

WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18-5B-3

§18-5B-3. School innovation zones; application for designation; state board rule.

(a) A school, a group of schools, a subdivision or department of a group of schools, or a subdivision or department of a school may be designated as an innovation zone in accordance with this article.

(b) The state board shall promulgate a rule, including an emergency rule if necessary, in accordance with article three-b, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code to implement the provisions of this article. The rule shall include provisions for at least the following:

(1) A process for a school, a group of schools, a subdivision or department of a group of schools or a subdivision or department of a school to apply for designation as an innovation zone that encompasses at least the following:

(A) The manner, time and process for the submission of an innovation zone application;

(B) The contents of the application, which must include a general description of the innovations the school or schools seek to institute and an estimation of the employees who may be affected by the implementation of the innovations; and

(C) Factors to be considered by the state board when evaluating an application, which shall include, but are not limited to, the following factors:

(i) The level of staff commitment to apply for designation as an innovation zone as determined by a vote by secret ballot at a special meeting of employees eligible to vote on the plan, as provided in section six of this article;

(ii) Support from parents, students, the county board of education, the local school improvement council and school business partners; and

(iii) The potential for an applicant to be successful as an innovation zone; and

(2) Standards for the state board to review applications for designation as innovation zones and to make determinations on the designation of innovation zones.

(c) The state board shall review innovation zone applications in accordance with the standards adopted by the board and shall determine whether to designate the applicant as an innovation zone. The state board shall notify an applicant of the board's determination within sixty days of receipt of an innovation zone application.

When initially designating innovation zones after the enactment of this article by the first extraordinary session of the 2009 Legislature, the state board shall consider applicants for designation in the following order: (1) A school and groups of schools; (2) a group of schools

seeking designation across the same subdivision or department of the schools; and (3) a school seeking designation of a subdivision or a department.

(d) When designating innovation zones under these provisions following the amendment and reenactment of this section by the Legislature at its regular session 2014, and for each of the four succeeding school years, the state board shall establish a priority for applications that include the establishment of entrepreneurship education programs as a curricular offering for students. To qualify under this priority, the program strategy must include the active involvement of one or more partners from the business community in program delivery. Nothing in this subsection requires the state board to designate all applicants that include the establishment of entrepreneurship education programs as innovation zones, or to exclude other qualified applicants for innovations in other areas from designation.