

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 157 Session of
2007

INTRODUCED BY RHOADES, MUSTO, C. WILLIAMS, LAVALLE, RAFFERTY,
GORDNER, STACK, KASUNIC, COSTA, WASHINGTON, STOUT, WOZNIAK,
M. WHITE, GREENLEAF AND EARLL, JANUARY 29, 2007

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, JANUARY 29, 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," further providing for powers and
6 duties of the intermediate unit board of directors; and
7 providing for academic improvement programs.

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

10 Section 1. Section 914-A of the act of March 10, 1949
11 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, is
12 amended by adding a clause to read:

13 Section 914-A. Powers and Duties of the Intermediate Unit
14 Board of Directors.--An intermediate unit board of directors
15 shall have the power and its duty shall be:

16 * * *

17 (18) To provide support to school districts eligible for
18 academic assistance and coordinate the academic improvement
19 program established under section 925-A.

20 Section 2. The act is amended by adding a section to read:

1 Section 925-A. Academic Improvement Program.--(a) Each
2 intermediate unit shall provide support to and coordinate an
3 academic improvement program for any school district assigned to
4 the intermediate unit that is eligible for academic assistance
5 under subsection (b). The intermediate unit shall provide
6 technical support and staff assistance to an academic
7 improvement team appointed under subsection (c).

8 (b) A school district shall be eligible for academic
9 assistance under this section where:

10 (1) any school in the school district has been classified
11 for warning for failure to meet at least one academic
12 performance target; or

13 (2) the school district requests that the intermediate unit
14 provide academic assistance under this section.

15 (c) (1) Within thirty (30) days of the intermediate unit's
16 receipt of the list of school districts eligible for academic
17 assistance under subsection (b), an academic improvement team
18 shall be appointed for each eligible school district. Members of
19 the academic improvement team shall be appointed by the
20 intermediate unit board of directors and the board of school
21 directors of the school district eligible for academic
22 assistance.

23 (2) Five (5) members of the academic improvement team shall
24 be appointed by the intermediate unit board of directors. Such
25 members shall not be employed by or otherwise affiliated with
26 the school district eligible for academic assistance and may
27 include:

28 (i) Intermediate unit staff members.

29 (ii) Teachers employed by school districts assigned to the
30 intermediate unit.

1 (iii) Administrators employed by school districts assigned
2 to the intermediate unit.

3 (iv) School board members from school districts assigned to
4 the intermediate unit.

5 (v) Faculty members of colleges or universities in this
6 Commonwealth with particular expertise in school improvement.

7 (3) Four (4) members of the academic improvement team shall
8 be appointed by the board of school directors of the school
9 district eligible for academic assistance. Such members shall
10 include:

11 (i) A parent of a student enrolled in the school district.

12 (ii) A teacher employed by the school district who is
13 selected by teachers employed by the school district.

14 (iii) An administrator employed by the school district, who
15 is selected by administrators employed by the school district.

16 (iv) A member of the board of school directors of the school
17 district who is selected by administrators employed by the
18 school district.

19 (4) The intermediate unit board of directors shall select a
20 chairman of the academic improvement team from the members
21 appointed under paragraph (2).

22 (d) The academic improvement team shall have the following
23 powers and duties:

24 (1) To design an academic improvement plan pursuant to
25 subsection (e).

26 (2) To provide periodic reports on the implementation of the
27 academic improvement plan to the intermediate unit board of
28 directors and the board of school directors of the school
29 district eligible for academic assistance.

30 (3) To meet periodically, but not less than quarterly, to

1 review the implementation of the academic improvement plan.

2 (4) To seek technical assistance from the Department of
3 Education in the design and implementation of the academic
4 improvement plan.

5 (e) (1) Within thirty-five (35) days of the appointment of
6 an academic improvement team under subsection (c), the academic
7 improvement team shall present an academic improvement plan to
8 the intermediate unit board of directors and the board of school
9 directors of the school district. Within forty-five (45) days of
10 the appointment of an academic improvement team, the board of
11 school directors of the school district shall vote to approve or
12 approve with amendments the plan at its next regularly scheduled
13 public meeting.

14 (2) The academic improvement plan shall set forth specific
15 goals for improving the academic performance of students in the
16 subject area or areas in which the school failed to meet an
17 academic performance target and may set forth goals in any
18 subject area for which an academic performance target has been
19 established. The plan shall include strategies designed to
20 achieve those goals. In preparing the plan, the academic
21 improvement team shall review school district programs, services
22 and strategies and recommend improvements as necessary. Such
23 programs, services and strategies shall include, but may not be
24 limited to:

25 (i) The involvement of parents in the improvement of
26 academic performance through the development of home activities
27 and materials to enhance student learning.

28 (ii) Continuing professional education options in addition
29 to options included in the continuing professional education
30 plan required under section 1205.1(c.1). Such additional options

1 shall be specific to improvements in the academic performance of
2 students.

3 (iii) Classroom instructional strategies specific to
4 improvements in the academic performance of students.

5 (iv) The redesign of curricula specific to improvements in
6 the academic performance of students.

7 (v) Improvements in school safety.

8 (vi) Tutoring programs for students who scored below
9 proficient on a Pennsylvania System of School Assessment test.

10 (3) The approved academic improvement plan shall be
11 effective so long as the school district is eligible for
12 academic assistance under subsection (b), unless the school
13 district is identified for further improvement as provided under
14 paragraph (6). Within fifteen (15) days of the school district's
15 notification of the results of the school district's performance
16 on a Pennsylvania System of School Assessment test, the academic
17 improvement team shall review such results and make a report to
18 the intermediate unit board of directors and the board of school
19 directors of the school district eligible for academic
20 assistance.

21 (4) Where the academic improvement team determines that the
22 school district continues to be eligible for academic assistance
23 under subsection (b), the academic improvement team shall
24 propose any necessary adjustments to the academic improvement
25 plan to the intermediate unit board of directors and the board
26 of school directors of the school district eligible for academic
27 assistance. Such adjustments shall be subject to the approval of
28 the board of school directors and shall constitute a new
29 academic improvement plan.

30 (5) Where the academic improvement team determines that the

1 school district is no longer eligible for academic assistance
2 under subsection (b), the academic improvement team shall
3 terminate. The board of school directors of the school district
4 eligible for academic assistance may continue to implement the
5 academic improvement plan.

6 (6) Where the school district is subsequently identified for
7 further improvement, the academic improvement team shall
8 terminate. A school district identified for further improvement
9 shall mean:

10 (i) A school district certified as distressed under section
11 691.

12 (ii) A school district certified as an education empowerment
13 district under section 1705-B or 1707-B.

14 (iii) A school district placed on an education empowerment
15 list under section 1703-B.

16 (iv) A school district in which any school is identified for
17 school improvement or corrective action.

18 (f) The Department of Education shall:

19 (1) Annually provide each intermediate unit with a list of
20 school districts eligible for academic assistance under
21 subsection (b)(1).

22 (2) Upon request, provide technical assistance to an
23 academic improvement team.

24 (3) Establish a clearinghouse of information related to
25 strategies for improving the academic performance of students
26 under subsection (e)(2).

27 (4) Establish and provide continuing professional education
28 courses, programs, activities or learning experiences under
29 section 1205.2(f) specific to classroom strategies to improve
30 the academic performance of students in subject areas for which

1 an academic performance target has been established.

2 (5) Develop and promulgate by guidelines, criteria and
3 procedures for providing funds to intermediate units under this
4 section. Applications for funds shall be submitted to the
5 department for approval. The department shall provide assistance
6 to applicants in the preparation of applications.

7 (g) This section shall not apply to any of the following:

8 (1) A school district certified as distressed under section
9 691.

10 (2) A school district certified as an education empowerment
11 district under section 1705-B or 1707-B.

12 (3) A school district placed on an education empowerment
13 list under section 1703-B.

14 (4) A school district in which any school is identified for
15 school improvement or corrective action.

16 Section 3. This act shall take effect in 60 days.