

Act 26

The Pennsylvania General Assembly has enacted legislation (Act 26), which requires all public schools to take a mandatory course of action in dealing with students who are found to be in possession of weapons.

The law requires that arrest and expulsion, for at least one year, of any student found in possession of a weapon on school property, in a school program, or while traveling to or from a school program, including time on public transportation.

The law requires a weapon to include, not limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, firearm, shotgun, rifle and any other tool or instrument capable of inflicting serious bodily injury. There is no requirement that the student use or try to use the weapon and possession for self-protection is not a defense. Parents are encouraged not to send tools or supplies such as metal or pointed scissors to school with their children unless they receive a written request from the teacher.

The law requires that violations will become a part of the student's permanent disciplinary record, and will be available to any school in which the student may later enroll. Parents will be required to sign an affidavit or family contract prior to enrolling their child in any public school to disclose the existence of any weapons violations or other serious violations.

These measures required by Act 26, are designed as a safeguard to ensure that all public schools are safe havens in which students may interact in an environment and climate, which fosters learning and strongly discourages potential acts of violence.

Joyce Woodson
Board Chair

Tonia Elmore
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)