Amending the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), entitled "An act relating to the public school system, including certain provisions applicable as well to private and parochial schools; amending, revising, consolidating and changing the laws relating thereto," in terms and courses of study, further providing for firefighter and emergency service training and establishing the Fire Training Fund.

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

Section 1. Section 1550 of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code of 1949, is amended to read:

Section 1550. Firefighter and Emergency Service Training.--

(a) [Beginning with the 2003-2004 school year and each school year thereafter, a] A school district may offer firefighter and emergency service training as credit-earning courses to students of the age of sixteen (16) years or older, except as otherwise provided in subsection (c). Such courses may include:

(1) Training as a Firefighter I from the National Board on
Training as an emergency medical technician pursuant to the act of July 3, 1985 (P.L.164, No.45), known as the "Emergency Medical Services Act."

(b) A school district that offers firefighter and emergency service training as credit-earning courses shall provide transportation to and supervision during any firefighter and emergency service training program that takes place off school grounds. Supervision of training shall be conducted as a cooperative education program in accordance with the provisions of 22 Pa. Code § 11.28 (relating to out-of-school programs).

(c) The Secondary Education Fire Training Pilot Program is established. The purpose of the pilot program is to provide high school students with instruction through a partnership between institutions of higher education and school districts or area vocational-technical schools, or both, to increase the number of individuals capable of becoming volunteer firefighters. The pilot program shall be implemented in accordance with the following:

(1) The State Fire Commissioner shall accept proposals from institutions of higher education in this Commonwealth for the pilot program. From the proposals submitted, the State Fire Commissioner shall select three institutions of higher education to offer the pilot program. The State Fire Commissioner, to the greatest extent practicable, shall select one institution of higher education each from the eastern, central and western regions of this Commonwealth. Nothing in this section shall prohibit an institution of higher education from incorporating emergency medical services instruction in the pilot program.

(2) An institution of higher education selected by the State
Fire Commissioner shall operate the pilot program by entering
into an agreement with a school district or an area vocational-
technical school, or both, for the provision of fire instruction
to students who are in at least the ninth grade and leading to
Firefighter I certification.

(3) A nonlapsing, restricted account is established in the
State Treasury, to be known as the Fire Training Fund. The State
Fire Commissioner may accept monetary donations and other money
for deposit into the Fire Training Fund from a person, business,
foundation, tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of
the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (Public Law 99-514, 26 U.S.C.
§ 501(c)(3)) or government entity on behalf of the Commonwealth.

(4) Money may be appropriated to the State Fire Commissioner
to carry out the provisions of this subsection. Each institution
of higher education offering the pilot program shall receive at
least one hundred fifty thousand dollars ($150,000) for the
duration of the pilot program.

(5) Any funds appropriated, donated or transferred under
this subsection and interest earned on the Fire Training Fund
shall be deposited into the Fire Training Fund.

(6) During the pilot program, the Legislative Budget and
Finance Committee shall conduct a survey of volunteer fire
companies in the municipalities surrounding the school districts
and area vocational-technical schools that participate in the
pilot program to determine whether the pilot program is
increasing the number of volunteer firefighters and any
additional recommendations. The results of the survey shall be
submitted to the chair and minority chair of the Veterans
Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee of the Senate and
the chair and minority chair of the Veterans Affairs and
Emergency Preparedness Committee of the House of Representatives

within six months of the expiration of the pilot program.

(7) The pilot program shall expire four years from the effective date of this subsection.

(d) As used in this section, the term "institution of higher education" means a community college operating under Article XIX-A or a university within the State System of Higher Education.

Section 2. This act shall take effect January 1, 2019, or immediately, whichever is later.