

WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18-5B-2

§18-5B-2. Legislative findings and purpose.

(a) Legislative findings. -- The Legislature finds that:

(1) Decades of school improvement literature substantiate that schools where the principal uses a collaborative and distributed approach to leadership and where the teachers have a unity of purpose, operate in a cohesive learning-centered culture and implement consistent, pervasive and research-based approaches to learning, can and do improve student learning;

(2) As in all enterprises, rules are established in public education to manage the resources efficiently, allot time among the activities and processes required and ensure attention to the goals mandated, but rules, by their nature, also limit the flexibility of professional educators to engage in those activities and implement those approaches that may best improve the learning of their students for the twenty-first century;

(3) Allowing individual schools to seek and receive exceptions from certain statutes, policies, rules and interpretations through the creation of school innovation zones will provide them greater control over important educational factors that impact student achievement, such as curriculum, personnel, organization of the school day, organization of the school year, technology utilization and the delivery of educational services to improve student learning; and

(4) Providing greater flexibility at innovation zone schools will enable school-level, professional educators to exercise more fully their professional judgment to improve student learning for the twenty-first century by instituting creative and innovative practices.

(b) Intent and purpose. -- The intent and purpose of this article is to:

(1) Provide for the establishment of school innovation zones to improve educational performance;

(2) Provide principals and teachers at schools approved as innovation zones with greater flexibility and control to meet the needs of a diverse population of students by removing certain policy, rule, interpretive and statutory constraints;

(3) Provide a testing ground for innovative educational reform programs and initiatives to be applied on an individual school level;

(4) Provide information regarding the effects of specific innovations and policies on student achievement;

(5) Document educational strategies that enhance student success; and

(6) Increase the accountability of the state's public schools for student achievement as measured by the state assessment programs and local assessment processes identified by the schools.