

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2695 Session of
1998

INTRODUCED BY SERAFINI, BROWNE, CAPPABIANCA, TIGUE, BARD, FARGO,
HALUSKA, ROBINSON, D. W. SNYDER, J. TAYLOR, ROSS AND
McILHATTAN, JUNE 9, 1998

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, JUNE 9, 1998

AN ACT

1 Establishing a program for obtaining information from school
2 districts in a uniform manner to permit statistical
3 comparison; imposing additional powers and duties on the
4 Department of Education, the Auditor General and the various
5 school districts; and providing for financial penalties for
6 noncompliance.

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

9 Section 1. Short title.

10 This act shall be known and may be cited as the School Report
11 Card Act.

12 Section 2. Definitions.

13 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
14 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
15 context clearly indicates otherwise:

16 "Department." The Department of Education of the
17 Commonwealth.

18 "Secretary." The Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth.

19 "Suspension/expulsion." The exclusion of a student from

1 school for disciplinary reasons for one full school day or
2 longer.

3 "Suspension/expulsion rate." The ratio of students suspended
4 or expelled to the number of students enrolled in October. A
5 student shall be counted once, regardless of the number of times
6 he or she is suspended.

7 Section 3. Duties of school districts.

8 (a) General rule.--Each school district and area vocational-
9 technical school shall complete a report card form for each
10 school within its jurisdiction in accordance with the provisions
11 of this act and on a uniform form prepared and furnished by the
12 department.

13 (b) Time.--The report card form shall be completed by school
14 districts for each school year and forwarded to the department
15 no later than July 31 of each year, unless a full or partial
16 extension is granted by the department.

17 (c) Auditing.--The Auditor General shall have the right to
18 review the information submitted pursuant to this act.

19 (d) Penalty for failure to comply.--The secretary, upon due
20 hearing, after two weeks' written notice to the board of school
21 directors affected, may withhold any part of the State
22 appropriation of any school district which refuses or neglects
23 to comply with the provisions of this act in a manner
24 satisfactory to the secretary, until such time as the report
25 card form is filed.

26 Section 4. Contents of report card form.

27 The school report card form shall contain information for
28 each individual school and school district, which information
29 shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

30 (1) Student attendance rates.

- 1 (2) Percent of low-income students.
- 2 (3) Dropouts or graduation rate at such time as the
- 3 department is prepared to certify such date.
- 4 (4) Class size.
- 5 (5) Number of professional and support staff.
- 6 (6) Teacher absenteeism.
- 7 (7) Percent of 11th-12th grade students taking the
- 8 College Entrance Examination Board Advance Placement Test.
- 9 (8) Percent of 11th-12th grade students taking the
- 10 College Entrance Examination Board Advance Placement Test
- 11 scoring above 3.
- 12 (9) Percentage of students of the total enrollment
- 13 grades 11-12 who take the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT)
- 14 and ACT test.
- 15 (10) Percentage of those students taking the SAT/ACT who
- 16 scored in the upper quartile; percentage of those taking the
- 17 SAT/ACT who scored in the lowest quartile.
- 18 (11) Pertinent data from the Pennsylvania System of
- 19 School Assessment (PSSA).
- 20 (12) Percentage of students retained grade-to-grade.
- 21 (13) Habitual truancy.
- 22 (14) Number of students enrolled in English as a second
- 23 language courses.
- 24 (15) Student mobility as determined by the number of
- 25 students in the reporting year who changed schools.
- 26 (16) Number of incidents occurring on school grounds
- 27 requiring the intervention of Federal, State and local law
- 28 enforcement.
- 29 (17) Length of school day and year.
- 30 (18) Suspension/expulsion rate.

- 1 (19) Average dollars spent per pupil.
- 2 (20) Range of teacher salaries.
- 3 (21) The average district teacher salary.
- 4 (22) Total expenditures for district administration.
- 5 (23) Average administrator salary.
- 6 (24) Range of administrator salaries.

7 Section 5. Duties of department.

8 (a) Form.--The department shall prepare a uniform report
9 card form and distribute that form to each school district and
10 area vocational-technical school no later than April 15 of each
11 school year.

12 (b) Statewide comparisons.--Upon receipt of the completed
13 report card information from the individual districts and area
14 vocational-technical schools, the department shall compile
15 Statewide comparison data, including:

16 (1) A comparison of Statewide averages to the individual
17 school and school district as a whole.

18 (2) A comparison of averages of demographically similar
19 schools.

20 (c) Districtwide summary.--The department shall prepare a
21 comprehensive districtwide summary for each school district
22 based on the information obtained under this section.

23 (d) Release of final report.--No later than January 1
24 following the school year for which report card data has been
25 furnished by school districts and area vocational-technical
26 schools, except that for the 1999-2000 school year when the date
27 shall be February 1, the department shall furnish each district
28 and area vocational-technical school with its completed report
29 card and those of each school within its jurisdiction to include
30 information as specified in section 4, Statewide comparisons as

1 specified in subsection (b) and the districtwide summary as
2 provided in subsection (c).

3 Section 6. Dissemination of report card.

4 (a) Parents.--No later than March 1, except for the 1999-
5 2000 school year when the date shall be April 1, each school
6 district shall distribute the applicable report card to parents
7 or guardians of pupils enrolled at the school. These report
8 cards may be included in normal school communications to parents
9 or guardians and need not be mailed separately.

10 (b) General public.--School districts and area vocational-
11 technical schools shall circulate the districtwide summary
12 provided by the department pursuant to section 5(c) to all
13 residents no later than March 1, except for the 1999-2000 school
14 year when the date shall be April 1. This summary may be
15 included in district newsletters and, when so included, need not
16 be mailed separately. No later than March 1, except for the
17 1999-2000 school year when the date shall be April 1, following
18 the release of report cards to individual districts by the
19 department, each district shall hold a public meeting to present
20 an overview of the full contents of the report card to the
21 general public. At least two weeks' advance notice shall be
22 given of this meeting stating the time, place and purpose.

23 (c) General Assembly.--The department shall forward a copy
24 of the Statewide results of the school report card to the
25 chairperson and minority chairperson of the Education Committee
26 of the Senate and the chairperson and minority chairperson of
27 the Education Committee of the House of Representatives.

28 Section 7. Cause of action.

29 Nothing in this act shall create a statutory cause of action
30 for educational malpractice by students, parents or guardians.

1 Section 8. Additional requirements.

2 The secretary shall have and may exercise all power and
3 authority necessary to the proper administration and
4 implementation of this act and shall have authority to establish
5 requirements necessary to effectuate the provisions of this act.

6 Section 9. Effective date.

7 This act shall take effect July 1, 1999.