
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 801 Session of
1993

INTRODUCED BY REIBMAN, RHOADES, AFFLERBACH, JONES, CORMAN,
MELLOW, SCHWARTZ, MUSTO, FISHER, STAPLETON, FATTAH AND BELAN,
MARCH 26, 1993

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, MARCH 26, 1993

AN ACT

1 Providing for the integration of educational resources of
2 schools, colleges and businesses in this Commonwealth.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Educational
7 Resource Sharing through Distance Learning Act.

8 Section 2. Declaration of policy.

9 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

10 (1) America's chief economic competitors are making
11 financial commitments to the infrastructure necessary for the
12 instantaneous movement of voice video and data among
13 organizations and agencies.

14 (2) Other states are using full audio, full video
15 teleconferencing technology for instructional and other
16 educational purposes.

17 (3) A number of school districts in this Commonwealth

1 currently have distance learning programs in place. Their
2 success serves as a model and a statement that greater
3 resources and priority need to be given to the development of
4 a more comprehensive distance learning system.

5 (4) Ongoing cooperation and resource sharing involving
6 elementary, secondary and postsecondary educational
7 facilities and the business community must be part of this
8 Commonwealth's response to international and domestic
9 developments.

10 (5) Full audio, full video teleconferencing technology
11 can provide more equitable access to excellent teachers,
12 enhanced curricula and other educational resources.

13 (6) Teleconferencing technology can provide special
14 benefits for rural areas, inner cities and other areas where
15 educational opportunities and resource sharing are limited by
16 geography, distances or financial resources.

17 (7) The promotion of distance learning technology is
18 necessary to provide for equity in educational opportunities
19 for all students through education resource sharing and
20 business-education partnerships.

21 Section 3. Definitions.

22 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
23 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
24 context clearly indicates otherwise:

25 "Distance learning programs." Those programs of instruction
26 using technology to transmit video, audio or data by one-way or
27 two-way telecommunications or computer technology while the
28 instructors and learners are in one or more geographically
29 separate locations.

30 Section 4. Distance learning program agreements.

1 (a) Board of school directors.--The board of school
2 directors of any school district may enter into an agreement
3 relating to a distance learning program with any of the
4 following:

5 (1) School districts.

6 (2) Intermediate units.

7 (3) Educational institutions, including institutions of
8 higher education.

9 (4) Businesses and other appropriate agencies.

10 (b) Department of Education.--Whenever funds become
11 available from any source whatever for the purpose of
12 establishing a distance learning program, the Department of
13 Education may enter into an agreement with any of the following:

14 (1) School districts.

15 (2) Intermediate units.

16 (3) Educational institutions, including institutions of
17 higher education.

18 (4) Other appropriate agencies.

19 (c) Purpose.--The purpose of a distance learning program
20 shall be to share and augment instruction and education
21 resources to provide for curriculum enhancement and other
22 educational opportunities that are not otherwise available or
23 affordable to students in elementary and secondary schools.

24 (d) Priorities.--Department of Education priority and
25 funding shall be afforded those distance learning program
26 proposals that demonstrate effective and innovative partnerships
27 with business and industry.

28 Section 5. Rules and regulations.

29 The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules and
30 regulations relating to academic credit that may be granted to

1 students enrolled in courses offered through distance learning
2 programs under the provisions of this act.

3 Section 6. Effective date.

4 This act shall take effect July 1, 1993, or immediately,
5 whichever is later.