

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 287 Session of
2007

INTRODUCED BY LEACH, CURRY, FABRIZIO, FREEMAN, GALLOWAY,
GOODMAN, HENNESSEY, JOSEPHS, KULA, MELIO, PALLONE, PAYTON,
ROEBUCK, SIPTROTH, WALKO AND YOUNGBLOOD, FEBRUARY 7, 2007

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 7, 2007

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," establishing the World Learn Program
6 in the Department of Education; providing for powers and
7 duties of the department; establishing the World Learn Fund;
8 and making an appropriation.

9 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
10 hereby enacts as follows:

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

14 ARTICLE XV-F

15 WORLD LEARN PROGRAM

16 Section 1501-F. Definitions.

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

20 "Charitable organization." The definition of "charitable

1 organization" in section 3 of the act of December 19, 1990
2 (P.L.1200, No.202), known as the Solicitation of Funds for
3 Charitable Purposes Act.

4 "Department." The Department of Education of the
5 Commonwealth.

6 "Eligible project." A project carried out by an eligible
7 student that raises money for any one of the following:

8 (1) An international charitable organization.

9 (2) A service project undertaken by the student to
10 provide humanitarian aid to needy persons in foreign
11 countries.

12 "Eligible student." A resident of this Commonwealth who is
13 enrolled as a student in a high school program in any school
14 entity.

15 "Fund." The World Learn Fund established in section 1507-F.

16 "International charitable organization." A charitable
17 organization that provides services either exclusively or
18 substantially to persons in foreign countries.

19 "Program." The World Learn Program established in section
20 1502-F.

21 "School entity." Any of the following located in this
22 Commonwealth:

23 (1) A school district.

24 (2) An intermediate unit.

25 (3) A joint school district.

26 (4) An area vocational-technical school.

27 (5) A charter school.

28 (6) An independent school.

29 (7) A licensed private academic school.

30 (8) An accredited school.

1 (9) A school registered under section 1327(b).

2 (10) The Scotland School for Veterans' Children.

3 (11) The Scranton School for the Deaf.

4 Section 1502-F. Establishment of program.

5 The World Learn Program is established within the department
6 to provide high school students with opportunities and
7 incentives to learn about and address geopolitical suffering.

8 The program is designed to provide matching funds for student-
9 sponsored projects that benefit international charities or
10 directly provide aid to those in need in foreign countries.

11 Section 1503-F. Application and approval.

12 (a) Application.--An eligible student may submit to the
13 school entity in which the student is enrolled an application
14 for a grant award under this article for an eligible project. A
15 project may be undertaken by one or more students. The
16 application must contain documentation in support of the
17 student's application. Documentation shall include at a minimum:

18 (1) A description of the project, including the
19 educational benefits accruing to the student as a result of
20 participation in the project.

21 (2) Information needed to verify the accuracy of the
22 description.

23 (b) Duty of school entity.--The school entity shall:

24 (1) Review each application submitted by a student under
25 subsection (a) and provide guidance as needed on ways to
26 improve the project.

27 (2) Forward to the department the application for each
28 project the school entity deems eligible for funding.

29 (c) Department guidelines.--School entity review and
30 approval procedures shall be in accordance with guidelines

1 established by the department.

2 Section 1504-F. Powers and duties of department.

3 The department shall:

4 (1) Establish criteria for evaluation and approval of
5 student applications by school entities.

6 (2) Review student applications for final approval or
7 disapproval.

8 (3) Award grants in an amount not to exceed \$5,000 for
9 each eligible project that the department approves.

10 (4) Establish periods during which applications will be
11 reviewed.

12 (5) Develop guidelines for payment of grants and prize
13 awards to school entities.

14 Section 1505-F. Payments of grants.

15 The department shall make a grant award payment directly to a
16 school entity upon verification to the school entity by the
17 eligible student that the eligible project has been completed. A
18 grant award shall be in an amount that matches up to \$5,000 of
19 the amount raised by a student for an eligible project. A school
20 entity shall provide for payment of the grant award to the
21 student organizing the humanitarian effort. The student shall
22 then forward the funds, and/or the goods or services purchased
23 with the funds to the beneficiary of the grant.

24 Section 1506-F. Awards.

25 (a) Award program.--The department shall establish an award
26 program whereby prizes are awarded to those students whose
27 projects are deemed most effective and creative. Evaluation
28 criteria shall include, but not be limited to:

29 (1) Sustainability of eligible project.

30 (2) Degree of cultural education afforded to eligible

1 students by eligible project.

2 (3) Development of executive skills, critical thinking
3 and employment skills.

4 (b) Prizes.--The prizes shall be awarded annually in the
5 following amounts:

6 (1) One first prize shall be in the amount of \$5,000.

7 (2) One second prize shall be in the amount of \$3,000.

8 Prizes may be divided among the students involved in a single
9 project.

10 (3) One third prize shall be in the amount of \$1,000.

11 (c) Course credit.--The department shall work in conjunction
12 with colleges and universities in this Commonwealth to develop a
13 plan to provide students whose projects are funded under this
14 article the option of earning up to four credit hours toward an
15 undergraduate degree program at no cost. At a minimum students
16 must document 50 hours of eligible project-related work to
17 qualify for one credit hour.

18 Section 1507-F. World Learn Fund.

19 (a) Establishment and administration.--There is hereby
20 established a separate fund in the State Treasury to be known as
21 the World Learn Fund. The fund shall be administered by the
22 department, and all moneys in the fund are appropriated to the
23 department on a continuing basis.

24 (b) Purpose.--The moneys in the fund shall be used solely
25 for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this article,
26 including program administration and promotion.

27 (c) Contributions and solicitation of funds.--

28 (1) The department is authorized:

29 (i) To accept, on behalf of the Commonwealth, gifts,
30 donations, legacies and usages of money from individuals,

1 organizations, public or private corporations and other
2 similar entities for purposes of the program.

3 (ii) To solicit and raise moneys from public and
4 private sources for purposes of the program.

5 (2) All money received or raised under this subsection
6 shall be paid into the State Treasury and credited to the
7 fund.

8 Section 1508-F. Tax credit.

9 The World Learn Program is deemed an approved innovative
10 educational program for purposes of the educational improvement
11 tax credit program under Article XX-B. A business firm that
12 contributes to the World Learn Fund may apply for a tax credit
13 in accordance with Article XX-B.

14 Section 1509-F. Report.

15 The department shall submit annually a report to the
16 Education Committee of the Senate and the Education Committee of
17 the House of Representatives regarding the program. The report
18 shall include a list of project approvals and disapprovals under
19 this article and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the
20 program.

21 Section 1510-F. Expiration.

22 This article shall expire June 30, 2009.

23 Section 2. (1) The sum of \$100,000 is hereby appropriated
24 to the World Learn Fund as a continuing appropriation for the
25 purposes of this article. This appropriation shall lapse June
26 30, 2009.

27 (2) Any revenue up to \$100,000 received by the World
28 Learn Fund as a result of a charitable contribution or
29 donation or a transfer from the State Treasurer as a result
30 of contributions from individuals' tax refunds shall annually

1 be transferred to the General Fund on July 1 of each year.
2 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2008, or
3 immediately, whichever is later.