

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 839 Session of 2023

INTRODUCED BY COLLETT, SAVAL, FONTANA, HUGHES, SCHWANK, KANE,  
COMITTA, SANTARSIERO, TARTAGLIONE, COSTA, L. WILLIAMS,  
KEARNEY, MUTH, STREET AND CAPPELLETTI, JUNE 30, 2023

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, JUNE 30, 2023

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 terms and courses of study,  
6 providing for Asian-American and Pacific Islander history  
7 instruction.

8 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
9 hereby enacts as follows:

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

13 Section 1555. Asian-American and Pacific Islander History  
14 Instruction.--(a) The Department of Education shall develop a  
15 model curriculum for students in kindergarten through grade  
16 twelve on Asian-American and Pacific Islander history.

17 (b) The instruction under subsection (a) shall:

18 (1) Be age appropriate.

19 (2) Be sequential in method of study.

20 (3) Communicate the connection between national, ethnic or

1 racial intolerance.

2 (4) Communicate the impact of personal responsibility, civic  
3 engagement and societal response within the context of paragraph  
4 (3).

5 (c) A school entity may utilize appropriate public or  
6 private resources to develop and implement this section. The  
7 Department of Education shall distribute information about  
8 appropriate curriculum materials to each school entity.

9 (d) Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, each school  
10 entity may offer instruction on Asian-American and Pacific  
11 Islander history and the social, political and economic  
12 contributions of members of the Asian-American and Pacific  
13 Islander community. This instruction may be integrated within  
14 the social studies and language arts course of study required in  
15 accordance with State Board of Education regulations.  
16 Instruction may also be integrated into other appropriate  
17 courses of study.

18 (e) The Department of Education may contract with and work  
19 in consultation with other organizations to develop curriculum  
20 under this section, including the Governor's Advisory Commission  
21 on Asian Pacific American Affairs.

22 (f) The curriculum under this section may include the  
23 history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Pennsylvania  
24 and the history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the  
25 United States as a whole, including the contributions of Asian  
26 Americans and Pacific Islanders toward advancing civil rights  
27 from the 19th century onward. The curriculum may also include  
28 contributions made by individual Asian Americans and Pacific  
29 Islanders in government and the arts, humanities and sciences,  
30 as well as the contributions of Asian-American and Pacific

1 Islander communities to the economic, cultural, social and  
2 political development of the United States.

3 (g) Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, the Department  
4 of Education shall make available to all school entities the  
5 curriculum described under this section, including any  
6 appropriate curriculum information and materials. The Department  
7 of Education shall also provide curriculum guidelines, in-  
8 service training programs and any other materials developed for  
9 the curriculum to any nonpublic school upon request.

10 (h) Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, each school  
11 entity shall provide programs on Asian-American and Pacific  
12 Islander history for instructors, utilizing the Department of  
13 Education's curriculum as part of the Department of Education's  
14 in-service training programs. School employes shall receive  
15 continuing professional education credits for engaging in in-  
16 service training programs developed under this section.

17 (i) The State Board of Education shall:

18 (1) Conduct a study on instruction offered in Asian-American  
19 and Pacific Islander history.

20 (2) Request that each school entity provide the State Board  
21 of Education with information concerning whether the school  
22 entity offers instruction in Asian-American and Pacific Islander  
23 history and the manner in which that instruction is offered.

24 (3) Issue a report on the instruction of Asian-American and  
25 Pacific Islander history in the 2024-2025 school year no later  
26 than November 30, 2025, to the Governor, the Secretary of  
27 Education, the chairperson and minority chairperson of the  
28 Education Committee of the Senate and the chairperson and  
29 minority chairperson of the Education Committee of the House of  
30 Representatives.

1 (j) The State Board of Education report under subsection (i)  
2 shall include the following:

3 (1) The number of school entities offering instruction in  
4 Asian-American and Pacific Islander history.

5 (2) The number of school entities using the curriculum and  
6 guidelines established by the Department of Education.

7 (3) The number of school entities using the in-service  
8 training programs made available by the Department of Education  
9 under this section.

10 (4) A description of how school entities are offering  
11 instruction in Asian-American and Pacific Islander history,  
12 which shall include:

13 (i) The number of hours of instruction offered.

14 (ii) The grade levels at which instruction is offered.

15 (iii) The course or courses in which the instruction is  
16 integrated.

17 (iv) Recommendations for improvements to the offering of  
18 instruction in Asian-American and Pacific Islander history,  
19 including recommended legislation.

20 (k) The Department of Education shall promulgate regulations  
21 necessary for the implementation of this section. If the report  
22 and study conducted by the State Board of Education under  
23 subsection (i) demonstrates that less than ninety percent of  
24 school entities offer instruction in Asian-American and Pacific  
25 Islander history consistent with the instruction and curriculum  
26 provided by the Department of Education, the Department of  
27 Education shall adopt regulations to require all school entities  
28 to offer instruction in Asian-American and Pacific Islander  
29 history.

30 (l) For purposes of this section, the term "school entity"

1 shall mean a school district, charter school, regional charter  
2 school, cyber charter school, intermediate unit or area career  
3 and technical school.

4 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.