

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2339 Session of  
1996

INTRODUCED BY MAJOR, STAIRS, GEORGE, RUBLEY, TULLI, STABACK,  
COLAFELLA, DEMPSEY, HENNESSEY, EGOLF, MAITLAND, ROBINSON,  
B. SMITH, LEH, ITKIN, GORDNER, BARLEY, HERSHEY, WAUGH, STISH,  
TRELLO, STURLA, MELIO, MILLER, GEIST, MUNDY, STERN,  
E. Z. TAYLOR, SCHULER, BELFANTI AND D. W. SNYDER,  
JANUARY 30, 1996

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, JANUARY 30, 1996

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 the weather emergency  
6 of 1996.

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 1501.7. Weather Emergency of 1996.--(a) This  
13 section applies only to the school year 1995-1996 as a result of  
14 the weather emergency of 1996.

15 (b) All school entities shall keep open for at least one  
16 hundred eighty (180) days of instruction for students by using  
17 all available days through June 30, 1996, and by using the  
18 provisions of this section and section 1502(c).

1     (c) As an alternative to providing one hundred eighty (180)  
2 days of instruction, the Secretary of Education shall authorize,  
3 without need of application, each school entity to have the  
4 option of computing instructional time on an hourly basis,  
5 rather than a daily basis, of nine hundred (900) hours for  
6 elementary and nine hundred ninety (990) hours for secondary  
7 schools. Each school entity which elects to compute  
8 instructional time on an hourly basis shall submit documentation  
9 to the Secretary of Education verifying the completion of the  
10 required hours of instruction.

11     (d) For purposes of computing instructional time pursuant to  
12 this section, the Secretary of Education shall calculate  
13 instructional days or time related to the weather emergency of  
14 1996 prior to calculating any other lost instructional time.

15     (e) The chief commissioned officer of a school district,  
16 intermediate unit or area vocational-technical school shall,  
17 upon the written request of a parent or guardian, excuse any  
18 student from school attendance if such student has the  
19 opportunity to receive a program of advanced instruction, to  
20 participate in academic or skills competition or to engage in  
21 leadership development activities. The request shall identify  
22 and describe the instruction, competition or leadership  
23 development activities and the dates and hours for which the  
24 absence is requested. The parent or guardian shall, following  
25 each such absence, furnish in writing to the chief commissioned  
26 officer a statement attesting to the student's participation,  
27 including the dates and hours of such participation.

28     (f) The chief commissioned officer of a school district,  
29 intermediate unit or area vocational-technical school shall  
30 excuse a student to observe or participate in a religious

1 activity or function, upon the written notification of such  
2 observance or participation by the student's parent or guardian.  
3 A student's absence from school pursuant to this subsection  
4 shall be considered an instructional day and shall not be  
5 recorded as an absence on the student's attendance record or on  
6 the record of any group or class of which the student is a  
7 member. There shall be no penalty attached for any such absences  
8 pursuant to this subsection.

9 (g) As used in this section, a school entity shall be any  
10 public, private or nonpublic school a child attends in order to  
11 fulfill the compulsory attendance requirements of this act.

12 Section 2. Section 1502 of the act, amended March 28, 1994  
13 (P.L.117, No.12), is amended to read:

14 Section 1502. Days Schools not to be Kept Open.-- (a)  
15 Except as provided in [subsection] subsections (b) and (c), no  
16 school shall be kept open on any Saturday for the purpose of  
17 ordinary instruction, except when Monday is fixed by the board  
18 of school directors as the weekly holiday, or on Sunday,  
19 Memorial Day, Fourth of July, or Christmas nor shall any school  
20 be kept open in any district during the time of holding the  
21 teachers' institute for such district. Whenever Memorial day  
22 shall be on a Sunday, the following Monday shall be a holiday.

23 (b) For the school year 1993-1994 only, the board of school  
24 directors shall have the option of rescheduling instructional  
25 days on Saturday, but for not more than one Saturday per month,  
26 to make up instructional days lost from the adopted school  
27 calendar because school was closed as a result of the weather  
28 emergency of 1994. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection  
29 (a), if the board of school directors reschedules an  
30 instructional day on Saturday, the schools may be open the

1 following Monday.

2     (c) For the school year 1995-1996 only, the board of school  
3 directors shall have the option of rescheduling instructional  
4 days on Saturday, but for not more than one Saturday per month,  
5 to make up instructional days lost from the adopted school  
6 calendar because school was closed as a result of the weather  
7 emergency of 1996. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection  
8 (a), if the board of school directors reschedules an  
9 instructional day on Saturday, the schools may be open the  
10 following Monday.

11     Section 3. This act shall take effect immediately.