people, the history, present-day experiences
27 and connection to the American culture and fabric of our land.

28 (4) Educational aids that provide students with information
29 on the historical and lived experiences of the inhabitants of
30 this Commonwealth, the inhabitants' experiences arriving in this

1 Commonwealth and development over the years.

2 (f) By July 31, 2023 2025, and each July 31 thereafter until <--
3 2028, the department shall submit to the chairperson and
4 minority chairperson of the Education Committee of the Senate
5 and the chairperson and minority chairperson of the Education
6 Committee of the House of Representatives a report which shall
7 include:

8 (1) The number of professional educators that have enrolled
9 in the continuing professional development course.

10 (2) The number of professional educators that have completed
11 the continuing professional development course.

12 (3) The number of school entities that have implemented
13 classroom instruction in the "What is your Pennsylvania Story"
14 curriculum.

15 (4) Issues that professional educators, administrators,
16 students or the department have identified and need to be
17 addressed.

18 (g) The continuing professional development course under
19 this section shall be voluntary and offered online at no cost to
20 professional educators.

21 (h) The department shall review the training materials every
22 two (2) years and issue revisions if necessary to ensure best
23 practices in the field.

24 (i) The department may approve other providers of continuing
25 professional development course and staff development that meets
26 the criteria of this section.

27 (j) As used in this section, the following words and phrases
28 shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection unless
29 the context clearly indicates otherwise:

30 "Department." The Department of Education of the

1 Commonwealth.

2 "Paraprofessional." An instructional paraprofessional within <--
3 the meaning of 22 Pa. Code § 14.105.

4 "Professional educator." As defined in section 1205.2(o).

5 "School or system leaders." As defined in section 1205.5(g).

6 "What is your Pennsylvania Story." A student's understanding
7 and observance of who the student is and the unique lived
8 experiences that each student and the student's family bring to
9 the Pennsylvania story.

10 Section 2. Section ~~1554(a), (b)(1) and (c)~~ 1554(A)(2), (B) <--
11 (1) AND (C) of the act are amended to read:

12 Section 1554. Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights
13 Violations Instruction.--(a) ~~(1) Beginning with school year~~ <--
14 ~~2015-2016, each school entity may offer instruction in the~~
15 ~~Holocaust, genocide and human rights violations to students. The~~
16 ~~instruction shall be integrated within the social studies and~~
17 ~~language arts courses of study required in accordance with State~~
18 ~~Board of Education regulations. Instruction may also be~~
19 ~~integrated into other appropriate courses of study. * * *~~ <--

20 (2) The ~~{Holocaust, genocide and human rights violations}~~ <--
21 instruction permitted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall:

22 (i) Be age appropriate.

23 (ii) Be sequential in method of study.

24 (iii) Communicate the connection between national, ethnic,
25 racial [or], religious or cultural intolerance and the subjects
26 described in subsection (b).

27 (iv) Communicate the impact of personal responsibility,
28 civic engagement and societal response within the context of the
29 subjects described in subsection (b).

30 ~~(3) School entities may utilize any appropriate public or~~ <--

1 ~~private materials, personnel and other resources in developing~~
2 ~~and implementing the program of instruction permitted pursuant~~
3 ~~to paragraph (1). The Department of Education shall distribute~~
4 ~~information about appropriate curriculum materials to each~~
5 ~~school entity. School entities may utilize any curriculum that~~
6 ~~complies with the requirements of this subsection.~~

7 * * *

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8 (b) (1) The Department of Education shall establish
9 curriculum guidelines [no later than twelve (12) months after
10 the effective date of this section] to foster implementation of
11 this section by school entities. The guidelines shall encourage
12 the inclusion of all of the following subjects where appropriate
13 in the instruction:

14 (i) The breadth of the history of the Holocaust, including
15 the Third Reich dictatorship, concentration camp system,
16 persecution of Jews and non-Jews, Jewish and non-Jewish
17 resistance and post-World War II trials.

18 (ii) The definition, history, response and actions taken in
19 the face of genocide, including the Holocaust and any other
20 genocide perpetrated against humanity, including the Rwandan
21 genocide and other genocides committed in Africa, Asia and
22 Europe.

23 (iii) Human rights violations.

24 (iv) Anti-Semitism, racism and the abridgment of civil
25 rights.

26 (v) "What is your Pennsylvania Story" curriculum.

27 * * *

28 (c) [Beginning with the 2015-2016 school year, the] The
29 Department of Education shall make available, to all school
30 entities, in-service training programs based upon the

1 instruction provided for under subsection (a) and the curriculum
2 guidelines established pursuant to subsection (b).

3 * * *

4 Section 3. This act shall take effect in 60 days.