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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE BILL

No. 1316 Session of  
2022

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INTRODUCED BY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, HUGHES, COLLETT, CAPPELLETTI, SCHWANK,  
BREWSTER, COSTA, KANE, DILLON AND MUTH, AUGUST 24, 2022

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REFERRED TO EDUCATION, AUGUST 24, 2022

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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.

19 Section 3. Definitions.

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

4 "Board." The State Board of Education.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 (3) located in an area with a high percentage of out-of-  
29 field teachers, high teacher turnover rate or high percentage  
30 of teachers who are not certified or licensed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

30 (iii) Once a student is enrolled in the program, the

1 student receives financial assistance in the form of free  
2 or reduced tuition offered by a higher education  
3 institution.

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

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

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

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

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

26 Section 5. Grow Our Own Educators Grants.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 this Commonwealth.

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

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

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

12 (g) Exclusions.--

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

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

22 (3) Nothing in this act shall be construed to create an  
23 entitlement or a right to financial assistance as a result of  
24 a grant received 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 for the use of the  
11 planning grant.

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

14 (c) Limitations.--

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

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

19 (d) Implementation grants.--

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

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

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

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

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

1           (iii) Demonstrate how the partnership will recruit  
2           aspiring educators or paraprofessionals that are  
3           reflective of the community of the eligible school  
4           entities.

5           (iv) Have adopted a proposed budget for the use of  
6           the implementation grant.

7 Section 7. Independent evaluation.

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

20 Section 8. Reports.

21      The department shall annually compile information regarding  
22      the program, including the independent evaluation under section  
23      7, and share the information on the department's publicly  
24      accessible Internet website as well as with the chairperson and  
25      minority chairperson of the Appropriations Committee of the  
26      Senate, the chairperson and minority chairperson of the  
27      Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives, the  
28      chairperson and minority chairperson of the Education Committee  
29      of the Senate and the chairperson and minority chairperson of  
30      the Education Committee of the House of Representatives

1 beginning no later than one year after the effective date of  
2 this section. The report shall include all the following  
3 information:

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

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

8 (3) The number of individuals participating in the  
9 program.

10 (4) Demographics of individuals participating in the  
11 program.

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

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

16 Section 9. Effective date.

17 This act shall take effect in 90 days.