

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 723 Session of 2017

INTRODUCED BY RAFFERTY, DINNIMAN, LANGERHOLC, MARTIN, FOLMER, AUMENT, SCARNATI, FONTANA, ARGALL, HUTCHINSON, WAGNER, MCGARRIGLE, REGAN, ALLOWAY, McILHINNEY, SABATINA, SCAVELLO, WHITE, BLAKE, VULAKOVICH, BARTOLOTTA, EICHELBERGER AND RESCHENTHALER, MAY 19, 2017

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, MAY 19, 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
 17 correctly answer at least sixty percent (60%) of the questions
 18 on a test that is identical to the one hundred (100) question

1 civics test used by the United States Citizenship and
2 Immigration Services.

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

6 (1) Determine the manner in which the test shall be
7 administered.

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

10 (i) Once in the fall.

11 (ii) Once in the spring.

12 (iii) Once in the summer.

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

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

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

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

28 (f) The department shall post on its publicly accessible
29 Internet website links to the one hundred (100) question civics
30 test used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration

1 Services and any related resources offered by the United States
2 Citizenship and Immigration Services. The department shall also
3 post on its publicly accessible Internet website any additional
4 materials that the department deems useful to school entities in
5 complying with the requirement in this section.

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

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

12 "Department" shall mean the Department of Education of the
13 Commonwealth.

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

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

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