

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 331 Session of 2019

INTRODUCED BY BROOKS, GORDNER, BROWNE, AUMENT, BAKER, DiSANTO, HUTCHINSON, REGAN, STEFANO, TOMLINSON, J. WARD, K. WARD, COSTA, BREWSTER, DINNIMAN, KEARNEY, SANTARSIERO, SCHWANK, TARTAGLIONE AND YUDICHAK, FEBRUARY 26, 2019

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 26, 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 terms and courses of study,
 6 further providing for firefighter and emergency service
 7 training and establishing the Fire Training Fund.

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

10 Section 1. Section 1550 of the act of March 10, 1949
 11 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, is
 12 amended to read:

13 Section 1550. Firefighter and Emergency Service Training.--

14 (a) [Beginning with the 2003-2004 school year and each school
 15 year thereafter, a] A school district may offer firefighter and
 16 emergency service training as credit-earning courses to students
 17 of the age of sixteen (16) years or older, except as otherwise
 18 provided in subsection (c). Such courses may include:

19 (1) Training as a Firefighter I from the National Board on

1 Fire Service Professional Qualifications.

2 (2) Training as an emergency medical technician pursuant to
3 the act of July 3, 1985 (P.L.164, No.45), known as the
4 "Emergency Medical Services Act."

5 (b) A school district that offers firefighter and emergency
6 service training as credit-earning courses shall provide
7 transportation to and supervision during any firefighter and
8 emergency service training program that takes place off school
9 grounds. Supervision of training shall be conducted as a
10 cooperative education program in accordance with the provisions
11 of 22 Pa. Code § 11.28 (relating to out-of-school programs).

12 (c) The Secondary Education Fire Training Pilot Program is
13 established. The purpose of the pilot program is to provide high
14 school students with instruction through a partnership between
15 institutions of higher education and school districts or area
16 vocational-technical schools, or both, to increase the number of
17 individuals capable of becoming volunteer firefighters. The
18 pilot program shall be implemented in accordance with the
19 following:

20 (1) The State Fire Commissioner shall accept proposals from
21 institutions of higher education in this Commonwealth for the
22 pilot program. From the proposals submitted, the State Fire
23 Commissioner shall select three institutions of higher education
24 to offer the pilot program. The State Fire Commissioner, to the
25 greatest extent practicable, shall select one institution of
26 higher education each from the eastern, central and western
27 regions of this Commonwealth. Nothing in this section shall
28 prohibit an institution of higher education from incorporating
29 emergency medical services instruction in the pilot program.

30 (2) An institution of higher education selected by the State

1 Fire Commissioner shall operate the pilot program by entering
2 into an agreement with a school district or an area vocational-
3 technical school, or both, for the provision of fire instruction
4 to students who are in at least the ninth grade and leading to
5 Firefighter I certification.

6 (3) A nonlapsing, restricted account is established in the
7 State Treasury, to be known as the Fire Training Fund. The State
8 Fire Commissioner may accept monetary donations and other money
9 for deposit into the Fire Training Fund from a person, business,
10 foundation, tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of
11 the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (Public Law 99-514, 26 U.S.C.
12 § 501(c)(3)) or government entity on behalf of the Commonwealth.

13 (4) Money may be appropriated to the State Fire Commissioner
14 to carry out the provisions of this subsection. Each institution
15 of higher education offering the pilot program shall receive at
16 least one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) for the
17 duration of the pilot program.

18 (5) Any funds appropriated, donated or transferred under
19 this subsection and interest earned on the Fire Training Fund
20 shall be deposited into the Fire Training Fund.

21 (6) During the pilot program, the Legislative Budget and
22 Finance Committee shall conduct a survey of volunteer fire
23 companies in the municipalities surrounding the school districts
24 and area vocational-technical schools that participate in the
25 pilot program to determine whether the pilot program is
26 increasing the number of volunteer firefighters and any
27 additional recommendations. The results of the survey shall be
28 submitted to the chair and minority chair of the Veterans
29 Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee of the Senate and
30 the chair and minority chair of the Veterans Affairs and

1 Emergency Preparedness Committee of the House of Representatives
2 within six months of the expiration of the pilot program.

3 (7) The pilot program shall expire four years from the
4 effective date of this subsection.

5 (d) As used in this section, the term "institution of higher
6 education" means a community college operating under Article
7 XIX-A or a university within the State System of Higher
8 Education.

9 Section 2. This act shall take effect January 1, 2019, or
10 immediately, whichever is later.