



# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

## FISCAL NOTE

HOUSE BILL NO. 1578

PRINTERS NO. 3499

PRIME SPONSOR: Fee

### COST / (SAVINGS)

FUND	FY 2015/16	FY 2016/17
General Fund	\$0	\$0

#### SUMMARY:

House Bill 1578 adds a new article to the Public School Code concerning the “E-chievement Program.” It would take effect in 60 days.

#### ANALYSIS:

House Bill 1578 establishes the “E-chievement Program” within the Department of Education (PDE) to award grants on a competitive basis to eligible school entities to the extent that funds are appropriated for this purpose. The legislation outlines application and eligibility criteria for school entities to apply for grants to establish hybrid learning programs, an instructional strategy that blends digital resources with traditional classroom teaching. The grants must be used for components of hybrid learning, including, but not limited to, digital instructional content, classroom management tools, operations support, technology and equipment, professional development, instructional coaching, consulting services, and planning assistance.

The school entity must provide a cash or in-kind local match of money in support of hybrid learning within the school entity of at least 25% of the cost of the project funded by the grant. There are two kinds of grants, either planning grants or implementation grants.

Planning grants may be issued to eligible school entities that are interested in hybrid learning but do not have comprehensive plans to deliver such learning. A planning grant may not exceed \$50,000 per school entity, and a school entity may not receive more than one planning grant within a five-year period.

Implementation grants may be issued to eligible school entities that have a comprehensive plan for hybrid learning and are either ready to implement that plan, or intend to expand a hybrid learning program that is already in place. Implementation grants may not exceed \$250,000 annually per school entity, and a school entity may not receive more than one implementation grant per year, nor more than three implementation grants within a five-year period.

By November 30, 2017, and by November 30 of each year thereafter, the Department must prepare and submit an electronic report to the Governor and General Assembly regarding the

effectiveness and administration of the program. The minimum contents of that report are provided for in the legislation.

Any E-chievement grants received by school districts under this program will not be counted as expenditures for the school district when the district is calculating the per student amounts it must pay to charter schools.

Finally, the Department must ensure that at least 15% of money appropriated for the E-chievement grants is allocated to school entities that rank in the lowest 5% of school entities based on academic performance. The Department must also, to the greatest extent possible, ensure that all money for grants is distributed geographically throughout this Commonwealth.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

Enactment of this legislation will have no adverse impact on Commonwealth funds. The legislation states that the grants will be awarded to the extent that funds are appropriated for this purpose; it does not require that any such appropriations be made.

**PREPARED BY:** Jeff Miller  
House Appropriations Committee (R)

**DATE:** June 20, 2016

*Estimates are calculated using the best information available. Actual costs and revenue impact incurred may vary from estimates.*