

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 362 Session of 2021

INTRODUCED BY ISAACSON, BURGOS, CIRESI, FREEMAN, HILL-EVANS, HOHENSTEIN, KENYATTA, LONGIETTI, MADDEN, MERSKI, NEILSON, O'MARA, PASHINSKI, SANCHEZ, SCHLOSSBERG, SCHWEYER, SIMS, WEBSTER AND DELLOSO, FEBRUARY 3, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 3, 2021

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 charter schools, providing for
 6 study of charter school academic and financial practices.

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 1704-A. Study of Charter School Academic and
 13 Financial Practices.--(a) The State Board of Education shall
 14 conduct a comprehensive study outlining the best academic and
 15 financial practices of high-performing charter schools currently
 16 operating in this Commonwealth and the unsuccessful academic and
 17 financial practices of low-performing charter schools currently
 18 or previously operating in this Commonwealth. The study shall
 19 include a detailed assessment of the following:

1 (1) High-performing charter schools that have a proven
2 success record of providing improved opportunities to teachers,
3 parents, students and community members for establishing and
4 maintaining schools that operate independently from existing
5 school district structure, including how the schools
6 accomplished the following:

7 (i) improved student learning, including student growth
8 measures;

9 (ii) increased learning opportunities for all students,
10 including students with disabilities;

11 (iii) used different and innovative teaching methods;

12 (iv) identified new professional opportunities for teachers;

13 (v) expanded choices that improve the types of educational
14 opportunities that are available within the public school
15 system; and

16 (vi) met or exceeded measurable academic standards.

17 (2) Low-performing charter schools that continue to operate
18 or have closed and the lessons that can be learned from the
19 schools' academic or financial failures, including any fraud,
20 waste and mismanagement that occurred.

21 (b) The State Board of Education, in conducting the study,
22 shall give consideration to an examination of the factors
23 associated with high-performing and low-performing charter
24 schools, such as:

25 (1) the demographics of the students that the schools
26 educate;

27 (2) the schools' records of operating with integrity and any
28 conflicts of interest; and

29 (3) governance structure and local creation and oversight.

30 (c) The State Board of Education, based on the comprehensive

1 assessment of high-performing and low-performing charter schools
2 conducted, shall identify policies, regulations and legislative
3 changes needed to improve the academic and learning success of
4 charter school students.

5 (d) No later than twelve (12) months after the effective
6 date of this section, the State Board of Education shall issue a
7 report of its findings and recommendations to the General
8 Assembly.

9 (e) As used in this section:

10 "High-performing charter school" includes, at a minimum, a
11 charter school that achieved an SPP score of eighty (80) or
12 higher in any year.

13 "Low-performing charter school" includes a charter school
14 that obtained an SPP score of sixty (60) or lower in any year or
15 has closed due to fraud, waste or mismanagement.

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