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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 845      Session of  
2001

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INTRODUCED BY MACKERETH, DALLY, THOMAS, BARD, BARRAR,  
BENNINGHOFF, CALTAGIRONE, M. COHEN, CORRIGAN, EGOLF, WATSON,  
FEESE, FLICK, FREEMAN, GRUCELA, HALUSKA, HARHAI, HARHART,  
HENNESSEY, HERSHEY, LEVDANSKY, MARSICO, McNAUGHTON, MELIO,  
NAILOR, PIPPY, ROSS, RUBLEY, SAYLOR, SCHRODER, SCRIMENTI,  
B. SMITH, STABACK, SURRA, WILT, YOUNGBLOOD AND ZUG,  
MARCH 6, 2001

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MARCH 6, 2001

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AN ACT

1 Establishing the Preapproved School Design Program; providing  
2 for the powers and duties of the Department of Education; and  
3 making an appropriation.

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 Preapproved  
8 School Design 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 "Department." The Department of Education of the  
14 Commonwealth.

15 "Program." The Preapproved School Design Program established  
16 in section 3.

1 "School entity." A school district, intermediate unit, area  
2 vocational-technical school or charter school operating within  
3 this Commonwealth under provisions of the act of March 10, 1949  
4 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949.

5 Section 3. Preapproved School Design Program.

6 (a) Program established.--The Preapproved School Design  
7 Program is established to provide school entities with  
8 preapproved design plans, documents and estimates for the  
9 construction of new school buildings. The plans shall meet with  
10 the approval of the department based upon various factors  
11 provided by the school entity. Those factors shall include:

12 (1) The expected range of grade level or ages of pupils  
13 enrolled at the school.

14 (2) The anticipated rated pupil capacity.

15 (3) The exterior dimensions of the facility.

16 (4) The proposed appearance of the facility, including  
17 interior and exterior finishes.

18 (5) Physical site characteristics and limitations.

19 (6) Local zoning ordinances affecting school building  
20 construction and use.

21 (7) The projected potential for future expansion or  
22 additions in use.

23 (8) Any other information deemed necessary by the  
24 department.

25 (b) Implementation.--Within five years of the effective date  
26 of this act, the department shall make available to school  
27 entities a portfolio of preapproved design plans. The department  
28 may charge a service fee to cover administrative and clerical  
29 fees associated with the production of the plans.

30 Section 4. Duties of department.

1 The department shall acquire a portfolio of building plans  
2 and may contract with any school entity to purchase or otherwise  
3 acquire a set of plans for a project which is partially or fully  
4 completed or plans for a proposed project. The department shall  
5 evaluate and acquire plans which meet the following criteria:

6 (1) Each plan must base the construction on standard-  
7 grade quality materials which meet or exceed State and local  
8 building codes.

9 (2) Each plan must meet the highest level for current  
10 standards of health, safety, accessibility, environmental  
11 protection and energy efficiency.

12 (3) Each plan must demonstrate the latest technology and  
13 techniques of construction and be free of costly aesthetic  
14 embellishments.

15 (4) Each plan must use traditional straight-line, right-  
16 angle design principle and be free of costly curved and  
17 nonsymmetrical design.

18 (5) To the greatest extent possible, a multiple-story  
19 design must be used in order to preserve open space and  
20 promote energy efficiency.

21 (6) Each plan must be designed with at least one side  
22 available for easy additions in the event expansion is needed  
23 in the future.

24 (7) Each plan must include the most current needs in  
25 terms of technology and associated equipment being used in  
26 the education of students.

27 (8) Each plan must be designed primarily with academic  
28 and technological needs of students in mind.

29 Section 5. Cooperative arrangements.

30 Any two or more school entities that plan, build or purchase

1 cooperatively shall be eligible to split the calculated savings  
2 evenly and receive reimbursement for any cost savings to the  
3 department under this act.

4 Section 6. Financial incentives.

5 A school entity that utilizes, as its final plan, a  
6 standardized plan provided by the department under the program,  
7 shall receive an additional State reimbursement equal to 10% of  
8 the State reimbursement factor provided for in section 2574 of  
9 the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public  
10 School Code of 1949.

11 Section 7. Appropriation.

12 The sum of \$500,000, or as much thereof as may be necessary,  
13 is hereby appropriated to the Department of Education for the  
14 purpose of departmental evaluations and plan acquisition under  
15 this act for the fiscal year July 1, 2001, to June 30, 2002.

16 Section 8. Effective date.

17 This act shall take effect July 1, 2001.