

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL**No. 1898** Session of
1984

INTRODUCED BY D. R. WRIGHT, GALLAGHER, MANDERINO, IRVIS,
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WARGO, ITKIN, BELFANTI, COY, GEORGE, RICHARDSON, COWELL,
TIGUE, WAMBACH, MURPHY, RUDY, DOMBROWSKI, KUKOVICH, HARPER,
FISCHER, WASS, BATTISTO, FREIND, BURNS AND LIVENGOOD,
FEBRUARY 6, 1984

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, MARCH 12, 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.

1 (3) Surveys have found that relatively few students are
2 obtaining access to computers and that these students have
3 access for relatively short periods of time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 established at sites reflecting considerations of demography,
2 availability of expertise, prior experience in providing
3 related educational services to basic education, and
4 application of workload.

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

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

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

14 Section 3. Definitions.

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

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

20 "Board." The Information Technology Education Board.

21 "Center." A Regional Computer Resource Center.

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

24 Section 4. Establishment of Information Technology Education

25 Board.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 Section 6. Regional Computer Resource Centers.

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

7 (1) Provide teacher training.

8 (2) Help design computer oriented curricula.

9 (3) Assist with the evaluation of software.

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

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

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

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

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

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

29 (i) Grant applications from school districts for
30 teacher training in computer education shall be received

1 by the regional board. After reviewing applications, the
2 regional board shall request an allocation from the
3 Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.

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

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

20 Section 7. Appropriations.

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

30 (B) DISTRIBUTION TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS.--THE FUNDS

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1 APPROPRIATED FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS ACT SHALL BE DISTRIBUTED
2 TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY A FORMULA WHICH IS BASED UPON FACTORS OF
3 60% FOR RELATIVE ENROLLMENT, 35% FOR LOW-INCOME PUPILS AND 5%
4 FOR STUDENTS IN SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS. FOR THE PURPOSES OF
5 THIS ACT, LOW-INCOME PUPILS ARE DEFINED AS CHILDREN AGED 5 TO 17
6 YEARS, INCLUSIVE, IN FAMILIES RECEIVING A GRANT IN EXCESS OF
7 \$2,000 FROM THE COMMONWEALTH ON ACCOUNT OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN
8 UNDER TITLE IV OF THE FEDERAL SOCIAL SECURITY ACT. FUNDS
9 DISTRIBUTED FOR STUDENTS IN SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS SHALL BE
10 ASSIGNED TO DISTRICTS WHOSE POPULATION IS LESS THAN 100 PER
11 SQUARE MILE AS DETERMINED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION FROM THE
12 MOST RECENT RECORDS OF THE UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU.

13 ~~(b)~~ (C) Agency appropriation.--The sum of \$1,900,000, or as ←
14 much thereof as may be necessary, is specifically appropriated
15 to the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, to
16 provide for establishing, operating and maintaining Regional
17 Computer Resource Centers, to provide up to \$400,000 for teacher
18 computer training grants and to provide up to \$100,000 for
19 administrative expenses incurred by the agency. This
20 appropriation shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal year but
21 shall continue until June 30, ~~1985~~ 1989. ←

22 Section 8. Sunset provision.

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

25 Section 9. Effective date.

26 This act shall take effect in 30 days.