

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 13-173—sHB 6525
Children Committee
Education Committee
Public Health Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND PHYSICAL EXERCISE IN SCHOOLS

SUMMARY: This act requires public schools to include a total of 20 minutes of physical exercise in each regular school day for all elementary school students, rather than just those in kindergarten through grade five.

The act requires each local and regional board of education, by October 1, 2013, to adopt policies it deems appropriate for any school employee who, during the regular school day, (1) prevents, as a form of discipline, an elementary school student from participating in the required period of physical exercise or (2) requires any student in grade kindergarten through 12 to engage in physical activity as a form of discipline.

The act also establishes a 19-member task force to study the effects of obesity on children's health and report its findings to the Children's Committee by October 1, 2014.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013 except for the task force provision, which is effective on October 1, 2013. (PA 13-247 § 94 changes the latter effective date to upon passage.)

SCHOOL EMPLOYEE

With regard to the policies the boards of education must adopt, the act defines a school employee as a (1) teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional, or coach employed by a local or regional board of education or working in a public elementary, middle, or high school; or (2) a person who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students in public elementary, middle, or high school under a contract with the local or regional board of education.

CHILDHOOD OBESITY TASK FORCE

Duties

The act establishes a task force to study the effects of obesity on children's health. The task force must:

1. gather and maintain current information on childhood obesity that can be used to better understand its impact on children's health;

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2. examine the nutrition standards for all food the state procures;
3. explore ways to increase children's physical activity;
4. recommend the implementation of a pilot program, through a local or regional board of education, to schedule recess before lunch in elementary school; and
5. advise the governor and General Assembly on how to coordinate and administer state programs to reduce the incidence of childhood obesity.

Membership

Task force members include:

1. the commissioners of children and families, education, public health (DPH), and social services, or their designees;
2. the Senate president pro tempore and House speaker, or their designees;
3. the House and Senate majority and minority leaders, or their designees;
4. the Children's Committee chairpersons, vice-chairpersons, and ranking members;
5. a licensed dietitian-nutritionist with a background in food service appointed by the DPH commissioner; and
6. two members of the public appointed by the Children's Committee chairpersons, one of whom is a children's health matters advocate and the other an academic, civic, or cultural leader specializing in children's health matters.

The appointing authorities must make their appointments by July 31, 2013 and fill any vacancies.

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