

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2605 Session of
2024

INTRODUCED BY SMITH-WADE-EL, KHAN, PROBST, KAZEEM, HANBIDGE,
BELLMON, SCOTT, HILL-EVANS, GIRAL, SCHLOSSBERG, MERSKI,
WAXMAN, HOHENSTEIN, WEBSTER, SANCHEZ, KENYATTA, FIEDLER,
PARKER, BOYD, ROZZI, SHUSTERMAN AND DONAHUE,
SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

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 School Library
6 Restoration Pilot Program.

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 XIV-C

13 SCHOOL LIBRARY RESTORATION PILOT PROGRAM

14 Section 1401-C. Scope of article.

15 This article relates to the School Library Restoration Pilot
16 Program.

17 Section 1402-C. Definitions.

18 The following words and phrases when used in this article

1 shall have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
2 context clearly indicates otherwise:

3 "Certified librarian." An individual who is a certified
4 teacher and has:

5 (1) completed a school library certification at an
6 institution of higher education; or

7 (2) achieved the minimum score required on the PRAXIS II
8 School Librarian test (5312) to be employed as a school
9 librarian in this Commonwealth.

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

12 "Eligible school." A school that meets the eligibility
13 requirements under section 1403-C(e).

14 "Grant." A grant awarded under section 1403-C(b).

15 "Institution of higher education." As defined in section
16 2001-E.

17 "Pilot program." The School Library Restoration Pilot
18 Program established under section 1403-C.

19 Section 1403-C. School Library Restoration Pilot Program.

20 (a) Establishment.--The School Library Restoration Pilot
21 Program is established within the department to provide grants
22 to low-achieving schools for the restoration of school
23 libraries.

24 (b) Grants.--

25 (1) The department shall award grants in accordance with
26 this article to the extent money is available.

27 (2) A grant awarded under paragraph (1) may not exceed
28 \$170,000.

29 (c) Use of grants.--A grant shall be used exclusively for
30 school library purposes, which include, but are not limited to,

1 the following:

2 (1) Furnishing and enhancing the library collection
3 through the purchase of books, digital library memberships,
4 software and other technology.

5 (2) Certification and training of school librarians,
6 including reimbursement or payment for courses required to
7 become a certified school librarian.

8 (d) Program operation.--The pilot program shall operate for
9 five full school years, beginning with the school year that
10 begins at least six months after the effective date of this
11 subsection.

12 (e) Eligibility.--A school must meet the following criteria
13 to be eligible for a grant:

14 (1) The school must be included on the list of low-
15 achieving schools published under section 2010-B for the year
16 in which the school applies for a grant.

17 (2) Three months after the effective date of this
18 paragraph, the school must submit a proposal to the
19 department that identifies how it will meet the guidelines of
20 the pilot program.

21 (3) Either of the following:

22 (i) The school's library must be staffed by at least
23 one certified librarian or one educator who is in the
24 process of earning a certification to be a librarian.

25 (ii) The school will use the grant to:

26 (A) hire a certified librarian or an educator
27 who is in the process of earning a certification to
28 be a librarian; or

29 (B) reimburse or pay for an educator employed by
30 the school to become a certified librarian.

1 (f) Participation.--The department shall select at least 12
2 eligible schools to participate in the pilot program as follows:

3 (1) The department shall select six elementary schools
4 and six secondary schools in accordance with paragraph (2).

5 (2) The department shall use a selection process
6 intended to select schools that would represent a variety of
7 student demographics and other school characteristics to
8 adequately represent this Commonwealth's student population.

9 Section 1404-C. Department responsibilities.

10 (a) General rule.--The department shall apply for Federal,
11 private and other non-State money and shall use money
12 appropriated or otherwise made available to the department for
13 the pilot program.

14 (b) Consultation.--The department shall consult with the
15 Governor's Advisory Council on Library Development and the
16 Pennsylvania School Librarians Association in establishing,
17 operating and evaluating the pilot program. The department may
18 consult with any other recognized organization that specializes
19 in, and has expertise with, school libraries.

20 (c) Guidelines.--No later than three months after the
21 effective date of this subsection, the department shall
22 establish guidelines and procedures for the pilot program in
23 consultation with the Governor's Advisory Council on Library
24 Development and the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association.
25 The department shall designate a Statewide coordinator to
26 oversee development and implementation of the pilot program.

27 Section 1405-C. Pilot program evaluation.

28 (a) Report by participating schools.--Each participating
29 school shall annually report to the department data and
30 information about the operation of the pilot program, in the

1 manner prescribed by the department.

2 (b) Evaluation.--The department shall contract with a
3 nationally recognized educational evaluation institution or
4 organization to provide and evaluate the pilot program to review
5 the effect having a school library and librarian has on the
6 school and test scores of the school's students. The evaluation
7 shall be published on the department's publicly accessible
8 Internet website.

9 (c) Report by department.--The department shall compile a
10 report based on the data and information received about the
11 operation of the pilot program under subsection (a). The
12 department shall submit the report under this subsection by
13 August 1 to the chairperson and minority chairperson of the
14 Education Committee of the Senate and the chairperson and
15 minority chairperson of the Education Committee of the House of
16 Representatives.

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