
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 85 Session of 2018

INTRODUCED BY LAWRENCE, BARRAR, BERNSTINE, CHARLTON, DIAMOND,
ENGLISH, KEEFER, METCALFE, O'NEILL, ROE, TALLMAN, THOMAS AND
WARD, MAY 24, 2018

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MAY 24, 2018

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 preliminary provisions, providing
6 for exemption from Keystone Exams.

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 121.1. Exemption from Keystone Exams.--(a) Within
13 one hundred eighty (180) days of the effective date of this
14 section, each governing authority of a school entity shall meet
15 and determine if the school entity shall excuse a student from
16 Keystone Exam testing if the student's parent or guardian
17 submits an objection based on philosophical grounds in writing
18 to school officials.

19 (b) If a governing authority of a school entity fails to

1 meet or make a determination as prescribed under subsection (a),
2 the school entity shall excuse a student from Keystone Exam
3 testing if the student's parent or guardian submits an objection
4 based on philosophical grounds in writing to school officials.

5 (c) If a school entity adopts a policy allowing for excusal
6 from Keystone Exam testing based on philosophical grounds under
7 subsection (a), or if the school entity fails to meet or make a
8 determination within the prescribed one hundred eighty (180)
9 days and the default applies under subsection (b), the following
10 shall apply:

11 (1) A student shall not be given negative consequences,
12 including the denial of a high school diploma, based solely on
13 the student's parent or guardian utilizing the provisions under
14 subsection (a) or (b).

15 (2) A school entity, including the administration, chief
16 school officer, temporary professional employes and professional
17 employes may not:

18 (i) solicit a student or student's parent or guardian to
19 utilize the provisions under subsection (a) or (b); or

20 (ii) be penalized for a student's parent or guardian
21 utilizing the provisions under subsection (a) or (b).

22 (d) As used in this section, the following words and phrases
23 shall have the meanings given to them in the subsection unless
24 the context clearly indicates otherwise:

25 "Governing authority." A local board of school directors, or
26 the equivalent, of a school entity.

27 "School entity." A school district, intermediate unit, joint
28 school, area vocational-technical school, charter school,
29 regional charter school or cyber charter school.

30 Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.