

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1601 Session of
2001

INTRODUCED BY BROWNE, ALLEN, BARD, BELARDI, CALTAGIRONE,
CAPPELLI, CAWLEY, L. I. COHEN, COLAFELLA, COSTA, CURRY,
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STURLA, J. TAYLOR, THOMAS, WALKO, C. WILLIAMS AND YOUNGBLOOD,
MAY 17, 2001

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MAY 17, 2001

AN ACT

1 Providing targeted assistance to urban school districts to
2 improve early learning and development so children are better
3 prepared to succeed in school.

4 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

5 (1) Particularly in urban areas, too many children are
6 not ready to learn when they arrive at school, with many
7 children beginning first grade with at least one significant
8 factor that places them at risk of academic failure.

9 (2) Children, especially those living in poverty, should
10 be provided with high quality, early childhood learning
11 opportunities that promote early cognitive development and
12 readiness to learn.

13 (3) When learning is delayed costs of that delay
14 multiply astronomically. Studies have estimated that for
15 every dollar spent as investment in early childhood
16 initiatives, a total of \$7 in public funds would be saved

1 over the long term through decreased placement in special
2 education, decreased retention in grade and reduction in
3 later criminal and delinquent behavior, not to mention
4 expected increases in high school graduation rates and rates
5 of parental involvement in education.

6 (4) The purpose of this act is to assist urban school
7 districts in providing quality programs aimed at improving
8 early learning and development so that these children are
9 better prepared to succeed in school.

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

12 Section 1. Short title.

13 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Urban Success
14 in Schools Act.

15 Section 2. Definitions.

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

19 "Department." The Department of Education of the
20 Commonwealth.

21 "Urban school district." A public school district located
22 within a city of the first class, city of the first class A,
23 city of the second class, city of the second class A or a city
24 of the third class with a population of not less than 20,000 at
25 the most recent Federal decennial census.

26 Section 3. Funding.

27 (a) Allocation.--Funds shall be allocated to urban school
28 districts by the department from appropriations made for this
29 purpose. During the 2001-2002 school year, and each year
30 thereafter, each urban school district shall be paid:

(1) An amount to be determined by multiplying \$100 by the urban school district's school-age average daily membership in kindergarten through third grades, if the urban school district's percent of enrollment from low-income families exceeds 60%.

(2) An amount to be determined by multiplying \$50 by the urban school district's school-age average daily membership in kindergarten through third grades, if the urban school district's percent of enrollment from low-income families is less than 60%.

(b) Use of funds.--Funds shall be used to:

(1) institute or expand full-day kindergarten programs;

(2) develop or expand pre-school programs for children who are four years of age; or

(3) develop or expand any of the district's other early childhood development initiatives, such as Head Start.

(c) Accountability.--Each urban school district shall maintain separate accounts in its district budget to facilitate monitoring the use of these funds. The department shall develop auditing guidelines to track the expenditures under this section.

Section 4. Reports.

(a) District reporting.--An urban school district shall provide program and fiscal reports as required by the department.

(b) Department reporting.--Beginning in the 2002 fiscal year, the department shall submit a report, no later than December 1 of each year, to the Chairmen and Minority Chairmen of the Appropriations and Education Committees of the Senate and the Chairmen and Minority Chairmen of the Appropriations and

1 Education Committees of the House of Representatives summarizing
2 the program and fiscal reports on funds disbursed under this
3 act.

4 Section 5. Effective date.

5 This act shall take effect July 1, 2001, or immediately,
6 whichever is later.