
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2206 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY SCHLOSSBERG, BRADFORD, CIRESI, FREEMAN, HENNESSEY,
HILL-EVANS, HOHENSTEIN, HOWARD, KINSEY, LONGIETTI, McCLINTON,
SANCHEZ, SIMS, SOLOMON AND WARREN, DECEMBER 30, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, DECEMBER 30, 2021

AN ACT

1 Establishing the Grow Our Own Educators Program; providing for
2 grants to eligible school entities; and imposing powers and
3 duties on the Department of Education and the State Board of
4 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 Grow Our Own
9 Educators Act.

10 Section 2. Legislative intent.

11 Recognizing the steady decline in the number of people
12 seeking a teaching certification in this Commonwealth, and that
13 this Commonwealth has one of the least diverse educator
14 workforces in the country, the General Assembly seeks to
15 establish a program aimed at increasing the pipeline of high-
16 quality and diverse future educators. The program should equip
17 aspiring educators with the supports necessary to ultimately
18 become a certified educator.

1 Section 3. Definitions.

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

5 "Board." The State Board of Education.

6 "Community organization." A nonprofit organization with a
7 demonstrated commitment to improving the educational and social
8 well-being of a community. The term includes a local education,
9 youth, parent, educator and employee organization.

10 "Department." The Department of Education of the
11 Commonwealth.

12 "Eligible entity." A school entity, institution of higher
13 education or partnership.

14 "Employee organization." As defined in section 301 of the
15 act of July 23, 1970 (P.L.563, No.195), known as the Public
16 Employe Relations Act.

17 "Hard-to-staff teaching position." An instructional
18 category, including, but not limited to, special education,
19 mathematics or science, in which Statewide data compiled by the
20 board indicates a multiyear pattern of substantial teacher
21 shortage or that has been identified as a critical need by a
22 local school board.

23 "High-need school." A public school that is:

24 (1) within the top quartile of elementary and secondary
25 schools Statewide, as ranked by the number of unfilled
26 available teacher positions;

27 (2) located in an area where at least 30% of students
28 have families with incomes below the poverty line; or

29 (3) located in an area with a high percentage of out-of-
30 field teachers, high teacher turnover rate or high percentage

1 of teachers who are not certified or licensed.

2 "Higher education institution." A public or private two-year
3 or four-year or higher postsecondary institution in this
4 Commonwealth that has been accredited at the college level by an
5 accrediting agency recognized by the United States Secretary of
6 Education.

7 "Partnership." A collaboration among at least one school
8 entity and an institution of higher education with a teacher
9 preparation program approved by the department. A partnership
10 may also include a community organization.

11 "Program." The Grow Our Own Educators Program established
12 under section 4.

13 "School entity." A school district in this Commonwealth.

14 "Secretary." The Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth.
15 Section 4. Grow Our Own Educators Program.

16 (a) Establishment.--The Grow Our Own Educators Program is
17 established. The program shall provide financial assistance,
18 including the following pathways for educators to help support
19 high-need schools in geographic areas that have hard-to-staff
20 teaching positions:

21 (1) Student to aspiring educator pathway. This pathway
22 consists of a partnership designed for students in high
23 school with an interest in pursuing education as a profession
24 and that provides the following:

25 (i) School entities, students and institutions of
26 higher education partner to develop specific plans for
27 each student.

28 (ii) While in high school, students enroll in a
29 series of credit-bearing postsecondary coursework which
30 may include dual enrollment courses.

1 (iii) Once a student is enrolled in the program, the
2 student receives financial assistance in the form of free
3 or reduced tuition offered by an institution of higher
4 education.

5 (iv) Students continue to be mentored as the student
6 progresses through the program so that the student has
7 the support needed to thrive.

8 (v) Upon graduating from high school, students work
9 for a designated amount of time at one of the partnering
10 school entities in a high-need school.

11 (2) Paraprofessional to educator pathway. This pathway
12 consists of using untapped resources for diversifying the
13 educator workforce in this Commonwealth. Partners must
14 address the need for flexibility with course offerings as
15 well as using wage-earning classroom time toward required
16 internship hours.

17 (3) Parents to paraprofessional pathway. This pathway
18 consists of technical assistance, funding and supports for
19 community organizations to develop a collaborative,
20 community-specific plan. Eligible community organizations
21 must demonstrate a commitment to the program by building
22 sustainable structures to reduce barriers for parents to
23 pursue postsecondary education and meaningful, family-
24 sustaining employment.

25 (b) Duties of board.--The board shall establish criteria and
26 certify hard-to-staff teaching positions and high-need schools.

27 Section 5. Grow Our Own Educators Grants.

28 (a) Grant awards.--To the extent that money is appropriated
29 for the purpose, the department shall award grants on a
30 competitive basis to eligible school entities that meet criteria

1 for funding.

2 (b) Funding sources.--The department may use the following
3 to award grants under the program:

4 (1) Private, Federal, State and institutional resources.

5 (2) Appropriations made by the General Assembly for the
6 program.

7 (3) Funding appropriated to the department for general
8 government operations.

9 (4) Funding appropriated to the department under Federal
10 law.

11 (5) Up to \$250,000 annually of undistributed money not
12 expended, encumbered or committed from appropriations for
13 grants and subsidies made to the department to award grants
14 under Article VI-A of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30,
15 No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, excluding
16 any amounts required to be transferred to the Financial
17 Recovery School District Transitional Loan Account to make
18 loans as provided under section 681-A of the Public School
19 Code of 1949. The money shall be transferred by the Secretary
20 of the Budget to a restricted account as necessary to award
21 grants, and, when transferred, the money in the restricted
22 account is hereby appropriated to carry out the provisions of
23 this act.

24 (c) Grant prioritization.--The secretary shall give priority
25 to an application for grant funding under this act to schools in
26 districts identified under Article VI-A of the Public School
27 Code of 1949 and schools identified for comprehensive support
28 and improvement under the Every Student Succeeds Act (Public Law
29 114-95, 129 Stat. 1802). The department shall ensure that all
30 money appropriated or made available to the department for

1 grants under this act is distributed geographically throughout
2 this Commonwealth.

3 (d) Applications for funding.--An eligible school entity
4 must submit an application, in a form deemed acceptable by the
5 department, to the department in order to be awarded a planning
6 grant or implementation grant under this act.

7 (e) Technical assistance.--The department shall provide
8 technical assistance to the eligible school entities applying
9 for grants under this act.

10 (f) Guidelines.--The department shall develop guidelines and
11 post them on the department's publicly accessible Internet
12 website.

13 (g) Exclusions.--

14 (1) Grants received under this act shall supplement and
15 not supplant other funds.

16 (2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a grant
17 award received by a school entity under this act shall not be
18 included in the school district's budgeted total expenditure
19 per average daily membership used to calculate the amount to
20 be paid to a charter school or to a regional charter school
21 under section 1725-A(a)(2) and (3) of the Public School Code
22 of 1949.

23 (3) No eligibility has an entitlement or a right to
24 financial assistance under this act.

25 Section 6. Types of grants.

26 (a) General rule.--Partnerships may apply for a planning
27 grant or an implementation grant under the program.

28 (b) Planning grants.--

29 (1) A planning grant may be issued to eligible entities
30 that are interested in developing programs but do not have

1 comprehensive plans to deliver the programs.

2 (2) A planning grant under this subsection may not
3 exceed \$50,000.

4 (3) The department shall develop the application for a
5 planning grant, which must include:

6 (i) A statement of objectives.

7 (ii) A statement or demonstration of need.

8 (iii) An overview of the planning process.

9 (iv) The entities engaged in the process.

10 (v) A proposed planning budget.

11 (vi) A statement of objectives, including a
12 statement or demonstration of need.

13 (c) Limitations.--

14 (1) Planning grants may only be issued to the extent
15 funding is provided.

16 (2) No eligible entity may receive more than one
17 planning grant per year.

18 (d) Implementation grants.--

19 (1) An implementation grant from the program may be
20 issued to eligible school entities.

21 (2) An implementation grant under this subsection may
22 not exceed \$250,000 annually.

23 (3) The department shall develop an application which
24 shall:

25 (i) Include a description of how the school entity
26 will define success, monitor progress and make program
27 improvements.

28 (ii) Have established a partnership and provided a
29 copy of a partnership agreement to the department.

30 (iii) Demonstrate how the partnership will recruit

1 aspiring educators or paraprofessionals that are
2 reflective of the community of the eligible school
3 entities.

4 (iv) Have adopted a proposed budget.

5 Section 7. Independent evaluation.

6 The board shall contract for an independent evaluation of
7 program implementation by each partnership and of the impact of
8 each program, including the extent of student retention in
9 program enrollment, acceptance as an education major in a four-
10 year institution of higher education, completion of a bachelor's
11 degree in education, obtaining employment in a hard-to-staff
12 teaching position or in a high-need school or similar school and
13 retention in teaching in a high-need school. The evaluation
14 shall assess the program's overall effectiveness and shall
15 identify particular program strategies that are especially
16 effective and shall cover the five-year period after
17 implementation of the program.

18 Section 8. Reports.

19 The department shall annually compile information regarding
20 the program, including the independent evaluation under section
21 7, and share the information on the department's publicly
22 accessible Internet website as well as with the chairperson of
23 the Appropriations Committee of the Senate, the chairperson of
24 the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives,
25 the chairperson of the Education Committee of the Senate and the
26 chairperson of the Education Committee of the House of
27 Representatives beginning no later than one year after the
28 effective date of this section. The report shall include all the
29 following information:

30 (1) A description of the types of partnerships created.

1 (2) The number of higher education institutions, school
2 entities and community organizations participating in the
3 program as members of partnerships.

4 (3) The number of individuals participating in the
5 program.

6 (4) Demographics of individuals participating in the
7 program.

8 (5) The dollar amount of grants awarded to each higher
9 education institution and a summary of the institution's
10 expenditures on services related to the partnership.

11 (6) An assessment of the impact of the program.

12 Section 9. Effective date.

13 This act shall take effect in 90 days.