
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 157 Session of
2011

INTRODUCED BY FONTANA, PIPPY, BROWNE, TARTAGLIONE, ERICKSON,
FARNESE, WILLIAMS, WARD, BOSCOLA, COSTA, FERLO, HUGHES,
BREWSTER, WASHINGTON, DINNIMAN, KITCHEN, GREENLEAF, KASUNIC,
STACK, YUDICHAK, EARLL, BLAKE AND SOLOBAY, JANUARY 18, 2011

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, JANUARY 18, 2011

AN ACT

1 Establishing a task force within the Department of Education,
2 providing for its powers and duties and providing for
3 administrative support.

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

6 Section 1. Task force on homeless children's education.

7 (a) Establishment.--There is established within the
8 Department of Education a task force on homeless children's
9 education.

10 (b) Composition.--The task force shall be composed of the
11 following members:

12 (1) The Secretary of Education, who shall act as
13 chairperson of the task force.

14 (2) The Secretary of Public Welfare or a designee from
15 the Office of Children, Youth and Families.

16 (3) Fifteen members to be appointed by the Secretary of
17 Education, within 30 days of the effective date of this act,

1 to include:

2 (i) Five representatives of local agencies assisting
3 homeless children and families, one each from
4 southwestern, northwestern, central, southeastern and
5 northeastern Pennsylvania.

6 (ii) Four representatives from the Commonwealth's
7 public schools, one of which shall be from a charter
8 school, representing urban, suburban and rural areas of
9 Pennsylvania.

10 (iii) Three representatives from Pennsylvania
11 intermediate units.

12 (iv) Three representatives from Pennsylvania social
13 services organizations or advocacy organizations with
14 experience working with homeless children and education
15 issues.

16 (c) Study.--The task force shall conduct a study of the
17 homeless child population and their educational needs in this
18 Commonwealth. The Department of Education shall develop uniform
19 forms and surveys necessary for obtaining the information
20 required for the study. The study shall include:

21 (1) A demographic survey of homeless parents and
22 homeless youth that includes, but is not limited to:

23 (i) length of homelessness;

24 (ii) number of episodes of homelessness;

25 (iii) highest educational level attained by homeless
26 parents;

27 (iv) living situation of homeless students;

28 (v) ages and grade levels of homeless students;

29 (vi) school attendance rates and gaps in enrollment
30 and truancy rates;

- 1 (vii) average number of school changes;
- 2 (viii) access to remedial services;
- 3 (ix) access to after school programs;
- 4 (x) access to and use of Title I funds and all other
- 5 funding sources to support homeless students;
- 6 (xi) drop-out rates of homeless students;
- 7 (xii) standardized test scores, including State
- 8 standardized test scores; and
- 9 (xiii) causes and signs of homelessness.

10 (2) An assessment of the difficulties in serving
11 homeless students.

12 (3) An assessment of different school-aged students,
13 including unaccompanied youth.

14 (4) An assessment of barriers to serving the needs of
15 preschool children experiencing homelessness, including
16 ensuring access to early intervention services.

17 (5) An assessment of successful strategies for serving
18 homeless students, including strategies for informing
19 parents, students and school districts of the educational
20 services available to homeless students.

21 (6) An assessment of the relationship between homeless
22 shelters and school personnel and effective protocols to
23 serve homeless students.

24 (7) An assessment of best practices used in other states
25 to educate homeless students.

26 (8) An assessment of methods for the accurate
27 identification and counting of homeless students in pre-K
28 through twelfth grade, including unaccompanied youth.

29 (9) Recommendations regarding data currently collected
30 by the department that could be desegregated on an ongoing

1 basis in regard to homelessness of children.

2 (d) Report to the General Assembly.--The task force shall
3 issue a report of its findings and recommendations to the
4 Governor, the President pro tempore of the Senate, the Minority
5 Leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of
6 Representatives, the Minority Leader of the House of
7 Representatives, the chairman and minority chairman of the
8 Education Committee of the Senate and the chairman and minority
9 chairman of the Education Committee of the House of
10 Representatives, and provide periodic updates of this report at
11 least once every three years. The initial report shall be
12 submitted within one year after the first meeting of the task
13 force and distributed to those State and local agencies that
14 work with homeless children, as well as to all Pennsylvania
15 school districts. Subsequent reports shall be made based on a
16 schedule developed by the task force which shall be indicated in
17 the initial report.

18 (e) Meetings.--The task force shall meet at least once each
19 quarter and shall hold its first meeting within 60 days of the
20 effective date of this act.

21 (f) Compensation.--Task force members shall receive no
22 compensation for their services but shall be reimbursed for all
23 necessary travel and other reasonable expenses incurred in
24 connection with the performance of their duties as members.

25 (g) Duties of department.--The Department of Education shall
26 provide administrative support, office space and any other
27 technical assistance required by the task force to carry out its
28 duties under this section, including access to all reports and
29 data required by the Federal Government to comply with Title I
30 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Public

1 Law 89-10, 20 U.S.C. Ch. 63, et seq.) and McKinney-Vento
2 Homeless Assistance Act of 1986 (Public Law 100-77, 42 U.S.C. §
3 11301, et seq.).

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