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,
    YOUNGBLOOD AND LONGIETTI, MARCH 29, 2007

AS REPORTED FROM COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, HOUSE OF
    REPRESENTATIVES, AS AMENDED, JUNE 27, 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 3.1. 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 ALL SCHOOL DISTRICTS IDENTIFIED   <──

18 AS HAVING high teacher turnover rates for first-year and second-

19 year teachers and that are economically disadvantaged as

20 determined by the secretary. Participation in the program shall

21 be mandatory for beginning educators employed in eligible school

22 districts THAT APPLY FOR FUNDING UNDER SECTION 5. The department   <──

23 shall adopt and implement criteria and standards for

24 participation in the program, including criteria regarding the

25 eligibility of educators and standards of local program quality

26 and intensity for schools, school districts, colleges,

27 universities and other educational and professional

28 organizations involved in the program. The criteria and

29 standards shall be consistent with the purposes of the program.

30   (b) Program description.--The program shall support locally

1 designed, high-quality induction programs that provide

2 individualized support and performance-based assessment for all

3 participating beginning educators. The department shall develop

4 and implement policies to govern the support, training and

5 assessment of beginning educators.~~, as a condition for the~~   <—

6 ~~professional certification of those educators in the future.~~

7   (c) Continuing professional education.--For a beginning

8 educator who holds an Instructional I or Educational Specialist

9 I certificate who is subject to the requirements of section

10 1205.2 of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as

11 the Public School Code of 1949, participation in the program

12 may, at the teacher's discretion, serve as credit towards hours

13 of continuing professional education programs, activities or

14 learning experiences.

15 Section 4. Administration.

16   The department shall implement and administer the program for

17 eligible school districts pursuant to this act. In administering

18 the program, the department shall provide for or contract for

19 all of the following:

20   (1) Establishment of requirements for reviewing and

21   approving local teacher induction programs.

22   (2) Development and administration of a system for

23   ensuring local teacher induction program quality and

24   effectiveness in producing excellent program outcomes.

25   (3) Ensuring that an eligible school district has a

26   local induction plan in place for each participating

27   beginning educator and that the program provides intensive,

28   mentor-based individualized support and assistance to each

29   participating beginning educator that includes a performance-

30   based assessment.

1   (4) Conducting and tracking research related to best

 2   practices for teacher induction programs and professional

 3   development materials and strategies for personnel involved

 4   in implementing induction programs.

 5   Section 5. Funding.

 6   (a) General rule.--An eligible school district or consortium

 7   of eligible school districts ~~shall~~ MAY apply to the department   <——

 8   for funding to establish a local teacher induction program

 9   pursuant to this act. From amounts appropriated for the purposes

10   of this act, the department shall allocate $1,500 for each

11   beginning educator participating in the program at ~~the~~ eligible   <——

12   school ~~district~~ DISTRICTS. To be eligible to receive funding, an   <——

13   eligible school district shall meet all the criteria and

14   standards required by the department.

15   (b) Participation limitation.--State funding for

16   participation in the program by educators who hold a first-level

17   certificate is limited to two years or until the teacher has

18   satisfied requirements for successful completion of the local

19   teacher induction program, whichever occurs first.

20   (c) Funding limitation.--No more than 10% of the total sum

21   appropriated annually shall be granted to any single eligible

22   school district.

23   Section 6. Report.

24   The department shall evaluate the effectiveness of the

25   program two years following full implementation and report the

26   findings to the General Assembly. An interim report shall be

27   provided to the General Assembly no later than July 1, 2008, if

28   full funding has not been provided prior to that date.

29   Section 7. Effective date.

30   This act shall take effect July 1, 2007, or immediately,

1 whichever is later.