

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, BAROLOTTA, EICHELBERGER, RESCHENTHALER, BOSCOLA, BROWNE AND COSTA, MAY 19, 2017

AS AMENDED ON SECOND CONSIDERATION, NOVEMBER 14, 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, further providing
6 for courses of study.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. Section 1605 of the act of March 10, 1949
10 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, is
11 amended by adding a subsection to read:

12 ~~Section 1605. Courses of Study. \* \* \*~~ <--

13 ~~(d) Beginning with the 2019 2020 school year, the curriculum~~
14 ~~for social studies under subsection (a) and courses enumerated~~
15 ~~in that subsection shall contain a unit of study that includes~~
16 ~~civics related subject matter of which naturalized citizens are~~
17 ~~required to demonstrate a knowledge. The following shall apply:~~

18 ~~(1) As a means to inform civics related curricula and~~

~~1 instruction, under any of the enumerated courses of study under  
2 subsection (b), a test shall be administered which is identical  
3 to the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the  
4 United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to survey a  
5 student's knowledge of the fundamentals of the history,  
6 principles and form of the Government of the United States.~~

~~7 (2) The Department of Education shall promulgate rules and  
8 regulations to implement the provisions of this subsection,  
9 which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:~~

~~10 (i) requiring that the aggregated results of the test for a  
11 public, private or parochial school be reported to the  
12 Department of Education on an annual basis to help inform the  
13 overall State approach to the social studies curriculum;~~

~~14 (ii) providing a written report to the Education Committee  
15 of the Senate and the Education Committee of the House of  
16 Representatives within five years after the implementation of  
17 this subsection to measure the impact of the test on the social  
18 studies curriculum; and~~

~~19 (iii) developing a certificate of recognition for those  
20 students scoring one hundred percent (100%) on the test.~~

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

~~22 SECTION 1605. COURSES OF STUDY.--\* \* \*~~

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~~23 (D) (1) BEGINNING IN THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR, EACH SCHOOL  
24 ENTITY SHALL:~~

~~25 (I) PROVIDE INSTRUCTION TO STUDENTS RELATING TO THE CONTENT  
26 OF THE ONE HUNDRED (100) QUESTION CIVICS TEST USED BY THE UNITED  
27 STATES CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES AT LEAST ONCE DURING  
28 GRADES SEVEN THROUGH TWELVE. THE INSTRUCTION MAY BE PROVIDED AS  
29 A SEPARATE COURSE OR AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT WITHIN A COURSE  
30 WHICH PROVIDES INSTRUCTION IN SOCIAL STUDIES UNDER SUBSECTION~~

1 (A).

2 (II) ADMINISTER A TEST TO STUDENTS THAT IS IDENTICAL TO THE  
3 ONE HUNDRED (100) QUESTION CIVICS TEST USED BY THE UNITED STATES  
4 CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE  
5 COURSE OR INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT PROVIDED FOR UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH  
6 (I). EACH SCHOOL ENTITY SHALL DETERMINE THE MANNER IN WHICH THE  
7 TEST SHALL BE ADMINISTERED.

8 (2) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:

9 (I) NO LATER THAN THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR, POST ON ITS  
10 PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE INTERNET WEBSITE LINKS TO THE ONE HUNDRED  
11 (100) QUESTION CIVICS TEST USED BY THE UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP  
12 AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES AND ANY RELATED RESOURCES OFFERED BY  
13 THE UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES. THE  
14 DEPARTMENT SHALL POST ANY ADDITIONAL MATERIALS AND RESOURCES  
15 THAT THE DEPARTMENT DEEMS USEFUL TO A SCHOOL ENTITY IN COMPLYING  
16 WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SUBSECTION.

17 (II) CONDUCT AN ELECTRONIC SURVEY OF EACH SCHOOL ENTITY AT  
18 THE CONCLUSION OF THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR AND AT THE  
19 CONCLUSION OF EVERY OTHER SCHOOL YEAR THEREAFTER REQUESTING  
20 INFORMATION REGARDING THE CIVICS TEST REQUIRED UNDER PARAGRAPH  
21 (1)(II). EACH SCHOOL ENTITY SHALL RESPOND TO THE SURVEY NO LATER  
22 THAN NOVEMBER 30 FOLLOWING THE SCHOOL YEAR FOR WHICH THE SURVEY  
23 IS CONDUCTED. THE SURVEY SHALL ONLY REQUEST THE FOLLOWING  
24 INFORMATION REGARDING THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING SCHOOL YEAR:

25 (A) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO TOOK THE CIVICS TEST.

26 (B) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO ATTAINED A PASSING  
27 GRADE ON THE CIVICS TEST BY ANSWERING AT LEAST SIXTY PERCENT  
28 (60%) OF THE TEST QUESTIONS CORRECTLY.

29 (C) THE GRADE LEVEL OR LEVELS IN WHICH THE CIVICS TEST WAS  
30 ADMINISTERED.

1 (D) THE COURSE OR COURSES IN WHICH THE CIVICS TEST WAS  
2 ADMINISTERED.

3 (III) MAKE THE DATA COLLECTED FROM THE SURVEYS CONDUCTED  
4 UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (II) AVAILABLE ON ITS PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE  
5 INTERNET WEBSITE.

6 (IV) DEVELOP A CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION FOR STUDENTS WHO  
7 PASSED THE CIVICS TEST BY ANSWERING ONE HUNDRED PERCENT (100%)  
8 OF THE TEST QUESTIONS CORRECTLY AND MAKE THE CERTIFICATE  
9 AVAILABLE ON ITS PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE INTERNET WEBSITE FOR USE BY  
10 SCHOOL ENTITIES.

11 (3) A STUDENT WITH AN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM SHALL  
12 NOT BE REQUIRED TO TAKE THE CIVICS TEST REQUIRED UNDER PARAGRAPH  
13 (1)(II) IF THE PROVISIONS OF THE STUDENT'S INDIVIDUALIZED  
14 EDUCATION PROGRAM INDICATE OTHERWISE.

15 (4) AS USED IN THIS SUBSECTION, THE FOLLOWING WORDS AND  
16 PHRASES SHALL HAVE THE MEANINGS GIVEN TO THEM IN THIS PARAGRAPH,  
17 UNLESS THE CONTEXT CLEARLY INDICATES OTHERWISE:

18 "DEPARTMENT" SHALL MEAN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OF THE  
19 COMMONWEALTH.

20 "INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM" SHALL MEAN AN  
21 INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM UNDER 22 PA. CODE CH. 14  
22 (RELATING TO SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND PROGRAMS).

23 "SCHOOL ENTITY" SHALL MEAN A SCHOOL DISTRICT, AREA  
24 VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL, INTERMEDIATE UNIT, CHARTER SCHOOL,  
25 CYBER CHARTER SCHOOL, REGIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL OR NONPUBLIC  
26 SCHOOL.

27 SECTION 2. THIS ACT SHALL TAKE EFFECT IN 60 DAYS.