

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 602 Session of
1999

INTRODUCED BY COY, GEORGE, SURRA, HANNA, SOLOBAY, SCHULER,
SCRIMENTI, SAINATO, BAKER, YOUNGBLOOD, STEELMAN, WILLIAMS,
SEYFERT, LUCYK, WALKO, THOMAS, GRUCELA, DeWEESE, RAMOS,
BELFANTI, TRAVAGLIO, PESCI, CAPPABIANCA, GORDNER, McCALL,
M. COHEN, PRESTON, CORRIGAN, ORIE, TRELLO, HARHAI AND SEMMEL,
FEBRUARY 17, 1999

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 17, 1999

AN ACT

1 Providing incentives and assistance for rural students to attend
2 college; and making an appropriation.

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 Rural
7 Education Opportunity Act.

8 Section 2. Definitions.

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

12 "Board." The State Rural Education Opportunity Board.

13 "Department." The Department of Education of the
14 Commonwealth.

15 "Program." The Rural Education Opportunity Program.

16 "Rural school district." A school district with fewer than

1 300 persons per square mile and postsecondary participation
2 rates below the State average in at least one of the preceding
3 five years prior to the year of application.

4 "System." The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

5 Section 3. Board membership.

6 The board shall consist of the following members:

7 (1) Chancellor of the system or his designee, who shall
8 be chairperson.

9 (2) The Secretary of Education or his designee.

10 (3) The chairperson of the Education Committee of the
11 Senate.

12 (4) The minority chairperson of the Education Committee
13 of the Senate.

14 (5) The chairperson of the Education Committee of the
15 House of Representatives.

16 (6) The minority chairperson of the Education Committee
17 of the House of Representatives.

18 (7) Two first-generation college graduates of State
19 universities who reside in rural Pennsylvania.

20 (8) A representative of the Center for Rural
21 Pennsylvania.

22 Section 4. Authorization and purpose.

23 (a) Grant program.--The system, in consultation with the
24 board, shall establish a program of grants to universities
25 within the system and rural school districts that qualify under
26 this act.

27 (b) Purpose.--Grants awarded under this act may be used for
28 any of the following purposes:

29 (1) To establish and maintain programs designed to serve
30 those primary and secondary students who are college able but

1 may not have considered college as an option.

2 (2) To serve nontraditional students presently in junior
3 and senior high school.

4 (3) To implement three-way partnerships among the
5 universities, school districts and parents.

6 (4) To work with students to assure adequate preparation
7 for college through program scheduling in high school for
8 admissions and financial aid presentations, for practice
9 tests and for other supportive activities to help
10 nontraditional students prepare for college life.

11 (5) To provide opportunities for students to visit
12 campuses and become comfortable with the college environment.

13 (6) To provide instruction in study skills to ensure
14 success in college.

15 (c) Guidelines.--The system, in consultation with the board,
16 shall establish guidelines to award grants for the purpose set
17 forth in subsection (b) and other purposes deemed appropriate by
18 the system and approved by the board.

19 Section 5. Applications.

20 (a) General rule.--A State system university or rural school
21 district may make application at the time, in the manner and
22 containing the information as required by the system. The system
23 shall determine from the information provided whether the
24 applicant is eligible for consideration by the board.

25 (b) Annual meeting.--Representatives of the system shall
26 meet annually to award grants to qualifying rural school
27 districts and system universities.

28 (c) Other meetings.--The board shall meet at the call of the
29 chairperson to conduct business related to the award of grants.

30 Section 6. Grants awarded by department.

1 The department shall award grants to qualifying organizations
2 upon the recommendation of the board.

3 Section 7. Regulations.

4 The system shall administer this act and may, with the
5 approval of the board, prescribe and adopt program policy
6 guidelines or regulations relating to the administration and
7 enforcement of this act.

8 Section 8. Appropriation.

9 An annual appropriation of not less than \$500,000 shall be
10 appropriated to the State System of Higher Education for the
11 purposes of carrying out this act.

12 Section 9. Effective date.

13 This act shall take effect immediately.