

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL
No. 2174 Session of
2008

INTRODUCED BY STAIRS, ROEBUCK, FAIRCHILD, GEIST, GINGRICH, HELM,
MACKERETH, R. MILLER, MOYER, MURT, READSHAW, SAYLOR,
SIPTROTH, YUDICHAK AND PETRONE, JANUARY 17, 2008

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, JANUARY 17, 2008

AN ACT

1 Establishing and providing for the Ready for Higher Education,
2 Ready to Work Act.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Ready for
7 Higher Education, Ready to Work Act.

8 Section 2. Legislative declaration.

9 It is the intent of the General Assembly that students and
10 parents develop academic and career goals for post-high school
11 experiences. Parents and students should become partners with
12 school personnel in career exploration and educational decision
13 making. Clear academic course expectations that emphasize
14 rigorous and relevant coursework should be made available to all
15 students.

16 Section 3. Definitions.

17 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall

1 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
2 context clearly indicates otherwise:

3 "Academic and career plan." A plan that describes the higher
4 education and career goals determined by each student and the
5 student's parent or guardian.

6 "Ready to work certificate." A credential awarded to a
7 student who demonstrates attainment of workplace skills and
8 readiness for employment.

9 Section 4. Ready for higher education and the workplace.

10 (a) Academic and career plans.--

11 (1) Within 60 school days of a student entering ninth
12 grade, the school in which the student is enrolled shall
13 ensure that he or she and his or her parent or guardian
14 develop a four-year to five-year academic and career plan
15 based on postsecondary and career goals, which shall include:

16 (i) A four-year college or university, community
17 college plus college or university or a military academy
18 degree.

19 (ii) A two-year postsecondary degree.

20 (iii) A postsecondary career certificate.

21 (iv) Immediate employment or entry-level military
22 enlistment.

23 (2) A student may progress toward his or her goal
24 through core courses leading to each of the goals provided
25 under paragraph (1), recommended groups of electives or both.

26 (3) Academic and career plans shall accommodate the
27 needs of students served in exceptional education programs to
28 the extent appropriate for individuals students. Exceptional
29 education students may continue to follow the courses
30 outlined in their individualized education plan.

1 (4) Alternative academic and career goals should also be
2 considered so that students may shift or transition from one
3 academic and career goal to another if they so choose.

4 (5) A school may assign a teacher, school administrator,
5 other school staff member or community volunteer to a student
6 if parental or guardian involvement is lacking.

7 (b) Business community.--A school may enter into
8 partnerships with community businesses to encourage and support
9 real-world internships and apprenticeships.

10 (c) Service learning.--Students shall be encouraged to take
11 part in service learning opportunities.

12 (d) Exclusions.--High school equivalency diploma preparation
13 programs shall not be a choice for high school students leading
14 to any of the four goals provided under subsection (a) because
15 the appropriate coursework, counseling component and career
16 preparation cannot be ensured.

17 (e) Notification.--Schools shall notify a student and the
18 student's parent or guardian of the student's progress toward
19 the student's chosen academic and career goals.

20 (f) Responsibilities of Department of Education.--The
21 Department of Education shall offer technical assistance to
22 school districts to ensure that school entities have the
23 appropriate resources to implement academic and career plans for
24 each student entering ninth grade.

25 (g) Responsibilities of school principal.--The school
26 principal or his or her designee shall designate a member of the
27 existing instructional or administrative staff to help
28 coordinate the preparation and maintenance of academic and
29 career plans for each student entering ninth grade.

30 Section 5. Ready to Work Certification Program.

1 (a) Establishment.--There is hereby established the Ready to
2 Work Certification Program to enhance the workplace skills of
3 this Commonwealth's students and to better prepare them for
4 successful employment in specific occupations.

5 (b) Locations.--The Ready to Work Certification Program may
6 be conducted in public middle and high schools, vocational-
7 technical schools, community colleges, State System of Higher
8 Education universities, career centers, vocational
9 rehabilitation centers and other educational facilities deemed
10 appropriate by the Department of Education or that provides job
11 training.

12 (c) Responsibilities of Department of Education.--The
13 Department of Education, in cooperation with the Department of
14 Labor and Industry, shall establish institutional readiness
15 criteria for program implementation.

16 (d) Program.--The Ready to Work Certification Program shall
17 be composed of:

18 (1) A comprehensive identification of workplace skills
19 for each occupation identified for inclusion in the program
20 by the Department of Labor and Industry and the Department of
21 Education.

22 (2) A preinstructional assessment that delineates the
23 mastery level of the student on the specific workplace skills
24 identified for a chosen occupation.

25 (3) A targeted instructional program limited to those
26 identified workplace skills in which the student is not
27 proficient, as measured by the preinstructional assessment.
28 Instruction may utilize a web-based program that may be
29 customized to meet identified specific needs of local
30 employers.

1 (4) A certificate and portfolio awarded to students upon
2 successful completion of the instruction. Each portfolio
3 shall describe the skills demonstrated by the student as
4 evidence of the student's preparation for employment.

5 Section 6. Rules and regulations.

6 The State Board of Education, in consultation with the
7 Department of Labor and Industry, may adopt rules and
8 regulations necessary to implement the provisions of this act.

9 Section 7. Appropriations.

10 This act shall be implemented to the extent that funds are
11 available.

12 Section 8. Effective date.

13 This act shall take effect immediately.