

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2274 Session of 2024

INTRODUCED BY SMITH-WADE-EL, HILL-EVANS, HOHENSTEIN, BURGOS, CERRATO, KINSEY, ABNEY, GIRAL, SANCHEZ, SCHLOSSBERG, KHAN, KIM, BELLMON, D. WILLIAMS, MAYES, CEPEDA-FREYTIZ, RABB, O'MARA, CONKLIN, KRAJEWSKI, KENYATTA AND ROZZI, MAY 8, 2024

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MAY 8, 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 school health services, providing
6 for mental health awareness and model curriculum and
7 establishing the Mental Health Education Advisory Committee.

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

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

13 Section 1426. Mental Health Awareness and Model
14 Curriculum.--(a) Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, a
15 school entity shall annually provide information regarding
16 mental health disorders and education for pupils in kindergarten
17 through grade twelve to parents, guardians and key school
18 personnel. The information shall be consistent with the
19 recommendations established under this section and detail age-

1 appropriate information for a student's grade as well as provide
2 a concise syllabus of the mental health education that will be
3 provided to a student in the student's year of study.

4 (b) A school entity shall provide the educational
5 information in subsection (a) through email, first class mail or
6 the school entity's publicly accessible Internet website.

7 (c) The department, in conjunction with the Department of
8 Health and the committee established under subsection (e), shall
9 develop or identify educational information and materials,
10 develop or identify an age-appropriate model mental health
11 curriculum for students in kindergarten through grade twelve and
12 make recommendations for providing information on mental health
13 education to students and their families. No later than June 30,
14 2025, the department shall publish information on the model
15 mental health curriculum designated and make the information
16 available to all school entities. The educational information,
17 materials and model mental health curriculum may include
18 materials already publicly available.

19 (d) The educational information and materials,
20 recommendations and model curriculum shall:

21 (1) be developed with input from the committee established
22 under subsection (e);

23 (2) be posted on the department's publicly accessible
24 Internet website;

25 (3) explain the importance of mental health education and
26 resources available for students; and

27 (4) consider warning signs, risk factors and State and local
28 resources available to students and their parents or guardians
29 that include, at a minimum, the 988 helpline and contact
30 information for local emergency health centers.

1 (e) The secretary shall establish a committee, to be known
2 as the Mental Health Education Advisory Committee, to offer
3 recommendations to the department and the Department of Health
4 on mental health issues, awareness and education, including
5 conditions defined under the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual
6 of Mental Health Disorders 5th Edition which typically affect
7 children and students, warning signs of the conditions, proper
8 treatment for the conditions and resources available through
9 school and community agencies.

10 (f) The secretary shall appoint members to the Mental Health
11 Education Advisory Committee from the following:

12 (1) Specialized health organizations, including the
13 Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness,
14 the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
15 and the Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians.

16 (2) School and teachers' associations and organizations,
17 including the Pennsylvania School Boards Association, the
18 Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators, the
19 Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners, the
20 Pennsylvania School Counselors Association, the Pennsylvania
21 Association of School Social Work Personnel and a current
22 professional educator who is a member of the Pennsylvania State
23 Education Association.

24 (3) Students and parents organizations, including a member
25 of a parent/teacher organization with a student currently
26 enrolled in a Pennsylvania school, a youth advocate from the
27 Pennsylvania Youth Advocacy Network and a student member or
28 designated student representative of the Pennsylvania
29 Association of Student Councils.

30 (g) Members of the committee shall serve without

1 compensation.

2 (h) During the first year after the establishment of the
3 committee, the committee shall meet at least two times per
4 school year at the call of the secretary or the secretary's
5 designee, who shall serve as chairperson. The first meeting of
6 the committee shall occur within sixty (60) days of the
7 effective date of this section.

8 (i) During the second and subsequent years after the
9 establishment of the committee, the committee shall meet at
10 least one time per school year to reassess the information
11 provided to parents by school entities as well as provide input
12 and recommendations for curricular updates to the department and
13 school entities on the model curriculum.

14 (j) The department shall make available educational
15 information, materials and recommendations developed by the
16 committee to school entities within one year after the
17 establishment of the committee.

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

21 "Committee." The Mental Health Education Advisory Committee
22 established under this section.

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

25 "Key school personnel." The term includes school principals,
26 vice principals, school counselors, school social workers and
27 school psychologists.

28 "Mental health." An individual's condition with regard to
29 the individual's psychological and emotional well-being,
30 including anxiety, stress, trauma or other mental or emotional

1 impairments.

2 "Professional educator." As defined in section 1205.2(o).

3 "School entity." A school district, joint school district,

4 charter school, regional charter school, cyber charter school,

5 intermediate unit or area career and technical school.

6 "Secretary." The Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth.

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