

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 1497 Session of
2014

INTRODUCED BY BAKER, GORDNER, ARGALL, RAFFERTY, VULAKOVICH,
GREENLEAF, ERICKSON, WOZNIAK, TEPLITZ, SOLOBAY, SMITH,
SCHWANK, HUGHES AND COSTA, OCTOBER 14, 2014

REFERRED TO LABOR AND INDUSTRY, OCTOBER 14, 2014

AN ACT

1 Providing for the Work Experience for High School Graduates 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 Graduates 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 employment." Work in the competitive labor
14 market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an
15 integrated setting for which an individual is compensated at or
16 above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and
17 level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar
18 work performed by individuals who do not have disabilities.

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

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

12 Section 3. Powers and duties of the Office of Vocational
13 Rehabilitation.

14 The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation shall be the lead
15 agency responsible for ensuring that local education agencies
16 and private employers work together in order to successfully
17 transition high school students with disabilities into
18 competitive employment after graduation. In collaboration with
19 officials of local education agencies and other public agencies,
20 such as an agency taking part in a county mental health or
21 intellectual disabilities program, the Office of Vocational
22 Rehabilitation shall:

23 (1) Participate in the development of individual
24 education plans for high school students with disabilities,
25 ensuring that job readiness skill training is included in
26 such plans when appropriate. Participation shall also include
27 attending individual education plan meetings when local
28 education agencies provide reasonable advance notice of the
29 meetings.

30 (2) Arrange for, monitor and support the placement of

1 high school students with disabilities in lawful internships,
2 on-the-job training and full-time or part-time work at
3 competitive wages in integrated settings with private sector
4 employers.

5 (3) Provide professional guidance relative to job
6 coaching services and provide the services to individuals who
7 are eligible for services at the Office of Vocational
8 Rehabilitation and when the services are included in an
9 individualized plan for employment by the Office of
10 Vocational Rehabilitation so high school students with
11 disabilities are able to succeed in competitive employment
12 with private sector employers.

13 Section 4. Appropriations.

14 For fiscal year 2014-2015, sufficient State funds shall be
15 appropriated to ensure that the Federal funds available to the
16 Commonwealth through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
17 under the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Public
18 Law 93-112, 29 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.) are matched by the Federal
19 Government. In subsequent fiscal years, sufficient State funds
20 shall be appropriated to ensure that the funds available to the
21 Commonwealth under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are matched by
22 the Federal Government. The difference between the funding for
23 fiscal year 2014-2015 and the amounts appropriated during fiscal
24 year 2013-2014 to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and
25 the Federal funds matched by the State funds shall be earmarked
26 and utilized by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
27 exclusively to carry out the purposes of this act. This section
28 shall not apply to a future one-time increase in the State
29 appropriation and the matching Federal funds.

30 Section 5. Effective date.

1 This act shall take effect in 60 days.