

WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18-5G-1

§18-5G-1. Legislative purpose and intent; liberal interpretation; prohibiting conversion of private schools; prohibiting profit or monetary consideration by elected officials; limiting authorization of public charter schools; legislative auditor report.

(a) The purpose of this article is to establish a process for the creation, governance and oversight accountability of public charter schools with a renewed commitment to the mission, goals, and diversity of public education that benefits students, parents, teachers, and community members.

(b) Public charter schools are intended to empower new, innovative, and more flexible ways of educating all children within the public school system to:

(1) Improve student learning by creating more diverse public schools with high standards for student performance;

(2) Allow innovative educational methods, practices and programs that engage students in the learning process, thus resulting in higher student achievement;

(3) Enable schools to establish a distinctive school curriculum, a specialized academic or technical theme, or method of instruction;

(4) Provide expanded opportunities within the public schools for parents to choose among the school curricula, specialized academic or technical themes, and methods of instruction that best serve the interests or needs of their child;

(5) Provide students, parents, community members, and local entities with expanded opportunities for involvement in the public school system;

(6) Allow authorized public schools and programs within public schools exceptional levels of self-direction and flexibility in exchange for exceptional levels of results-driven accountability for student learning; and

(7) Encourage the replication of successful strategies for improving student learning.

(c) All public charter schools established under this article are public schools and are part of the state's public education system.

(d) The provisions of this article shall be interpreted liberally to support the purpose and intent of this section and to advance a renewed commitment by the state to the mission, goals and diversity of public education.

(e) No provision of this article may be interpreted to allow the conversion of private schools

into public charter schools.

(f) The total number of public charter schools authorized and in operation under an approved contract in this state shall be limited to 10 pilot public charter schools until July 1, 2023. The State Board shall report to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability by November 1, 2022, and every 3 years thereafter, on the status of the state's public charter schools. LOCEA shall report its findings and recommendations, if any, to the Legislature during its next Regular Session. Beginning July 1, 2023, and every 3 years thereafter, an additional 10 public charter schools may be authorized and in operation under an approved contract in this state. The Mountaineer Challenge Academy, if converted to a public charter school, shall not count towards the limitation established by this subsection.

(g) Two years after the first public charter school commences operations under the provisions of this article, the Legislative Auditor shall conduct an audit of the public charter school program and report the findings to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability.

(h) It is the intent of the Legislature that public charter school students be considered as important as all other school students in the state and, to that end, comparable funding levels from existing and future sources should be maintained for public charter school students.