WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18-2E-9

§18-2E-9. West Virginia virtual school.

(a) Findings: -- The Legislature finds that:

(1) West Virginia schools have improved and expanded Internet access which enables schools to offer courses through the Internet and other new and developing technologies;

(2) Current technology is available to provide students with more resources for learning and new and developing technologies offer even more promise for expanded learning opportunities;

(3) A number of states and other jurisdictions have developed Internet-based instruction which is available currently and which is being used by schools in this state;

(4) To educate better the students of West Virginia, more course and class offerings can be made available through technology, especially to students who are geographically disadvantaged;

(5) Virtual learning enables students to learn from remote sites, learn at times other than the normal school day and learn at a different pace and gives students access to courses that would not be available in their area;

(6) There is a need to assure that Internet-based courses and courses offered through new and developing technologies are of high quality; and

(7) The state and county school systems can benefit from the purchasing power the state can offer.

(b) The Legislature hereby creates the West Virginia virtual school. The West Virginia virtual school shall be located within the office of technology and information systems within the West Virginia Department of Education.

(c) The State Superintendent of Schools shall appoint the director of the West Virginia virtual school with the approval of the state board.

(d) The director of the West Virginia virtual school has the following powers and duties:

(1) To contract with providers for courses and other services;

(2) To review courses and courseware and make determinations and recommendations relative to the cost and quality of the courses and the alignment with the instructional goals and objectives of the state board;

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(3) To develop policy recommendations for consideration by the state board, which may include, but not be limited to, the following:

(A) Hardware and software considerations for the offering of courses on the Internet or other developing technologies;

(B) Standards of teachers and other school employees who are engaged in the activities surrounding the offering of courses on the Internet or other developing technologies;

(C) Sharing of resources with other agencies of government, both within and outside West Virginia, to facilitate the offering of courses on the Internet or other developing technologies;

(D) Methods for including courses offered on the Internet or through other developing technologies in alternative education programs;

(E) Methods for making courses offered on the Internet or through other developing technologies available for students receiving home instruction;

(F) Methods for brokering the courses offered on the Internet or through other developing technologies;

(G) Methods for applying for grants;

(H) Methods for employing persons who are the most familiar with the instructional goals and objectives to develop the courses to be offered on the Internet and through other developing technologies; and

(I) Proper funding models that address all areas of funding including, but not limited to, which county, if any, may include a student receiving courses on the Internet or through other developing technologies in enrollment and who, if anyone, is required to pay for the courses offered on the Internet or through other developing technologies; and

(4) Any other powers and duties necessary to address the findings of the Legislature in subsection (a) of this section.

(e) Subject to the process outlined in this section, the West Virginia virtual school's approved virtual and distance learning courses are exempt from the mandatory use of primary source instructional materials listed on the state multiple list.

(f) The West Virginia Department of Education shall report the progress of the West Virginia virtual school to the Legislative Oversight commission on education accountability on or before September 1, 2000.

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