

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1898 Session of
1984

INTRODUCED BY D. R. WRIGHT, GALLAGHER, MANDERINO, IRVIS,
PIEVSKY, F. E. TAYLOR, BURNS, STEWART, STEIGHNER, STUBAN,
WARGO, ITKIN, BELFANTI, COY, GEORGE, RICHARDSON, COWELL,
TIGUE, WAMBACH, MURPHY, RUDY, DOMBROWSKI AND KUKOVICH,
FEBRUARY 7, 1984

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 7, 1984

AN ACT

1 Establishing an Information Technology Education Board within
2 the Department of Education; enlarging the responsibilities
3 of the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency;
4 creating Regional Computer Resource Centers; establishing
5 Regional Computer Resource Center boards; and making
6 appropriations.

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

9 Section 1. Short title.

10 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Information
11 Technology Education Act.

12 Section 2. Legislative intent.

13 (a) Findings.--The General Assembly finds:

14 (1) The ability to use and process information is an
15 essential skill to a productive society.

16 (2) Computers have become universal devices in the
17 processing of information.

18 (3) Surveys have found that relatively few students are

1 obtaining access to computers and that these students have
2 access for relatively short periods of time.

3 (4) There is a potentially increasing gap between
4 economically advantaged and economically disadvantaged
5 students regarding computer availability.

6 (5) The department has found that an overwhelming
7 majority of teachers in the Commonwealth have no computer
8 proficiency.

9 (6) It is the best interest of the Commonwealth to
10 improve and strengthen computer education in its elementary
11 and secondary schools by:

12 (i) Encouraging orderly planning for the use of
13 microcomputers and for the application of microcomputers
14 to the instructional programs of elementary and secondary
15 schools.

16 (ii) Improving teacher training in computer
17 education.

18 (iii) Encouraging the acquisition of computer
19 hardware.

20 (iv) Assisting in the acquisition of appropriate
21 computer software.

22 (b) Intent.--The General Assembly intends that:

23 (1) All areas of the Commonwealth shall have available a
24 Regional Computer Resource Center to assist school districts
25 in developing the computer skills of their students and
26 teachers and to ensure availability of computer equipment,
27 training and programs.

28 (2) There shall be at least eight, but no more than ten,
29 centers throughout the Commonwealth, each of which shall be
30 established at sites reflecting considerations of demography,

1 availability of expertise, prior experience in providing
2 related educational services to basic education, and
3 application of workload.

4 (3) Funding shall be made available to the centers from
5 the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency for
6 operation and maintenance and for local grants for teacher
7 training and from the Department of Education for hardware
8 and software acquisition.

9 (4) The initial priority of this act shall be to
10 equalize the development of computer skills of students and
11 teachers among the school districts.

12 (5) This program is designed as a five-year program.

13 Section 3. Definitions.

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

17 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance
18 Agency.

19 "Board." The Information Technology Education Board.

20 "Center." A Regional Computer Resource Center.

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

23 Section 4. Establishment of Information Technology Education
24 Board.

25 (a) Creation.--There is hereby created the Information
26 Technology Education Board within the Department of Education.

27 (b) Members.--The board shall consist of seven members. Four
28 members shall be legislators, one from each party represented in
29 each house. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall
30 designate the members from the House and the President pro

1 tempore shall designate the members from the Senate. One member
2 shall be the Secretary of Education or his designee. One member
3 shall be the Executive Director of Pennsylvania Higher Education
4 Assistance Agency or his designee. These six members shall serve
5 for the duration of their respective terms of office, and
6 members from the House and Senate may be reappointed to the
7 board if reelected to legislative office. The one remaining
8 member shall be appointed by the Governor.

9 (c) Powers and duties.--The board shall be responsible for
10 establishing uniform school district application and review
11 procedures for grant proposals submitted to Regional Computer
12 Resource Centers by local school districts. It shall allocate
13 the appropriation for hardware and software acquisition grants
14 among the centers. It shall review annual reports of program
15 content, effectiveness and costs which will be submitted by the
16 centers.

17 Section 5. Responsibility of Pennsylvania Higher Education
18 Assistance Agency.

19 (a) Establish centers.--The Pennsylvania Higher Education
20 Assistance Agency shall establish not less than eight nor more
21 than ten Regional Computer Resource Centers throughout the
22 Commonwealth at sites based on demography, availability of
23 expertise, equalization of workload and prior experience in
24 providing related educational services to basic education.

25 (b) Teacher training grant supervision.--The agency shall be
26 responsible for reviewing teacher training grant proposals
27 submitted on behalf of teachers by Regional Computer Resource
28 Centers. It shall allocate the appropriation for teacher
29 training grants among the centers.

30 Section 6. Regional Computer Resource Centers.

1 (a) Purpose.--The purposes of each Regional Computer
2 Resource Center are to increase teacher expertise relating to
3 computer information technology and to assist local school
4 districts within the region to upgrade computer hardware and
5 software. To this end, it will:

6 (1) Provide teacher training.

7 (2) Help design computer oriented curricula.

8 (3) Assist with the evaluation of software.

9 (4) Review and evaluate proposals for upgrading computer
10 and computer oriented instruction.

11 (5) Provide funding for computer hardware and software.

12 (6) Coordinate purchase of computer hardware and
13 software.

14 (b) Regional Computer Resource Center Board.--

15 (1) The Governor shall appoint five persons to be
16 members of each Regional Computer Resource Center Board of
17 Directors. The appointments shall be made based on
18 recommendations of the agency. The persons appointed shall
19 represent five broad areas: computer technology, teacher
20 education, computer education, elementary education and
21 secondary education.

22 (2) It shall be the duty of the regional board to
23 receive grant applications from school districts. Such
24 applications shall include plans for upgrading computer
25 education through two related and coordinated actions:
26 teacher training and computer hardware and software
27 acquisition and utilization.

28 (i) Grant applications from school districts for
29 teacher training in computer education shall be received
30 by the regional board. After reviewing applications, the

1 regional board shall request an allocation from the
2 Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.

3 (ii) Grant applications from school districts for
4 purchasing hardware and software necessary to supply programs
5 designed by the applicants shall be received by the regional
6 board. After reviewing applications, the regional board shall
7 request an aggregate allocation from the Information
8 Technology Education Board of the Department of Education.
9 The grants to school districts made by the Regional Computer
10 Resource Center shall reflect the aid ratio defined in the
11 act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public
12 School Code of 1949, but shall not exceed \$50,000. Each
13 school district applying shall be required to supply the
14 balance of the funding necessary for its program; the balance
15 may be supplied in cash or in kind.

16 (c) Support staff and equipment.--The centers will be
17 staffed on a full-time basis and shall have sufficient
18 technological equipment to meet their purposes.

19 Section 7. Appropriations.

20 (a) Education appropriation.--The sum of \$3,250,000, or as
21 much thereof as may be necessary, is specifically appropriated
22 to the Department of Education for the fiscal year July 1, 1984
23 to June 30, 1985, to provide up to \$3,200,000 for grants to
24 school districts for developing and implementing hardware and
25 software computer usage in accordance with this act and to
26 provide up to \$50,000 for administrative expenses incurred by
27 the department and by the Information Technology Education
28 Board.

29 (b) Agency appropriation.--The sum of \$1,900,000, or as much
30 thereof as may be necessary, is specifically appropriated to the

1 Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, to provide for
2 establishing, operating and maintaining Regional Computer
3 Resource Centers, to provide up to \$400,000 for teacher computer
4 training grants and to provide up to \$100,000 for administrative
5 expenses incurred by the agency. This appropriation shall not
6 lapse at the end of the fiscal year but shall continue until
7 June 30, 1985.

8 Section 8. Sunset provision.

9 The program created under this act shall expire five years
10 from the effective date of this act.

11 Section 9. Effective date.

12 This act shall take effect in 30 days.