WEST VIRGINIA CODE CHAPTER 18 ARTICLE 5F

WV Legislature

§18-5F-1. Short title.

This article shall be known and may be cited as the Accessibility and Equity in Public Education Enhancement Act.

WV Legislature

§18-5F-2. Legislative findings; purpose.

(a) The Legislature finds and declares that:

(1) County school districts have called for more local control and flexibility to meet the education needs of their communities;

(2) Students, parents and teachers are seeking alternatives to the traditional classroom delivery of education that better meets the educational needs of students;

(3) Public schools should be able to provide a variety of instructional delivery models;

(4) The county school districts can enhance education opportunities for students, using technology;

(5) Using technology to deliver instruction can provide flexibility and increase options for instruction;

(6) Giving county school districts the flexibility to create innovative programs will provide teachers with new instructional opportunities; and

(7) This Act is not intended to save money through the reduction of school personnel positions.

(b) The purpose of this article is to enhance access and equity in public education in West Virginia.

WV Legislature

§18-5F-3. Definitions.

For the purposes of this article, unless a different meaning clearly appears from the context:

(a) “Blended program” means a formal education program in which a student learns:

(1) At least in part through online learning, with some element of student control over time, place, path or pace;

(2) At least in part in a supervised setting outside the home; and

(3) In such a way that the modalities of each student’s learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience;

(b) “Eligible student” means a student eligible for attendance in public schools in a school district that provides a virtual instruction program, that is a member of a multicounty consortium providing a virtual instruction program or that does not provide a virtual instruction program and is not a member of a multicounty consortium but participates through a collaborative agreement between the school district in which the student is enrolled and a school district or a multicounty consortium providing a virtual instruction program;

(c) “Multicounty consortium” means a written arrangement where two or more county boards act in concert to establish a virtual school that will serve eligible students; and

(d) “Virtual instruction program” means a program implemented by a county board or multicounty consortium that provides a full-time online or blended program of instruction for students enrolled in any composition of grades kindergarten through twelve.

WV Legislature

§18-5F-4. County board policy adoption.

(a) A county board or a multicounty consortium may create a virtual instruction program for one or more schools serving any composition of grades kindergarten through twelve by adopting a policy creating the program and after adopting the policy may contract with virtual school providers. When there is a multicounty consortium, each county board in the consortium shall adopt a policy creating the virtual instruction program. The virtual instruction program may begin July 1, 2017, or at any point thereafter: Provided, That, notwithstanding any other provision of this article to the contrary, no eligible students in grades kindergarten through five may participate in a virtual instruction program until after the program has been in operation for one full school year.

(b) The policy adopted by the county board pursuant to this section shall govern the virtual instruction program offered by the county board or multicounty consortium.

(c) The policy shall be consistent with this article and may offer eligible students in grades kindergarten through twelve an online pathway for earning a high school diploma and, at a minimum, shall include the following:

(1) The scope, instructional model and capacity for the virtual education program;

(2) Assessment protocol and specific requirements for monitoring performance that are consistent with section five, article two-e of this chapter;

(3) A plan for monitoring students receiving virtual instruction in accordance with pacing and completion of the required virtual coursework: Provided, That, if virtual instruction occurs in a public school classroom then a teacher, professional personnel, professional educator or paraprofessional employed by that county must be present to monitor;

(4) Qualifications of faculty, which at a minimum shall include a teaching certificate issued pursuant to article three, chapter eighteen-a of this code and state board rules; and

(5) A requirement that any virtual school provider contracted with comply with state and federal privacy laws.

WV Legislature

§18-5F-5. Compliance with existing state law.

(a) An eligible student enrolled in a virtual instruction program shall:

(1) Be counted in the net enrollment of the school district in which the student resides for the purposes of calculating and receiving state aid;

(2) Be subject to the same state assessment requirements as other students in the school district; and

(3) Receive a diploma from the school district, upon completing the same coursework required of regular public school students in the district.

(b) An eligible student participating in a virtual instruction program, to the extent the program as delineated in the county board policy allows or requires instruction to occur outside of a school building, is not required to comply with compulsory school attendance requirements set forth in article eight of this code or any other provision of law or state board rule relating to attendance.

(c) Neither the school district, the eligible student nor the parents of the student participating in a virtual instruction program, to the extent the program as delineated in the county board policy allows or requires instruction to occur outside of a school building, may incur any penalty or be held accountable for the absence of the student from the school building.

(d) For an eligible student participating in a virtual instruction program, neither the school district nor the student, to the extent the program as delineated in the county board policy is a learn at your own pace program, is required to comply with the instructional term requirement set forth in section forty-five, article five of this chapter or any other law or state board rule requiring a student to be receiving instruction for any set time.

(e) An eligible student participating in a virtual instruction program shall be considered to be attending the school in the attendance district created by the county board pursuant to section sixteen, article five of this chapter that the eligible student resides in unless otherwise transferred to another school pursuant to that section or any other provision of this code. The eligible student may participate in any cocurricular and extracurricular activities of that school, but is subject to the same participation requirements imposed on a traditional student attending the school.

(f) A county board is exempt from any provision of law or state board rule that applies to the traditional delivery of instruction such as requirements relating to the physical presence of a student, student monitoring and security, the maximum teacher-pupil ratio set forth in section eighteen-a, article five of this chapter, instructional time requirements and physical education requirements to the extent any of the foregoing conflict with the delivery of the virtual instruction program.

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(g) The virtual instruction program is not subject to online course restrictions imposed by the state board, state superintendent or the West Virginia Department of Education.

(h) Coursework offered through a virtual instruction program shall be aligned to the appropriate academic standards as required by state law and state board rule.

(i) The assessment results of a student shall be included in the assessment results of the school and the school district in which the student is considered enrolled pursuant to this section for purposes of accountability.

WV Legislature

§18-5F-6. Report to Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability.

[Repealed.]

WV Legislature