

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 1465 Session of
2002

INTRODUCED BY SCHWARTZ, O'PAKE, MELLOW, LOGAN, COSTA, BODACK,
WAGNER, STACK, STOUT, C. WILLIAMS, KUKOVICH, TARTAGLIONE,
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LAVALLE, WOZNIAK, FUMO, CONTI, RHOADES, GREENLEAF, PUNT AND
TOMLINSON, JUNE 7, 2002

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, JUNE 7, 2002

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," establishing criteria and authority
6 for school districts to include character education in
7 curriculum planning and the Character Education Grant
8 Program.

9 The General Assembly finds that:

10 (1) Character education assists in positive social,
11 emotional and ethical development of students by teaching,
12 modeling and practicing basic civic values and character
13 traits.

14 (2) Integration of these character traits into the
15 curriculum, extracurricular activities and school-wide
16 culture combined with an emphasis on community outreach and a
17 service ethic furthers the internalization of core civic
18 values.

19 (3) Where character education initiatives have been

1 assessed in studies spanning over 20 years, results
2 consistently show that students in those schools:

3 (i) Engage in more pro-social behavior.

4 (ii) Are more skilled at resolving interpersonal
5 conflicts.

6 (iii) Are more concerned about others.

7 (iv) Are more committed to civic values.

8 (v) Are more interested in learning.

9 (4) The purposes of a character education program are
10 to:

11 (i) Educate students in basic civic values and
12 character traits that are:

13 (A) Beneficial and essential to civilized
14 society.

15 (B) Common to the diverse social, cultural and
16 religious groups of this Commonwealth.

17 (ii) Instill in students a service ethic and
18 encourage individual outreach to the community.

19 (iii) Promote student achievement and learning and
20 develop civic-minded students through character
21 education.

22 (iv) Reduce student disciplinary problems through
23 character education.

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

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

29 ARTICLE XV-D

30 CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM

1 Section 1501-D. Definitions.

2 The following words and phrases when used in this article
3 shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
4 context clearly indicates otherwise:

5 "Character education." A course of instruction designed to
6 educate and assist students in developing basic civic values and
7 character traits, a service ethic and community outreach and
8 thus to improve the school environment and student achievement
9 and learning.

10 "Character education program" or "program." A program
11 designed and implemented by a school district to provide a
12 course of character education to students in that school
13 district. This term includes, but is not limited to:

14 (1) Professional education for professional educators
15 for the delivery of character education.

16 (2) Participation in professional education programs by
17 members of the Character Education Advisory Group.

18 "Department." The Department of Education of the
19 Commonwealth.

20 "Grant program." The Character Education Grant Program
21 established by section 1504-D.

22 "Professional educator." An individual who holds a
23 Pennsylvania teacher, educational specialist or administrative
24 certification or letter of eligibility.

25 "Secretary." The Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth.
26 Section 1502-D. Character education program.

27 (a) Authorization.--The board of school directors of a
28 school district may establish and implement a character
29 education program in its schools.

30 (b) Curriculum contents.--The program may include and teach

1 the following basic civil values and character traits:

2 (1) Trustworthiness, including honesty, integrity,
3 reliability and loyalty.

4 (2) Respect, including regard for others, tolerance and
5 courtesy.

6 (3) Responsibility, including hard work, economic self-
7 reliance, accountability, diligence, perseverance and self-
8 control.

9 (4) Fairness, including justice, consequences of bad
10 behavior, principles of nondiscrimination and freedom from
11 prejudice.

12 (5) Caring, including kindness, empathy, compassion,
13 consideration, generosity and charity.

14 (6) Citizenship, including love of country, concern for
15 the common good, respect for authority and the law and
16 community mindedness.

17 (c) Additional elements.--The program may also include and
18 teach the importance of a service ethic and community outreach.

19 (d) Character education advisory group.--

20 (1) If a board of school directors elects to establish
21 the program, the board of school directors shall develop the
22 program in consultation with a character education advisory
23 group. The board of directors of a school district shall
24 appoint the members of the character education advisory
25 group.

26 (2) A character education advisory group shall consult
27 with and advise the board of school directors in the
28 development of the program. The members of the character
29 education advisory group shall elect a chairperson of the
30 group.

1 (3) The board of school directors shall appoint to the
2 character education advisory group no less than two
3 representatives from each of the following groups:

4 (i) Parents and legal guardians of students in the
5 school district.

6 (ii) Teachers and administrators employed by the
7 school district.

8 (iii) Other members of the community where the
9 school district is located, including social, cultural,
10 business and religious leaders.

11 (4) The board of school directors shall:

12 (i) Cooperate and consult with the character
13 education advisory group.

14 (ii) Provide assistance and relevant materials to
15 the character education advisory group.

16 (5) (i) The character education advisory group shall
17 consult with and advise the board of school directors
18 until such time that the program is fully developed and
19 deemed completed.

20 (ii) The board of school directors shall have the
21 sole authority to determine the completion of the
22 program, and may elect to continue the duration of the
23 character education advisory group for up to two
24 additional years for the purpose of receiving
25 consultation and advice from the character education
26 advisory group regarding the school district's
27 implementation of the program.

28 (e) Integration of concepts into total curriculum.--The
29 program shall be integrated into the school procedures and
30 environment and structured to instruct primarily through

example. Classroom instruction may also be used to supplement the program.

Section 1503-D. Department duties and powers.

The department shall:

(1) Establish criteria and guidelines for the establishment and implementation of programs that are consistent with this article. These guidelines shall also include methods of evaluating the programs and curricula.

(2) Provide resources and technical assistance to boards of directors of school districts regarding the establishment and implementation of successful programs, upon the request of the board of directors of the school district.

(3) Identify and analyze effective programs and practices and related professional development for professional educators and provide such information to a school district upon request of the board of directors of the school district.

(4) Collect and disseminate among school districts information regarding programs and practices and potential support sources, including character education programs that have been successfully established and implemented in other states.

(5) Provide resources and technical assistance to boards of school directors of school districts that support the professional development of professional educators in the establishment and implementation of the program.

(6) Collect and disseminate among school districts information regarding effective professional education for professional educators regarding the establishment and implementation of the program.

1 (7) Seek, apply for and accept grants or contributions
2 of funds from any public or private source, including the
3 acceptance of Federal funds appropriated by the General
4 Assembly for the purposes of this article.

5 (8) Establish and award grants under the grant program
6 to assist school districts in establishing and implementing
7 programs.

8 (9) Maintain a list of school districts that have
9 established and implemented the program pursuant to this
10 article.

11 (10) Prepare and submit an annual report to the
12 Education Committee of the Senate and the Education Committee
13 of the House of Representatives regarding the administration
14 and operation of programs and grants awarded under the grant
15 program. The report shall include:

16 (i) A summary of the guidelines and criteria
17 established by the department and the establishment and
18 operation of the grant program.

19 (ii) A listing of the sources of funding sought by
20 the department for use in the grant program.

21 (iii) A listing of the number of school districts
22 that established and implemented programs.

23 (iv) A description of each school district's program
24 and the integration into the curriculum.

25 (v) A description of measures utilized by school
26 districts to provide parent, professional educator and
27 community involvement.

28 Section 1504-D. Character Education Grant Program.

29 (a) Establishment.--There is hereby established in the
30 department the Character Education Grant Program for the purpose

1 of funding the establishment and implementation of a program by
2 a school district.

3 (b) Eligibility.--A school district, that establishes and
4 implements the program in compliance with the requirements
5 established under section 1502-D and with department criteria
6 and guidelines established under section 1503-D, may apply to
7 the department for a grant. Grants shall be awarded to eligible
8 school districts from funds appropriated and funds received by
9 the department for this purpose.

10 (c) Permitted uses.--The grant shall be used by a school
11 district to fund the establishment and implementation of the
12 program.

13 (d) Adoption of application procedures.--The secretary shall
14 adopt such procedures, rules and form as may be necessary to
15 implement this grant program by regulation.

16 (e) Application forms.--Applications shall be made to the
17 department in such form and at such time as the secretary may
18 prescribe by regulation.

19 (f) Other funding sources.--Funds received under the grant
20 program may be used in conjunction with funds received from any
21 other public or private source.

22 Section 1505-D. Prohibited instruction.

23 Nothing in this article shall be construed to authorize a
24 board of school directors of a school district to establish and
25 implement the program in such a manner that it instructs,
26 proselytizes or indoctrinates students in a specific religious
27 or political belief.

28 Section 1506-D. Local control.

29 Nothing in this article shall be construed to require a board
30 of school directors of a school district to establish and

1 implement the program or to apply for any grant from the
2 Commonwealth or any other source for the purposes of funding the
3 establishment or implementation of the program.

4 Section 2. This act shall take effect as follows:

5 (1) The addition of section 1503-D(1), (3) and (7) of
6 the act shall take effect immediately.

7 (2) This section shall take effect immediately.

8 (3) The remainder of this act shall take effect in 90
9 days.