

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 834 Session of 2009

INTRODUCED BY PICCOLA, DINNIMAN, ROBBINS, RAFFERTY, WAUGH,  
VANCE, BAKER, ALLOWAY, VOGEL AND EARLL, MAY 1, 2009

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, MAY 1, 2009

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," providing for standards for programs  
6 leading to teacher certification.

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 a  
11 section to read:

12 Section 1203.1. Standards for Programs Leading to Teacher  
13 Certification.--(a) The Department of Education shall evaluate  
14 and approve teacher education programs leading to the  
15 certification and permitting of professional personnel. The  
16 evaluation by the department shall provide assurance that, on or  
17 before January 1, 2011, teacher education programs require at  
18 least nine credits or two hundred seventy (270) hours, or an  
19 equivalent combination thereof, regarding accommodations and  
20 adaptations for students with disabilities in an inclusive

setting. Within the content of these nine credits or two hundred  
seventy (270) hours, instruction in literacy skills development  
and cognitive skill development for students with disabilities  
must be included, as determined by the institution. At least  
three credits or ninety (90) additional hours, or an equivalent  
combination thereof, must address the instructional needs of  
English language learners. For purposes of this requirement, one  
credit equals thirty (30) hours of coursework. Applicable hours  
are limited to a combination of seat hours of classroom  
instruction, field observation experiences, major research  
assignments and development and implementation of lesson plans  
with accommodations and adaptations for diverse learners in an  
inclusive setting.

(b) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (a), the  
Department of Education is prohibited from:

(1) Requiring a specific number of credits for approval of a  
teacher education program.

(2) Incorporating any formula, scoring system or numerical  
method in the approval of a teacher education program.

(3) Expending funds or allowing any other action in  
furtherance of the purposes of clause (1) or (2).

(c) The following principles shall be considered in any  
teacher education program review:

(1) The preparation program design shall be consistent with  
the preparing institution's mission and reflect knowledge  
derived from research and sound professional practice.

(2) The preparing institution shall ensure that the  
preparation program curriculum does not include unnecessary  
duplication of coursework and strives to create efficient  
professional educator preparation.

1     (3) The preparing institution shall ensure that candidates  
2 complete a well-planned sequence of professional educator  
3 courses and field experiences to develop an understanding of the  
4 structure, skills, core concepts, facts, methods of inquiry and  
5 application of technology related to each academic discipline  
6 the candidates plan to teach or in the academic disciplines  
7 related to the noninstructional certificate categories in which  
8 they plan to serve.

9     (4) For initial programs culminating in a bachelor's degree,  
10 the professional educator program shall cooperate with the  
11 liberal arts and other academic disciplines of the college or  
12 university to create preparation programs that allow candidates  
13 to complete the degree and the initial preparation program  
14 within four years from the time of initial enrollment at the  
15 college or university.

16     (5) For initial programs culminating in an advanced degree,  
17 the professional educator program shall cooperate with the  
18 liberal arts and other academic disciplines of the college or  
19 university to create preparation programs that allow candidates  
20 to complete the advanced degree and the initial preparation  
21 program within five years from the time of initial enrollment at  
22 the college or university.

23     (d) The Department of Education shall provide to the  
24 Education Committee of the Senate and the Education Committee of  
25 the House of Representatives any guidelines it issues that  
26 relate to the evaluation and approval of teacher education  
27 programs.

28     (e) The Legislative Budget and Finance Committee shall  
29 conduct a study of Pennsylvania's system of teacher  
30 certification examinations to assure their effectiveness and

1 shall report its findings and recommendations to the General  
2 Assembly by December 31, 2009.

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