AN ACT

Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An act relating to the public school system, including certain provisions applicable as well to private and parochial schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the laws relating thereto," providing for the Keystone Telepresence Education Grant Program.

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

Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended by adding an article to read:

ARTICLE XV-J

KEYSTONE TELEPRESENCE EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM

Section 1501-J. Scope of article.

This article relates to the Keystone Telepresence Education Grant Program.

Section 1502-J. Definitions.

The following words and phrases when used in this article shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:
"Department." The Department of Education of the Commonwealth.

"Grant." A Keystone Telepresence Education Grant authorized and awarded by the department under the program to intermediate units in this Commonwealth.

"Homebound student." A student in this Commonwealth who:

(1) is unable to attend school for an extended period as the result of a serious medical condition, including injuries from an accident, recovery from a medical procedure, serious illness or chronic illness; and

(2) satisfies the conditions for receipt of homebound instruction under 22 Pa. Code § 11.25 (relating to temporary excusals due to illness or other urgent reasons).

"Program." The Keystone Telepresence Education Grant Program established under section 1503-J(a).

"Secretary." The Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth.

"Telepresence equipment." Available technology that enables homebound students to participate in daily educational activities with the students' classmates and teachers, in real-time, from a remote location. The technology shall include audio and video capabilities that enable homebound students to communicate with classmates and teachers.

"Telepresence equipment manufacturer." An entity that manufactures telepresence equipment for the use of, among other things, educating homebound students and provides technical support and training for the equipment.

Section 1503-J. Keystone Telepresence Education Grant Program.

(a) Establishment.--The Keystone Telepresence Education Grant Program is established for the purpose of awarding grants to intermediate units for the purchase of telepresence equipment.
and related support services for the educational support of homebound students. The department shall:

(1) Develop guidelines for the purchase of telepresence equipment and services related to the utilization of the equipment through the program, including department-approved telepresence equipment manufacturers.

(2) Determine the form and manner in which an application for a grant may be filed with the department.

(3) Provide notice of the program to intermediate units.

(4) Make grant applications available to all intermediate units along with details relating to the application process.

(5) Adopt guidelines for the approval of grant applications.

(b) Eligibility.--Each intermediate unit shall be eligible for a grant.

(c) Application.--An intermediate unit may apply for a grant by submitting one annual application to the department. The secretary shall determine in accordance with the guidelines of the department the amount of a grant award to an intermediate unit.

(d) Allocation.--To award grants under the program, the department shall use up to $300,000 annually of undistributed funds not expended, encumbered or committed from appropriations for grants and subsidies made to the department to award grants. The funds shall be transferred by the Secretary of the Budget to a restricted account as necessary to award grants and, when transferred, are hereby appropriated to carry out the provisions in this article.

(e) Limitations.--No intermediate unit may receive an annual
grant allocation that exceeds 10% of the funds available under
the grant program.

Section 1504-J. Intermediate unit policies.

(a) Telepresence equipment use.--An intermediate unit shall
develop an internal policy for the use of telepresence equipment
and related support services prior to applying for a grant. The
policy shall include guidelines for the process by which public
schools, nonpublic schools or other educational entities within
the intermediate unit may request the use of telepresence
equipment through an intermediate unit.

(b) Dissemination.--An intermediate unit shall, upon
request, provide the policy under subsection (a) to a public
school, nonpublic school or other educational entity within the
intermediate unit.

(c) Policy modification.--A public school, nonpublic school
or other educational entity within an intermediate unit may
request that the intermediate unit modify its policy for the use
of telepresence equipment and related support services to meet
the needs of a homebound student.

Section 1505-J. Use of grants.

(a) Equipment.--An intermediate unit which is awarded a
grant shall use the grant to purchase telepresence equipment.

(b) Service and training.--A grant may be used, in part, to
secure technical support, mechanical support and training
support related to the use of telepresence equipment.

Section 1506-J. Reports.

An intermediate unit which is awarded a grant shall submit to
the department a report detailing all expenditures related to
the use of the grant.

Section 1507-J. Prohibition.
An intermediate unit that purchases telepresence equipment with a grant may not charge a public school, nonpublic school or other educational entity within the intermediate unit for the use of the telepresence equipment when the equipment is used to support the educational needs of a homebound student.

Section 1508-J. Construction.

Nothing in this article shall be construed to require or create an entitlement to telepresence equipment as a component of an individualized education plan for any student in this Commonwealth.

Section 2. This act shall take effect in 90 days.