
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 560 Session of
2001

INTRODUCED BY MURPHY, RHOADES, O'PAKE, COSTA, THOMPSON, KUKOVICH
AND KITCHEN, MARCH 6, 2001

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, MARCH 6, 2001

AN ACT

1 Authorizing public school districts and individual public
2 schools to enter into mentoring partnership agreements to
3 improve student performance in certain courses of study;
4 directing the Department of Education to establish a grant
5 program; and making an appropriation.

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

8 Section 1. Short title.

9 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Public School
10 Mentoring Partnership Act.

11 Section 2. Legislative findings and intent.

12 (a) Findings.--The General Assembly finds and declares as
13 follows:

14 (1) Under the Constitution of Pennsylvania the General
15 Assembly is responsible for the maintenance and support of a
16 thorough and efficient system of public education to serve
17 the needs of this Commonwealth.

18 (2) The highest priority of that system of public
19 education is the academic achievement of all students in this

1 Commonwealth.

2 (3) In the exercise of its authority, the General
3 Assembly has delegated to the State Board of Education
4 responsibility for establishing a State assessment system and
5 to the Department of Education responsibility for
6 implementing that assessment system.

7 (4) In an effort to encourage high academic achievement
8 throughout this Commonwealth, the General Assembly should
9 provide opportunities and incentives for school districts to
10 enter into collaborative partnerships which provide targeted
11 assistance to schools in order to develop and implement
12 improvements known to be effective in more successful schools
13 throughout this Commonwealth.

14 (b) Intent.--It is the intent of the General Assembly and
15 the purpose of this act to provide enhanced educational
16 opportunities to this Commonwealth's school children by
17 encouraging and promoting an atmosphere of cooperation and
18 collaboration among school districts across this Commonwealth.
19 It is further the intent of the General Assembly to allow
20 schools with demonstrated academic areas of strength to partner
21 with schools exhibiting weaknesses in those academic areas.

22 Section 3. Definitions.

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

26 "Course of study." Any of the following subjects of
27 classroom instruction: reading, English, mathematics, natural
28 sciences and social sciences.

29 "Department." The Department of Education of the
30 Commonwealth.

1 "Mentoring services." The provision of instructional
2 services, including, but not limited to, workshops, symposiums,
3 Saturday studies or other educational services directed at
4 identifying the causes of consistently deficient performance by
5 students in a course of study and devising solutions and
6 strategies to improve performance.

7 "Program." The Mentoring Partnership Grant Program
8 established in section 5.

9 Section 4. School mentoring partnerships.

10 (a) General rule.--A public school district or individual
11 public school in this Commonwealth that has identified
12 consistently deficient performance by students in a course of
13 study may enter into a mentoring partnership agreement with
14 another public school district or individual public school to
15 receive mentoring services from that school district or school.

16 (b) Qualifications.--The mentoring school district or
17 individual school shall demonstrate strengths and skills in an
18 academic area needed by the partnering school district or
19 individual school. The partnering school district or individual
20 school shall demonstrate academic weakness in an area of
21 demonstrated strength of the mentoring school district or
22 individual school. The mentoring school district or individual
23 school shall also be able to provide consultation and support
24 services.

25 (c) Funding.--A school district or individual school that
26 enters into a mentoring partnership agreement may apply to the
27 department for a mentoring partnership grant under this act and
28 may use other funds available to the school district or
29 individual school for the provision of mentoring services.

30 Section 5. Mentoring partnership grants.

1 (a) Establishment.--The department shall establish a
2 Mentoring Partnership Grant Program to award grants to public
3 school districts and individual public schools that have entered
4 into agreements in accordance with section 4 for courses of
5 study at the elementary school level.

6 (b) Amount of grants.--A grant under this act may not exceed
7 \$50,000 to any two school districts or two individual schools in
8 partnership. No more than 20% of the grant amount may be used
9 for materials and supplies.

10 (c) Eligibility.--In order to receive a grant under this
11 act, a school district and individual school must file an
12 application with the department and execute a grant agreement in
13 a form acceptable to the department. No school district or
14 individual school is eligible to receive more than one grant
15 under this act.

16 (d) Grant application.--An application for a grant shall
17 contain the following:

18 (1) The names of any school district or individual
19 school involved.

20 (2) A description of the schools' mentoring partnership
21 agreement.

22 (3) Documentation of the strengths and skills of the
23 mentoring school district or individual school under section
24 4(b).

25 (4) Documentation of the areas of academic weaknesses of
26 the partnering school district or individual school under
27 section 4(b).

28 (5) Measurable goals.

29 (6) The method by which the goals will be evaluated.

30 (7) Such other information as required by the

department.

(e) Grant agreement.--The mentoring partnership grant agreement shall be signed by both the school districts and individual schools that have entered into the agreement and shall contain the following terms and conditions:

(1) The school districts and individual schools shall report to the department the results of the evaluation referred to in subsection (d)(6) within 30 days of the completion of the mentoring partnership.

(2) The school districts and individual schools shall permit the department to audit the expenditures made from the grant moneys.

(3) Such other terms and conditions as required by the department.

(f) Expiration.--This section shall expire three years from the effective date of this act.

Section 6. Reports.

The department shall make interim and final reports to the General Assembly as to the mentoring partnerships as reported by the school districts and schools and as to the program in general.

Section 7. Regulations.

The department shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary to administer this act.

Section 8. Appropriation.

The sum of \$5,000,000, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated to the Department of Education for the fiscal year July 1, 2001, to June 30, 2002, for the purpose of making mentoring partnership grants in accordance with this act. This appropriation shall be a continuing

- 1 appropriation and shall lapse June 30, 2004.
- 2 Section 9. Effective date.
- 3 This act shall take effect in 60 days.