

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 St. Clair County, which  
11 shall be residential institutions. Each academy shall be  
12 located within 5 linear miles of a major interstate in a  
13 community where the average income of a household of 3 people  
14 is no greater than 100% of the federal poverty level. The land  
15 value of the community in which the academy is located may not  
16 exceed \$7.50 per square foot.

17 (b) Each academy shall be a State agency, funded by State  
18 appropriations, private contributions, and endowments. Minimal  
19 fees for residential students may be charged. Each academy may  
20 admit those students who have completed the academic equivalent  
21 of the 9th grade and shall offer a program of secondary  
22 coursework that is appropriate for students in the 10th, 11th

1 and 12th grades and that offers courses that meet the  
2 prerequisites to receiving a high school diploma under Section  
3 27-22 of the School Code. Admission shall be determined by  
4 competitive examination.

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

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

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

20 (2) three Representatives of secondary education,  
21 appointed by the State Superintendent of Education;

22 (3) the two mayors of the municipalities where the  
23 academies are to be located;

24 (4) the president of a statewide labor federation  
25 representing more than one international union, or his or

1 her designee, appointed by the State Superintendent of  
2 Education; and

3 (5) two members representative of the general public,  
4 appointed by the Governor.

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

18 Section 20. Powers of the Board. The Board of Trustees is  
19 authorized to:

20 (1) Accept donations, bequests, or other forms of  
21 financial assistance for educational purposes from any  
22 public or private person or agency and comply with rules  
23 and regulations governing grants from the federal  
24 government or from any other person or agency, which are  
25 not in contravention of the Illinois Constitution or the

1 laws of the State of Illinois.

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

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

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

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

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

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

26 (8) Prepare and adopt an annual budget necessary for

1 the continued operation of the academies.

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

11 (10) Perform other functions as are necessary to the  
12 supervision and control of those phases of education under  
13 its supervision and control.

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

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

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

25 (14) Determine subjects and extracurricular activities  
26 to be offered by an academy.

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

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

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

15          (18) Prepare and adopt or approve programs of study and  
16 rules, bylaws, and regulations for the conduct of students  
17 and for the government of the school and programs under its  
18 jurisdiction.

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

25          Section 25. Academy property. Each academy shall be

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

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