



# Senate Education Committee

**Senator Lloyd Smucker**

**Chairman**

**Kelly Phenicie**  
*Executive Director/Counsel*  
kphenicie@pasen.gov

**Tabitha Hummer**  
*Deputy Executive Director*  
thummer@pasen.gov

**Diane M. McNaughton**  
*Communications Specialist*  
dmmcnaughton@pasen.gov

---

Room 351, Main Capitol Building • Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120-3013 • 717-787-6535

---

## House Bill 139

Printer's No. 0123

Prime Sponsor: Zimmerman

Committee: Education

### SYNOPSIS:

Amends the Private Academic Schools Act to provide that online schools may be licensed by the State Board of Private Academic Schools.

### SUMMARY:

Amends the Private Academic Schools Act to define "online school" as a school with at least one office located in Pennsylvania which uses technology to provide a significant portion of its curriculum and to deliver a significant portion of instruction to its students through the internet or other electronic means, and which shall not include a cyber-charter school.

Provides that the definition of "private academic school" includes "online schools."

Defines "office" as the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education within the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), and replaces the majority of references to PDE throughout the Act with the term "office," so as to delegate the responsibilities of PDE specifically to the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Defines "premises" as any grounds or facilities utilized by a school for the purposes of providing instruction or, in the case of an online school, any office space or facilities from which instruction will be transmitted or from which administrative support is offered.

Permits the offices or facilities of an online school to fulfill certain application and licensure requirements in the Act which currently necessitate brick-and-mortar school locations where instruction takes place. Requires the State Board of Private Academic Schools to promulgate rules and regulations, and establish policies, principles, and standards necessary to carry out the purposes of the act as they relate to online schools within 18 months. These rules and regulations shall address the unique provision of instruction and services by online schools, and shall provide for any additional requirements or exemptions as may be needed to accommodate the ability of online schools to provide instruction and student services.

Establishes that the State Board of Private Academic Schools may not issue a license to an online school until the rules, regulations, policies, principles, and standards provided are in effect.

Effective Date: 60 days

### BILL HISTORY:

Passed House 2/4/15 (195-2)

Prepared by: Phenicie 12/3/2015