

No. 1984-145

AN ACT

HB 1898

Establishing within the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency Regional Computer Resource Centers and Regional Computer Resource Center boards.

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

Section 1. Short title.

This act shall be known and may be cited as the Information Technology Education Act.

Section 2. Purpose.

The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

(1) It is in the best interest of the Commonwealth to improve and strengthen computer education in its elementary and secondary schools by:

(i) Coordinating the activities of the Regional Computer Resource Centers with the existing Science Teachers Education Program administered by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.

(ii) Encouraging orderly planning for the use of microcomputers and for the application of microcomputers to the instructional programs of elementary and secondary schools.

(iii) Improving teacher training in computer education.

(iv) Encouraging the acquisition of computer hardware.

(v) Assisting in the acquisition of appropriate computer software.

(2) All areas of the Commonwealth shall have available a Regional Computer Resource Center to assist school districts in developing the computer skills of their students and teachers and to ensure availability of computer equipment, training and programs.

(3) There shall be at least eight centers throughout the Commonwealth, each of which shall be established at sites reflecting considerations of demography.

(4) Funding shall be made available to the centers from the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.

(5) The initial priority of this act shall be to equalize the development of computer skills of students and teachers among the school districts.

(6) This program is designed as a four-year program.

Section 3. Definitions.

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

“Agency.” The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.

“Center.” A Regional Computer Resource Center.

“Department.” The Department of Education of the Commonwealth.

“Intermediate unit.” An intermediate unit as defined by the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949.

Section 4. Responsibility of Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.

(a) Establish centers.—The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency shall establish not less than eight Regional Computer Resource Centers throughout the Commonwealth at sites based on demography.

(b) Grant supervision.—The agency shall be responsible for reviewing school district grant proposals submitted by Regional Computer Resource Centers.

(c) Power to make grants.—The Higher Education Assistance Agency shall make grants to school districts. Those grants shall reflect at least one of the following:

- (1) The aid ratio as defined in the Public School Code of 1949.
- (2) School district enrollment.

Each school district applying shall be required to supply the balance of the funding necessary for its program. The balance may be supplied in cash or in kind.

Section 5. Regional Computer Resource Centers.

(a) Purpose.—The purposes of each Regional Computer Resource Center are to increase teacher expertise relating to computer information technology and to assist local school districts within the region to acquire, utilize and upgrade computer hardware and software. To this end, it will:

- (1) Provide teacher training.
- (2) Help design computer oriented curricula.
- (3) Assist with the evaluation of software.
- (4) Review and evaluate proposals for upgrading computer and computer oriented instruction.
- (5) Coordinate purchase of computer hardware and software.
- (6) Loan computer hardware and software to nonpublic school students.

Regional Computer Resource Centers may contract with intermediate units to provide the above services.

(b) Regional Computer Resource Center Board.—

(1) The Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency shall appoint five persons to be members of each Regional Computer Resource Center Board of Directors. The persons appointed shall represent five broad areas: computer technology, teacher education, computer education, elementary education and secondary education. No less than two members of the Regional Computer Resource Center Board shall be classroom teachers or building principals.

(2) It shall be the duty of the regional board to receive grant applications from school districts. Such applications shall include plans for upgrading computer education through two related and coordinated actions: teacher training and computer hardware and software acquisition and utilization.

(3) Grant applications from school districts for teacher training in computer education, computer hardware acquisition and computer software acquisition shall be received by the regional board. After reviewing applications, the regional board shall forward each application with their comments to the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.

Section 6. Loan of computer hardware and software to nonpublic school students.

The Director of the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency through the Regional Computer Resource Centers shall have the power and duty to purchase computer hardware and software and, upon individual request, to loan them to all children residing in the Commonwealth who are enrolled in grades kindergarten through 12 of a nonpublic school. The annual allocation for this purchase shall not exceed 20% of the appropriated funds used for the purchase of computer hardware and software from the total appropriation. Such computer hardware and software shall be loaned free to such children.

Section 7. Regulations.

The Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency shall have the power and its duty shall be to adopt such regulations as may be necessary to implement this act.

Section 8. Sunset provision.

The program created under this act shall expire four years from the effective date of this act.

Section 9. Effective date.

This act shall take effect in 30 days.

APPROVED—The 9th day of July, A. D. 1984.

DICK THORNBURGH