

---

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

---

HOUSE BILL

No. 539 Session of  
2021

---

INTRODUCED BY BOBACK, HILL-EVANS, IRVIN, CIRESI, PISCIOTTANO,  
HELM, R. MACKENZIE, LONGIETTI, NEILSON, A. DAVIS, WHEELAND  
AND M. MACKENZIE, FEBRUARY 16, 2021

---

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, FEBRUARY 16, 2021

---

AN ACT

1 Establishing the Governor's Schools of Excellence.

2 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
3 hereby enacts as follows:

4 Section 1. Short title.

5 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Governor's  
6 Schools of Excellence Act.

7 Section 2. Legislative intent.

8 It is the intent of the General Assembly to establish the  
9 permanent operation of the Governor's Schools of Excellence in  
10 order to afford students of all socioeconomic backgrounds the  
11 opportunity to pursue in-depth and advanced studies in fields  
12 that may include agricultural sciences, engineering and  
13 technology, sciences or arts.

14 Section 3. Definitions.

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

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

3 "Governor's School of Excellence." A school established by  
4 the department under section 5.

5 "Host site." A college or university within this  
6 Commonwealth where a Governor's School of Excellence is located.

7 "Program." The Governor's Schools of Excellence Program  
8 established under section 4.

9 Section 4. Governor's Schools of Excellence Program.

10 The Governor's Schools of Excellence Program is established  
11 within the department.

12 Section 5. Duties of department.

13 (a) Disciplines.--The department shall establish at least  
14 five Governor's Schools of Excellence at host sites throughout  
15 this Commonwealth in disciplines that may include any of the  
16 following:

17 (1) Agricultural sciences.

18 (2) Engineering and technology.

19 (3) Sciences.

20 (4) Arts.

21 (5) Other disciplines determined by the department.

22 (b) Locations.--

23 (1) Governor's Schools of Excellence may be sponsored by  
24 and located at host sites designated by the department.

25 (2) The department shall designate host sites on a  
26 competitive basis, based upon criteria to be determined by  
27 the department and published on the department's publicly  
28 accessible Internet website.

29 (3) In order to be designated by the department, the  
30 host site shall provide at least 50% of the cost to operate

1 the Governor's School of Excellence.

2 (4) Host sites designated by the department shall be  
3 geographically dispersed throughout this Commonwealth.

4 (c) Administration.--In administering the program, the  
5 department shall do all of the following:

6 (1) Make student applications available to every public  
7 school and nonpublic school in this Commonwealth and include  
8 the application on the department's publicly accessible  
9 Internet website.

10 (2) Ensure that each Governor's School of Excellence is  
11 utilizing a process in which students are selected on the  
12 basis of student performance and achievement through a  
13 competitive selection process and seek to ensure an  
14 economically, socially and geographically diverse student  
15 population.

16 (3) Ensure that the Governor's School of Excellence  
17 complies with subsection (e), enabling all qualified students  
18 the opportunity to enroll in the program regardless of the  
19 student's economic circumstances.

20 (d) Scheduling.--Governor's Schools of Excellence shall be  
21 held, to the extent possible, during the summer months between  
22 the end and the beginning of the school year. The department may  
23 grant permission for a school to be held at other times during  
24 the school year when circumstances and programming options  
25 warrant that change.

26 (e) Costs.--Students attending a Governor's School of  
27 Excellence may not be required to pay any tuition or fees to  
28 attend and participate in a Governor's School of Excellence.  
29 Students shall be responsible for their own costs relating to  
30 transportation to and from the Governor's School of Excellence.

1 Section 6. Effective date.

2 This act shall take effect immediately.