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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 298 Session of  
2019

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INTRODUCED BY SOLOMON, SAMUELSON, FREEMAN, RYAN, BERNSTINE,  
CALTAGIRONE, KULIK, NEILSON, MURT, HILL-EVANS AND READSHAW,  
JANUARY 30, 2019

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, JANUARY 30, 2019

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AN ACT

1 Establishing the Older Adult Mentor Volunteer Program; and  
2 providing for duties of the Department of Education, the  
3 State Board of Education, intermediate units and public  
4 school entities.

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

7 Section 1. Short title.

8 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Older Adult  
9 Mentor Volunteer Program (MVP) Act.

10 Section 2. Legislative intent.

11 The intent of this act is to facilitate the exchange of  
12 knowledge between generations, using the experience and wisdom  
13 of retired older adults to enrich the lives and futures of this  
14 Commonwealth's young people.

15 Section 3. Definitions.

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

1 "Department." The Department of Education of the  
2 Commonwealth.

3 "Intermediate unit." An intermediate unit established under  
4 Article IX-A of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known  
5 as the Public School Code of 1949.

6 "Older adult." An individual who is 60 years of age or  
7 older.

8 "Program." The Older Adult Mentor Volunteer Program (MVP)  
9 established in section 4.

10 "School entity." A public school district, intermediate  
11 unit, charter school, regional charter school or area  
12 vocational-technical school.

13 "State board." The State Board of Education.  
14 Section 4. Older Adult Mentor Volunteer Program.

15 (a) Establishment.--The Older Adult Mentor Volunteer Program  
16 (MVP) is established in furtherance of expanding opportunities  
17 for qualified older adult volunteers to work directly with  
18 students before, during or after school hours, in school  
19 buildings and facilities and on school grounds. The purpose of  
20 the program is to:

21 (1) Enable older adults to impart the wisdom that they  
22 have accrued to the next generation and to share their unique  
23 professions, skills and experiences with students.

24 (2) Provide opportunities for students to explore areas  
25 of interest and develop skills, knowledge and experience in a  
26 variety of subjects, trades and hobbies.

27 (b) Participation.--

28 (1) No school entity shall be required to utilize the  
29 services of qualified MVP volunteers or to participate in the  
30 program beyond the requirements of section 7(b).

1           (2) The program shall not supersede or restrict any  
2 school district volunteer programs operating outside of the  
3 program.

4 Section 5. Guidelines.

5       The department, in consultation with the State board, shall  
6 develop guidelines for the program. The guidelines shall ensure  
7 the development of a program which will use the wisdom and  
8 talents of older adults to enhance the personal, educational and  
9 professional experiences of students. The guidelines shall  
10 include the following:

11           (1) The respective roles of school entities and  
12 intermediate units in program implementation and evaluation.

13           (2) Policies and procedures for operation of the program  
14 by school entities in coordination with intermediate units.

15           (3) Identification of methods for use in fostering  
16 participation in the program.

17           (4) Development and dissemination of application forms.

18 Section 6. Registry.

19       The department shall develop and maintain, in coordination  
20 with intermediate units, a central registry of older adult  
21 volunteers to facilitate matching older adult volunteers with  
22 students. The department shall provide electronic access to the  
23 registry to intermediate units and school entities.

24 Section 7. Application procedures.

25       (a) General rule.--An interested older adult may apply for  
26 participation in the program by submitting an application to an  
27 intermediate unit. The applicant shall indicate the school  
28 entity or school entities for which the applicant proposes to  
29 volunteer.

30       (b) Duties of intermediate units, school entities and State

1 and local agencies.--Intermediate units, school entities and  
2 area agencies on aging shall furnish program applications to  
3 older adults upon request. Applications may also be submitted  
4 electronically through the publicly accessible Internet websites  
5 of the department and the Department of Aging. A school entity  
6 or a State or local agency, other than an intermediate unit,  
7 that receives an application shall forward the application to  
8 the appropriate intermediate unit for review and processing.

9 (c) Review.--Upon receipt of an application, an intermediate  
10 unit shall review the application and, subject to 23 Pa.C.S. §  
11 6344.2 (relating to volunteers having contact with children),  
12 shall approve the application and add the applicant to the  
13 registry.

14 (d) Compliance with policies.--An older adult volunteer must  
15 comply with the applicable policies of the school entity for  
16 which the volunteer has applied to serve.

17 Section 8. Orientation and training.

18 A school entity that uses the services of older adult  
19 volunteers shall link older adults with students according to  
20 academic interests, professional pursuits, hobbies, skills or an  
21 identified need for an enriching exchange with an older adult  
22 volunteer.

23 Section 9. Public awareness program.

24 The department shall undertake efforts to make older adults,  
25 students and school entities aware of the existence and purpose  
26 of the program. The department and school entities shall also  
27 undertake efforts aimed at recruiting older adult volunteers.  
28 School entities shall identify students that may benefit from  
29 the program.

30 Section 10. Effective date.

1        This act shall take effect in 60 days.