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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 224 Session of  
2015

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INTRODUCED BY CHRISTIANA, MACKENZIE, MUSTIO, TOEPEL, BLOOM,  
MILLARD, CUTLER, KAUFFMAN, SAYLOR, MALONEY, BARRAR, DIAMOND,  
RAPP, DRISCOLL, V. BROWN, MARSICO, VEREB, A. HARRIS AND  
GROVE, JANUARY 26, 2015

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, JANUARY 26, 2015

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AN ACT

1 Providing for the posting of annual financial information for  
2 public school entities.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Public School  
7 Web Accountability and Transparency (SchoolWATCH) Act.

8 Section 2. Definitions.

9 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall  
10 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
11 context clearly indicates otherwise:

12 "Administrative staff." Employees of a public school entity  
13 that include, but are not limited to, superintendents, assistant  
14 superintendents, deputy superintendents, principals, assistant  
15 principals, supervisors, managers, directors and coordinators.

16 "Area vocational-technical school." As defined in section  
17 1841 of the Public School Code of 1949.

1 "Average daily membership." As defined in section 2501 of  
2 the Public School Code of 1949.

3 "Charter school." As defined in section 1703-A of the Public  
4 School Code of 1949.

5 "Charter school entity." A charter school, cyber charter  
6 school or regional charter school as defined in section 1703-A  
7 of the Public School Code of 1949.

8 "Cyber charter school." As defined in section 1703-A of the  
9 Public School Code of 1949.

10 "Department." The Department of Education of the  
11 Commonwealth.

12 "Expenditures." As defined in section 602-A of the Public  
13 School Code of 1949.

14 "Facilities acquisition and construction expenditures."  
15 Expenditures related to the purchase or improvement of land,  
16 buildings, service systems and built-in equipment.

17 "General fund balance." The balance in a public school  
18 entity's general fund, which shall not include nonspendable and  
19 restricted fund balances.

20 "Instructional expenditures." Expenditures related to all  
21 those activities dealing directly with the interaction between  
22 teachers and students and related costs, which can be directly  
23 attributed to a program of instruction.

24 "Market value/personal income aid ratio." A school  
25 district's combined market value and personal income wealth per  
26 pupil relative to the State average.

27 (1) For an area vocational-technical school, this amount  
28 shall be calculated based on the sum of market value and  
29 personal income wealth data for each of the area vocational-  
30 technical school's component school districts.

1           (2) For a charter school or regional charter school,  
2 this amount shall be calculated based on the sum of market  
3 value and personal income wealth data for each school  
4 district that granted a charter to the charter school or  
5 regional charter school under section 1717-A or 1718-A of the  
6 Public School Code of 1949.

7           (3) For a cyber charter school, this amount shall be  
8 calculated based on the sum of market value and personal  
9 income wealth data for the school district in which the cyber  
10 charter school's administrative offices are located.

11 "Noninstructional expenditures." Expenditures related to  
12 activities concerned with providing noninstructional services to  
13 students, staff or the community.

14 "Other financing uses." Current debt service expenditures  
15 and other expenses such as the refunding of debt and transfers  
16 of money from one fund to another.

17 "Public School Code of 1949." The act of March 10, 1949  
18 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949.

19 "Public school entity." Any of the following:

20           (1) An area vocational-technical school.

21           (2) A school district.

22           (3) A charter school entity.

23 "Regional charter school." As defined in section 1703-A of  
24 the Public School Code of 1949.

25 "School district." As defined in section 102 of the Public  
26 School Code of 1949.

27 "School performance profile." A comprehensive overview of  
28 student academic performance in a public school entity compiled  
29 annually by the department.

30 "Support services expenditures." Expenditures related to

1 those services that provide administrative support, technical  
2 support, including, but not limited to, guidance and health, and  
3 logistical support to facilitate and enhance instruction.

4 Section 3. Financial information to be posted.

5 (a) Information.--Within 90 days of the effective date of  
6 this act and by May 31 of each year thereafter, the department  
7 shall post all of the following for each public school entity on  
8 its publicly accessible Internet website, to the extent the  
9 information is available to the department:

10 (1) The following financial information for the public  
11 school entity for the most recent fiscal year for which the  
12 public school entity reported such information to the  
13 department:

14 (i) Total expenditures in the following categories:

15 (A) Instructional.

16 (B) Support services.

17 (C) Noninstructional.

18 (D) Facilities acquisition and construction.

19 (E) Other financing uses.

20 (ii) The public school entity's per-student  
21 expenditures, on each of the following bases:

22 (A) Based on the public school entity's  
23 instructional expenditures.

24 (B) Based on the public school entity's total  
25 expenditures.

26 (iii) The public school entity's per-student charter  
27 school tuition rates in each of the following categories:

28 (A) For regular education students.

29 (B) For special education students.

30 (iv) The public school entity's average daily

1 membership.

2 (v) The public school entity's market value/personal  
3 income aid ratio.

4 (vi) The average teacher salary in the public school  
5 entity.

6 (vii) Total revenues from the following sources:

7 (A) Federal.

8 (B) State.

9 (C) Local.

10 (D) Other.

11 (viii) The public school entity's general fund  
12 balance.

13 (2) A link to the most recent of each of the following  
14 reports filed by the public school entity with the  
15 department:

16 (i) Summaries of financial report data.

17 (ii) Nonadministrative staff compensation report.

18 (iii) Administrative staff compensation report.

19 (3) A link to the public school entity's publicly  
20 accessible Internet website, where available.

21 (4) A statement instructing the public to contact the  
22 public school entity for access to any union contract.

23 (b) Posting.--In posting financial information as required  
24 under this section, the department shall:

25 (1) Post all information as a "View Fiscal Information"  
26 icon located on a School Performance Profile that the  
27 department shall compile annually for each public school  
28 entity.

29 (2) Post all information in a location and manner that  
30 is easily accessible to the public.

1 (3) Include all definitions and other explanatory  
2 references that may be necessary to assist Internet website  
3 users in understanding the posted information.

4 (4) Use existing databases and electronic reporting  
5 systems to the extent possible.

6 (5) Provide for an electronic feature that will allow  
7 the public to compare financial information for a minimum of  
8 four public school entities.

9 (6) Beginning with information pertaining to the 2012-  
10 2013 fiscal year, post the information required under  
11 subsection (a) (1) for at least the most recent three fiscal  
12 years for which such information is available to the  
13 department, including a trend graph displaying the change in  
14 the amount reported each year from the amount reported in the  
15 previous year.

16 (c) Limitation.--The department's posting of financial  
17 information under this section shall not be construed to:

18 (1) Require a public school entity to provide the  
19 department with any additional information, data or reports  
20 that the public school entity is not already required to  
21 provide to the department as of the effective date of this  
22 act.

23 (2) Require any public school entity to provide the  
24 department with additional information beyond the information  
25 required to be provided to the department by any other public  
26 school entity.

27 Section 4. Effective date.

28 This act shall take effect immediately.