
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 924 Session of
2015

INTRODUCED BY AUMENT, SCARNATI, RAFFERTY, ALLOWAY, BLAKE,
GORDNER, BAKER, YUDICHAK, SCHWANK, ARGALL, MENSCH, DINNIMAN
AND BROWNE, JUNE 24, 2015

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, JUNE 24, 2015

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 the E-chievement
6 Program.

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 XVII-D

13 E-CHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

14 Section 1701-D. Scope of article.

15 This article relates to the E-chievement Program.

16 Section 1702-D. 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:

1 "Department." The Department of Education of the
2 Commonwealth.

3 "Hybrid learning." An instructional strategy that blends
4 digital resources with classroom teaching to increase student
5 engagement and improve academic achievement through the delivery
6 of lessons in small groups, the use of data to differentiate
7 instruction, the encouragement of individually paced learning
8 and the application of multiple educational methodologies. The
9 term does not include instruction through a distance education
10 program.

11 "Program." The E-chievement Program established under this
12 article.

13 "School entity." A school district, intermediate unit,
14 career and technical school, nonpublic school, private school or
15 charter school. The term does not include a cyber charter
16 school.

17 Section 1703-D. E-chievement Program.

18 (a) Establishment.--The E-chievement Program is established
19 in the department to award grants on a competitive basis to
20 eligible school entities for the planning or implementation of
21 hybrid learning.

22 (b) Eligibility.--

23 (1) A school entity may apply to the department for a
24 planning grant or implementation grant under the program.
25 More than one school entity may submit a joint application if
26 the school entities work together to provide hybrid learning.

27 (2) The department may establish criteria to determine
28 whether a school entity is eligible to receive a grant under
29 this article and shall give priority to school entities that
30 submit a joint application and demonstrate a commitment to

1 exchanging best-practices and sharing hybrid learning costs.

2 (c) Applications.--A school entity must submit an
3 application, in such form as deemed acceptable by the
4 department, to the department and execute a grant agreement in
5 order to be awarded a planning grant or implementation grant
6 from the department under this article. The grant application
7 must describe the manner in which the applicant will use hybrid
8 learning to improve student achievement and reduce costs.

9 (d) Grant agreement.--An eligible school entity that is
10 awarded a planning grant or implementation grant under this
11 article must sign a grant application with the department that
12 provides for the following:

13 (1) The school entity will provide a cash or in-kind
14 local match of money to hybrid learning within the school
15 entity of at least 25%.

16 (2) The school entity will work collaboratively to share
17 lessons learning with other school entities that receive
18 grants under this article.

19 (3) The school entity will report hybrid learning
20 results, including student achievement, to the department and
21 the General Assembly, as requested.

22 (e) Use of grants.--

23 (1) A grant issued by the department under this article
24 shall be used for necessary components of hybrid learning,
25 including, but not limited to, digital instructional content,
26 classroom management tools, operations support, technology
27 and equipment, professional development, instructional
28 coaching, consulting services and planning assistance.

29 (2) A grant issued by the department under this article
30 may not be used for:

1 (i) Staff salaries, except to the extent necessary
2 for substitute teachers or the cost of professional
3 development activities related to hybrid learning.

4 (ii) The purchase of computer hardware, except for
5 reasonable quantities of computers and electronic devices
6 that are designed to launch hybrid learning programs.

7 Section 1704-D. Planning grants.

8 (a) General rule.--A planning grant from the program shall
9 be issued to eligible school entities that are interested in
10 hybrid learning, but do not have comprehensive plans to deliver
11 hybrid learning instruction.

12 (b) Limitation on amount.--A planning grant under this
13 article may not exceed more than \$50,000 annually for a school
14 entity and not more than \$50,000 annually for each school entity
15 that submits a joint application.

16 (c) Required information for application.--A school entity
17 that applies for a planning grant must submit the following
18 information in the grant application:

19 (1) A statement of the problem to be solved and
20 identification of the objectives related to the problem.

21 (2) An overview of the planning process.

22 (3) A description of the professional development that
23 will occur during the planning period.

24 (4) The proposed planning budget, including the local
25 match.

26 Section 1705-D. Implementation grants.

27 (a) General rule.--An implementation grant from the program
28 shall be issued to eligible school entities that at the time of
29 application:

30 (1) have hybrid learning designs and are ready to

1 implement hybrid learning; or
2 (2) deliver hybrid learning and intend to expand hybrid
3 learning.

4 (b) Limitation on amount.--An implementation grant under
5 this article may not exceed more than \$250,000 annually for a
6 school entity and not more than \$250,000 annually for each
7 school entity that submits a joint application. The
8 implementation grant may be awarded for not more than three
9 years.

10 (c) Required information for application.--A school entity
11 that applies for an implementation grant must submit the
12 following information in the grant application:

13 (1) A statement of the problem to be solved and
14 identification of the objectives related to the problem.

15 (2) A detailed hybrid learning program design.

16 (3) An overview of the implementation plan for the
17 hybrid learning program.

18 (4) The proposed hybrid learning program budget,
19 including the local match.

20 (5) A summary of the professional development program.

21 (6) A description of how the school entity will define
22 success, monitor progress and make program improvements.

23 (7) A description of how the school entity will be able
24 to provide hybrid instruction within three years or less
25 without funding from the Commonwealth for the hybrid
26 learning.

27 Section 1706-D. Requirements for hybrid learning.

28 The following shall apply:

29 (1) Hybrid learning may be delivered outside of a school
30 building in whole or in part using technology that may

1 include the Internet, video conferencing or other electronic
2 means.

3 (2) The time during which a student participates in
4 hybrid learning shall be considered to be compliant with the
5 compulsory attendance requirements of section 1327.

6 (3) School entities offering hybrid learning shall
7 develop policies related to the following and post such
8 policies on the school entity's publicly accessible Internet
9 website:

10 (i) Course grades.

11 (ii) Course credit.

12 (iii) Student promotion and graduation.

13 (iv) Eligibility requirements for student
14 participation in hybrid learning opportunities.

15 (4) A school entity offering hybrid learning shall
16 ensure that each student enrolled in the school entity and
17 participating in hybrid learning is offered at least 990
18 hours of instruction at the secondary level and 900 hours of
19 instruction at the elementary level.

20 Section 1707-D. Annual report.

21 By November 30, 2015, and by November 30 of each year
22 thereafter, the department shall prepare and submit a report to
23 the Governor, the Appropriations Committee of the Senate, the
24 Education Committee of the Senate, the Appropriations Committee
25 of the House of Representatives and the Education Committee of
26 the House of Representatives regarding the effectiveness and
27 administration of the program. The report shall, at a minimum,
28 discuss the following:

29 (1) Whether the program is meeting the goal of
30 delivering cost-effective, individualized instruction to

1 increase student engagement and improve academic performance.

2 (2) The measures the department used to measure outcomes
3 of the program, including student academic performance.

4 (3) Individual school entity results from participation
5 in the program.

6 (4) The overall success of the program.

7 (5) Recommendations for modifications to the program.

8 Section 1708-D. Collective bargaining.

9 Nothing contained in this article shall be construed to
10 supersede or preempt the rights, remedies and procedures
11 afforded to school employees or labor organizations under
12 Federal or State law, including the act of July 23, 1970
13 (P.L.563, No.195), known as the Public Employe Relations Act, or
14 any provision of a collective bargaining agreement negotiated
15 between a school entity and an exclusive representative of the
16 employees in accordance with that act.

17 Section 1709-D. Program limitation.

18 No eligible school entity may receive grants under this
19 article in excess of \$1,000,000 or within four years, consisting
20 of one planning grant and three years of implementation grants.

21 Section 1710-D. Distribution of funding.

22 The department shall ensure that not more than 15% of money
23 appropriated or made available to the department for grants
24 under this article are allocated to priority school entities,
25 are defined by the department and, to the greatest extent
26 possible, are distributed geographically throughout this
27 Commonwealth.

28 Section 1711-D. Expiration.

29 This article shall expire in five years.

30 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.