

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2638 Session of
2000

INTRODUCED BY COLAFELLA, DeWEESE, STURLA, STEELMAN, STAIRS,
MUNDY, GRUCELA, WILLIAMS, M. COHEN, EVANS, BELARDI, BEBKO-
JONES, BELFANTI, CAPPABIANCA, COSTA, DALEY, FICHTER, FLICK,
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McCALL, MICOZZIE, RAMOS, READSHAW, ROONEY, SANTONI, SHANER,
SNYDER, SOLOBAY, STABACK, THOMAS, TIGUE, TRICH, TULLI, WALKO,
WASHINGTON, WOJNAROSKI AND YUDICHAK, JUNE 14, 2000

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, JUNE 14, 2000

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 a quality instruction
6 program; and making an appropriation.

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 XII-A.

13 IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION PROGRAM.

14 Section 1201-A. Legislative Findings.--The General Assembly
15 finds and declares as follows:

16 (1) A well-trained and well-educated work force is essential
17 to the economic well-being of this Commonwealth and its

1 citizens.

2 (2) A system of public education that provides a quality
3 education for all the children of this Commonwealth is essential
4 in maintaining a well-trained and well-educated work force.

5 (3) One of the greatest influences on the quality of
6 education and academic performance of students is the quality of
7 instruction with particular emphasis on the knowledge, skills
8 and qualifications of teachers. Fully trained and certified
9 teachers provide better instruction leading to higher student
10 achievement. A well-trained teacher work force also saves money
11 in the long run over emergency hires and alternatively certified
12 teachers who receive only a few days or weeks of training before
13 they are hired.

14 (4) It is in the interests of the Commonwealth to assist
15 school districts, especially financially poor school districts,
16 in their efforts to improve the quality of instruction for all
17 children in public education and more specifically to improve
18 the knowledge, skills and qualifications of teachers in public
19 schools.

20 (5) It is in the interests of the Commonwealth to assist
21 school districts, especially financially poor school districts,
22 to improve their teacher work force through National Board
23 Certification of their teachers and to provide incentives to
24 those teachers attaining National Board Certification to serve
25 as mentors to new and existing teachers. National Board
26 Certification of teachers is a nationally recognized process
27 designed to certify teachers so that they, like professionals in
28 other fields, can achieve distinction by meeting rigorous
29 standards of knowledge and performance. The certification
30 requirements far exceed existing State recertification

requirements. National Board Certification is endorsed by leading business groups including: United States Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Manufacturers, American Business Conference, Business Higher Education Forum, Council on Competitiveness and Council of Growing Companies.

(6) In order to address the fact that some school districts, due to teacher shortages, are forced to hire teachers not certified in their area of instruction, particularly in the areas of science and mathematics, the State should provide assistance to school districts in the continuing education of teachers to ensure that all of their teachers are certified in their area of instruction.

(7) In order to ensure that new technology in our children's classrooms serves to improve the quality of instruction, the State should provide assistance to school districts to ensure that their teachers are properly trained and capable of using the new technology and integrating computers into classroom instruction.

(8) It is in the interests of the Commonwealth for the State to provide assistance to school districts, especially financially poor school districts, to provide every high school student with academic promise with the opportunity to take an Advanced Placement course. Advanced placement courses are recognized as a proven program exposing high school students to academically rigorous coursework and challenging standards. Pennsylvania presently lags behind other surrounding states in providing advanced placement courses to its brightest and most promising students.

Section 1202-A. Definitions.--For the purposes of this article, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

1 "Advanced placement courses" shall mean high school level
2 preparatory courses for advanced placement examination that is
3 approved by the College Board and Educational Testing Service.

4 "Advanced placement examination" shall mean the advanced
5 placement examinations conducted by the College Entrance
6 Examination Board, on the basis of which participating
7 institutions of post-secondary education award post-secondary
8 academic credit.

9 "Applicant" shall mean a school district or a combination of
10 school districts which applies for funds under this article.

11 "Average daily membership" shall have the same meaning as it
12 is defined in section 2501.

13 "Continuing professional education opportunities" shall mean
14 continuing professional education courses, programs, activities
15 and other learning experiences approved to meet continuing
16 professional requirements under section 1205.2.

17 "Department" shall mean the Department of Education of the
18 Commonwealth.

19 "Higher education institutions" shall mean any institution of
20 higher education in this Commonwealth authorized to grant
21 collegiate level degrees and which has received total
22 institutional accreditation by an accrediting agency recognized
23 by the Federal Government, the Department of Education and the
24 State Board of Education.

25 "Educator" shall mean an individual who holds a Pennsylvania
26 teacher, educational specialist or administrative certification
27 or letter of eligibility.

28 "Market Value/Personal Income Aid Ratio" shall have the same
29 meaning as it is defined in section 2501.

30 "National Board Certification" shall mean a continuing

education program established by the private nonprofit National Board for Professional Teaching Standards designed to certify experienced teachers that complete a demanding demonstration of their content knowledge and teacher skills. Teachers achieving National Board Certification are recognized by their peers as ones who meet high and rigorous professional standards and accomplished teaching practices.

"School district" shall have the same meaning as in section 102.

"School entity" shall mean any public school district, intermediate unit or area vocational-technical school.

"Secretary" shall mean the Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth.

Section 1203-A. Establishment of Program.--There is hereby established in the department the Quality Instruction Program. The program shall provide Quality Instruction Entitlement Grants and Quality Instruction Competitive Grants to eligible school districts for the purpose of improving the quality of instruction for all children in public education and more specifically to improve the knowledge, skills and qualifications of teachers in public schools.

Section 1204-A. Applications.--(a) Applicants for grant funding under section 1205-A or 1206-A shall submit applications at the time, in the manner and containing or accompanied by such information as the department may prescribe but, in any case, shall include a plan for the expenditure of grant funds that documents the following:

(1) That the plan is developed in consultation with the faculty and administrative staff of the schools within the school district and members of the community that will be

1 affected by the plan.

2 (2) That the plan indicates how the grant funds will be
3 allocated for eligible uses under section 1206-A and how grant
4 funds will be allocated to school entities within the school
5 district.

6 (3) That the plan provides qualitative and quantitative
7 measures that will be used to determine whether the eligible
8 uses of grant funds have improved the academic performance of
9 students benefiting from the grant funds and improved the
10 knowledge, skills and qualifications of educators.

11 (b) Two or more school districts eligible for funding under
12 section 1205-A and/or 1206-A may submit a joint application.

13 Section 1205-A. Quality Instruction Entitlement Grants.--The
14 department shall provide Quality Instruction Entitlement Grants
15 to those school districts eligible for Quality Instruction
16 Entitlement Grants whose Market Value/Personal Income Aid Ratio
17 (MV/PIAR) is greater than the State median (MV/PIAR) for the
18 prior school year. Those school districts that are eligible for
19 funding shall receive twelve dollars (\$12) for each student
20 included in the school district's average daily membership. No
21 school district eligible for a Quality Instruction Entitlement
22 Grant shall receive less than fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000)
23 of grant funding.

24 Section 1206-A. Quality Instruction Competitive Grants.--(a)
25 School districts that are not eligible for funding under section
26 1205-A may apply to the department for Quality Instruction
27 Competitive Grants. A school district eligible for funding under
28 section 1205-A is not eligible for funding under this section.

29 (b) The department shall develop a competitive grant
30 procedure that shall factor in the size and the relative wealth

of the school districts in determining which school districts would receive Quality Instruction Competitive Grants. The department shall also determine a minimum and maximum grant amount that a school district could receive.

Section 1207-A. Eligible Uses of Grant Funding.--(a) School districts receiving funding under section 1205-A or 1206-A may use funding for the following purposes:

(1) To provide incentives for educators to seek National Board Certification by reimbursing educators up to two thousand dollars (\$2,000) per educator for the cost for seeking National Board Certification.

(2) To provide those educators that have completed National Board Certification with up to one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per educator per year to serve as mentors to other teachers in their school district.

(3) To provide continuing professional education opportunities to those educators that are teaching in a classroom outside of their area of certification in order to become certified in their areas of instruction. School districts may collaborate with other school entities and/or higher education institutions to provide these continuing education courses through distance learning technology.

(4) To provide continuing professional education opportunities to educators and reading aides to improve the knowledge and skills in the area of reading instruction, curriculum and programs.

(5) Promote Learning to Link by providing continuing professional education opportunities and training to educators in the use of new technologies and computers in educating students, including integrating new education technologies into

classroom instruction to improve student academic performance.

(6) To train educators to teach advanced placement courses and/or to pay for materials or equipment needed to offer Advanced Placement courses.

(7) To improve a teacher induction program that monitors and supports new teachers to ensure quality instruction. No funding under this article may be used by the school district for services already provided in an existing teacher induction program.

(8) For programs developed by the school district and approved by the department that have demonstrated improvements in the quality of instruction and improved the academic performance of students in the school district.

(b) Two or more school districts receiving funding under section 1205-A and/or 1206-A may combine their funding to provide for one or more of the eligible uses for funding.

(c) Educators who participate in activities specified under this section shall earn professional development credit as required under section 1205.2.

Section 1208-A. Reports.--(a) All school districts receiving funding under section 1205-A or 1206-A shall on an annual basis submit a report to the department detailing the allocation of grant funds by eligible uses under section 1207-A and by a school entity within the school district. The report shall also document both qualitatively and quantitatively the impact of the grant funding on improving the academic performance of students benefiting from the grant funds and improving the knowledge, skills and qualifications of educators. The department shall develop the procedures and format that school districts will use in preparing their report.

1 (b) The department shall submit to the General Assembly and
2 make public a report on the allocation of grant funds by school
3 district and by eligible uses under section 1207-A. The report
4 shall also document both qualitatively and quantitatively the
5 impact both Statewide and by school district of the grant
6 funding on improving the academic performance of students
7 benefiting from the grant funds and improving the knowledge,
8 skills and qualifications of educators.

9 Section 1209-A. State Funding.--The sum of thirteen and one-
10 half million dollars (\$13,500,000), or as much thereof as may be
11 necessary, is hereby appropriated to the Department of Education
12 for each fiscal year from fiscal year 2000-2001 through fiscal
13 year 2004-2005 for the purpose of this article. Of this
14 appropriation amount, no more than nine million dollars
15 (\$9,000,000) shall be allocated each year for funding under
16 section 1205-A and no less than four and one-half million
17 dollars (\$4,500,000) shall be allocated for funding under
18 section 1206-A.

19 Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.