

No. 1987-49

AN ACT

HB 9

Promoting the development of programs to prevent students from dropping out of school.

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

Section 1. Legislative findings and intent.

The General Assembly finds and declares that large numbers of students are leaving school prior to graduation, that these students, due to their lack of education, are unable to participate as productive citizens in the Commonwealth and that State leadership is required to reduce the number of dropouts from the public school system. It is the intent of this legislation to promote the development of programs to prevent students from dropping out of school, to promote the collection of information on dropouts and to promote the development and use of Statewide programs designed to prevent current students from dropping out.

Section 2. Program established.

The Department of Education shall establish a program of school dropout prevention.

Section 3. Eligible grant applicants.

Applications for grants may be submitted by school districts.

Section 4. Program requirements.

Services and programs may be provided to students in grades kindergarten through 12. Services and programs shall include the following:

- (1) Academic coursework.
- (2) Remedial education.
- (3) Other courses required for graduation.
- (4) Vocational education.
- (5) Programs of employment and training and related services, counseling and assessment.
- (6) Involvement of parents and guardians of students and individuals enrolled in dropout prevention programs.
- (7) Public information and outreach activities.
- (8) Human, social and community services.

Section 5. Criteria for awarding grants.

In awarding grants, the Secretary of Education shall be guided by the following criteria:

- (1) The extent to which dropout rates in the school district exceed the Statewide average dropout rate.
- (2) The program effectiveness in prior years if the grant application is intended to provide funding for programs already in existence, expressed in terms of:

(i) A decline in both the number and percentage of students leaving school prior to graduation.

(ii) Improvement in the promotion rate, attendance rate and academic achievement of students enrolled in the program.

(3) The anticipated results of new programs, expressed in terms of:

(i) A decline in both the number and percentage of students leaving school prior to graduation.

(ii) Improvement in the promotion rate, attendance rate and academic achievement of students enrolled in the program.

(4) The extent to which the school district program is linked to those of other relevant service providers, such as literacy councils, area vocational-technical schools, postsecondary educational and training institutions, private industry councils, social service agencies and community-based organizations.

(5) The number of dropouts in the school district.

Section 6. Duties and responsibilities of the Secretary of Education.

(a) Grant-making process.—The Secretary of Education shall develop applications for grants and make them available to school districts with the highest rates or numbers of dropouts, shall develop any regulations, guidelines or standards required for the implementation of this act and shall review all grant applications and make grants from funds appropriated for this purpose.

(b) Data collection, analysis and distribution.—The Secretary of Education shall prepare a report by February 1 of each year which must, at a minimum, contain the following:

(1) Numbers of students leaving school without graduating.

(2) Grade levels at the time of their withdrawal from school.

(3) Age at the time of their withdrawal from school.

(4) Reasons for withdrawing from school.

(5) The postwithdrawal activities of individuals who left school prior to graduation.

(6) Numbers of students enrolled in dropout prevention programs.

(7) An evaluation of programs provided in the prior school year and their effectiveness.

(c) Limitations to each school district.—Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, no one school district shall receive more than 10% of the total funds available under this program established by the Secretary of Education in any one school year.

Section 7. Effective date.

This act shall take effect July 1, 1987, or immediately, whichever is later.

APPROVED—The 10th day of July, A. D. 1987.

ROBERT P. CASEY