

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1978 Session of  
2017

INTRODUCED BY GROVE, SOLOMON, VAZQUEZ, DRISCOLL, JAMES, THOMAS,  
DAVIS, SCHLOSSBERG, CONKLIN, HILL-EVANS, WATSON, CRUZ,  
PASHINSKI AND PHILLIPS-HILL, DECEMBER 19, 2017

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, DECEMBER 19, 2017

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 certification of teachers,  
6 providing for a cultural awareness continuing professional  
7 development course.

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 1218. Cultural Awareness Continuing Professional  
14 Development Course.--(a) The Department of Education shall  
15 develop and implement a continuing professional education course  
16 on cultural awareness that may be used by professional educators  
17 to satisfy the requirements of section 1205.2.

18 (b) The Department of Education shall develop the continuing  
19 professional education course in a manner which provides  
20 professional educators with information and strategies which can

1 be incorporated into instruction and general interactions with  
2 students in order to encourage students to become more  
3 culturally aware.

4 (c) The continuing professional education course shall  
5 include training on the following:

6 (1) Information and strategies to encourage students to  
7 become more culturally aware, and to reject ethnic, cultural and  
8 religious biases.

9 (2) Resolving disputes between students that result from  
10 ethnic and cultural disputes.

11 (3) Resolving disputes between students that result from  
12 religious biases.

13 (4) The dynamics of prejudice and discrimination that impede  
14 effective learning.

15 (5) Civil rights awareness.

16 (d) Continuing professional education course materials may  
17 include the following:

18 (1) Materials that educate students in cultural sensitivity  
19 by introducing the students to various cultures.

20 (2) Teaching aids that allow students to explore cultures  
21 through food, art, books, movies, dance, traditions and cross-  
22 cultural experiences.

23 (3) Resources that allow students to explore the cultural  
24 experience of other people, their history, present day  
25 experiences and connection to the American culture and fabric of  
26 our land.

27 (4) Educational aids that provide students with information  
28 on the cultural experiences of the inhabitants of this  
29 Commonwealth, the inhabitant's experience arriving in this  
30 Commonwealth and development over the years.

1 (e) By July 31, 2018, and each July 31 thereafter, the  
2 Department of Education shall submit to the chairman and  
3 minority chairman of the Education Committee of the Senate and  
4 the chairman and minority chairman of the Education Committee of  
5 the House of Representatives a report which shall include:

6 (1) The number of professional educators that have enrolled  
7 in the continuing professional education course.

8 (2) The number of professional educators that have completed  
9 the continuing education course.

10 (3) The number of schools that have implemented classroom  
11 instruction in cultural awareness.

12 (4) Any issues that professional educators, administrators,  
13 students or the Department of Education have identified and need  
14 to be addressed.

15 (f) The course established under subsection (a) shall be  
16 voluntary, offered online and at no cost to professional  
17 educators.

18 (g) For the purpose of this section, the term "professional  
19 educator" shall mean an individual who holds a Pennsylvania  
20 teacher, educational specialist or administrative certification  
21 or letter of eligibility.

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