

Gov. Wolf Signs Trauma-Informed Education Legislation

PUBLISHED ON
July 3, 2019

Trauma-informed education is now mandatory at all Pennsylvania public schools thanks to new legislation included in the state's 2019-2020 budget.

Earlier this year, Pennsylvania legislators introduced two bills that included the implementation of trauma-informed approaches to student learning. The approaches included in the bills recognized the signs and symptoms of trauma and integrated that knowledge into education-based policies, learning procedures and practices. During the budget process, legislators combined the bills and incorporated them into [Senate Bill 144](#).

The new bill recognizes that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) - which include factors such as abuse, neglect and other traumatic experiences - have a potentially long-lasting effect on children's cognitive functioning and physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being. The bill requires schools to implement mandatory training of administrators, staff and school board members to identify the signs and symptoms of trauma. That would lead to the school community using a multi-tiered support system for students and families who have experienced trauma, preventing its reoccurrence and promoting resiliency tailored to the entire school community.

The mandatory training required includes:

- A minimum of one hour of training on trauma-informed approaches for both newly elected and reelected school board directors. Similar requirements apply to charter school trustees.
- A minimum of one hour of professional development training on trauma-informed approaches.
- The Pennsylvania Department of Education's PA Leadership Standards must include information on trauma-informed approaches.

I have presented on ACEs, trauma-informed education, resiliency and restorative justice locally and nationally since 2017. You can view our "[Power of Relationships](#)" video to see how our firm has embraced this educational movement in an effort to find the best ways to reach students and streamline the education process.

If you have any questions on this trauma-informed legislation or any other topic, please contact any member of the [Barley Snyder Education Practice Group](#).