

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 890 Session of 2017

INTRODUCED BY DINNIMAN, DiSANTO, MARTIN, McGARRIGLE, BLAKE,  
KILLION, BREWSTER, FOLMER, COSTA AND WARD, SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

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," in preliminary provisions, providing  
6 for excusal of children from assessments.

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

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

12 Section 121.1. Excusal of Children from Assessments.--(a)  
13 (1) A parent or guardian of a child may submit to the public  
14 school entity where the child is enrolled a written request to  
15 excuse the child from any or all parts of an assessment based on  
16 the parent or guardian's objection on religious or philosophical  
17 grounds, the basis of a strong moral or ethical conviction  
18 similar to a religious belief, privacy concern or due to health  
19 concerns for the child. Such health concerns may include stress  
20 and anxiety in preparation for the assessment.

1     (2) A parent or guardian's objection on religious grounds  
2 shall follow the process specified under 22 Pa. Code § 4.4(d)  
3 (relating to general policies).

4     (b) (1) Notwithstanding any provision of law, a parent or  
5 guardian's written request to school officials to excuse his or  
6 her child from any or all parts of the assessments administered  
7 under this article shall be granted.

8     (2) No public school entity shall be penalized because a  
9 parent or guardian exercises the right established under  
10 subsection (a).

11     (c) For the purposes of this section:

12     "Assessment" or "accountability" shall mean the Pennsylvania  
13 System of School Assessment test, the Keystone Exam, an  
14 equivalent local assessment or another test established or  
15 approved by the State Board of Education or General Assembly to  
16 meet the requirements of section 2603-B(d)(10)(i) and required  
17 under the Every Student Succeeds Act (Public Law 114-95, 129  
18 Stat. 1802) or its successor statute.

19     "Public school entity" shall mean a school district,  
20 intermediate unit, joint school, area vocation-technical school,  
21 charter school or cyber charter school.

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