
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 1579 Session of
1998

INTRODUCED BY SCHWARTZ, NOVEMBER 9, 1998

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, NOVEMBER 9, 1998

AN ACT

1 Requiring the Department of Education to provide technical
2 assistance and to report to the General Assembly and school
3 districts on alternative education programs.

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

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Department of
8 Education Study on Alternative Education Programs Act.

9 Section 2. Declaration of policy.

10 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

11 (1) Government and community officials as well as
12 medical and educational professionals are referring to
13 violence as an epidemic.

14 (2) Since 1988 teenage boys in the United States
15 generally have been more likely to die from gunshot wounds
16 than from all natural causes combined.

17 (3) There are nearly 3,000,000 incidents of crime on or
18 near school grounds each year.

1 (4) Gun-related violence takes the life of an American
2 child at least every three hours and the lives of at least 25
3 children, the equivalent of a full classroom, every three
4 days.

5 (5) Violence is a learned behavior. The basic values,
6 attitudes, behavior patterns and communication skills
7 acquired early in life are likely to be key in developing
8 predispositions for violent behavior later in life.

9 (6) School districts have the responsibility of
10 providing expelled students an alternative education.

11 Section 3. Department of Education technical assistance on
12 alternative education programs.

13 It shall be the duty of the Department of Education to
14 provide technical assistance to school districts on alternative
15 education programs for school-age children who have violated
16 school policies related to weapons, alcohol or drugs,
17 intentional injury to another person or who have been expelled
18 or served two or more long-term suspensions within one school
19 year. Such technical assistance shall include, but not be
20 limited to:

21 (1) Providing information on effective model alternative
22 education programs.

23 (2) On-site consultation on the development of
24 alternative education program design, curriculum development,
25 staff development and parent and community involvement
26 systems.

27 (3) Information on available Federal and State financial
28 resources to support alternative education programs.

29 Section 4. Department of Education study on alternative
30 education programs.

1 (a) Report required.--One year after the effective date of
2 this act, the Department of Education shall submit a report to
3 the Education Committee of the Senate, to the Education
4 Committee of the House of Representatives and to school
5 districts on the issue of alternative education programs for
6 school-age children who have violated school policies related to
7 weapons, alcohol or drugs, intentional injury to another person
8 or who have been expelled or served two or more long-term
9 suspensions within one school year.

10 (b) Report components.--The report shall include:

11 (1) An overview of the effectiveness of existing
12 alternative education programs.

13 (2) Recommendations on standards for alternative
14 education programs in this Commonwealth.

15 (3) An evaluation of the need for mandating specific
16 alternative education programs in Commonwealth school
17 districts.

18 (4) Recommendations for other actions by the General
19 Assembly or local school districts to respond to the problem
20 of school-age children who have violated school policies
21 related to weapons, alcohol or drugs, intentional injury to
22 another person or who have been expelled or served two or
23 more long-term suspensions within one school year.

24 (c) Appointment of advisory panel.--The Secretary of
25 Education shall appoint an advisory panel to provide
26 recommendations to the Department of Education on the
27 development of technical assistance resources.

28 (d) Members of advisory panel.--The advisory panel shall
29 consist of at least seven members, including the following:

30 (1) A representative of juvenile court judges.

- 1 (2) A representative of the child welfare system.
- 2 (3) An educator.
- 3 (4) A parent.
- 4 (5) A resident of this Commonwealth who is active in
- 5 community antiviolenace efforts.
- 6 (6) A representative from the field of law enforcement.
- 7 (7) A child psychologist.
- 8 Section 4. Effective date.
- 9 This act shall take effect immediately.