
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 579 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY KINSEY, HILL-EVANS, MADDEN, SANCHEZ, SCHLOSSBERG,
PARKER, FLEMING, CIRESI, KIM AND HOHENSTEIN, MARCH 20, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MARCH 20, 2023

AN ACT

1 Establishing and providing for the implementation and
2 administration of the Beginning Educator Support and Training
3 (BEST) Program; and providing for powers and duties of the
4 Department of 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 Beginning
9 Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program Act.

10 Section 2. Declaration of policy.

11 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

12 (1) The beginning years of a teacher's career are a
13 critical time in which intensive professional development and
14 training must occur.

15 (2) The public invests heavily in the preparation of
16 prospective teachers and more than half of all new teachers
17 leave some Pennsylvania school districts after one or two
18 years in the classroom.

19 (3) Intensive professional development and training are

1 necessary to build on the preparation that precedes initial
2 certification, to transform academic preparation into
3 practical success in the classroom, to retain greater numbers
4 of capable beginning educators and to remove novices who show
5 little promise as teachers.

6 Section 3. Definitions.

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

10 "Beginning educator." A first-year teacher with a valid
11 Pennsylvania Instructional I certificate or Educational
12 Specialist I certificate or who is a long-term substitute, 45
13 days or more, employed in an eligible school district.

14 "Department." The Department of Education of the
15 Commonwealth.

16 "Eligible school district." A school district with a high
17 turnover rate for beginning educators in a two-year period and
18 that is economically disadvantaged as determined by the
19 secretary.

20 "Performance-based assessment." An assessment that evaluates
21 beginning educators in relation to student learning and teaching
22 behaviors that is content-specific and reveals information about
23 the logic and coherence of the teachers' curriculum, the
24 appropriateness of the teacher's instructional decisions for
25 students, the range of pedagogical strategies the teacher uses
26 effectively, the quality of the teacher's assignments, the
27 teacher's skill in assessing student learning and the teacher's
28 ability to reflect on the teacher's own teaching and make
29 changes based on evidence of student learning.

30 "Program." The Beginning Educator Support and Training

1 (BEST) Program established under section 4.

2 "Program quality." Excellence with respect to program
3 factors, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

4 (1) Program goals.

5 (2) Design resources.

6 (3) Management, evaluation and improvement of the
7 program.

8 (4) Working conditions.

9 (5) Support, training and assessment services for each
10 beginning educator.

11 "Secretary." The Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth.
12 Section 4. The Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST)
13 Program.

14 (a) Establishment.--

15 (1) The Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST)
16 Program is established and shall be administered by the
17 department.

18 (2) The department shall provide the program to all
19 school districts identified as having high teacher turnover
20 rates for first-year and second-year teachers and that are
21 economically disadvantaged as determined by the secretary and
22 that are selected for participation by the department.

23 (3) Participation in the program shall be mandatory for
24 beginning educators employed in eligible school districts
25 that apply for funding under section 6 and that are selected
26 for participation by the department.

27 (4) The department shall adopt and implement criteria
28 and standards for participation in the program, including
29 criteria regarding the eligibility of educators and standards
30 of local program quality and intensity for schools, school

1 districts, colleges, universities and other educational and
2 professional organizations involved in the program. The
3 criteria and standards shall be consistent with the purposes
4 of the program.

5 (b) Program description.--The program shall support locally
6 designed, high-quality induction programs that provide
7 individualized support and performance-based assessment for all
8 participating beginning educators. The department shall develop
9 and implement policies to govern the support, training and
10 assessment of beginning educators.

11 (c) Continuing professional education.--For a beginning
12 educator who holds an Instructional I or Educational Specialist
13 I certificate who is subject to the requirements of section
14 1205.2 of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as
15 the Public School Code of 1949, participation in the program
16 may, at the teacher's discretion, serve as credit towards hours
17 of continuing professional education programs, activities or
18 learning experiences.

19 Section 5. Administration.

20 The department shall implement and administer the program for
21 eligible school districts under this act. In administering the
22 program, the department shall provide or contract for all of the
23 following:

24 (1) Establishment of requirements for reviewing and
25 approving local teacher induction programs.

26 (2) Development and administration of a system for
27 ensuring local teacher induction program quality and
28 effectiveness in producing excellent program outcomes.

29 (3) Ensuring that an eligible school district has a
30 local induction plan in place for each participating

1 beginning educator and that the program provides intensive,
2 mentor-based individualized support and assistance to each
3 participating beginning educator that includes a performance-
4 based assessment.

5 (4) Conducting and tracking research related to best
6 practices for teacher induction programs and professional
7 development materials and strategies for personnel involved
8 in implementing induction programs.

9 Section 6. Funding.

10 (a) Allocation.--

11 (1) To the extent funds are appropriated for the
12 program, an eligible school district or consortium of
13 eligible school districts may apply to the department for
14 funding to establish a local teacher induction program under
15 this act.

16 (2) From amounts appropriated for the purposes of this
17 act, the department shall allocate an amount not to exceed
18 \$1,500 for each beginning educator participating in the
19 program at an eligible school district.

20 (3) To be eligible to receive funding, an eligible
21 school district must meet all the criteria and standards
22 required by the department.

23 (b) Participation limitation.--State funding for
24 participation in the program by an educator who holds a first-
25 level certificate is limited to two years or until the educator
26 has satisfied requirements for successful completion of the
27 local teacher induction program, whichever occurs first.

28 (c) Funding limitation.--No more than 10% of the total sum
29 appropriated annually shall be granted to a single eligible
30 school district.

1 Section 7. Report.

2 The department shall evaluate the effectiveness of the
3 program two years following full implementation and report the
4 findings to the General Assembly. An interim report shall be
5 provided to the General Assembly no later than July 1, 2026, if
6 full funding has not been provided prior to that date.

7 Section 8. Effective date.

8 This act shall take effect July 1, 2023, or immediately,
9 whichever is later.