
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1701 Session of
2013

INTRODUCED BY CAUSER, S. H. SMITH, RAPP, GABLER, SANKEY, ROCK,
WATSON, MILLARD, FLECK, MURT, EVERETT, DENLINGER, COHEN AND
GINGRICH, SEPTEMBER 25, 2013

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, SEPTEMBER 25, 2013

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 rural regional
6 community college pilot program for underserved counties.

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 XIX-G

13 RURAL REGIONAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

14 PILOT PROGRAM FOR UNDERSERVED COUNTIES

15 Section 1901-G. Scope of article.

16 This article provides for a pilot program to establish a
17 rural regional community college in an 11-county rural area that
18 is underserved by comprehensive community college education and
19 work force development.

1 Section 1902-G. Definitions.

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

5 "Annual." A 12-month period coterminous with the
6 Commonwealth's fiscal year beginning July 1 and ending June 30.

7 "Board of trustees." The board of trustees of a rural
8 regional community college established under this article.

9 "County." Any county in this Commonwealth.

10 "Certified public accountant." A member of the American
11 Institute of Certified Public Accountants who has a minimum of
12 five years' verifiable experience in performing audits of
13 government funds for nonprofit organizations with a comparable
14 or larger annual budget.

15 "Rural regional community college" or "regional rural
16 school." A public institution which is established in a rural
17 area and operated in accordance with the provisions of this
18 article as a nonprofit organization which provides up to a two-
19 year, postsecondary education not to exceed the level of an
20 associate of arts or sciences degree and which is active in work
21 force development.

22 "Rural regional school plan" or "plan." A plan for the
23 establishment and operation of a regional rural school under
24 this article.

25 "Secretary." The Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth
26 or such person as the secretary may designate to act on behalf
27 of the secretary with regard to any of the duties and
28 prerogatives imposed by this article.

29 "State Board." The State Board of Education.

30 Section 1903-G. Designation; pilot program and future rural

1 regional community colleges.

2 The secretary, within 30 days of the effective date of this
3 article, shall work with an established nonprofit organization
4 as defined under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code
5 of 1986 (Public Law 99-514, 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3)) representing
6 a rural multicounty region which is underserved by a
7 comprehensive community college program, including work force
8 development. The Education Consortium of the Upper Allegheny
9 represents an 11-county area and is designated under this
10 section.

11 Section 1904-G. Designation; board of trustees.

12 Within 60 days of the secretary's designation under section
13 1903-G, a board of trustees shall be appointed to establish the
14 rural regional school required under this article. The board of
15 trustees shall consist of not less than seven members nor more
16 than 11 members appointed by the secretary who are
17 representative of the area designated jointly by the secretary
18 and the nonprofit organization under section 1903-G. The
19 following shall apply to the board of trustees established under
20 this section:

21 (1) Members of the board of trustees shall be appointed
22 for terms of three years each, except that those persons
23 initially appointed shall draw lots to determine which
24 trustees shall serve for a term of three years, which
25 trustees shall serve for a term of two years and which
26 trustees shall serve for a term of one year. Thereafter, all
27 members shall be appointed for terms of three years each.

28 (2) Vacancies on the board shall be filled by the
29 existing board. A trustee may succeed himself, provided that
30 no member shall serve for longer than ten years.

1 (3) The secretary shall convene an initial meeting of
2 the board of trustees within 90 days of the secretary's
3 designation under this section. After the initial meeting,
4 the board of trustees shall meet at such times each year as
5 the board of trustees determines to be necessary to satisfy
6 the requirements of this article.

7 (4) The board of trustees shall adopt standing operating
8 rules and procedures.

9 (5) The board of trustees shall choose from among its
10 members a chairman, vice chairman and secretary.

11 (6) A majority of the members of the board of trustees
12 shall constitute a quorum.

13 (7) Trustees shall serve without compensation, except
14 that they shall be reimbursed for their actual and necessary
15 expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

16 Section 1905-G. Establishment.

17 (a) General rule.--Within one year of the effective date of
18 this article, the board of trustees appointed under section
19 1904-G shall submit to the secretary a proposed regional rural
20 school plan in such form and containing such information as the
21 secretary may require. In addition to other information which
22 may be required by the secretary, the plan shall include the
23 following:

24 (1) A designation of the name of the proposed regional
25 technical school, which shall be the "Regional Community
26 College of _____ " or " _____ Regional
27 Community College."

28 (2) A survey of the vocational and occupational needs of
29 the area and the means by which the proposed regional rural
30 school will meet those needs, reduce unemployment and improve

1 the employable skills of residents of the area to be served
2 by the regional rural school.

3 (3) An operating and financial plan for the proposed
4 regional rural school, including a plan for the capital needs
5 and expenses of the proposed regional rural school.

6 (4) A plan by which the regional rural school shall seek
7 accreditation by an accrediting association which is
8 recognized by the United States Department of Education.

9 (b) Submission of plan.--Within 30 days of the submission of
10 the regional rural school plan to the secretary, the secretary
11 shall issue an approval or rejection of the plan. A rejection of
12 the plan shall be accompanied by a written statement of the
13 reasons for the rejection of the plan. If the plan is rejected,
14 the board of trustees shall submit a revised plan to the
15 secretary within 60 days of the plan's rejection.

16 (c) Plan approval.--Upon the approval of the plan by the
17 secretary, the regional rural school shall be considered
18 established.

19 Section 1906-G. Powers and duties of board of trustees.

20 (a) General rule.--The board of trustees appointed under
21 section 1904-G shall administer and supervise the affairs of any
22 regional rural school established under this article. Subject to
23 any other law and to any regulations promulgated by the State
24 Board pertaining to regional rural schools, the board of
25 trustees shall have the following powers and duties:

26 (1) To appoint and fix the salary of a president of the
27 regional rural school.

28 (2) To appoint and fix the salary of a treasurer of the
29 regional rural school.

30 (3) To hold, rent, lease, sell, purchase and improve

1 land, buildings, furnishings, equipment, materials, books and
2 supplies.

3 (4) To enter into contracts for services with community
4 education councils, schools, colleges or universities, or
5 with school districts or municipalities, to effectuate the
6 purposes of this article.

7 (5) To accept and receive gifts of real and personal
8 property and Federal, State and local moneys and grants, and
9 to expend the same.

10 (6) To make policies providing for the admission and
11 expulsion of students, the courses of instruction, the
12 tuition and fees to be charged and for all matters related to
13 the government and administration of the regional rural
14 school, provided that policies related to admission, tuition
15 and fees give preference to residents of the 11-county area
16 designated by the secretary pursuant to section 1903-G.

17 (7) To submit to the secretary for approval proposed
18 amendments to the regional rural school plan.

19 (8) To enter into contracts for services to high schools
20 located in the area designated by the secretary under section
21 1903-G to provide area vocational-technical education
22 services.

23 (9) To submit an annual budget to the secretary for
24 consideration and approval.

25 (10) To exercise such other powers and perform such
26 other duties as are necessary to effectuate the purposes of
27 this article.

28 (b) Duties of board.--The board of trustees shall enter into
29 contracts, hold property and take other actions in the name of
30 the regional school.

1 Section 1907-G. Officers of regional rural school.

2 (a) President.--The president shall be the chief executive
3 and administrative officer of the regional rural school and
4 shall perform all duties which the board of trustees may
5 prescribe. The president shall have the right to attend meetings
6 of the board of trustees and to be heard on all matters before
7 it, but shall have no right to vote on any matter.

8 (b) Treasurer.--The treasurer of the regional rural school
9 shall give a proper bond in such amount and with such corporate
10 surety as is approved by the board of trustees. The treasurer
11 shall file the bond with the board of trustees. The account of
12 the treasurer shall be audited annually by a certified public
13 accountant or other qualified public accountant selected by the
14 board of trustees.

15 Section 1908-G. Students.

16 Any individual may apply for admission to the regional rural
17 school established under this article, provided that preference
18 in admissions, tuition and fees may be given to residents of the
19 multicounty area designated by the secretary pursuant to section
20 1903-G. In considering applicants for admission, the regional
21 rural school shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color,
22 gender, marital status, ethnic group or religion.

23 Section 1909-G. Tuition.

24 The tuition charged by each regional rural school shall be an
25 amount determined by the board of trustees of the regional rural
26 school, in accordance with the budget approved by the secretary
27 and with regulations of the State Board. The board of trustees
28 shall determine the amount of tuition which will not exceed the
29 Pennsylvania in-resident community college average.

30 Section 1910-G. Dissolution of regional rural school.

1 No regional rural school established under this article shall
2 be dissolved without the approval of the secretary. Upon
3 dissolution of the regional rural school, the Commonwealth shall
4 assume all assets and liabilities of the regional rural school.
5 Section 1911-G. Degrees.

6 A regional rural school established under this article may
7 award any type of diploma, technical or career training
8 certificate or degree not to exceed the level of an associate of
9 arts or sciences degree.

10 Section 1912-G. Funding.

11 A regional rural school established under this article shall
12 be funded by an appropriation by the General Assembly, grants
13 from the Federal Government, grants from the Commonwealth,
14 grants from private foundations or any combination thereof.

15 Section 1913-G. Financial aid.

16 Students enrolled in a regional rural school established
17 under this article shall be eligible for financial aid to the
18 extent permitted under Federal and State law.

19 Section 1914-G. Regulations.

20 The State Board may promulgate final-omitted regulations
21 pursuant to the act of June 25, 1982 (P.L.633, No.181), known as
22 the Regulatory Review Act, as necessary to implement this
23 article.

24 Section 1915-G. Reports.

25 The Legislative Budget and Finance Committee shall prepare
26 and submit to the General Assembly written interim and final
27 reports evaluating the operation of this article. The interim
28 report shall be submitted by June 30, 2018, and the final report
29 shall be submitted by June 30, 2022. Each report shall include,
30 but may not be limited to, the following:

1 (1) A review of the success of the regional rural school
2 established under this article in satisfying the goals set
3 forth in the regional rural school plan approved by the
4 secretary and in satisfying the needs of the multicounty area
5 the rural technical school was established to serve.

6 (2) Demographic and program data, including the
7 following:

8 (i) Numbers of full-time and part-time faculty and
9 student enrollments, in total and within curricular
10 areas.

11 (ii) Dual enrollment participation.

12 (iii) Credit hours taught by faculty.

13 (iv) Distance learning courses offered.

14 (v) Articulation agreements with higher education
15 institutions.

16 (vi) Lists of courses with fewer than 20 students.

17 (vii) Lists of courses with more than 50 students.

18 Where available, student data shall be disaggregated by
19 categories, including gender, race and age.

20 (3) Student progress and achievement measures, including
21 the following:

22 (i) Retention rates.

23 (ii) Graduation rates after two, three and four
24 years.

25 (iii) Passing rates on certification and licensure
26 examinations.

27 (iv) Number of students employed within one year of
28 program completion.

29 (v) Placement into additional education or
30 employment in the student's field of study.

1 Where available, data shall be disaggregated by categories,
2 including gender, race and age.

3 (4) Economic and work force development measures,
4 including:

5 (i) Employer satisfaction.

6 (ii) Customized job training offerings.

7 (iii) Employment status.

8 (iv) Numbers of businesses and organizations served.

9 (5) Recommendations for future legislation.

10 Section 1916-G. Expiration.

11 This article shall expire June 30, 2023, unless reenacted
12 prior to that date.

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