
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1487 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY DeLUCA, BERNSTINE, A. DAVIS, HILL-EVANS, MILLARD,
JOHNSON-HARRELL, KORTZ AND KOSIEROWSKI, MAY 22, 2019

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MAY 22, 2019

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 grounds and buildings, further
6 providing for approval by department of plans, etc., of
7 buildings and exceptions.

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

10 Section 1. Section 731 of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30,
11 No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended to
12 read:

13 Section 731. Approval by Department of Plans, etc., of
14 Buildings; Exceptions.--The Department of Education, with
15 respect to construction or reconstruction of public school
16 buildings, shall have the power and its duties shall be:

17 (1) To review all projects, plans and specifications for
18 school building construction or reconstruction, and to make
19 recommendations thereon to the General Assembly and the
20 Governor: Provided, however, That approval of the Department of

1 Education shall not be required for projects, plans and
2 specifications for school construction projects for which
3 reimbursement from the Commonwealth is not requested[;].

4 (2) To assist school districts in preplanning construction
5 and reconstruction projects, and offer such architectural,
6 engineering and financial advice as will enable the project to
7 comply with the standards prescribed by the State Board of
8 Education[;].

9 (3) To hold hearings on any or all projects and subpoena
10 witnesses, administer oaths, take testimony and compel the
11 production of documents relevant to any investigation[;].

12 (4) To act as liaison between the public, local school
13 officials, the General Assembly, and the Governor on school
14 building construction and reconstruction projects[;].

15 (5) To receive and investigate complaints from the public or
16 other source concerning any school building construction or
17 reconstruction project[;].

18 (6) To conduct investigations on any phase of school
19 building construction or reconstruction projects.

20 (7) To stop a school building construction or reconstruction
21 project and require a referendum if a school district fails to
22 comply with the requirements under section 701.1.

23 The Department of Education shall employ engineers,
24 architects, financial advisors, and such other staff personnel
25 as may be necessary for the proper performance of the duties of
26 the Department with respect to construction or reconstruction of
27 public school buildings.

28 No public school building shall be contracted for,
29 constructed, or reconstructed, in any school district of the
30 second, third, or fourth class until the plans and

1 specifications therefor have been approved by the Department of
2 Education.

3 When ordinary repairs are proposed, such as plastering,
4 painting, replacement of floors, improvement of school grounds,
5 repairing or providing walks, roadways or retaining walls, the
6 cost of which in districts of the second class or in districts
7 of the third and fourth class will not exceed fifteen thousand
8 dollars (\$15,000) per building, no approval shall be required.
9 Where any structural change is involved, such as moving or
10 adding doors, windows, partitions, making additions or any
11 excavations, or any work which may affect the safety or health
12 of the pupils, or any work which comes under the jurisdiction of
13 another department of the Commonwealth, approval of the
14 Department of Education shall be required regardless of the cost
15 of such structural change.

16 No school building shall be purchased by any school district
17 until such purchase shall have been approved by the Department
18 of Education. Such approval shall not be given unless the school
19 building to be purchased and any approved structural changes or
20 renovations meet the standards required to operate public school
21 buildings of a similar age currently in use in the Commonwealth.

22 A school district which submits an unsworn falsification to
23 the Department of Education to receive approval under this
24 section shall be subject to 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904 (relating to
25 unsworn falsification to authorities).

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