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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE BILL

No. 200 Session of  
2015

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INTRODUCED BY BAKER, TARTAGLIONE, GREENLEAF, TEPLITZ, SCAVELLO,  
SMITH, VULAKOVICH, GORDNER, BREWSTER, AUMENT, RAFFERTY,  
SCHWANK, COSTA, SCARNATI, BOSCOLA, MCGARRIGLE AND STACK,  
JANUARY 16, 2015

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REFERRED TO LABOR AND INDUSTRY, JANUARY 16, 2015

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AN ACT

1 Providing for the Work Experience for High School Students with  
2 Disabilities Act; imposing duties on the Office of Vocational  
3 Rehabilitation; and providing for appropriations.

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

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Work  
8 Experience for High School Students with Disabilities Act.

9 Section 2. Definitions.

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

13 "Competitive integrated employment." Work in the competitive  
14 labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis  
15 in an integrated setting for which an individual is compensated  
16 at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary  
17 wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or

1 similar work performed by individuals who do not have  
2 disabilities.

3 "Integrated setting." With respect to an employment outcome,  
4 a setting typically found in the community in which an applicant  
5 or eligible individual interacts with individuals without  
6 disabilities, other than an individual who is providing services  
7 to the applicant or eligible individual, to the same extent that  
8 individuals without a disability in a comparable position  
9 interact with other persons.

10 "Office of Vocational Rehabilitation." The Office of  
11 Vocational Rehabilitation established under section 7 of the act  
12 of December 20, 1988 (P.L.1306, No.167), known as the Vocational  
13 Rehabilitation Act.

14 Section 3. Powers and duties of the Office of Vocational  
15 Rehabilitation.

16 The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation shall develop  
17 connections between local education agencies and public and  
18 private employers to promote the successful transition of high  
19 school students with disabilities into competitive integrated  
20 employment after graduation. In collaboration with officials of  
21 local education agencies and other public agencies, such as an  
22 agency taking part in a county mental health or intellectual  
23 disabilities program, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation  
24 shall to the greatest extent possible:

25 (1) Provide information for the development of  
26 individual education plans for high school students with  
27 disabilities. The office shall, when possible, attend  
28 individual education plan meetings in person or by  
29 alternative means, such as video conferences and conference  
30 calls, when invited by local education agencies.

1           (2) Arrange for, monitor and support the placement of  
2 high school students with disabilities in lawful internships,  
3 on-the-job training and full-time or part-time work at  
4 competitive wages in integrated settings with public or  
5 private sector employers.

6           (3) Provide professional guidance relative to job  
7 coaching services:

8           (i) To individuals who are eligible for services at  
9 the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

10           (ii) When those services are included in an  
11 individualized plan for employment by the Office of  
12 Vocational Rehabilitation.

13 Section 4. Construction.

14       Nothing in this act shall be construed to reduce the  
15 obligation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act  
16 (Public Law 91-230, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.) of a local  
17 education agency or any other agency to provide or pay for any  
18 transition services that are also considered special education  
19 or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free,  
20 appropriate public education to children with disabilities.

21 Section 5. Appropriations.

22       For fiscal year 2015-2016, sufficient State funds shall be  
23 appropriated to ensure that the Federal funds available to the  
24 Commonwealth through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation  
25 under the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public  
26 Law 93-112, 29 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.) are matched by the Federal  
27 Government. In subsequent fiscal years, sufficient State funds  
28 shall be appropriated to ensure that the funds available to the  
29 Commonwealth under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are matched by  
30 the Federal Government. The difference between the funding for

1 fiscal year 2015-2016 and the amounts appropriated during fiscal  
2 year 2014-2015 to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and  
3 the Federal funds matched by the State funds shall be earmarked  
4 and utilized by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation  
5 exclusively to carry out the purposes of this act. This section  
6 shall not apply to a future one-time increase in the State  
7 appropriation and the matching Federal funds.

8 Section 6. Effective date.

9 This act shall take effect in 60 days.