WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18-2E-8

§18-2E-8. Creating jobs through education.

(a) Findings and intent. -- The Legislature finds that the Governor, the Legislature, the state board and the people of West Virginia established goals for education through an education summit and series of town meetings in the summer of the year 1990, and that these goals were codified in section four, article one of this chapter during the third extraordinary session of the Legislature of that year. Among these goals is the goal that high school graduates will be prepared fully for college, other post-secondary education or gainful employment and that the number of high school graduates entering post-secondary education will increase by fifty percent. The Legislature finds that this goal reflects a fundamental belief that the result of a thorough and efficient system of free schools is that the youth of the state exit the system equipped with the skills, competencies and attributes necessary to succeed, to continue learning throughout their lifetimes and to attain economic self-sufficiency.

The Legislature further finds that the full preparation of youth as indicated in these findings cannot be accomplished by the school system alone, but requires the full and active partnership with parents and people from business, labor, higher education, economic development and other organizations and entities in the community that have an interest in providing quality education. Therefore, the intent of this section is to establish a policy framework and strategy for the state board in fulfilling its responsibility for the general supervision of free schools in order to encourage and utilize actively involved partnerships in the formulation of rules and practices to achieve the goal that high school graduates will be prepared fully for college, other post-secondary education or gainful employment, particularly in the delivery of programs that provide work-based learning opportunities for students within the school or at the workplace. The Legislature recognizes that many skilled jobs require education beyond the high school level, that the goals of West Virginia include increased post-secondary attendance and that the goals for post-secondary education as set forth in section one-a, article one, chapter eighteen-b of this code include an increased focus within higher education on relevancy, responsiveness to business, industry, labor and community needs, and on the current and future work force needs of the state. Therefore, it is further the intent of this section to enhance the linkages between secondary and post-secondary education.

(b) Comprehensive goals for jobs through education. -- The Legislature hereby establishes the following goals to be accomplished by the year 2001 for all students in all schools:

(1) The elimination of student grouping or tracking systems that result in high school students completing a general curriculum that does not prepare them fully for college, other post-secondary education or gainful employment;

(2) The replacement of the general curriculum, as stated in subdivision (1) of this subsection,

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with a system of career clusters and education majors that increases the academic expectations for all students, includes a system of career information and guidance and incorporates structured work-based learning;

(3) The requirement that every student, in consultation with his or her parents and school advisor, establish an individualized student transition plan covering grades nine through twelve and the first year beyond graduation from high school;

(4) The active involvement of partners at the state, regional and local levels in assuring the full preparation of graduates for college, other post-secondary education or gainful employment;

(5) The creation of a process through which qualified graduates will receive a portable credential that is recognized and valued by employers as an indicator of the skills, competence and readiness for employment of the graduates; and

(6) The implementation of continuous program assessment, program improvement and staff development.

(c) Increased academic expectations and career development for all students. -- The Legislature finds that there is a need to establish higher academic expectations and a system of career development for all students that contains the following elements:

(1) Assessment. -- The implementation of an assessment program that measures student performance by grade level and assesses student attainment of the basic academic foundation skills;

(2) Focus on basic skills in kindergarten through fourth grade. -- The strengthening and refocusing of kindergarten through fourth grade in order to assure that all students perform at grade level at the completion of the fourth grade by concentrating on teaching the basics of reading, writing, mathematics and computer skills;

(3) Development of rigorous curriculum. -- The development and implementation of a rigorous and relevant curriculum of basic academic requirements that lays a foundation for further learning and skill development. The proficiencies of the students shall be assessed at the end of the eighth grade and all students should attain the basic academic requirement levels by no later than the end of the tenth grade;

(4) Career exploration in grades five through eight. -- The exploration by students in the fifth through eighth grades of their interests and abilities in career clusters through accessing information about occupational skills and labor markets;

(5) Creation and initial implementation of individual student transition plan for grades nine and ten. -- The creation, by the end of the eighth grade, of the first two years of an individualized student transition plan that builds upon career awareness and exploration activities in the earlier grades and enables the student in consultation with his or her

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parents and school advisor to select a broad career cluster for further exploration in grades nine and ten;

(6) Choosing career majors for grades eleven through post-secondary. -- The creation of the second part of the individualized student transition plan by the end of the tenth grade. The second part of the individualized student transition plan shall establish a career major for the final years of high school and the first year after high school that will prepare the student for college, other post-secondary education or gainful employment;

(7) Implementation of career majors. -- The fulfillment of the secondary education component of the career major in grades eleven and twelve, including the successful completion of the necessary curriculum and participation in work-based learning experiences; and

(8) Completion of individualized student transition plan and assessment. -- The completion of the individualized student transition plan in the first year following graduation from high school by attending college, other post-secondary education or securing gainful employment. The state board shall provide an assessment form to be completed by the student and returned to the high school upon the completion of the individualized student transition plan. The form shall provide for the student to report his or her success in completing the plan and the strengths and weaknesses of his or her education preparation.

(d) Report of recommendations on comprehensive career development. -- To assist in the establishment of a comprehensive career development system, the state school-to-work steering committee shall report to the state board and the Legislative Oversight commission on education accountability by November 1, 1996, the recommendations of the career guidance committee established pursuant to the state school-to-work implementation plan.

(e) Guidelines for increasing the ability of all students to meet higher academic expectations and become self-motivated learners. -- Practices that increase the academic expectations for all students and help them to succeed in achieving those higher expectations include, but are not limited to:

(1) Utilizing instructional methods that require the student to be a worker who is actively engaged in the learning process;

(2) Utilizing methodologies that require students to apply academic knowledge in practical situations and problem solving;

(3) Utilizing computers and other technologies to provide opportunities for creative instruction, both individually and in groups in all subjects;

(4) Providing structured opportunities for students to participate in credit and noncredit learning activities outside the school that are integrated with and are an extension of the school-based program of study for the student through such activities as field trips, job

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shadowing, community service, entrepreneurship development, mentoring, internships, apprenticeships, school-based enterprises in partnership with the private sector and other cooperative learning experiences connected to student education majors and school-based instructional programs;

(5) Integrating and interrelating academic and technical content throughout the curriculum and ensuring numerous opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning to emphasize the importance of reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing; and

(6) Encouraging teachers to plan and work together and exercise their professional judgment in the classroom.

(f) Establishing partnerships. -- As soon as practicable following the effective date of this section, the Governor shall appoint or designate a "Jobs Through Education Employer Panel", to assure the high quality preparation of our youth for college, other post-secondary education or gainful employment. The jobs through education employer panel shall advise and assist the state board, the higher education governing boards and institutions, other post-secondary education training programs and agencies and employers in assuring that graduates are prepared fully for further education and training or gainful employment and shall perform other functions as set forth in this section. In providing such advice and assistance and in the performance of such other functions, the jobs through employer panel shall solicit input from the county steering committees.

As soon as practicable, following the effective date of this section, county boards shall appoint a county steering committee that includes parents and people from business, labor, higher education, economic development, local school improvement councils, faculty Senates and other organizations and entities in the community as valuable partners in developing and implementing a system within the county that meets the intent of this section and adheres to the rules of the state board. The membership of the county steering committee and participation in the community and technical college district consortia committee, as created by section three-a, article three, chapter eighteen-b of this code, shall be coordinated to the extent that it is practical.

(g) Guidelines for work-based learning. -- Work-based learning is a structured activity that correlates with and is mutually supportive of school-based learning for the student, and includes specific objectives to be mastered by the student as a result of the activity. It is central to the education preparation process to develop within the student an awareness of the work environment and how the skills the student is acquiring will be applied in that environment. Broadly defined, work-based learning opportunities are activities that assist students to gain an awareness of the workplace, develop an appreciation of the relevancy of academic subject matter to workplace performance and gain valuable work experience and skills while exploring their occupational interests and abilities. Incorporating work-based learning as a central part of the education process and also as a final step in the formal education process includes, but is not limited to:

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(1) Providing students in the early grades with activities such as field trips, career-oriented speakers in the classroom, courses such as junior achievement which are taught by volunteers in the classroom, job shadowing and other such activities to increase student awareness of the workplace; and

(2) Providing students in the later grades, including college and other post-secondary education, with activities such as structured community service, apprenticeships, internships, clinical experiences, cooperative education and other work-site placements, school-based enterprises, workplace simulations and entrepreneurial development, that provide students with more specific work experience in an occupational area associated with their education major.

To the extent possible, student work-based learning, and particularly workplace learning, should be jointly assessed by a school-based educator or advisor and a work-based mentor who possesses the skills set forth in the work-based learning objectives of the student, and who has been trained in mentoring and assessing student performance.

(h) Special consideration for providing work-based learning in counties with few opportunities for employment. -- Providing work-based learning opportunities for all students in counties with few employers will be particularly difficult. While the following additional examples of ways to increase opportunities for work-based learning are applicable for all counties, they are most important in counties with few employers. Additional examples include, but are not limited to:

(1) Computer software that simulates workplace situations and problem solving;

(2) Interactive and other technology to bring an exposure to the workplace into the classroom;

(3) Community service;

(4) Partnerships with city, state and county government for work-based placements;

(5) Volunteer programs, such as junior achievement and other programs that utilize volunteers trained to deliver work-related instruction;

(6) Assumption of recordkeeping and other measures by the schools, or through the use of community-based organizations or other intermediaries, that make it easier for small businesses to participate in accepting students for workplace learning;

(7) Rural entrepreneurship through action learning programs;

(8) School-based enterprises;

(9) Projects through 4-H, scouts, junior ROTC and other school and nonschool student and civic organizations;

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(10) Multiple partnerships with existing employers, such as hospitals that have multiple departments;

(11)Agricultural education, FFA projects and supervised work experience programs; and

(12)Programs at vocational-technical education centers.

The state board shall make recommendations to the Legislature by November 1, 1996, on any further actions that may be appropriate to assist counties with few employers in providing work-based learning opportunities for all students.

(i) Electronic portfolio of student accomplishments and preparation. -- For the purpose of better documenting the preparation of high school graduates for college, other post-secondary education or gainful employment, the state board shall develop an electronic portfolio which will be a permanent record for every student. The electronic portfolio shall be issued by the appropriate county board and shall include the accomplishments of the student during his or her education preparation. Upon request, students shall receive the contents of the electronic portfolio in written or computer readable form. The electronic portfolio shall be subject to the same confidentiality and disclosure laws and rules as any other student records. The electronic portfolio shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) Documentation of attendance, grades, accomplishments, education plans, education major interests, curriculum, special activities, honors and advanced education and other items appropriate for inclusion in the portfolio as determined by state board rule to present the accomplishments and achievements of the student;

(2) A separate area for the student to enter presentations, examples and other information on his or her special areas of interest and advanced achievement;

(3) Certification of student attainment of the minimum level of proficiency in the basic skills that lays the foundation for further learning and skill development for success in college, other post-secondary education or gainful employment; and

(4) Certification of the skills, competence and readiness for college, other post-secondary education or employment, as indicated by: (i) College entrance tests; (ii) specialized assessments that measure the attainment of necessary skills and competencies required in the workplace; (iii) the attainment of industry recognized credentials, licensure or certification; (iv) the completion of nationally accredited technical education programs; (v) performance in specialized learning experiences such as paid and unpaid structured work-based learning in the private or public sectors, including, but not limited to, registered youth apprenticeships, internships, cooperative education, community service, entrepreneurship development and school-based enterprises in partnership with the private sector; and (vi) other indicators relevant to the student's skills, competence and readiness for college, other post-secondary education or gainful employment.

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(j) Guidelines for certification on the electronic portfolio of student skills, competencies and readiness for employment. -- The certification of student skills, competencies and readiness for a particular industry or occupation to be included on the electronic portfolio, including certification offered by an institution of higher education or other job training programs, shall require the approval of an appropriate entity designated by the jobs through education employer panel. Local education agencies, institutions of higher education and other job training programs desiring to issue such certification to meet local labor market or community needs and circumstances may apply to the panel for such approval. To the extent possible, such certification shall provide the student with a proficiency credential that is widely recognized and accepted within an industry or occupational area as a reliable indicator of the ability of the student. The jobs through education employer panel shall consult other established skill standards for use in certifying proficiency in skills, competencies and readiness within specific industries and occupations. The intent of these provisions is to provide a formal mechanism for the ongoing alignment of the certification of student skills, competencies and readiness with current minimum requirements for success in the industry or occupational area for which the student is preparing, including requirements which will be met through additional education in college or other post-secondary education.

(k) Staff development. -- Meeting the intent and objectives of this section will require a continued focus on staff development to increase the ability of teachers and administrators to employ various methodologies for strengthening the rigor, content and relevance of the learning process and help all students achieve at higher levels. Teachers and administrators must know about workplace requirements to help students internalize the relationship between learning in school and success in the careers they envision for themselves in adult life. The use of student assessment and program evaluation information continually to check and improve the curriculum, instruction, school climate and school organization and management, is critical to maintaining high quality instruction that is relevant to changing workplace requirements. Staff development opportunities shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) Designation by the state board of exemplary counties and schools that have implemented comprehensive school-to-work systems as model demonstration sites to be visited and observed;

(2) Collaboration and utilization of the resources of the state Department of Education, institutions of higher education, the center for professional development and county staff development councils for both in-service and preservice preparation programs;

(3) Teacher and business exchange programs that enable teachers to gain exposure and experience in the workplace and business persons to gain exposure and experience in the schools; (4) Structured programs or institutes that take educators into the workplace to observe the work environment and skills necessary to perform work tasks; and

(5) Staff development activities which include joint participation by public school, college

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and other post-secondary faculty where appropriate.

(l) Study committee for staff development credits. -- There is hereby created a study committee to make recommendations on the feasibility of, and the possible process for, crediting staff development activities toward fulfilling the requirement for renewal of certificates, pursuant to section three, article three, chapter eighteen-a of this code, and the progression through the state minimum salary schedule, pursuant to section two, article four of said chapter. The committee shall consist of the chancellor of the university of West Virginia board of trustees, or a designee; the state superintendent, or a designee, who shall serve as chair of the committee; a member of the state board, to be selected by the state board; a representative of West Virginia University to be selected by the president of the university; a representative of Marshall university, to be selected by the president of the university; a representative of the West Virginia graduate college, to be selected by the president of the college; four classroom teachers to be appointed by the Governor within thirty days of the effective date of this section; and the director of the center for professional development or a designee. Such committee shall report its recommendations to the Legislative Oversight commission on education accountability by January 1, 1997.

(m) State board rule. -- On or before November 1, 1996, the state board, with advice from the jobs through education employer panel, and in consultation with the higher education governing boards, shall adopt a rule in accordance with the provisions of article three-b, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code for the implementation of this section. The rule shall allow flexibility for local variation to meet local circumstances and shall establish a five-year plan for phased implementation. The proposed rule developed pursuant to this section shall contain a financial impact statement as well as a job impact statement.

(n)Any study groups or committees created by the state board to assist in development of policies or rules for the implementation of this section shall contain significant representation by classroom teachers as defined by section one, article one, chapter eighteen-a of this code. Further, the state board shall include in its annual budget request sufficient funds to implement programs, policies or rules adapted to meet the goals set out in this section: Provided, That nothing in this section shall be construed to require any specific level of funding by the Legislature.

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