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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 1680 Session of  
2023

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INTRODUCED BY SAPPEY, KINSEY, MADDEN, HILL-EVANS, GUENST, SMITH-  
WADE-EL, FREEMAN, SCHLOSSBERG, HOHENSTEIN, HOWARD, KHAN,  
SANCHEZ AND CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

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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 deaf and hard of hearing education.

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 1529. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education.--(a) In  
13 accordance with the academic standards for health, safety and  
14 physical education and not later than the beginning of the 2024-  
15 2025 school year, the department, in consultation with the  
16 Department of Health and at least one State or local  
17 organization with an expertise in hearing impairment and loss,  
18 shall identify or develop a model curriculum and curriculum  
19 guidelines for instruction on deaf and hard of hearing education

1 for public school students.

2 (b) The model curriculum and guidelines shall:

3 (1) be posted on the department's publicly accessible  
4 Internet website;

5 (2) be age-appropriate;

6 (3) be revised regularly to remain current with national  
7 standards;

8 (4) provide guidance for integration into health courses or  
9 other appropriate curriculum requirements;

10 (5) be made available to all school entities; and

11 (6) address topics including, but not limited to:

12 (i) hearing loss types and causes;

13 (ii) the prevalence of hearing impairment and loss;

14 (iii) common sources of noises that can contribute to  
15 hearing loss;

16 (iv) effects of noise on hearing and warning signs of  
17 impairment;

18 (v) types of assistive devices available to address or  
19 offset hearing loss;

20 (vi) hearing loss stigmas and prevention techniques;

21 (vii) the impact hearing impairment and loss can have on an  
22 individual; and

23 (viii) recommendations on preventing and treating hearing  
24 loss.

25 (c) (1) A school entity that offers instruction in deaf and  
26 hard of hearing education may utilize the model curriculum  
27 developed under subsections (a) and (b) or develop the school  
28 entity's own curriculum in accordance with academic standards  
29 and consistent with guidelines developed under subsections (a)  
30 and (b). A school entity may utilize appropriate publicly or

1 privately available materials, personnel and other resources in  
2 developing and implementing this instruction, subject to the  
3 requirements of section 111 and 23 Pa.C.S. § 6344 (relating to  
4 employees having contact with children; adoptive and foster  
5 parents).

6 (2) A teacher, instructor or community volunteer, with the  
7 participation of a professional educator with a Pennsylvania  
8 certification, including a professional educator certified in  
9 physical education or health education or a school nurse, may  
10 provide, facilitate or oversee the instruction offered by a  
11 school entity under this section.

12 (d) A cyber charter school may provide the instruction under  
13 this section through the Internet or other electronic means. If  
14 a cyber charter school provides the instruction under this  
15 section through the Internet or other electronic means, the  
16 cyber charter school shall be exempt from the academic standards  
17 and guidelines developed under subsections (a) and (b) regarding  
18 in-person instructional requirements.

19 (e) As used in this section, the following words and phrases  
20 shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection unless  
21 the context clearly indicates otherwise:

22 "Department." The Department of Education of the  
23 Commonwealth.

24 "School entity." A school district, joint school district,  
25 charter school, regional charter school, cyber charter school,  
26 intermediate unit or area career and technical school.

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