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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 1019 Session of  
2023

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INTRODUCED BY RIGBY, SCHMITT, CIRESI, SCHLOSSBERG, FREEMAN,  
GREGORY AND E. NELSON, APRIL 24, 2023

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, APRIL 24, 2023

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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 paraprofessional-to-  
6 teacher certification program; and establishing the  
7 Paraprofessional-To-Teacher Grant Program.

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

10 Section 1. The act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known  
11 as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended by adding an  
12 article to read:

13 ARTICLE XV-N

14 PARAPROFESSIONAL-TO-TEACHER

15 CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

16 Section 1501-N. Scope of article.

17 This article relates to the Paraprofessional-to-Teacher  
18 Certification Program.

19 Section 1502-N. Legislative intent.

20 It is the intent of the General Assembly to produce new

1 teachers with the knowledge, understandings and skills to  
2 promote student learning.

3 Section 1503-N. Definitions.

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

7 "Department." The Department of Education of the  
8 Commonwealth.

9 "Grant program." The Paraprofessional-to-Teacher Grant  
10 Program.

11 "Institution of higher education." Any of the following:

12 (1) A university within the State System of Higher  
13 Education under Article XX-A.

14 (2) A State-related institution as defined in section  
15 2001-C.

16 (3) An accredited private or independent college or  
17 university.

18 "Paraprofessional." An instructional paraprofessional within  
19 the meaning of 22 Pa. Code § 14.105 (relating to personnel).

20 "Paraprofessional-to-teacher certification program." A  
21 teacher preparation program offered by an institution of higher  
22 education designed for a paraprofessional to achieve a teacher  
23 certification.

24 Section 1504-N. Paraprofessional-to-teacher certification  
25 program.

26 (a) Guidance.--The department shall provide guidance to  
27 institutions of higher education to establish a  
28 paraprofessional-to-teacher certification program to aid  
29 paraprofessionals to meet Pennsylvania instructional  
30 certification requirements.

1 (b) Comprehensive materials.--The program shall be designed  
2 to be comprehensive and delivered through a combination of  
3 university academic classroom, school and other appropriate  
4 settings and shall include the following components:

5 (1) Ensure that paraprofessional candidates for  
6 professional educator certification master both the content  
7 and methodology of their discipline and meet the standards  
8 for academic performance as defined in 22 Pa. Code § 354.24  
9 (relating to academic performance) and professional educator  
10 curriculum as defined in 22 Pa. Code § 354.25 (relating to  
11 preparation program curriculum) and that candidates are  
12 supported in their achievement of the learning principles  
13 under 22 Pa. Code § 354.33 (relating to professional  
14 competency).

15 (2) Enable a paraprofessional to complete college  
16 credits for the work performed in their role as a  
17 paraprofessional.

18 (3) Enable a paraprofessional to use wage-earning  
19 classroom time towards required student teaching hours.  
20 Classroom teaching experiences are expected to include face-  
21 to-face components.

22 (4) Allow for utilization of online course options.

23 Section 1505-N. Paraprofessional-to-Teacher Grant Program.

24 (a) Establishment.--The Paraprofessional-to-Teacher Grant  
25 Program is established in the department for the purpose of  
26 awarding grants to institutions of higher education to develop  
27 paraprofessional-to-teacher certification programs.

28 (b) Duties.--The department shall:

29 (1) Adopt guidelines for the approval of grant  
30 applications.

1           (2) Determine the form and manner in which an  
2 application for a grant may be filed with the department.

3           (3) Provide notice of the program to institutions of  
4 higher education.

5           (4) Make grant applications available to all  
6 institutions of higher education along with details relating  
7 to the application process.

8           (5) Beginning no later than 90 days after the effective  
9 date of this paragraph, begin accepting and processing  
10 applications. For all subsequent years, the department shall  
11 establish an application period during which applications for  
12 grants under this article are accepted.

13       (c) Eligibility.--An institution of higher education that  
14 develops and implements a paraprofessional-to-teacher  
15 certification program in compliance with department criteria and  
16 guidelines established under section 1504-N may apply to the  
17 department for a grant.

18       (d) Application.--An eligible institution of higher  
19 education may apply for a grant by submitting an application to  
20 the department at such time and in the manner prescribed by the  
21 department. The department shall determine the amount of a grant  
22 award in accordance with the department's guidelines.

23       (e) Allocation.--Grants shall be awarded from funds  
24 appropriated to the department for this purpose.

25       (f) Limitations.--An institution of higher education may not  
26 receive an annual grant allocation that exceeds 20% of the funds  
27 available under the grant program.

28       (g) Permitted uses.--The grant shall be used by an eligible  
29 institution of higher education for the following:

30           (1) To fund the establishment and implementation of a

1 paraprofessional-to-teacher certification program that offers  
2 flexibility by utilizing both in-person and asynchronous  
3 learning and allows the paraprofessional to remain employed  
4 while in the program.

5 (2) To provide a discounted or reduced tuition rate to  
6 participants enrolled in the paraprofessional educational  
7 program.

8 (h) Other funding sources.--Funds received by an institution  
9 of higher education under the grant program may be used in  
10 conjunction with funds received from any other public or private  
11 source.

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