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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE BILL

No. 579 Session of  
1999

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INTRODUCED BY BELAN, KUKOVICH, RHOADES, COSTA, STAPLETON,  
KASUNIC, WAGNER, BODACK, MUSTO, BELL, STOUT, BOSCOLA, MELLOW  
AND SCHWARTZ, MARCH 15, 1999

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REFERRED TO COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, MARCH 15, 1999

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AN ACT

1 Establishing a pilot program for business and school cooperation  
2 in economically distressed regions; and making an  
3 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 Business and  
8 School Cooperative Act.

9 Section 2. Legislative purpose.

10 It is the intent of the General Assembly to establish  
11 incentives for cooperation between business or industry and  
12 public secondary educational institutions that specialize in  
13 vocational training. Since regions experiencing economic  
14 distress have a great need to cultivate a prepared work force in  
15 order to break the cycle of economic downturn, these regions are  
16 where these legislated incentives should be concentrated.

17 Section 3. Definitions.

18 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall

1 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the  
2 context clearly indicates otherwise:

3 "Department." The Department of Community and Economic  
4 Development of the Commonwealth.

5 Section 4. Pilot program.

6 The department shall implement a pilot program for business  
7 and school cooperation in economically distressed regions. The  
8 department shall design the program to encourage dialogue  
9 between business and educational leaders in these regions for  
10 the purpose of identifying problems and recommending solutions  
11 regarding preparedness of high school graduates for local  
12 employment.

13 Section 5. Challenge grants.

14 (a) Identification of economically distressed regions.--The  
15 department shall identify regions which suffer economic distress  
16 and shall prioritize these regions.

17 (b) Grant recipients.--The department shall invite pilot  
18 program proposals from school districts or groups of school  
19 districts in economically distressed regions. Grants of up to  
20 \$15,000 shall be awarded to pilot program participants based on  
21 need, severity of economic distress in the region, worthiness of  
22 the pilot program proposal and evidence of local commitment.

23 (c) Pilot program proposal criteria.--Grants shall be used  
24 to accomplish any of the following:

25 (1) Schedule joint business and school exchange programs  
26 where students, teachers and administrators regularly visit  
27 diverse businesses and business people visit schools to  
28 create a mutual awareness of career options and  
29 opportunities.

30 (2) Strengthen business cooperation with vocational

1 schools to ensure that the vocational-technical programs are  
2 imparting skills which the local business community needs.

3 (3) Develop apprenticeship programs involving high  
4 schools and businesses which would lead to full employment  
5 after high school graduation.

6 (4) Sponsor business and school partnerships which  
7 include tutoring and mentoring to prevent students from  
8 dropping out.

9 (5) Establish programs which encourage business  
10 employees to become involved with their childrens' schools.  
11 For example, joint business and school seminars may be held  
12 at the workplace to apprise parents of occupational  
13 opportunities for their children, and employee participation  
14 in school government, such as seeking election to school  
15 boards, would be encouraged.

16 (d) Local commitment criteria.--In applying for a business  
17 and education cooperative grant, school districts shall  
18 demonstrate a philosophical and financial, including cost-  
19 sharing, commitment from local businesses to cooperate with the  
20 schools to provide the region with an adequately educated and  
21 fully-employed population.

## 22 Section 6. Appropriation.

23 The sum of \$150,000, or as much thereof as may be necessary,  
24 is hereby appropriated to the Department of Community and  
25 Economic Development for the fiscal year July 1, 1999, to June  
26 30, 2000, to carry out the provisions of this act.

## 27 Section 7. Effective date.

28 This act shall take effect in 60 days.