



## **News for Immediate Release**

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### **Secretary of Education Tells Committee Governor Corbett's Digital Learning Proposal Expands Educational Opportunities for Students**

**Harrisburg** – Governor Tom Corbett's proposal to expand digital learning to all students across Pennsylvania is an important component to the future of education in Pennsylvania, said Secretary of Education Ron Tomalis today during testimony before the House Education Committee.

"Digital learning is not just a short-term trend, it is quickly becoming the new model for education across the state and throughout the country," Tomalis said. "The higher education and business communities as well as our day-to-day lives have adapted to the digital environment and our public education system must follow the same path to make sure that students are provided with additional high-quality learning opportunities."

The committee's focus was Rep. Ryan Aument's (R-Lancaster) proposal, House Bill 983, which would require the Department of Education to create a clearinghouse for online courses to be made accessible to school entities, including school districts, charter and cyber charter schools, intermediate units, and career and technical centers.

A comprehensive online learning initiative would build upon the work already under way in the Department of Education with funds allocated in Pennsylvania's federal Race to the Top grant.

As required under the grant, beginning with the 2013-14 school year, the department will post on its website a list of online algebra I and biology courses that have been reviewed by the department for quality and alignment to the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards.

Corbett's digital learning proposal would expand the availability of online courses to additional content areas, such as foreign language, history, science and English literature.

According to Keeping Pace with K-12 Online and Blended Learning 2012, online learning is being used by millions of students across the country and it's expected to increase significantly in the years ahead.

As a result of this trend, many school districts across Pennsylvania offer online education to students through district-developed courses, a consortium of school districts or third-party providers.

Nationwide, 31 states and the District of Columbia have statewide full-time online schools, and more than a dozen states have acknowledged the importance of online learning by enacting laws to enable students to have access to digital learning.

"By implementing a statewide online learning initiative, Pennsylvania's taxpayers, who invest \$27 billion each year into public education, will affirm their commitment to increasing quality educational opportunities for our students," Tomalis said.

"Governor Corbett believes that digital learning ensures that students will no longer be limited by the content available in textbooks and course offerings in a local school district."

**Media contact:** Tim Eller, 717-783-9802

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