WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18-2-7E

§18-2-7e. Business and community partnerships for improving student engagement and preparation; roles of school district leadership and local school improvement councils; future-ready graduate profile.

(a) The purpose of this section is to complement the delivery of programs in workforce preparation set forth in §18-2-7d of this code by providing a framework for schools, school systems, and communities to:

(1) Engage their local stakeholders in developing a shared vision of the knowledge, college, and career skills, and life characteristics that a future-ready graduate of their school system will need for success in occupations and entrepreneurship in the changing world of work;

(2) Build strategic partnerships that instill within students an awareness of the changing world of work, build an appreciation of the relevancy of academic subject matter for future success, nurture the whole child, and promote student acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and characteristics needed for success; and

(3) Provide an opportunity for students to gain valuable experience and skills in a workplace environment while still exploring their interests and abilities.

(b) A county board may establish a diverse stakeholder working group which may include, but is not limited, to educators from both public and higher education, businesses and business organizations, associations and authorities, families, students, community leaders, and any other stakeholders they may choose. Working with the school system leadership, the purpose of the stakeholder working group is to assist in the development of a succinct profile of a future-ready graduate of the school system containing the knowledge, college and career skills, and life characteristics that they agree are needed for success in occupations and entrepreneurship in the changing world of work. The school system leadership may include the stakeholders in creating visibility and support for their unique, shared vision of a future-ready graduate and in setting the stage for planning and action steps that may be necessary to prepare future-ready graduates. The school system leadership may engage external champions who are committed to the shared vision of a future-ready graduate to help generate community awareness and support for the project and to build strategic partnerships for program implementation. The action steps should include clearly articulating the profile of the future-ready graduate to participating schools, parents and the community, nurturing the whole child, and beginning the development of foundational knowledge, skills, and characteristics beginning in the early years of school, and establishing multiple paths toward college and career readiness for students that include internships, externships, and credentialing.

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(c) Local school improvement councils can play a key role in the implementation of programs at the age appropriate grade levels by engaging the school's business and community partners, including two-year and four-year institutions of higher education, to help develop within students an awareness of the changing world of work and an appreciation of the relevancy of academic subject matter for success in various occupations and entrepreneurship. This may include, but is not limited to, presentations by guest speakers, demonstrations, hands-on creative projects, virtual or on-site visits to work places, and internships, externships, and credentialing appropriate for the grade levels of the school to reinforce the competencies students will need for success. Local school improvement councils may exercise their authority pursuant to §18-5A-3 of this code to seek waivers from rules, policies, interpretations, and statutes for plan implementation.

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