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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE BILL

No. 343 Session of  
2024

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INTRODUCED BY KANE, CAPPELLETTI, FONTANA, SANTARSIERO, HAYWOOD,  
COMITTA, COSTA, SCHWANK, BREWSTER, DILLON, MUTH AND COLLETT,  
JANUARY 2, 2024

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REFERRED TO EDUCATION, JANUARY 2, 2024

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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 providing for Internet safety education curriculum.

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 1555. Internet Safety Education Curriculum.--(a)  
13 The department, in consultation with the Office of Attorney  
14 General, shall establish an age-appropriate curriculum for  
15 Internet safety instruction of students in kindergarten through  
16 grade twelve. Beginning with the school year that commences  
17 after the effective date of this section, a school district  
18 shall incorporate into the school curriculum a component on  
19 Internet safety to be taught at least once each school year to

1 students in kindergarten through grade twelve. The school board  
2 shall determine the scope and duration of this unit of  
3 instruction. The age-appropriate unit of instruction may be  
4 incorporated into the current courses of study regularly taught  
5 in the district's schools, as determined by the school board.  
6 Such instruction shall be chosen from a menu of options  
7 developed by the department, which shall include, but not be  
8 limited to, the following topics:

9 (1) Safe and responsible use of social networking websites,  
10 chat rooms, email, bulletin boards, instant messaging and other  
11 means of communication on the Internet.

12 (2) Recognizing, avoiding and reporting online solicitations  
13 of students, their classmates and their friends by sexual  
14 predators.

15 (3) Risks of transmitting personal information on the  
16 Internet.

17 (4) Recognizing and avoiding unsolicited or deceptive  
18 communications received online.

19 (5) Recognizing and reporting online harassment and cyber  
20 bullying.

21 (6) Reporting illegal activities and communications on the  
22 Internet.

23 (7) Copyright laws on written materials, photographs, music  
24 and video.

25 (8) Media literacy that provides a framework to access,  
26 analyze, evaluate, create, act and participate with messages in  
27 a variety of communication forms, including print, video and the  
28 Internet.

29 (b) The department may develop curricula to serve the  
30 instructional needs of multiple grades of students, such as one

1 curriculum for elementary school students, one curriculum for  
2 middle school students and one curriculum for high school  
3 students.

4 (c) In developing the Internet safety education curriculum,  
5 the department shall take into consideration similar curricula  
6 in other states and other curricular materials suggested by  
7 education experts, child psychologists or technology companies  
8 that work on child online safety issues. The department shall  
9 also conduct a thorough review of publicly available materials  
10 on the topics of safe online communications, privacy protection,  
11 cyber bullying, viewing inappropriate material, file-sharing and  
12 the importance of open communications with responsible adults.  
13 The department and the State Board of Education shall make such  
14 resource materials that they deem appropriate available on their  
15 publicly accessible Internet websites.

16 (d) Curricula devised in accordance with subsection (a)  
17 shall be developed within six (6) months of the effective date  
18 of this section.

19 (e) A parent or legal guardian of a student who is under  
20 eighteen (18) years of age, within a reasonable period of time  
21 after the request is made, shall be permitted to examine the  
22 Internet safety curriculum instructional materials at the school  
23 in which the student is enrolled.

24 (f) At the request of a parent or legal guardian, a student  
25 shall be excused from all or parts of the Internet safety  
26 curriculum instruction. The principal shall notify all parents  
27 or legal guardians of their ability to withdraw their children  
28 from instruction in the curriculum by returning a signed opt-out  
29 form.

30 (g) As used in this section, the following words and phrases

1 shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection:

2 "Department." The Department of Education of the  
3 Commonwealth.

4 "Office of Attorney General." The Office of Attorney General  
5 of the Commonwealth.

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