

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 564 Session of 2017

INTRODUCED BY BOBACK, KORTZ, BIZZARRO, McNEILL, BARRAR, SAINATO, KAUFFMAN, STAATS, O'BRIEN, MILLARD, MACKENZIE, MURT, WATSON, NEILSON, READSHAW, WARD, COX, STURLA, GABLER, FREEMAN, SOLOMON, RADER, PYLE, SACCONI, D. COSTA, TOOHL, ROE, HAHN, PICKETT, ELLIS, DeLISSIO, LONGIETTI, HARKINS, FABRIZIO, YOUNGBLOOD, CUTLER, PASHINSKI, RYAN, DIAMOND, RAVENSTAHL, ENGLISH, ROTHMAN, RAPP, ROEBUCK, EVERETT, BURNS, DALEY, HELM, V. BROWN, JAMES, DONATUCCI, BENNINGHOFF, GOODMAN AND DUSH, FEBRUARY 21, 2017

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 21, 2017

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," in high schools, providing for civics  
 6 test graduation requirement.

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 1613.1. Civics Test Graduation Requirement--(a)  
 13 Notwithstanding 22 Pa. Code §4.24 (relating to high school  
 14 graduation requirements), beginning in the 2020-2021 school year  
 15 and in each school year thereafter, each school entity shall  
 16 require a student, as a condition of high school graduation, to

1 correctly answer at least sixty percent (60%) of the questions  
2 on a test that is identical to the one hundred (100) question  
3 civics test used by the United States Citizenship and  
4 Immigration Services.

5 (b) Each school entity may administer the test required  
6 under subsection (a) in any grade from grades seven through  
7 twelve, and shall:

8 (1) Determine the manner in which the test shall be  
9 administered.

10 (2) Offer students the opportunity to take the test at least  
11 three times each year as follows:

12 (i) Once in the fall.

13 (ii) Once in the spring

14 (iii) Once in the summer.

15 (3) Indicate that a student has satisfied the requirements  
16 of this section in a student's academic record.

17 (c) Each student shall be permitted to take the test  
18 required under subsection (a) as many times as necessary in  
19 order to meet the requirements of this section.

20 (d) A student with an individualized education program shall  
21 not be required to comply with the requirements of this section  
22 if the provisions of the student's individualized education  
23 program indicate otherwise.

24 (e) The chief school administrator of a school entity may  
25 waive the requirements of this section for students in grade  
26 twelve on a case by case basis for good cause in extenuating  
27 circumstances. Waivers granted under this subsection shall not  
28 exceed ten percent (10%) of the students in the graduating class  
29 of the school entity.

30 (f) The department shall post on its publicly accessible

1 Internet website links to the one hundred (100) question civics  
2 test used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration  
3 Services and any related resources offered by the United States  
4 Citizenship and Immigration Services. The department shall also  
5 post on its publicly accessible Internet website any additional  
6 materials that the department deems useful to school entities in  
7 complying with the requirement in this section.

8 (g) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require  
9 school entities to collect and report new data to the  
10 department.

11 (h) As used in this section, the following words and phrases  
12 shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection, unless  
13 the context clearly indicates otherwise:

14 "School entity" shall mean each school district, area  
15 vocational-technical school, intermediate unit, charter school,  
16 cyber charter school, regional charter school, or nonpublic  
17 school from which a student may graduate high school.

18 "Department" shall mean the Department of Education of the  
19 Commonwealth.

20 "Individualized education program" shall mean an  
21 individualized education program established under 22 Pa. Code  
22 Ch. 14 (relating to special education services and programs).

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