

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2562 Session of
2000

INTRODUCED BY KIRKLAND, STAIRS, COLAFELLA, MUNDY, STEELMAN,
CURRY, ROBINSON, GRUCELA, ROEBUCK, JAMES, MYERS AND STURLA,
MAY 17, 2000

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MAY 17, 2000

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," excepting certain school districts
6 from the education empowerment list.

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

9 Section 1. Section 1703-B of the act of March 10, 1949
10 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, added
11 May 10, 2000 (P.L. , No.16), is amended to read:

12 Section 1703-B. Education Empowerment List.--(a) The
13 department shall place a school district that has a history of
14 low test performance on an education empowerment list, except
15 that no school district in a county of the second class A may be
16 placed on the education empowerment list prior to June 30, 2003.

17 The department shall immediately notify the school district of
18 its placement on the education empowerment list and shall
19 publish the list in the Pennsylvania Bulletin. A school district

1 may petition the department to exclude from its calculation
2 under this subsection the PSSA test score of any student who was
3 enrolled in the district for less than ninety (90) instructional
4 days of the school year in which the test was administered.

5 (b) The department shall provide a school district on the
6 education empowerment list with a list of every school in that
7 district with a history of low test performance. These schools
8 shall be listed based upon the percentage of students with a
9 history of low test performance. The department shall publish
10 the list in the Pennsylvania Bulletin.

11 (c) (1) No later than fourteen (14) days after notification
12 pursuant to subsection (a), the department shall establish an
13 academic advisory team for each school district placed on the
14 education empowerment list. The academic advisory team shall
15 work in the school district with the school district empowerment
16 team to assist in the development of the school district
17 improvement plan.

18 (2) The academic advisory team shall consist of no less than
19 three (3) nor more than six (6) members and shall be composed of
20 experts selected by the department, who possess knowledge and
21 experience in such areas as school or business administration,
22 staff development, early childhood education, curriculum
23 development, budget development or fiscal management, labor
24 relations or special education. These experts may include
25 certificated teachers and administrators, school board members,
26 school business officials, and academic experts or consultants.
27 The academic advisory team shall not be composed entirely of
28 department staff.

29 (d) (1) No later than thirty (30) days following the
30 placement of a school district on the education empowerment

1 list, the school district shall establish a school district
2 empowerment team to work with the academic advisory team
3 established under subsection (c) to develop a school district
4 improvement plan.

5 (2) The school district empowerment team shall consist of
6 eleven (11) members, as follows:

7 (i) One (1) member of the board of school directors who may
8 be the president or a designated member of the board.

9 (ii) The superintendent of the school district.

10 (iii) The school business manager or the individual
11 responsible for the fiscal management of the school district.

12 (iv) A principal from a district school selected by all
13 principals in the district.

14 (v) A teacher from a district school selected by all
15 teachers in the district.

16 (vi) Two (2) parents of students from district schools, at
17 least one of whom has a child in a district school identified
18 under subsection (b).

19 (vii) A local representative of business.

20 (viii) A local community leader.

21 (ix) Two (2) members of the general public, which may
22 include local law enforcement, social service providers or
23 health care providers serving the school district.

24 (3) The board of school directors shall establish procedures
25 for selecting the parents, the business and community leaders
26 and members of the general public. The procedures shall ensure
27 public awareness of these openings and input from local parent
28 organizations, local business organizations and community and
29 civic organizations.

30 (4) The school district empowerment team shall elect a

1 chairperson from among its membership at its first meeting. No
2 school director or employe of the school district shall be
3 eligible for election as chairperson.

4 (e) The school district improvement plan developed pursuant
5 to subsection (c) shall give priority consideration to
6 improvement of schools identified pursuant to subsection (b) and
7 shall set forth specific methods and goals for improving the
8 educational performance of each district school and the school
9 district, that include all of the following:

10 (1) Identification of districtwide academic standards, which
11 meet or exceed the academic standards under 22 Pa. Code, Ch. 4
12 (relating to academic standards and assessment).

13 (2) Performance goals, benchmarks and timetables to improve
14 academic performance for the school district and each school in
15 the school district that will enable the school district to be
16 removed from the education empowerment list.

17 (3) Revisions to the curriculum, instructional practices and
18 programming that will enable students to attain the academic
19 standards under paragraph (1).

20 (4) A system of assessments to measure the performance of
21 the school district, each school in the school district and
22 students in meeting the academic standards under paragraph (1).

23 (5) A system of academic accountability that provides for
24 specific consequences for students, each school in the school
25 district and administrators for attaining or failing to attain
26 levels of academic performance set forth in the school district
27 improvement plan.

28 (6) Specific procedures to inform parents or guardians and
29 the community of the performance of each school in the school
30 district and to increase their participation.

1 (7) Specific policies and procedures to increase the
2 authority to individual schools and responsibility for
3 performance of individual schools, including granting individual
4 schools greater control of their personnel, budget and
5 educational program.

6 (8) A system of school selection that to the greatest extent
7 possible allows parents to choose the public school in the
8 district their child can attend.

9 (9) Professional development activities and programs that
10 will assist teachers and administrators in enabling students to
11 attain academic standards.

12 (10) Policies and procedures to assure a safe and secure
13 environment in schools in the district.

14 (f) The school district empowerment team shall hold at least
15 one public hearing prior to submitting its school district
16 improvement plan to the school board. Additionally, the plan
17 shall be made available for public inspection in the school
18 district offices for at least ten (10) days prior to its
19 submission to the board of school directors.

20 (g) The board of school directors shall transmit the final
21 school district improvement plan to the department with its
22 recommendations within one hundred twenty (120) days of the
23 establishment of the school district empowerment team under
24 subsection (d).

25 (h) The department shall return the school district
26 improvement plan to the board of school directors with its
27 approval or any request for modifications no later than thirty
28 (30) days following its submission. Any further modifications
29 made by the school district empowerment team shall be
30 transmitted to the department by the board of school directors.

1 (i) Amendments to an existing school district improvement
2 plan may be transmitted to the department, in a manner
3 prescribed by the department, whenever the school district
4 empowerment team working with the board of school directors
5 determines that the amendments will improve the performance of
6 the school district.

7 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2000, or
8 immediately, whichever is later.