

Application Guidelines for PA Pact

A Consolidated Application for Funding under the Accountability Block Grant, Educational Assistance and Accountability to Commonwealth Taxpayers programs

A. OVERVIEW

Pennsylvania has committed to ensuring that all students — regardless of background, condition or circumstance — graduate from high school with the competencies and skills necessary for postsecondary success. This goal is essential to the commonwealth's future economic prosperity and to fulfilling its most basic obligation to serve its citizenry.

Pennsylvania's school districts have made significant progress over the last five years in raising academic performance levels for students across every grade level and demographic subgroup. However, significant challenges remain: more than three in ten Pennsylvania students still score below proficient on the PSSA reading and math tests, and one in six students scores below basic, the lowest achievement level.

Reaching Pennsylvania's goal of ensuring that 100% of our students are proficient in reading and math by 2014 is possible if we take strong action now to build upon the progress of the last five years.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is supporting schools and districts in reaching this goal through the establishment of *The Pennsylvania Pact* (PA-Pact). PA-Pact provides resources for schools and districts to invest in proven practices to ensure that all students achieve greater academic success. Through PA-Pact, school districts create a single application for up to three separate funding sources:

- the Accountability Block Grant (ABG),
- the Educational Assistance Program (EAP)*, and
- the Accountability to Commonwealth Taxpayers fund (ACT) – the portion of a school district's increase that exceeds the annual inflation index of the Basic Education Funding under the Governor's proposed new formula (see proposed Section 2502.49)

B. DEFINITIONS

ABG – Accountability Block Grant (see 24 PS 25-2599.2)

EAP – Educational Assistance Program (see 24 PS 1502-C and 1505-C)

ACT - Accountability to Commonwealth Taxpayers – The amount of basic education funding allocated to a school district pursuant to Governor Rendell's Education Budget proposal dated Feb. 5, 2008 that exceeds the amount of basic education funding allocated to the school district in the prior fiscal year by more than the index, established at 4.4 % for fiscal year 2008-2009.

This amount of funding must have an authorized plan for spending allocation. (see 24 PS 25-2502.49 pending)

Department –The Pennsylvania Department of Education.

C. What funding is my district eligible for?

The following table summarizes which LEAs are eligible for ABG, EAP, and ACT funds. Please note: while every district receives ABG funding, not every school district receives EAP and ACT funding.

Funding/Program	Eligible LEAs
Accountability Block Grant (see Appendix B)	All 501 School Districts
Education Assistance Program	175 School Districts/CTCS as identified by student proficiency levels.
Accountability to Commonwealth Taxpayers	School Districts receiving a basic education subsidy increase in 2008-09 of more than 4.4% over the previous year.

Each school district/career and technical center can verify the amount of its proposed 2008-09 allocation by logging on to the following website:

<http://www.pde.state.pa.us/k12/cwp/view.asp?a=165&Q=139520>.

D. How can my district create the greatest impact on student achievement?

A key component to the PA-Pact application is ensuring that funding is targeted toward increasing the academic performance of all students, but most particularly those students who are struggling academically.

As part of the PA-Pact application process, school districts are asked to review and analyze student performance data, including PSSA results. Districts are encouraged to review the data analysis that they may have already completed as part of the district and school improvement planning process, as detailed in *Getting Results* (for further detail, please see the Department's website at

<http://www.pde.state.pa.us/pas/cwp/view.asp?a=3&q=105017>) *Getting Results* asks schools and districts to analyze student performance using a three-phase, data-informed inquiry cycle as follows:

1. Data: What data does the school/district have regarding student performance and growth?
2. Analysis/Discovery: What does the data reveal about school's programming in terms of areas of strength and areas of concern? What are the "root causes" for weak student performance?
3. Solutions: Which evidence-based strategies can the school/district pursue to address the root cause(s) of weak student performance? What is the plan for implementing these strategies?

Using the results of their student data analysis, school districts completing the PA-Pact application will identify how ABG, EAP and/or ACT funds will be used to address the root causes of weak student performance and target identified instructional needs.

E. ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURES BY FUNDING SOURCE

The following table summarizes eligible uses for **ABG, EAP and ACT** funds. Please note: while every school district receives ABG funding, not every school district receives EAP and ACT funding.

What funding can a District use for each strategy?			
Strategies	ABG funding	EAP funding	ACT funding
<i>Increased Instructional Time (See Appendix C)</i>			
Tutoring before/after school, weekends	YES	YES	YES
Extension of the school day/year	YES	YES	YES
Intensive instruction for struggling students during the school day (including AYP subgroups LEP/ELL, etc).	YES	YES	YES
Other educational support services that do not interfere with the eligible student's classroom instructional time and does not supplant services required in the student's IEP.	NO	YES	YES
<i>New Curriculum and Course Offerings</i>			
High school reform	YES	NO	YES
Science and applied knowledge skills	YES	NO	YES
World languages in elementary grades	YES	NO	YES
Elementary science education	YES	NO	YES
Performance of student subgroups	YES	NO	NO
Other new curricula/course offerings	NO	NO	YES
<i>Professional teacher education*</i>			
Teacher Training	YES	NO	YES
Literacy and math coaching	YES	NO	YES
Other Professional Development	YES	NO	YES
<i>Early Education, Pre-K through Grade 3 (See Appendix D)</i>			
Pre-kindergarten	YES	NO	YES

Full day kindergarten	YES	NO	YES
Class size reduction, K-3	YES	NO	YES
<i>Teacher and Administrator Incentives</i>			
Incentives for highly effective qualified teachers to work in academically challenged schools (schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action)	YES	NO	YES
Incentives for the most highly qualified principals to work in academically challenged schools (schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action)	NO	NO	YES
Incentives for the adoption of performance contracts for superintendents, assistant superintendents and principals	NO	NO	YES
<i>Social and Health Services</i>	YES	NO	NO
<i>Research-Based Improvement Strategies</i>	YES	NO	See Section F. Special Budget Instructions
<i>Evidence Based Supports and One-Time Costs</i>	NO	NO	See Section F. Special Budget Instructions

*For more information on Professional Development, review the Act 48 Guidelines on the Department Web site at http://www.teaching.state.pa.us/teaching/lib/teaching/Approved_Provider_Guidelines_Final_6_5_2007.pdf

F. SPECIAL BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS

Carry-over: The ABG, EAP and ACT funds are state dollars, and therefore, carryover funds are not permitted. All allocated grant dollars identified on your 2008-09 PA-Pact Application must be encumbered or spent by June 30, 2009. ABG funds may only be used to establish, maintain or expand programs in the chart above.

ACT funds must be used as follows:

- ✓ At least 80% of such funds shall be used to offer eligible programs (those in the above chart) for the first time or to expand eligible programs that are already in existence in the school district.
- ✓ No more than 10% of such funds may be used to maintain eligible programs in the above chart that are already in existence in the school district or for one-time costs necessary to the delivery of instruction that shall include books, materials or other supplies.

- ✓ No more than 10% of ACT funds may be used for other programs or activities that are essential to achieving or maintaining academic performance targets and that are based on sound research, or for one-time costs necessary to the delivery of instruction that shall include books, materials or other supplies.

Districts with one or more schools in school improvement or corrective action are expected to demonstrate how the increase in ACT funding will be targeted to meet the needs of struggling students in those schools.

G. SUBMISSION, REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF A DISTRICT'S PA-PACT

Submission Deadline:

School districts that are eligible for ABG and EAP funds must submit the *PA-Pact* application to the Pennsylvania Department of Education no later than May 19, 2008. The *PA-Pact* replaces the previous application process for ABG and EAP funding.

Districts that are also eligible for the ACT funding are strongly encouraged, although not required, to submit this portion of the *PA-Pact* application by May 19, 2008.

Submitting the ACT portion of the application at the same time as the ABG and EAP portions will enable districts to receive early approval for spending these funds.

If a district chooses not to submit the ACT portion of the application concurrently with the rest of the application package by May 15, 2008, the *PA-Pact* application must be revised to include the ACT portion and submitted to the Department no later than August 1, 2008, pending approval by the General Assembly of the Governor's budget plan.

Review and Approval:

The Department must approve the ABG and EAP portions of the application for all school districts/career and technical centers.

If a school district is identified for warning, improvement or corrective action, or has one or more schools identified for school improvement or corrective action, the District's ACT plan must also be approved by the Department before funds can be expended. If a school district does not receive approval for its ACT plan, the Department will provide a written explanation to the district's board of school directors. A school district whose application has been disapproved shall amend and resubmit the application for approval by the Department. The Department shall withhold the portion of the increase in basic education funding which exceeds the index until such time as the application is approved.

All school districts will comply with the individual program assurances as indicated in the ASSURANCES section of the *PA-Pact* application.