

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2498 Session of  
2014

INTRODUCED BY MAHONEY, LUCAS, BISHOP, MILLARD, V. BROWN,  
HARKINS, READSHAW, GODSHALL, R. BROWN, SNYDER, MCGEEHAN,  
COHEN, MURT AND CALTAGIRONE, SEPTEMBER 22, 2014

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, SEPTEMBER 22, 2014

AN ACT

1 Establishing a pilot program that provides grants to vocational-  
2 technical schools and career and technical institutes for  
3 instruction in drug and alcohol counseling relating primarily  
4 to the prevention of heroin use, addiction and related  
5 deaths; 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 Vocational-  
10 Technical School Drug and Alcohol Counseling Pilot Program.

11 Section 2. Legislative findings and purpose.

12 (a) Legislative Findings.--The General Assembly finds and  
13 declares that:

14 (1) This Commonwealth is experiencing an epidemic in the  
15 incidence of addiction, overdose and resultant deaths  
16 involving the use of heroin.

17 (2) Heroin use has risen among youth and its use  
18 transcends all demographic and geographic boundaries.

19 (3) Programs established in high school curricula

1 provide students with the opportunity to learn about the  
2 potential dangers and consequences of the abuse of alcohol  
3 and illegal drugs such as heroin.

4 (4) There is a need to establish drug and alcohol  
5 counseling in the curriculum of vocational-technical schools  
6 and career and technical institutes to provide students with  
7 the opportunity to earn school credits toward a degree in  
8 this field of study.

9 (5) An increase in the number of well-trained drug and  
10 alcohol counselors will help to more effectively address the  
11 drug and alcohol problems of citizens in this Commonwealth  
12 and, in particular, to meet the increased need to prevent and  
13 treat the problems of addiction and overdose related to the  
14 use of heroin.

15 (b) Purpose.--The purpose of this act is to implement a  
16 pilot program that will:

17 (1) Create a distinctive curriculum for students in  
18 vocational-technical schools or career and technical  
19 institutes that provides students an opportunity to study, to  
20 earn school credits and to graduate with a degree in drug and  
21 alcohol counseling in order to meet the increased need for  
22 individuals trained in this field of endeavor.

23 (2) Study the effectiveness of the curriculum in  
24 providing essential insights and counsel regarding the  
25 ability of students to implement the developed educational  
26 strategies and to prevent citizens' and, in particular,  
27 youth's involvement in the use and addiction to drugs, and  
28 more specifically heroin, with the overall goal of reducing  
29 deaths from heroin overdose.

30 (3) If the program is found to be effective, make the

curriculum available to other vocational-technical schools or career and technical institutes in this Commonwealth to better address local drug and alcohol abuse and addiction problems.

Section 3. Definitions.

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

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

"Program." The Vocational-Technical School Drug and Alcohol Counseling Pilot Program established by this act.

Section 4. Vocational-Technical School Drug and Alcohol Counseling Pilot Program.

(a) Establishment.--The department shall establish and administer the Vocational-Technical School Drug and Alcohol Counseling Pilot Program to be utilized as a separate and distinct curriculum leading to a degree in drug and alcohol counseling for participating students in vocational-technical schools or career and technical institutes. The curriculum shall provide insight and counsel to students regarding the dangers to citizens' health and well-being of drug and alcohol abuse, as well as the other potential consequences of such behavior, specifically address the prevention of the abuse of heroin and include a focus on potentially effective strategies for preventing the use, addiction and overdose deaths involving youth.

(b) Program operation.--The program shall operate for three full school years, beginning with the school year that begins at least six months after the effective date of this section.

1 (c) Funds.--The department shall use State funds  
2 appropriated by the General Assembly for the program under  
3 section 9 and shall award grants to vocational-technical schools  
4 or career and technical institutes that participate in the  
5 program. No grant may exceed \$50,000.

6 (d) Consultation.--The department shall consult with the  
7 Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs in developing the  
8 program and any other organization that specializes in and has  
9 expertise with the problems related to illegal drug and alcohol  
10 abuse and addiction and, in particular, with the drug heroin, in  
11 establishing, operating and evaluating the program.

12 Section 5. Duties.

13 No later than four months after the effective date of this  
14 section, the department shall:

15 (1) Establish guidelines and procedures for the program  
16 that shall include:

17 (i) Establishing curricular materials that address  
18 effective prevention of alcohol and drug abuse, with a  
19 particular focus on the use of heroin and its inherent  
20 potential dangers, including addiction and overdose  
21 leading to death and with a special emphasis on  
22 potentially effective strategies for the prevention of  
23 the use, addiction and overdose death by youth.

24 (ii) Providing technical advice and support for  
25 schools that request assistance in implementing the  
26 program.

27 (2) Develop and publicize an application procedure for  
28 school districts interested in having the vocational-  
29 technical school or career and technical institute which  
30 their students attend participate in the program.

1           (3) Select not more than 12 vocational-technical schools  
2 or career and technical institutes to participate in the  
3 program from the list of applications received by school  
4 districts located in counties of the fourth class.

5           (4) Assure that the vocational-technical schools and  
6 career and technical institutes chosen for the program are  
7 located in counties of the fourth class and are  
8 geographically dispersed throughout this Commonwealth.

9 Section 6. School district requirements.

10       (a) Nomination.--The board of directors of a school district  
11 located in a county of the fourth class may submit an  
12 application to the department nominating the vocational-  
13 technical school or career and technical institute with which it  
14 is affiliated to participate in the program. The application  
15 shall include written consent by the vocational-technical school  
16 or career and technical institute to the nomination.

17       (b) Application.--No later than six months after the  
18 effective date of this section, a school district may submit an  
19 application to the department in the manner prescribed by the  
20 department. Each school district which applies to have the  
21 vocational-technical school or career and technical institute  
22 with which it is affiliated considered for participation in the  
23 program shall agree to do all of the following:

24           (1) Establish the program curriculum created by the  
25 department as a curriculum that is separate from its  
26 established curricular programs and that provides a separate  
27 and distinct curricular track into which students may enroll  
28 for the purpose of studying to earn a degree in the field of  
29 drug and alcohol counseling.

30           (2) Participate in the program for three years.

1 Section 7. Evaluation of program.

2 The department shall contract with a nationally recognized  
3 drug and alcohol counseling evaluation institution or  
4 organization to provide an evaluation of the program to review  
5 its effectiveness for students who are studying to become drug  
6 and alcohol counselors in deterring the abuse of alcohol and  
7 drugs and, in particular, preventing or reducing citizens'  
8 involvement in the use of heroin and reducing the number of  
9 heroin overdoses and deaths related to heroin overdose. The  
10 evaluation shall include a special focus on examining the  
11 potential effectiveness of developed strategies for the  
12 prevention of heroin use by youth. The evaluation shall be  
13 published on the department's publicly accessible Internet  
14 website. The contract shall require the institution to submit a  
15 report in accordance with section 8.

16 Section 8. Reports.

17 (a) School district report.--Each participating school  
18 district shall annually report to the department data and  
19 information about the operation of the program in the manner  
20 prescribed by the department.

21 (b) Department report.--The department shall annually  
22 furnish to the Governor, the Education Committee of the Senate  
23 and the Education Committee of the House of Representatives a  
24 report on the program.

25 (c) Institution report.--Upon the conclusion of the third  
26 school year of the program, the drug and alcohol counseling  
27 evaluation institution or organization shall prepare a  
28 comprehensive report outlining the three-year history of the  
29 program and its potential for successfully contributing to  
30 reducing alcohol and drug abuse and, in particular, for reducing

1 the incidence of the use, addiction, overdose and related deaths  
2 involving heroin by youth in this Commonwealth.

3 Section 9. Appropriation.

4 The sum of \$500,000 is hereby appropriated to the department  
5 for the purpose of grants to vocational-technical schools and  
6 career and technical institutes participating in the program.

7 Section 10. Effective date.

8 This act shall take effect immediately.