

PUBLIC SCHOOL CODE OF 1949 - ASSESSMENT OF CIVIC KNOWLEDGE

Act of Jun. 19, 2018, P.L. 227, No. 35

Cl. 24

Session of 2018

No. 2018-35

HB 564

AN ACT

Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An act relating to the public school system, including certain provisions applicable as well to private and parochial schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the laws relating thereto," in high schools, providing for assessment of civic knowledge.

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

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

Section 1605.1. Assessment of Civic Knowledge.--(a)

Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, each school entity:

(1) Shall administer at least once to students during grades seven through twelve a locally developed assessment of United States history, government and civics that includes the nature, purpose, principles and structure of United States constitutional democracy, the principles, operations and documents of United States government and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Each school entity shall determine the form of the assessment and the manner in which the assessment shall be administered and may administer the assessment at the conclusion of the course of study required under section 1605(a) or at the conclusion of another related course or instructional unit. A school entity may use the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Test to satisfy the requirements of this paragraph.

(2) Shall issue a certificate of recognition, developed by the department, to students who achieve a perfect score on the assessment administered under paragraph (1).

(b) The department shall:

(1) Within twelve (12) months of the effective date of this section, post on its publicly accessible Internet website links to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Test and any related resources offered by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. The department shall also post on its publicly accessible Internet website any additional materials that the department deems useful to school entities in complying with the requirements in this section.

(2) Conduct an electronic survey of each school entity at the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year and at the conclusion of every second school year thereafter requesting information concerning compliance with the requirements of this section. Each school entity shall respond to the survey no later than November 30 following the school year for which the survey is conducted. The survey shall only request the following information for the immediately preceding school year:

(i) The type of the assessment administered as required under subsection (a)(1).

(ii) The total number of students who took the assessment.

(iii) The total number of students who attained a passing grade on the assessment.

(iv) The grade level or levels in which the assessment was administered.

(v) The course or courses in which the assessment was administered.

(3) By January 1 of the year following the school year for which the survey is conducted, make the data collected from the surveys conducted under paragraph (2) available on its publicly accessible Internet website.

(4) Develop a certificate of recognition for a student who achieves a perfect score on the assessment under subsection (a)(1) and make the certificate available on the department's publicly accessible Internet website for use by a school entity.

(c) A student with an individualized education program shall not be required to take the assessment administered under subsection (a)(1) if the provisions of the student's individualized education program indicate otherwise.

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

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

"Individualized education program" shall mean a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed or revised in a meeting in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Public Law 91-230, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.) and 22 Pa. Code Ch. 14 (relating to special education services and programs).

"School entity" shall mean a school district, area vocational-technical school, intermediate unit, charter school, cyber charter school or regional charter school.

"United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Test" shall mean the one-hundred (100) question civics test used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

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

APPROVED--The 19th day of June, A.D. 2018.

TOM WOLF