

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 481 Session of 2023

INTRODUCED BY SOLOMON, MADDEN, SANCHEZ, CIRESI, KENYATTA,
GUENST, HILL-EVANS, SHUSTERMAN AND BRIGGS, MARCH 16, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MARCH 16, 2023

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 certification of teachers,
6 providing for "What is your Pennsylvania Story" continuing
7 professional development course; and, in terms and courses of
8 study, further providing for Holocaust, genocide and human
9 rights violations instruction.

10 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
11 hereby enacts as follows:

12 Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known
13 as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended by adding a
14 section to read:

15 Section 1221. "What is your Pennsylvania Story" Continuing
16 Professional Development Course.--(a) The department shall
17 develop and implement a continuing professional development
18 course on each student's "What is your Pennsylvania Story" in
19 anticipation of the United States semiquincentennial that may be
20 used by:

21 (1) Professional educators to satisfy the requirements of

1 section 1205.2.

2 (2) School or system leaders to satisfy the requirements of
3 section 1205.5.

4 (3) Paraprofessionals to satisfy staff development
5 requirements under 22 Pa. Code § 14.105 (relating to personnel).

6 (b) The department shall develop the continuing professional
7 development course in a manner which provides professional
8 educators with information and strategies which can be
9 incorporated into instruction and general interactions with
10 students in order to encourage students to express who they are
11 as the United States approaches its semiquincentennial, which
12 shall include this Commonwealth's unique heritage of religious
13 freedom and relationship to the development of the Constitution
14 of the United States and may include students' experiences with
15 how the students and the students' families have navigated with
16 our democracy and religious freedoms.

17 (c) The continuing professional development course shall
18 enhance the ability of students to interact effectively with one
19 another as students in each county of this Commonwealth, and
20 students shall share "What is your Pennsylvania Story," which
21 may include the following:

22 (1) Awareness of a person's own cultural worldview.

23 (2) Attitude toward cultural differences.

24 (3) Knowledge of different cultural practices and
25 worldviews.

26 (4) Cross-cultural skills.

27 (d) The continuing professional development course shall be
28 research-based and include training on the following:

29 (1) Information and strategies, including listening to the
30 unique "What is your Pennsylvania Story" of students, to

1 encourage students to:

2 (i) Become more historically and culturally aware of this
3 Commonwealth's unique heritage of religious freedom.

4 (ii) Reject ethnic, cultural and religious biases.

5 (2) Resolving disputes between students that result from
6 ethnic and cultural disputes.

7 (3) Resolving disputes between students that result from
8 religious biases.

9 (4) The dynamics of prejudice and discrimination that impede
10 effective learning and dialogue principles for effective
11 communication.

12 (5) Civil rights awareness.

13 (6) Intellectual, physical and behavioral disability
14 awareness.

15 (e) Continuing professional development course materials may
16 include the following:

17 (1) Materials that educate students by introducing the
18 students to various cultures through the stories that students
19 relay about who the students are and how the students' families
20 weave into the Pennsylvania and United States experience.

21 (2) Teaching aids that allow students to explore cultures
22 through food, art, books, movies, dance, traditions and cross-
23 cultural experiences.

24 (3) Resources that allow students to explore the cultural
25 experience of other people, the history, present-day experiences
26 and connection to the American culture and fabric of our land.

27 (4) Educational aids that provide students with information
28 on the historical and lived experiences of the inhabitants of
29 this Commonwealth, the inhabitants' experiences arriving in this
30 Commonwealth and development over the years.

1 (f) By July 31, 2023, and each July 31 thereafter until
2 2028, the department shall submit to the chairperson and
3 minority chairperson of the Education Committee of the Senate
4 and the chairperson and minority chairperson of the Education
5 Committee of the House of Representatives a report which shall
6 include:

7 (1) The number of professional educators that have enrolled
8 in the continuing professional development course.

9 (2) The number of professional educators that have completed
10 the continuing professional development course.

11 (3) The number of school entities that have implemented
12 classroom instruction in the "What is your Pennsylvania Story"
13 curriculum.

14 (4) Issues that professional educators, administrators,
15 students or the department have identified and need to be
16 addressed.

17 (g) The continuing professional development course under
18 this section shall be voluntary and offered online at no cost to
19 professional educators.

20 (h) The department shall review the training materials every
21 two (2) years and issue revisions if necessary to ensure best
22 practices in the field.

23 (i) The department may approve other providers of continuing
24 professional development course and staff development that meets
25 the criteria of this section.

26 (j) As used in this section, the following words and phrases
27 shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection unless
28 the context clearly indicates otherwise:

29 "Department." The Department of Education of the
30 Commonwealth.

1 "Paraprofessional." An instructional paraprofessional within
2 the meaning of 22 Pa. Code § 14.105.

3 "Professional educator." As defined in section 1205.2(o).

4 "School or system leaders." As defined in section 1205.5(g).

5 "What is your Pennsylvania Story." A student's understanding
6 and observance of who the student is and the unique lived
7 experiences that each student and the student's family bring to
8 the Pennsylvania story.

9 Section 2. Section 1554(a), (b) (1) and (c) of the act are
10 amended to read:

11 Section 1554. Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights
12 Violations Instruction.--(a) (1) Beginning with school year
13 2015-2016, each school entity may offer instruction in the
14 Holocaust, genocide and human rights violations to students. The
15 instruction shall be integrated within the social studies and
16 language arts courses of study required in accordance with State
17 Board of Education regulations. Instruction may also be
18 integrated into other appropriate courses of study.

19 (2) The [Holocaust, genocide and human rights violations]
20 instruction permitted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall:

21 (i) Be age appropriate.

22 (ii) Be sequential in method of study.

23 (iii) Communicate the connection between national, ethnic,
24 racial [or], religious or cultural intolerance and the subjects
25 described in subsection (b).

26 (iv) Communicate the impact of personal responsibility,
27 civic engagement and societal response within the context of the
28 subjects described in subsection (b).

29 (3) School entities may utilize any appropriate public or
30 private materials, personnel and other resources in developing

1 and implementing the program of instruction permitted pursuant
2 to paragraph (1). The Department of Education shall distribute
3 information about appropriate curriculum materials to each
4 school entity. School entities may utilize any curriculum that
5 complies with the requirements of this subsection.

6 (b) (1) The Department of Education shall establish
7 curriculum guidelines [no later than twelve (12) months after
8 the effective date of this section] to foster implementation of
9 this section by school entities. The guidelines shall encourage
10 the inclusion of all of the following subjects where appropriate
11 in the instruction:

12 (i) The breadth of the history of the Holocaust, including
13 the Third Reich dictatorship, concentration camp system,
14 persecution of Jews and non-Jews, Jewish and non-Jewish
15 resistance and post-World War II trials.

16 (ii) The definition, history, response and actions taken in
17 the face of genocide, including the Holocaust and any other
18 genocide perpetrated against humanity, including the Rwandan
19 genocide and other genocides committed in Africa, Asia and
20 Europe.

21 (iii) Human rights violations.

22 (iv) Anti-Semitism, racism and the abridgment of civil
23 rights.

24 (v) "What is your Pennsylvania Story" curriculum.

25 * * *

26 (c) [Beginning with the 2015-2016 school year, the] The
27 Department of Education shall make available, to all school
28 entities, in-service training programs based upon the
29 instruction provided for under subsection (a) and the curriculum
30 guidelines established pursuant to subsection (b).

1 * * *

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