
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 1275 Session of
2018

INTRODUCED BY MARTIN, AUMENT, COSTA, MENSCH, GORDNER, REGAN,
BLAKE, SCHWANK, WARD AND YUDICHAK, OCTOBER 12, 2018

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, OCTOBER 12, 2018

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An
2 act relating to the public school system, including certain
3 provisions applicable as well to private and parochial
4 schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the
5 laws relating thereto," providing for the Keystone
6 Telepresence Education Grant Program.

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

9 Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known
10 as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended by adding an
11 article to read:

12 ARTICLE XV-J

13 KEYSTONE TELEPRESENCE EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM

14 Section 1501-J. Scope of article.

15 This article relates to the Keystone Telepresence Education
16 Grant Program.

17 Section 1502-J. Definitions.

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

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

3 "Grant." A Keystone Telepresence Education Grant authorized
4 and awarded by the department under the program to intermediate
5 units in this Commonwealth.

6 "Homebound student." A student in this Commonwealth who:

7 (1) is unable to attend school for an extended period as
8 the result of a serious medical condition, including injuries
9 from an accident, recovery from a medical procedure, serious
10 illness or chronic illness; and

11 (2) satisfies the conditions for receipt of homebound
12 instruction under 22 Pa. Code § 11.25 (relating to temporary
13 excusals due to illness or other urgent reasons).

14 "Program." The Keystone Telepresence Education Grant Program
15 established under section 1503-J(a).

16 "Secretary." The Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth.

17 "Telepresence equipment." Available technology that enables
18 homebound students to participate in daily educational
19 activities with the students' classmates and teachers, in real-
20 time, from a remote location. The technology shall include audio
21 and video capabilities that enable homebound students to
22 communicate with classmates and teachers.

23 "Telepresence equipment manufacturer." An entity that
24 manufactures telepresence equipment for the use of, among other
25 things, educating homebound students and provides technical
26 support and training for the equipment.

27 Section 1503-J. Keystone Telepresence Education Grant Program.

28 (a) Establishment.--The Keystone Telepresence Education
29 Grant Program is established for the purpose of awarding grants
30 to intermediate units for the purchase of telepresence equipment

1 and related support services for the educational support of
2 homebound students. The department shall:

3 (1) Develop guidelines for the purchase of telepresence
4 equipment and services related to the utilization of the
5 equipment through the program, including department-approved
6 telepresence equipment manufacturers.

7 (2) Determine the form and manner in which an
8 application for a grant may be filed with the department.

9 (3) Provide notice of the program to intermediate units.

10 (4) Make grant applications available to all
11 intermediate units along with details relating to the
12 application process.

13 (5) Adopt guidelines for the approval of grant
14 applications.

15 (b) Eligibility.--Each intermediate unit shall be eligible
16 for a grant.

17 (c) Application.--An intermediate unit may apply for a grant
18 by submitting one annual application to the department. The
19 secretary shall determine in accordance with the guidelines of
20 the department the amount of a grant award to an intermediate
21 unit.

22 (d) Allocation.--To award grants under the program, the
23 department shall use up to \$300,000 annually of undistributed
24 funds not expended, encumbered or committed from appropriations
25 for grants and subsidies made to the department to award grants.
26 The funds shall be transferred by the Secretary of the Budget to
27 a restricted account as necessary to award grants and, when
28 transferred, are hereby appropriated to carry out the provisions
29 in this article.

30 (e) Limitations.--No intermediate unit may receive an annual

1 grant allocation that exceeds 10% of the funds available under
2 the grant program.

3 Section 1504-J. Intermediate unit policies.

4 (a) Telepresence equipment use.--An intermediate unit shall
5 develop an internal policy for the use of telepresence equipment
6 and related support services prior to applying for a grant. The
7 policy shall include guidelines for the process by which public
8 schools, nonpublic schools or other educational entities within
9 the intermediate unit may request the use of telepresence
10 equipment through an intermediate unit.

11 (b) Dissemination.--An intermediate unit shall, upon
12 request, provide the policy under subsection (a) to a public
13 school, nonpublic school or other educational entity within the
14 intermediate unit.

15 (c) Policy modification.--A public school, nonpublic school
16 or other educational entity within an intermediate unit may
17 request that the intermediate unit modify its policy for the use
18 of telepresence equipment and related support services to meet
19 the needs of a homebound student.

20 Section 1505-J. Use of grants.

21 (a) Equipment.--An intermediate unit which is awarded a
22 grant shall use the grant to purchase telepresence equipment.

23 (b) Service and training.--A grant may be used, in part, to
24 secure technical support, mechanical support and training
25 support related to the use of telepresence equipment.

26 Section 1506-J. Reports.

27 An intermediate unit which is awarded a grant shall submit to
28 the department a report detailing all expenditures related to
29 the use of the grant.

30 Section 1507-J. Prohibition.

1 An intermediate unit that purchases telepresence equipment
2 with a grant may not charge a public school, nonpublic school or
3 other educational entity within the intermediate unit for the
4 use of the telepresence equipment when the equipment is used to
5 support the educational needs of a homebound student.

6 Section 1508-J. Construction.

7 Nothing in this article shall be construed to require or
8 create an entitlement to telepresence equipment as a component
9 of an individualized education plan for any student in this
10 Commonwealth.

11 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 90 days.