

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2856 Session of
2006

INTRODUCED BY STAIRS, FLEAGLE, R. MILLER, O'NEILL, GRUCELA,
MUNDY, PALLONE, STURLA, ARGALL, BARRAR, BIANCUCCI,
CALTAGIRONE, CRAHALLA, DALEY, FAIRCHILD, FRANKEL, FREEMAN,
GEIST, GEORGE, GOODMAN, HESS, MANN, McILHATTAN, PETRONE,
RUBLEY, SAYLOR, SIPTROTH, SONNEY, E. Z. TAYLOR, THOMAS AND
TIGUE, JUNE 29, 2006

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, JUNE 29, 2006

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," establishing the High School Redesign
6 Commission and providing for its powers and duties.

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

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

12 ARTICLE XVI-C

13 HIGH SCHOOL REDESIGN COMMISSION

14 Section 1601-C. High School Redesign Commission.

15 There is hereby established an independent commission under
16 the sole jurisdiction of the General Assembly whose purpose it
17 shall be to collect, review, analyze and recommend strategies
18 for the General Assembly and school districts to promote and

1 improve high school student performance and to achieve
2 efficiencies in the delivery of secondary education. The
3 commission shall make recommendations to the General Assembly
4 to:

5 (1) Identify strategies for incentives within the State
6 budget.

7 (2) Develop Statewide educational policy on secondary
8 education, including, but not limited to, the feasibility and
9 advisability of establishing a Statewide core curriculum for
10 high schools.

11 (3) Determine fiscal analysis of each recommendation or
12 strategy.

13 (4) Adopt guiding principles and programs that assess
14 current and future needs of secondary schools and students
15 and improve student success in high schools within this
16 Commonwealth.

17 Section 1602-C. Membership.

18 (a) General rule.--The High School Redesign Commission shall
19 be comprised of the following persons:

20 (1) The Governor or his designee.

21 (2) The Secretary of Education or his designee.

22 (3) Two members of the State Board of Education
23 designated by the chairman of that board.

24 (4) A member designated by the chancellor of the State
25 System of Higher Education.

26 (5) Two members of local boards of school directors, one
27 each appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate and the
28 Majority Leader of the House of Representatives.

29 (6) A member of a local workforce investment board
30 appointed by the President pro tempore of the Senate.

1 (7) Two classroom teachers, one each appointed by the
2 Minority Leader of the Senate and the Minority Leader of the
3 House of Representatives.

4 (8) Four representatives of the business community, one
5 each appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate, the
6 Majority Leader of the House of Representatives, the Minority
7 Leader of the Senate and the Minority Leader of the House of
8 Representatives.

9 (9) One superintendent appointed by the Speaker of the
10 House of Representatives.

11 (10) The chairman of the Education Committee of the
12 Senate or his designee.

13 (11) The chairman of the Education Committee of the
14 House of Representatives or his designee.

15 (12) The minority chairman of the Education Committee of
16 the Senate or his designee.

17 (13) The minority chairman of the Education Committee of
18 the House of Representatives or his designee.

19 (b) Terms.--Each nonlegislative member of the commission
20 shall serve for a term of two years and may be reappointed.
21 Legislative and administrative members may serve for the
22 duration of their current term of office.

23 (c) Officers.--The commission shall select its chairman and
24 vice chairman from among the legislative members of the
25 commission.

26 (d) Quorum.--The presence of a majority of the commission
27 members shall constitute a quorum. Any decisions of the
28 commission shall be made by a majority of the commission members
29 appointed and serving at that time.

30 (e) Expense reimbursements.--Members shall receive

1 reimbursement for expenses incurred as part of their official
2 duties, but no compensation shall be paid for attending meetings
3 of the commission. Reimbursements shall be paid for actual
4 expenses submitted in accordance with the guidelines of the
5 Executive Board and shall be paid from funds appropriated for
6 this purpose by the General Assembly.

7 (f) Initial meeting.--The commission shall convene an
8 initial meeting within 60 days of the effective date of this
9 section. The chairman of the Education Committee of the House of
10 Representatives shall preside at the meeting until the election
11 of a chairman at that meeting.

12 (g) Staff.--The General Assembly shall provide sufficient
13 staff to assist the commission in the fulfillment of its duties.

14 (h) Meetings.--The commission shall meet at least every six
15 months for the purpose of fulfilling its duties and
16 responsibilities.

17 (i) Reports.--The commission shall by November 30 of each
18 year prepare and issue a report to the Governor and the General
19 Assembly regarding the legislative and administrative
20 recommendations for consideration in preparation of the
21 Commonwealth's General Fund budget. The first report shall be
22 issued no later than November 30 of the year following the first
23 full year after the effective date of this section.

24 (j) Accountability block grants.--Any recommendations for
25 fiscal incentive strategies for high school reform or redesign
26 shall qualify for accountability block grants under section
27 2599.2 for up to five years beyond the year of initial
28 recommendation.

29 Section 1603-C. Commission recommendations.

30 In making its recommendations, the commission shall consider

1 the following:

2 (1) Strategies for increasing the rigor of the high
3 school curriculum, including a study of the feasibility and
4 advisability of establishing a Statewide high school
5 curriculum.

6 (2) Strategies for increasing dual enrollment
7 opportunities for high school students, including, but not
8 limited to:

9 (i) Early entry into postsecondary and higher
10 education.

11 (ii) The identification of potential funding sources
12 for such dual enrollment strategies.

13 (iii) Improved articulation agreements between
14 secondary schools and postsecondary institutions.

15 (3) Strategies based on scientific research and
16 supporting data that promote:

17 (i) A strengthening of the Commonwealth's high
18 school diploma endorsements.

19 (ii) Better integration of job skill assessments
20 into high school preparation programs and initiatives.

21 (iii) Better alignment of secondary skill and
22 knowledge with the skills and knowledge of postsecondary
23 institutions.

24 (iv) Improvement of the rigor of high school
25 curriculum, especially establishing a rigorous core
26 curriculum.

27 (v) Exploring the advisability and feasibility of
28 testing students at the end of each course that a student
29 completes.

30 (vi) Reduction in the number of students who leave

1 high school prior to graduation, including those
2 strategies that assist underperforming students to make
3 progress in order to graduate from high school.

4 (vii) Innovations to the senior year of high school
5 in order for the time spent during that year to be
6 academically motivating and enriching in preparation of
7 students for life beyond graduation.

8 (viii) Diploma options for high school students.

9 (ix) Assessing students' personal skills early in
10 their secondary education as a means of assisting
11 parents, teachers and guidance counselors in their advice
12 to high school students regarding their selection of
13 academic courses and career goals.

14 (x) Restructuring or redesigning secondary schools
15 by size, population, grade configuration or other factor,
16 so long as that redesign or restructuring promotes
17 academic efficiency and performance.

18 (4) The fiscal impact such strategies and initiatives
19 will cost the Commonwealth and its school entities to
20 implement. Fiscal notes shall be included in the commission's
21 annual report.

22 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2006, or
23 immediately, whichever is later.