

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
5 Vocational Academy Opportunity Act.

6 Section 5. Definition. In this Act, "Board" means the Board
7 of Trustees created by this Act.

8 Section 10. Establishment, funding, and location.

9 (a) There are initially created 2 vocational academies, one
10 located in Cook County and the other in a downstate county
11 designated by the Board of Higher Education as downstate, which
12 shall be residential institutions. Each academy shall be
13 located within 5 linear miles of a major interstate in a
14 community where the average income of a household of 3 people
15 is no greater than 100% of the poverty guidelines updated
16 periodically in the Federal Register by the U.S. Department of
17 Health and Human Services under the authority of 42 U.S.C.
18 9902(2). The land value of the community in which each academy
19 is located may not exceed \$7.50 per square foot.

20 (b) Each academy shall be a State agency, funded by State
21 appropriations, private contributions, and endowments. Minimal
22 fees for residential students may be charged. Each academy may

1 admit those students who have completed the academic equivalent
2 of the 9th grade and shall offer a program of secondary
3 coursework that is appropriate for students in the 10th, 11th,
4 and 12th grades and that offers courses that meet the
5 prerequisites to receiving a high school diploma under Section
6 27-22 of the School Code. Admission shall be determined by
7 competitive examination.

8 (c) In order to be eligible for State appropriations, each
9 academy shall submit to the Board of Higher Education no later
10 than the 1st day of October of each year its budget proposal
11 for the operation and capital needs of the academy for its next
12 fiscal year.

13 Section 15. Board of Trustees. The academies shall be
14 governed by a single Board of Trustees for the collective
15 operation and oversight of the academies, which shall consist
16 of the following members:

17 (1) ex officio, nonvoting members who shall be: the
18 State Superintendent of Education, the Executive Director
19 of the Illinois Community College Board, the Executive
20 Director of the Board of Higher Education, and the
21 superintendent of schools of the school district where each
22 academy is to be located;

23 (2) 3 representatives of secondary education,
24 appointed by the State Superintendent of Education;

25 (3) the 2 mayors of the municipalities where the

1 academies are to be located;

2 (4) the president of a statewide labor federation
3 representing more than one international union, or his or
4 her designee, appointed by the State Superintendent of
5 Education; and

6 (5) 2 members representative of the general public,
7 appointed by the Governor.

8 With the exception of the initial appointments, the
9 members' terms of office shall be for 6 years. At the first
10 meeting, members shall draw lots for appointments of 2, 4, or
11 6-year initial terms. A vacancy shall be filled for the
12 unexpired portion of the term by appointment of the person who
13 appointed the member causing such vacancy. The initial terms
14 shall commence upon appointment, and, upon expiration of a
15 term, a member shall continue serving until a successor is
16 appointed. The Board shall select a chair from among its
17 members who shall serve a 2-year term as chair. Members shall
18 receive no salary but shall be reimbursed for all ordinary and
19 necessary expenses incurred in performing their duties as
20 members of the Board.

21 Section 20. Powers of the Board. The Board of Trustees is
22 authorized to:

23 (1) Accept donations, bequests, or other forms of
24 financial assistance for educational purposes from any
25 public or private person or agency and comply with rules

1 governing grants from the federal government or from any
2 other person or agency that are not in contravention of the
3 Illinois Constitution or the laws of the State of Illinois.

4 (2) Purchase equipment and make improvements to
5 facilities necessary for the use of the academies, in
6 accordance with applicable law.

7 (3) Adopt, amend, or repeal rules and policies
8 necessary for the conduct of the business of the Board.

9 (4) Award certificates and issue diplomas to students
10 for successful completion of programs of study, provided
11 that a high school diploma may be issued to a student if
12 the student has, at a minimum, satisfied the requirements
13 of Section 27-22 of the School Code.

14 (5) Enter into agreements with institutions of higher
15 education for dual credit in accordance with the
16 requirements of the Dual Credit Quality Act.

17 (6) Select a Director, who shall be the chief
18 administrative officer of the academies and who shall
19 administer the rules and policies adopted by the Board of
20 the Trustees under this Section. The Director shall also be
21 the chief administrative officer of the Board and shall be
22 responsible for all of the Board's administrative
23 functions, duties, and needs.

24 (7) Determine faculty and staff positions necessary
25 for the efficient operation of the academies and select
26 personnel for the positions.

1 (8) Prepare and adopt an annual budget necessary for
2 the continued operation of the academies.

3 (9) Enter into contracts and agreements, which have
4 been recommended by the Director, to the extent that funds
5 are specifically appropriated for that purpose, with other
6 public agencies with respect to cooperative enterprises
7 and undertakings related to or associated with an
8 educational purpose or program affecting education in an
9 academy. This power does not preclude the Board from
10 entering into other contracts and agreements that it may
11 deem necessary to carry out its duties and functions.

12 (10) Perform other functions as are necessary for the
13 supervision and control of those phases of education under
14 the Board's supervision and control.

15 (11) Delegate to the Director any administrative
16 powers and duties that the Board deems appropriate to aid
17 the Director in the efficient administration of his or her
18 responsibility for the implementation of the policies of
19 the Board.

20 (12) Adopt rules and policies necessary for the
21 efficient operation of an academy.

22 (13) Establish criteria to be used in determining the
23 eligibility of applicants for enrollment in an academy. The
24 criteria shall ensure adequate geographic, sexual, and
25 ethnic representation.

26 (14) Determine subjects and extracurricular activities

1 to be offered by an academy.

2 (15) Pay salaries and expenses, including, but not
3 limited to, facilities, equipment, and supplies of the
4 faculty and staff of an academy, out of funds appropriated
5 or otherwise made available for the operating and
6 administrative expenses of the Board and an academy.

7 (16) Exercise budgetary responsibility and allocate
8 for expenditure by an academy and programs under the
9 academy's jurisdiction all moneys appropriated or
10 otherwise made available for purposes of the Board and of
11 the academy.

12 (17) Prescribe and select for use in an academy free
13 school books and other materials of instruction for
14 children enrolled in the academy and programs under the
15 academy's jurisdiction for which the General Assembly
16 provides funds.

17 (18) Prepare and adopt or approve programs of study and
18 rules and bylaws for the conduct of students and for the
19 government of an academy and programs under the academy's
20 jurisdiction.

21 (19) Employ personnel as may be needed, establish
22 policies governing their employment and dismissal, and fix
23 the amount of their compensation. In the employment,
24 establishment of policies, and fixing of compensation, the
25 Board may make no discrimination on account of sex, race,
26 creed, color, or national origin.

1 Section 25. Academy property. Each academy shall be
2 empowered to lease or purchase real and personal property on
3 commercially reasonable terms for the use by the academy. Any
4 leases or purchases of real or personal property and any
5 disposition of the property by an academy shall be in
6 compliance with the provisions of the Civil Administrative Code
7 of Illinois and the State Property Control Act. Personal
8 property acquired for use by an academy shall be inventoried
9 and disposed of in accordance with the State Property Control
10 Act.

11 Section 30. Indemnification. Each academy, the Board, and
12 the academy's or Board's officers and employees shall be
13 represented and indemnified in certain civil lawsuits in
14 accordance with the State Employee Indemnification Act. An
15 academy, the Board, or the academy's or Board's officers or
16 employees may not participate in the creation of any
17 corporation, joint venture, partnership, association, or other
18 organizational entity that exercises, expands, or enhances the
19 powers, duties, or responsibilities of the academy, unless
20 specifically authorized by the General Assembly. This Section
21 does not restrict an academy from creating any organizational
22 entity that is within or a part of the academy.