

Act 1: New Tools to Support Students Experiencing Educational Instability

Pennsylvania students who experience “education instability” due to homelessness, involvement in the foster care or juvenile justice systems, or court-ordered placements, are entitled to additional support under a new law called [Act 1 of 2022](#). This law seeks to remove educational and graduation barriers for students who experience one or more school changes during a single school year. These students are often unable to fully participate in school and are unable to graduate on time due to lost or unrecognized credits or a student’s inability to take a course required by their last school.

Learn more about students’ rights under Act 1 [here](#) and review the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s interim guidance on Act 1 [here](#). If a student you are working with has experienced education instability, you can use the tools below to advocate on the student’s behalf:

Request Assignment of a Point of Contact: Under Act 1, students are assigned a Point-of-Conduct designated by the school the student currently attends. This Point of Contact ensures that all students are able to fully participate in school activities and provides additional support for high school students, including assessing credits, considering whether certain credits may be waived, and developing an individualized Graduation Plan. *Use [this tool](#) if the student has not been assigned a Point of Contact.*

Request Credit Assessment and/or Graduation Plan: High school students receive special support under Act 1. These students must receive a credit assessment, a process through which a school must now award full or partial credit for all work satisfactorily completed in a prior school, including a residential placement. A current school can also waive credit requirements that pose a barrier to graduation for students. In addition, a Point of Contact must develop an individualized graduation plan for students who experience education instability.

If a student is unable to graduate through their current school, a Point of Contact can request a diploma from the prior school. A student may receive a diploma from their prior school if deemed ineligible to graduate from their current school following a credit and waiver assessment and the student meets the prior school’s graduation requirements after the assessment. Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, students can also receive a state-wide Keystone Diploma. This option is only explored if a student cannot graduate from their current or prior school. A Keystone Diploma has the same force as a school-issued high school diploma and is not the same as a GED. *Use [this tool](#) to request a credit assessment, credit waiver, graduation plan, or related request.*

Request to Participate in a School-Sponsored Activity or Extracurricular: Under Act 1, students who change schools mid-year must be allowed to participate in school-sponsored activities and extracurriculars if they meet “participation and qualification requirements.” *Use [this tool](#) if the student is being denied the ability to participate in a school-sponsored activity or extracurricular.*

Request to Eliminate Fines or Fees: Students protected by Act 1 cannot be assessed fees or fines to participate in a school-sponsored activity or extracurricular or as a penalty for not having

a uniform. Such fees must be waived. Use [this this tool](#) if the student is subject to a dress code fine or denied the ability to participate in a school-sponsored activity or extracurricular due to a fee.