
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 923 Session of
2007

INTRODUCED BY ROEBUCK, D. EVANS, FREEMAN, GALLOWAY, GRUCELA,
JOSEPHS, W. KELLER, KORTZ, LEACH, McILHATTAN, MELIO, MURT,
MYERS, M. O'BRIEN, PALLONE, PARKER, PAYTON, PRESTON,
READSHAW, SOLOBAY, STURLA, TANGRETTI, THOMAS, WALKO AND
YOUNGBLOOD, MARCH 29, 2007

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MARCH 29, 2007

AN ACT

1 Establishing and providing for the implementation and
2 administration of the Beginning Educator Support and Training
3 (BEST) Program; and providing for powers and duties of the
4 Department of Education.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Short title.

8 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Beginning
9 Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program.

10 Section 2. Declaration of policy.

11 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

12 (1) The beginning years of a teacher's career are a
13 critical time in which intensive professional development and
14 training must occur.

15 (2) The public invests heavily in the preparation of
16 prospective teachers and more than half of all new teachers
17 leave some Pennsylvania school districts after one or two

1 years in the classroom.

2 (3) Intensive professional development and training are
3 necessary to build on the preparation that precedes initial
4 certification, to transform academic preparation into
5 practical success in the classroom, to retain greater numbers
6 of capable beginning educators and to remove novices who show
7 little promise as teachers.

8 Section 3. Definitions.

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

12 "Beginning educator." A first-year teacher with a valid
13 Pennsylvania Instructional I certificate or Educational
14 Specialist I certificate or who is a long-term substitute, 45
15 days or more, employed in an eligible school district.

16 "Department." The Department of Education of the
17 Commonwealth.

18 "Eligible school district." A school district with a high
19 turnover rate for beginning educators in a two-year period and
20 that is economically disadvantaged as determined by the
21 Secretary of Education.

22 Performance-based assessment." An assessment that evaluates
23 beginning educators in relation to student learning and teaching
24 behaviors that is content-specific and reveals information about
25 the logic and coherence of the teachers' curriculum, the
26 appropriateness of their instructional decisions for students,
27 the range of pedagogical strategies they use effectively, the
28 quality of their assignments, their skill in assessing student
29 learning and their ability to reflect on their own teaching and
30 make changes based on evidence of student learning.

1 "Program." The Beginning Educator Support and Training
2 (BEST) Program established by this act.

3 "Program quality." Excellence with respect to program
4 factors, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

5 (1) Program goals.

6 (2) Design resources.

7 (3) Management, evaluation and improvement of the
8 program.

9 (4) Working conditions.

10 (5) Support, training and assessment services to each
11 beginning educator.

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

13 Section 3. Establishment.

14 (a) Program established.--There is hereby established the
15 Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program, to be
16 administered by the department. The department shall provide the
17 program to school districts with high teacher turnover rates for
18 first-year and second-year teachers and that are economically
19 disadvantaged as determined by the secretary. Participation in
20 the program shall be mandatory for beginning educators employed
21 in eligible school districts. The department shall adopt and
22 implement criteria and standards for participation in the
23 program, including criteria regarding the eligibility of
24 educators and standards of local program quality and intensity
25 for schools, school districts, colleges, universities and other
26 educational and professional organizations involved in the
27 program. The criteria and standards shall be consistent with the
28 purposes of the program.

29 (b) Program description.--The program shall support locally
30 designed, high-quality induction programs that provide

1 individualized support and performance-based assessment for all
2 participating beginning educators. The department shall develop
3 and implement policies to govern the support, training and
4 assessment of beginning educators, as a condition for the
5 professional certification of those educators in the future.

6 (c) Continuing professional education.--For a beginning
7 educator who holds an Instructional I or Educational Specialist
8 I certificate who is subject to the requirements of section
9 1205.2 of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as
10 the Public School Code of 1949, participation in the program
11 may, at the teacher's discretion, serve as credit towards hours
12 of continuing professional education programs, activities or
13 learning experiences.

14 Section 4. Administration.

15 The department shall implement and administer the program for
16 eligible school districts pursuant to this act. In administering
17 the program, the department shall provide for or contract for
18 all of the following:

19 (1) Establishment of requirements for reviewing and
20 approving local teacher induction programs.

21 (2) Development and administration of a system for
22 ensuring local teacher induction program quality and
23 effectiveness in producing excellent program outcomes.

24 (3) Ensuring that an eligible school district has a
25 local induction plan in place for each participating
26 beginning educator and that the program provides intensive,
27 mentor-based individualized support and assistance to each
28 participating beginning educator that includes a performance-
29 based assessment.

30 (4) Conducting and tracking research related to best

1 practices for teacher induction programs and professional
2 development materials and strategies for personnel involved
3 in implementing induction programs.

4 Section 5. Funding.

5 (a) General rule.--An eligible school district or consortium
6 of eligible school districts shall apply to the department for
7 funding to establish a local teacher induction program pursuant
8 to this act. From amounts appropriated for the purposes of this
9 act, the department shall allocate \$1,500 for each beginning
10 educator participating in the program at the eligible school
11 district. To be eligible to receive funding, an eligible school
12 district shall meet all the criteria and standards required by
13 the department.

14 (b) Participation limitation.--State funding for
15 participation in the program by educators who hold a first-level
16 certificate is limited to two years or until the teacher has
17 satisfied requirements for successful completion of the local
18 teacher induction program, whichever occurs first.

19 (c) Funding limitation.--No more than 10% of the total sum
20 appropriated annually shall be granted to any single eligible
21 school district.

22 Section 6. Report.

23 The department shall evaluate the effectiveness of the
24 program two years following full implementation and report the
25 findings to the General Assembly. An interim report shall be
26 provided to the General Assembly no later than July 1, 2008, if
27 full funding has not been provided prior to that date.

28 Section 7. Effective date.

29 This act shall take effect July 1, 2007, or immediately,
30 whichever is later.