
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 347 Session of
2007

INTRODUCED BY O'NEILL, ADOLPH, BARRAR, BOYD, CALTAGIRONE,
CLYMER, CREIGHTON, EVERETT, FABRIZIO, FLECK, GEIST, GINGRICH,
HUTCHINSON, KIRKLAND, MAHONEY, R. MILLER, MILNE, MOYER, MURT,
RAPP, REICHLEY, SAYLOR, S. H. SMITH, STAIRS, SURRA, SWANGER
AND WATSON, JUNE 25, 2007

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, JUNE 25, 2007

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 Establishing a special bipartisan legislative task force to
2 examine the feasibility and costs associated with creating a
3 State-operated, Internet-based high school, to be known as
4 the Pennsylvania Virtual High School.

5 WHEREAS, Existing State programs to provide for high school
6 reform and access to dual enrollment and tutoring programs are
7 limited in scope and accessibility by the Commonwealth's 501
8 public school districts; and

9 WHEREAS, All high school students in this Commonwealth
10 deserve equal access to the benefits of high school reform
11 efforts and a greater variety of learning opportunities; and

12 WHEREAS, A number of states, including Florida, Kentucky,
13 Texas, Georgia and West Virginia, already operate or are
14 planning state-sponsored virtual high schools as a cost-
15 effective way to deliver a diversity of high school programs;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Virtual High School could offer, in

1 a cost-efficient format, a range of learning services,
2 including:
3 (1) expanded curricular offerings, such as higher level
4 mathematics and science courses;
5 (2) increased options for concurrent enrollment in
6 higher education;
7 (3) summer enrichment and tutoring programs;
8 (4) increased instructional options for at-risk,
9 homebound and alternative education students;
10 (5) expanded offerings for gifted and talented students;
11 and
12 (6) linkages between students and prospective employers,
13 including those offering internships and apprenticeships;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Some virtual learning opportunities are already
16 available in this Commonwealth, such as the Scranton City School
17 District's Alternative Virtual Education (SAVE) program and
18 programs offered through blendedschools.net; therefore be it

19 RESOLVED (the Senate concurring), That the General Assembly
20 establish a bipartisan legislative task force to examine the
21 feasibility and costs related to the establishment of a State-
22 operated, Internet-based high school, to be known as the
23 Pennsylvania Virtual High School, which would provide secondary
24 students throughout this Commonwealth with access to a wide
25 range of learning services, including, at a minimum:

26 (1) expanded curricular offerings, such as higher-level
27 mathematics and science courses, foreign language courses and
28 Advanced Placement courses;
29 (2) increased options for concurrent enrollment in
30 higher education;

- 1 (3) SAT preparation programs;
- 2 (4) summer enrichment and tutoring courses;
- 3 (5) increased instructional options for at-risk
- 4 students, homebound and alternative education students;
- 5 (6) expanded offerings for gifted and talented students;
- 6 and
- 7 (7) establishment of linkages between students and
- 8 prospective employers, including those offering high school
- 9 internships and apprenticeships;

10 and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That the task force consist of the following 29
12 members:

13 (1) The chairman and minority chairman of the Education
14 Committee of the Senate and the chairman and minority
15 chairman of the Education Committee of the House of
16 Representatives.

17 (2) Two members of the Senate, one each to be chosen by
18 the President pro tempore and the Minority Leader of the
19 Senate.

20 (3) Two members of the House of Representatives, one
21 each to be chosen by the Majority Leader and Minority Leader
22 of the House of Representatives.

23 (4) The Secretary of Education or a designee.

24 (5) The chairperson of the State Board of Education or a
25 designee who shall be a member of the State Board of
26 Education.

27 (6) The Chancellor of the State System of Higher
28 Education or a designee.

29 (7) The presidents of each of the Commonwealth's four
30 State-related universities or their designees.

1 (8) The president of the Pennsylvania Commission on
2 Community Colleges or a designee.

3 (9) The president of the Pennsylvania Association of
4 Independent Colleges and Universities or a designee.

5 (10) The president of the Pennsylvania Association of
6 School Administrators or a designee.

7 (11) The president of the Pennsylvania Association of
8 Elementary and Secondary School Principals or a designee.

9 (12) The president of the Pennsylvania Association of
10 Intermediate Units or a designee.

11 (13) The president of the Pennsylvania Association of
12 Rural and Small Schools or a designee.

13 (14) The president of the Pennsylvania League of Urban
14 Schools or a designee.

15 (15) The president of the Pennsylvania Federation of
16 Teachers or a designee.

17 (16) The president of the Pennsylvania State Education
18 Association or a designee.

19 (17) The president of the Pennsylvania School Boards
20 Association or a designee.

21 (18) The president of the Pennsylvania PTA or a
22 designee.

23 (19) The president of the Pennsylvania Chamber of
24 Business and Industry or a designee.

25 (20) Two representatives of Pennsylvania's broadband
26 cable industry, one of whom shall be selected by the
27 President pro tempore of the Senate and one of whom shall be
28 selected by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

29 and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That members be appointed within 30 days of the

1 adoption of this resolution and that names be furnished to the
2 chairman and minority chairman of the Education Committee of the
3 Senate and the chairman and minority chairman of the Education
4 Committee of the House of Representatives; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That the Majority Chairman and Minority Chairman of
6 the Education Committee of the Senate and the Majority Chairman
7 and Minority Chairman of the Education Committee of the House
8 jointly call the initial meeting of the task force, at which
9 meeting the members shall elect a chairperson from its

10 membership; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That the first meeting of the task force be
12 convened no later than 60 days after adoption of this
13 resolution; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That the task force be authorized to hold hearings,
15 take testimony and make its investigations at such places as it
16 deems necessary in this Commonwealth; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That in undertaking this investigation, the task
18 force have the following powers and duties:

19 (1) to meet with all segments of the basic and higher
20 education communities, representatives of this Commonwealth's
21 business and labor communities and Internet service providers
22 operating within this Commonwealth to discuss their potential
23 involvement in the operation of a State-sponsored virtual
24 high school program;

25 (2) to meet with current operators of Internet-based
26 educational programs operating within this Commonwealth,
27 including those operated by school districts, intermediate
28 units and blended school programs;

29 (3) to review State-operated virtual high school
30 programs already in operation throughout the United States;

1 and

2 (4) to evaluate and make recommendations on the
3 following:

4 (i) An agency or institution to be responsible for
5 administration of the school and oversight of day-to-day
6 operations.

7 (ii) Courses to be offered, including how they will
8 be determined and assessed.

9 (iii) Faculty, including salaries, certification,
10 training, professional development and evaluation.

11 (iv) Policies for awarding credits.

12 (v) Assuring maximum accessibility to high school
13 students in all geographic locations.

14 (vi) Student enrollment, verification of attendance
15 and performance assessment.

16 (vii) Program accountability.

17 (viii) Methods for funding, including cost
18 estimates.

19 (ix) Internet filtering, blocking and other security
20 issues.

21 (x) Intellectual property issues such as patents,
22 copyrights and trademarks.

23 (xi) Adaptation and accessibility for students with
24 disabilities.

25 (xii) Such other issues as it deems appropriate;

26 and be it further

27 RESOLVED, That the task force report to the General Assembly
28 on its activities and findings and make recommendations no later
29 than April 1, 2008; and be it further

30 RESOLVED, That staff for the task force be made available by

1 the Education Committee of the Senate and the Education
2 Committee of the House of Representatives; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That members of the task force serve without
4 compensation but be reimbursed for all necessary and actual
5 expenses incurred in the performance of their duties; and be it
6 further

7 RESOLVED, That the actual expenses incurred by the task force
8 and staff be equally divided between the Senate and the House of
9 Representatives and be paid from appropriate accounts under the
10 control of the Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of
11 the House of Representatives; and be it further

12 RESOLVED, That, within 30 days after the task force has made
13 its report, the Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of
14 the House of Representatives cause a record of all expenses
15 incurred by the members of the task force which are payable by
16 the Commonwealth to be made publicly available.