

**Minor**

**Judiciary**

**Education**

**Board**

**1999 Membership:**

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Gregory E. Dunlap, Esq.  
Jerry J. Russo, Esq.  
Honorable Robert E. Simpson

**Staff:**

Robert E. Hessler, *Executive Director*

**Legal Authorization:**

Pa. Constitution, Article V, § 12  
42 Pa. C.S., § 31  
42 Pa. C.S., § 2131  
42 Pa. C.S., § 3118

1001 Philadelphia Avenue  
Chambersburg, PA 17201  
(717) 263-0691  
fax (717) 263-4068

## History/Background

Article V, §12 of the Pennsylvania Constitution requires that district justices and judges of the Philadelphia Traffic Court either be members of the bar of the Supreme Court or, before taking office, complete a course and pass an examination in the duties of their respective offices.

It is the responsibility of the Minor Judiciary Education Board (MJEB) to instruct and certify individuals wishing to become district justices, Philadelphia Traffic Court judges or Philadelphia Bail Commissioners. The board approves the curriculum, appoints and evaluates instructors, establishes course content, reviews all tests, and issues certificates to successful program participants.

In addition, the board conducts continuing education for district justices, senior district justices, Philadelphia Traffic Court judges, senior Philadelphia Traffic Court judges, Philadelphia Bail Commissioners and for those individuals who wish to maintain a current certification in one or more of these areas. It also conducts a one-week practicum, or orientation course, for newly elected or appointed district justices.

The board has seven members who are appointed by the governor with a two-thirds approval by the Senate.

## 1999 Curriculum

During this past year approved subjects for the four-week certifying course included:

- Criminal Law and Procedure
- Civil Law and Procedure
- Rules of Evidence
- judicial ethics
- Motor Vehicle Law
- arrest/search and seizure
- Pennsylvania Drug/Device and Cosmetics Act
- Pennsylvania Crimes Code

Continuing education for the Commonwealth's district justices and Philadelphia Bail Commissioners is mandated by the Judicial Code (42 Pa. C.S., § 3118). This year during the 14 scheduled weeks the following courses made up the 32 required course hours for district justices:

- review and update of civil and criminal procedure
- Motor Vehicle Code
- protection from abuse
- judicial ethics

The one-week mandatory continuing education course for Philadelphia Bail Commissioners included:

- protection from abuse
- criminal law review
- arrest/search and seizure
- Alliance for the Mentally Ill

The orientation course for new district justices included:

- district justice administration applications
- district justice practice
- Alliance for the Mentally Ill
- human behavior (two days)

The Minor Judiciary Education Board approved a continuing education program for Philadelphia Traffic Court judges in compliance with Rule 22. That program included:

- alcoholism/depression/stress
- procedural rules review
- Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code review and update

The Minor Judiciary Education Board provided continuing education to 638 individuals; certification classes to 56 prospective district justices, three prospective Philadelphia Traffic Court judges and one prospective Philadelphia Bail Commissioner; one certification update candidate; and continuing legal education credits to 70 attorney district justices.

## Other Activities

In addition to conducting educational courses at its facility in Chambersburg, the Minor Judiciary Education Board provided staff assistance to the minor judiciary, court administrators, president judges and related court agencies in answering questions pertaining to

the board, the minor courts system and the board's courses of instruction.

## Contact Person

Robert E. Hessler serves as Executive Director of the MJEB and may be contacted at (717) 263-0691. 