

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 897 Session of 2023

INTRODUCED BY KINKEAD, ISAACSON, CIRESI, MADDEN, McANDREW, WARREN, SIEGEL, SANCHEZ, MALAGARI, HILL-EVANS, PARKER, ROZZI, CONKLIN, NEILSON, HOWARD, GREEN, GUZMAN, KENYATTA, WEBSTER, TAKAC, McNEILL AND T. DAVIS, APRIL 17, 2023

SENATOR ARGALL, EDUCATION, IN SENATE, AS AMENDED, JUNE 27, 2024

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 transfers of credits between
6 institutions of higher education, further providing for
7 definitions and for duties of public institutions of higher
8 education, providing for guaranteed admission, AND for <--
9 reports to General Assembly and for dispute resolution and <--
10 further providing for Transfer and Articulation Oversight
11 Committee, AND FURTHER PROVIDING for duties of department and <--
12 for applicability.

13 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
14 hereby enacts as follows:

15 Section 1. Section 2001-C of the act of March 10, 1949
16 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, is
17 amended by adding definitions to read:

18 Section 2001-C. Definitions.

19 The following words and phrases when used in this article
20 shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
21 context clearly indicates otherwise:

1 * * *

2 "Parallel baccalaureate degree program." A bachelor's degree
3 program in a comparable field of study and with similar
4 foundation-level, major-specific competencies as an associate
5 degree program, as articulated in program-to-program agreements.

6 * * *

7 "Receiving institution." The public institution of higher
8 education where a transfer student plans to enroll and to apply
9 previously earned credit toward a degree program.

10 * * *

11 Section 2. Section 2002-C(c) (1) of the act is amended to
12 read:

13 Section 2002-C. Duties of public institutions of higher
14 education.

15 * * *

16 (c) Other duties.--Each public institution of higher
17 education shall do all of the following:

18 (1) Agree to accept with full junior standing the
19 associate of arts or associate of science degree [into a] and
20 to apply all college-level credits earned to fulfill the
21 degree requirements at the public institution of higher
22 education, including major requirements and general education
23 requirements, toward the parallel baccalaureate degree
24 program as outlined in paragraph (3) [by the timelines
25 established by the Transfer and Articulation Oversight
26 Committee but] no later than December 31, [2011] 2023 2024. <--
27 For purposes of this paragraph, an associate of arts or
28 associate of science degree is a degree designed primarily
29 for transfer to a baccalaureate institution and must contain
30 a minimum of 60 credits. The following shall apply:

1 (i) A student with an associate of arts or associate
2 of science degree from a public institution of higher
3 education who is transferring into a parallel
4 baccalaureate degree program at another public
5 institution of higher education shall be awarded full
6 junior standing and shall not be required to
7 satisfactorily complete more than 60 credits to earn a
8 120 credit baccalaureate degree in a parallel program,
9 regardless of the courses the student took to earn the
10 associate degree prior to transferring, unless required
11 to meet accreditation or external licensure or
12 certification standards.

13 (ii) A student transferring from one public
14 institution of higher education to another public
15 institution of higher education shall have the same
16 requirements for admission to a particular academic
17 program and for retention as a student who began their
18 postsecondary education at the receiving institution.

19 (iii) A student transferring into a parallel
20 baccalaureate degree program with an associate of science
21 or associate of arts degree shall be guaranteed admission
22 to the parallel baccalaureate degree program, subject to
23 capacity, as long as the student meets the criteria for
24 admission required of students who began their education
25 at the receiving institution.

26 (iv) A public institution of higher education may
27 designate majors or programs of study that are limited
28 access by reason of accreditation, clinical or resource-
29 based capacity.

30 (v) A student transferring from a public institution

1 of higher education with an associate of arts or
2 associate of science degree or who has completed 30
3 credits of foundation courses, as defined by the Transfer
4 and Articulation Oversight Committee, shall have
5 satisfied the general education requirements at the
6 receiving institution, with possible exceptions made for
7 the following, provided that the exceptions do not extend
8 the student's time to the degree:

9 (A) One signature general education course of up
10 to three credits, if applicable.

11 (B) A prescribed general education course
12 required for the major, if not satisfactorily
13 completed.

14 (C) General education overlays satisfied in
15 advanced courses in the major.

16 * * *

17 Section 3. The act is amended by adding sections to read:
18 Section 2003.1-C. Guaranteed admission.

19 A public institution of higher education shall ensure the <--
20 following:

21 ~~(1) An THAT AN undergraduate student transferring from a~~ <--
22 ~~public community college with an associate of arts or~~
23 ~~associate of science degree shall be guaranteed admission~~
24 ~~into the parallel baccalaureate degree program at a public~~
25 ~~institution of higher education except in programs that have~~
26 ~~mandated admission requirements, including, but not limited~~
27 ~~to:~~

28 ~~(i) A program for teacher preparation.~~ <--

29 ~~(ii) A program requiring an audition.~~

30 ~~(iii) A program with GPA requirements.~~

1 ~~(iv) A program with additional entrance requirements~~
2 ~~imposed by an accreditor.~~

3 ~~(2) Starting with the 2024 spring semester,~~
4 ~~undergraduate students from a community college in this~~
5 ~~Commonwealth with an associate degree who fulfill the~~
6 ~~requirements of paragraph (1) shall receive priority~~
7 ~~enrollment in upper division coursework at the receiving~~
8 ~~institution over out of State students.~~

9 (1) A PROGRAM REQUIRING AN AUDITION. <--

10 (2) A PROGRAM WITH ADDITIONAL ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS
11 IMPOSED BY AN ACCREDITOR.

12 Section 2003.2-C. Reports to General Assembly.

13 For each academic year, the department shall prescribe data
14 requirements to be submitted by a public institution of higher
15 education and report to the General Assembly the following:

16 (1) Details of the progress made by a public institution
17 of higher education and an institution that elects to
18 participate under section 2006-C in furtherance of enabling
19 the transfer of credits between institutions, and which
20 recommends further action to be taken to ensure all students
21 which have completed credits in community colleges, shall be
22 able to transfer those credits to an institution of higher
23 education.

24 (2) Details of the ability of a student to transfer from
25 community colleges to institutions of higher education,
26 including the ability of students to graduate from
27 institutions of higher education. The report under this
28 section shall annually identify any issues encountered by
29 students in transferring from community colleges to
30 institutions of higher education, as well as issues

1 encountered by transfer students in graduating from
2 institutions of higher education.

3 (3) Any other information related to student transfer,
4 awarding of credit for prior learning or difficulties in the
5 ability of a student to transfer between public institutions
6 of higher education.

7 Section 2003.3 C. Dispute resolution. <--

8 The department shall establish and maintain a dispute
9 resolution committee for disputes arising over the acceptance of
10 transfer students and credits. The dispute resolution committee
11 shall:

12 (1) Be composed of the following membership:

13 (i) The Secretary of Education or a designee, who
14 shall serve as chair of the dispute resolution committee.

15 (ii) Three members representing community colleges.

16 (iii) Three members representing the State System of
17 Higher Education.

18 (iv) One member representing State related
19 institutions.

20 (v) One member representing independent institutions
21 of higher education that have elected to participate
22 under section 2006 C.

23 (vi) Other members as appointed by the chair of the
24 committee to the dispute resolution committee.

25 (2) Continue to develop dispute resolution policies and
26 procedures to be utilized when disputes arise relating to the
27 transfer and application of credits under this article.

28 (3) Resolve disputes involving disagreement over the
29 transfer or award of credits or the placement of students
30 between community colleges and institutions of higher

1 ~~education.~~

2 ~~(4) Resolve appeals from students transferring from~~
3 ~~community colleges who have been denied acceptance to an~~
4 ~~institution of higher education after the completion of an~~
5 ~~associate degree at a community college or who have been~~
6 ~~denied the acceptance of college level credits completed at a~~
7 ~~community college.~~

8 ~~(5) Report decisions regarding dispute resolutions and~~
9 ~~appeals as well as the dispute resolution committee's reasons~~
10 ~~for those decisions. Reports under this paragraph shall be~~
11 ~~provided regularly to institutions of higher education and~~
12 ~~community colleges to inform the application of the~~
13 ~~articulation process.~~

14 Section 4. Sections 2004 C(b) and (c) (5), 2005 C(4) (ii) and
15 2007 C of the act are amended to read:

16 Section 2004 C. Transfer and Articulation Oversight Committee.

17 * * *

18 ~~{(b) Dispute resolution subcommittee.}~~

19 ~~(1) The chair of the committee shall appoint a dispute~~
20 ~~resolution subcommittee comprised of:~~

21 ~~(i) Three members appointed under subsection (a) (1)~~

22 ~~(ii) (A).~~

23 ~~(ii) Three members appointed under subsection (a) (1)~~

24 ~~(ii) (B).~~

25 ~~(iii) One member appointed under subsection (a) (1)~~

26 ~~(ii) (D).~~

27 ~~(2) The chair of the committee may add members to the~~
28 ~~dispute resolution subcommittee.~~

29 ~~(3) The dispute resolution subcommittee shall develop~~
30 ~~dispute resolution policies and procedures to be utilized~~

1 ~~when disputes arise relating to the transfer and application~~
2 ~~of credits under this article.]~~

3 ~~(c) Duties of Transfer and Articulation Oversight~~
4 ~~Committee. The committee shall:~~

5 * * *

6 ~~[(5) Submit an annual report to the General Assembly~~
7 ~~that details the progress made by the public institutions of~~
8 ~~higher education and institutions that elect to participate~~
9 ~~under section 2006 C in furtherance of enabling the transfer~~
10 ~~of credits between such institutions and which recommends~~
11 ~~further action to be taken.]~~

12 * * *

13 SECTION 4. SECTIONS 2005-C(4) (II) AND 2007-C OF THE ACT ARE <--
14 AMENDED TO READ:

15 Section 2005-C. Duties of department.

16 The department shall:

17 * * *

18 (4) Provide for an electronic database or software
19 program and portal for the purpose of providing access to all
20 of the following information on an Internet website:

21 * * *

22 (ii) The annual report to the General Assembly as
23 required by section [2004-C(c)(5)] 2003.2-C.

24 Section 2007-C. Applicability.

25 [Nothing] Except as otherwise provided, nothing in this
26 article shall [do any of the following]:

27 (1) Preclude any institution of higher education from
28 establishing institution-to-institution articulation
29 agreements.

30 (2) Void articulation agreements that have been

1 established prior to the effective date of this section.

2 Section 5. This act shall take effect in 60 days.