WEST VIRGINIA CODE CHAPTER 18 ARTICLE 8

WV Legislature

§18-8-1. Compulsory school attendance; exemptions.

(a) Exemption from the requirements of compulsory public school attendance established in §18-8-1a of this code shall be made on behalf of any child for the causes or conditions set forth in this section. Each cause or condition set forth in this section is subject to confirmation by the attendance authority of the county. A child who is exempt from compulsory school attendance under this section is not subject to prosecution under §18-8-2 of this code, nor is such a child a status offender as defined by §49-1-202 of this code.

(b) A child is exempt from the compulsory school attendance requirement set forth in §18-8-1a of this code if the requirements of this subsection, relating to instruction in a private, parochial, or other approved school, are met. The instruction shall be in a school approved by the county board and for a time equal to the instructional term set forth in §18-5-45 of this code. In all private, parochial, or other schools approved pursuant to this subsection, it is the duty of the principal or other person in control, upon the request of the county superintendent, to furnish to the county board such information and records as may be required with respect to attendance, instruction, and progress of students enrolled.

(c) A child is exempt from the compulsory school attendance requirement set forth in §18-8-1a of this code if the requirements of either subdivision (1) or subdivision (2) of this subsection, both relating to home instruction, are met.

(1) The instruction shall be in the home of the child or children or at some other place approved by the county board and for a time equal to the instructional term set forth in §18-5-45 of this code. If the request for home instruction is denied by the county board, good and reasonable justification for the denial shall be furnished in writing to the applicant by the county board. The instruction shall be conducted by a person or persons who, in the judgment of the county superintendent and county board, are qualified to give instruction in subjects required to be taught in public elementary schools in the state. The person or persons providing the instruction, upon request of the county superintendent, shall furnish to the county board information and records as may be required periodically with respect to attendance, instruction, and progress of students receiving the instruction. The state board shall develop guidelines for the home schooling of special education students including alternative assessment measures to assure that satisfactory academic progress is achieved.

(2) The child meets the requirements set forth in this subdivision: *Provided*, That the county superintendent may, after a showing of probable cause, seek from the circuit court of the county an order denying home instruction of the child. The order may be granted upon a showing of clear and convincing evidence that the child will suffer neglect in his or her education or that there are other compelling reasons to deny home instruction.

(A) Upon commencing home instruction under this section the parent of a child receiving home instruction shall present to the county superintendent or county board a notice of intent to provide home instruction that includes the name, address, and age of any child of compulsory school age to be instructed and assurance that the child shall receive instruction

WV Legislature

in reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies, and that the child shall be assessed annually in accordance with this subdivision. The person providing home instruction shall notify the county superintendent upon termination of home instruction for a child who is of compulsory attendance age. Upon establishing residence in a new county, the person providing home instruction shall notify the previous county superintendent and submit a new notice of intent to the superintendent of the new county of residence: *Provided*, That if a child is enrolled in a public school, notice of intent to provide home instruction shall be given on or before the date home instruction is to begin.

(B) The person or persons providing home instruction shall submit satisfactory evidence of a high school diploma or equivalent, or a post-secondary degree or certificate from a regionally accredited institution, or from an institution of higher education that has been authorized to confer a post-secondary degree or certificate in West Virginia by the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education or by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.

(C) Annually, the person or persons providing home instruction shall obtain an academic assessment of the child for the previous school year in one of the following ways:

(i) The child receiving home instruction takes a nationally normed standardized achievement test published or normed not more than 10 years from the date of administration and administered under the conditions as set forth by the published instructions of the selected test and by a person qualified in accordance with the test's published guidelines in the subjects of reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies. The child is considered to have made acceptable progress when the mean of the child's test results in the required subject areas for any single year is within or above the fourth stanine or, if below the fourth stanine, shows improvement from the previous year's results;

(ii) The child participates in the testing program currently in use in the state's public schools. The test shall be administered to the child at a public school in the county of residence. Determination of acceptable progress shall be based on current guidelines of the state testing program;

(iii) A portfolio of samples of the child's work is reviewed by a certified teacher who determines whether the child's academic progress for the year is in accordance with the child's abilities. The teacher shall provide a written narrative about the child's progress in the areas of reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies and shall note any areas which, in the professional opinion of the reviewer, show need for improvement or remediation. If the narrative indicates that the child's academic progress for the year is in accordance with the child's abilities, the child is considered to have made acceptable progress; or

(iv) The child completes an alternative academic assessment of proficiency that is mutually agreed upon by the parent or legal guardian and the county superintendent.

WV Legislature

(D) A parent or legal guardian shall maintain copies of each student's Academic Assessment for three years. When the annual assessment fails to show acceptable progress, the person or persons providing home instruction shall initiate a remedial program to foster acceptable progress. The county board upon request shall notify the parents or legal guardian of the child, in writing, of the services available to assist in the assessment of the child's eligibility for special education services. Identification of a disability does not preclude the continuation of home schooling. In the event that the child does not achieve acceptable progress for a second consecutive year, the person or persons providing instruction shall submit to the county superintendent additional evidence that appropriate instruction is being provided.

(E) The parent or legal guardian shall submit to the county superintendent the results of the academic assessment of the child at grade levels three, five, eight, and 11, as applicable, by June 30 of the year in which the assessment was administered.

(3) This subdivision applies to both home instruction exemptions set forth in subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection. The county superintendent or a designee shall offer such assistance, including textbooks, other teaching materials and available resources, all subject to availability, as may assist the person or persons providing home instruction. Any child receiving home instruction may upon approval of the county board exercise the option to attend any class offered by the county board as the person or persons providing home instruction may consider appropriate subject to normal registration and attendance requirements.

(d) A child is exempt from the compulsory school attendance requirement set forth in §18-8-1a of this code if the requirements of this subsection, relating to physical or mental incapacity, are met. Physical or mental incapacity consists of incapacity for school attendance and the performance of school work. In all cases of prolonged absence from school due to incapacity of the child to attend, the written statement of a licensed physician or authorized school nurse is required. Incapacity shall be narrowly defined and in any case the provisions of this article may not allow for the exclusion of the mentally, physically, emotionally, or behaviorally handicapped child otherwise entitled to a free appropriate education.

(e) A child is exempt from the compulsory school attendance requirement set forth in §18-8-1a of this code if conditions rendering school attendance impossible or hazardous to the life, health, or safety of the child exist.

(f) A child is exempt from the compulsory school attendance requirement set forth in §18-8-1a of this code upon regular graduation from a standard senior high school or alternate secondary program completion as determined by the state board.

(g) A child is exempt from the compulsory school attendance requirement set forth in §18-8-1a of this code if the child is granted a work permit pursuant to the subsection. After due investigation the county superintendent may grant work permits to youths under the

WV Legislature

termination age designated in §18-8-1a of this code, subject to state and federal labor laws and regulations. A work permit may not be granted on behalf of any youth who has not completed the eighth grade of school.

(h) A child is exempt from the compulsory school attendance requirement set forth in §18-8-1a of this code if a serious illness or death in the immediate family of the child has occurred. It is expected that the county attendance director will ascertain the facts in all cases of such absences about which information is inadequate and report the facts to the county superintendent.

(i) A child is exempt from the compulsory school attendance requirement set forth in §18-8-1a of this code if the requirements of this subsection, relating to destitution in the home, are met. Exemption based on a condition of extreme destitution in the home may be granted only upon the written recommendation of the county attendance director to the county superintendent following careful investigation of the case. A copy of the report confirming the condition and school exemption shall be placed with the county director of public assistance. This enactment contemplates every reasonable effort that may properly be taken on the part of both school and public assistance authorities for the relief of home conditions officially recognized as being so destitute as to deprive children of the privilege of school attendance. Exemption for this cause is not allowed when the destitution is relieved through public or private means.

(j) A child is exempt from the compulsory school attendance requirement set forth in §18-8-1a of this code if the requirements of this subsection, relating to church ordinances and observances of regular church ordinances, are met. The county board may approve exemption for religious instruction upon written request of the person having legal or actual charge of a child or children. This exemption is subject to the rules prescribed by the county superintendent and approved by the county board.

(k) A child is exempt from the compulsory school attendance requirement set forth in §18-8-1a of this code if the requirements of this subsection, relating to alternative private, parochial, church, or religious school instruction, are met. Exemption shall be made for any child attending any private school, parochial school, church school, school operated by a religious order, or other nonpublic school which elects to comply with the provisions of §18-28-1 *et seq*. of this code.

(l) Completion of the eighth grade does not exempt any child under the termination age designated in §18-8-1a of this code from the compulsory attendance provision of this article.

(m) A child is exempt from the compulsory school attendance requirements set forth in §18-8-1a of this code if the child is an eligible recipient participating in the Hope Scholarship Program, as provided for in §18-31-1 *et seq*. of this code and provides a notice of intent to participate in the Hope Scholarship Program to the county superintendent. The county superintendent shall enter the following into the West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS):

WV Legislature

(1) The filing of the notice of intent pursuant to this subsection;

(2) In the case of a Hope Scholarship recipient who chooses an individualized instructional program, annually, the child's test results or determination that a student is making academic progress commensurate with his or her age and ability, as applicable, pursuant to §18-31-8(a)(4) of this code; and

(3) In the case of an eligible recipient enrolling in a participating school, annually, the filing of a notice of enrollment pursuant to §18-31-11(a)(6) of this code.

(n) A child is exempt from the compulsory school attendance requirement set forth in §18-8-1a of this code if the child participates in a learning pod or microschool pursuant to this subsection.

(1) For the purposes of this subsection:

(A) "Learning pod" means a voluntary association of parents choosing to group their children together to participate in their elementary or secondary academic studies as an alternative to enrolling in a public school, private school, homeschool, or microschool, including participation in an activity or service provided to the children in exchange for payment; and

(B) "Microschool" means a school initiated by one or more teachers or an entity created to operate a school that charges tuition for the students who enroll and is an alternative to enrolling in a public school, private school, homeschool, or learning pod.

(2) Upon beginning participation in a learning pod or microschool pursuant to this subsection, the parent or legal guardian of the child participating shall present to the county superintendent or county board a notice of intent to participate in a learning pod or microschool that includes the name, address, and age of any child of compulsory school age participating and assurance that the child shall receive instruction in reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies, and that the child shall be assessed annually in accordance with this subsection. The person providing instruction shall notify the county superintendent upon termination of participation in a learning pod or microschool for a child who is of compulsory attendance age. Upon establishing residence in a new county, the person providing instruction shall notify the previous county superintendent and submit a new notice of intent to the superintendent of the new county of residence: *Provided*, That if a child is enrolled in a public school, notice of intent to participate in a learning pod or microschool shall be given on or before the date participation is to begin.

(3) The person or persons providing instruction shall submit satisfactory evidence of a high school diploma or equivalent, or a post-secondary degree or certificate from a regionally accredited institution, or from an institution of higher education that has been authorized to confer a post-secondary degree or certificate in West Virginia by the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education or by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.

WVLegislature

(4) Annually, the person or persons providing instruction shall obtain an academic assessment of the child for the previous school year in one of the following ways:

(A) The child participating in a learning pod or microschool takes a nationally normed standardized achievement test published or normed not more than 10 years from the date of administration and administered under the conditions as set forth by the published instructions of the selected test and by a person qualified in accordance with the test's published guidelines in the subjects of reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies. The child is considered to have made acceptable progress when the mean of the child's test results in the required subject areas for any single year is within or above the fourth stanine or, if below the fourth stanine, shows improvement from the previous year's results;

(B) The child participates in the testing program currently in use in the state's public schools. The test shall be administered to the child at a public school in the county of residence. Determination of acceptable progress shall be based on current guidelines of the state testing program;

(C) A portfolio of samples of the child's work is reviewed by a certified teacher who determines whether the child's academic progress for the year is in accordance with the child's abilities. The teacher shall provide a written narrative about the child's progress in the areas of reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies and shall note any areas which, in the professional opinion of the reviewer, show need for improvement or remediation. If the narrative indicates that the child's academic progress for the year is in accordance with the child's abilities, the child is considered to have made acceptable progress; or

(D) The child completes an alternative academic assessment of proficiency that is mutually agreed upon by the parent or legal guardian and the county superintendent.

(5) A parent or legal guardian shall maintain copies of each student's Academic Assessment for three years. When the annual assessment fails to show acceptable progress, the person or persons providing instruction shall initiate a remedial program to foster acceptable progress. The county board upon request shall notify the parents or legal guardian of the child, in writing, of the services available to assist in the assessment of the child's eligibility for special education services. Identification of a disability does not preclude the continuation of participation in a learning pod or microschool. In the event that the child does not achieve acceptable progress for a second consecutive year, the person or persons providing instruction shall submit to the county superintendent additional evidence that appropriate instruction is being provided.

(6) The parent, legal guardian, learning pod, or microschool shall submit to the county superintendent the results of the academic assessment of the child with the same frequency prescribed in §18-8-1(c)(2)(E) of this code: *Provided*, That instead of the academic assessment results being submitted individually, the learning pod or microschool may submit

WV Legislature

the school composite results.

(7) The county superintendent or a designee shall offer such assistance, including textbooks, other teaching materials and available resources, all subject to availability, as may assist the person or persons providing instruction. Any child participating in a learning pod or microschool may upon approval of the county board exercise the option to attend any class offered by the county board as the person or persons providing instruction may consider appropriate subject to normal registration and attendance requirements.

(8) No learning pod or microschool which meets the requirements of this subsection is subject to any other provision of law relating to education: *Provided*, That any learning pod or microschool which has a student requiring special education instruction must comply with the provisions of §18-20-11 of this code, including, but not limited to, placement of video cameras for the protection of that exceptional student.

(9) Making learning pods and microschools subject to the home instruction provisions and requirements does not make learning pods and microschools the same as homeschooling.

WV Legislature

§18-8-1a. Commencement and termination of compulsory school attendance; public school entrance requirements; exceptions.

(a) Notwithstanding the provisions of section one of this article, compulsory school attendance begins with the school year in which the sixth birthday is reached prior to July 1 of such year or upon enrolling in a full-time publicly funded kindergarten program, and continues to the 17th birthday or for as long as the student continues to be enrolled in a school system after the 17th birthday.

(1) A child may be removed from such kindergarten program when the parent or guardian determines that the best interest of the child would not be served by requiring further attendance: *Provided*, That the principal shall make the final determination with regard to compulsory school attendance in a publicly supported kindergarten program.

(2) The compulsory school attendance provision of this article shall be enforced against a person 18 years of age or older for as long as the person continues to be enrolled in a school system and may not be enforced against the parent, guardian, or custodian of the person.

(3) Notwithstanding the provisions of section one of this article, compulsory school attendance begins with the school year in which the sixth birthday is reached prior to September 1 of such year or upon enrolling in a publicly supported kindergarten program and continues to the seventeenth birthday or for as long as the student continues to be enrolled in a school system after the 17th birthday: *Provided*, That beginning in the school year 2019-2020, compulsory school attendance begins with the school year in which the sixth birthday is reached prior to July 1 of such year or upon enrolling in a publicly supported kindergarten program.

(b) A parent, as defined in §18-31-2 of this code, shall have the option, prior to enrolling in a publicly supported kindergarten program, to apply for a Hope Scholarship on behalf of his or her child as set forth in §18-31-1 *et seq.* of this code. Every year thereafter, a parent shall have the option to renew his or her child's enrollment in the Hope Scholarship Program pursuant to §18-31-8 of this code.

(c) Attendance at a state-approved, nonpublic kindergarten program, including a Montessori kindergarten program as provided in §18-5-18 of this code, homeschool kindergarten program, Hope Scholarship kindergarten program, or private, parochial, or church kindergarten program recognized under §18-8-1(k) of this code is deemed school attendance for the purposes of this section. Students entering the public school system after such kindergarten program shall be placed in the developmentally and academically appropriate grade level.

(d) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section and §18-5-18 of this code, a county board may provide for advanced entrance or placement under policies adopted by said board for any child who has demonstrated sufficient mental and physical competency for such entrance or placement.

WV Legislature

(e) A student from another state, or who is eligible to enroll in a public school in this state, shall be enrolled in the same grade in a public school in West Virginia as the student was enrolled at the school or program from which the student transferred. A transcript or other credential provided by a public school or public charter school program, private school program, homeschool program, microschool program, or HOPE scholarship program shall be accepted by a public school in this state as a record of a student's previous academic performance for the purposes of placement and credit assignment: *Provided*, That each public school shall record the class, grade and source on the student's public school transcript.

(1) A report shall be made, at least annually, to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability ("LOCEA") of the demographics (including, but not limited to, age, race, county, and grade) of students who re-enroll into public schools in this state and whether they attended a homeschool, charter school, private school, microschool, or HOPE scholarship program.

WV Legislature

§18-8-2. Offenses; penalties; cost of prosecution; jurisdiction.

(a) Any parent, guardian, or custodian who fails to cause a child or children under 18 years of age in that person's legal or actual charge to attend school in violation of this article or without just cause, is guilty of a misdemeanor and, shall, upon conviction of a first offense, be fined not less than $50 nor more than $100 together with the costs of prosecution. The magistrate or circuit court judge, upon conviction and pronouncing sentence, may delay the sentence for a period of 60 school days provided the child is in attendance every day during said 60-day period. Following the 60-day period, if the child was present at school for every school day, the delayed sentence may be suspended and dismissed. Upon conviction of a second offense, a fine may be imposed of not less than $50 nor more than $100 together with the costs of prosecution or confined in jail not less than five nor more than 20 days. Every day a child is out of school contrary to this article constitutes a separate offense. Magistrates shall have concurrent jurisdiction with circuit courts for the trial of offenses arising under this section.

(b) Any person 18 years of age or older who is enrolled in school who, after receiving due notice, fails to attend school in violation of this article or without just cause, is guilty of a misdemeanor and, shall, upon conviction of a first offense, be fined not less than $50 nor more than $100 together with the costs of prosecution and required to attend school and remain throughout the school day. The magistrate or circuit court judge, upon conviction and pronouncing sentence, may delay the imposition of a fine for a period of 60 school days provided the person is in attendance every day during said 60-day period. Following the 60-day period, if the student was present at school every day, the delayed sentence may be suspended and dismissed. Upon conviction of a second offense, a fine may be imposed of not less than $50 nor more than $100 together with the costs of prosecution and the person may be required to go to school and remain throughout the school day until such time as the person graduates or withdraws from school or confined in jail not less than five nor more than 20 days. Every day a student is out of school contrary to this article constitutes a separate offense. Magistrates shall have concurrent jurisdiction with circuit courts for the trial of offenses arising under this section.

(c) Upon conviction of a third offense, any person 18 years of age or older who is enrolled in school shall be withdrawn from school during the remainder of that school year. Enrollment of that person in school during the next school year or years thereafter is conditional upon all absences being excused as defined in law, state board policy and county board of education policy. More than one unexcused absence of such a student shall be grounds for the director of attendance to authorize the school to withdraw the person for the remainder of the school year. Magistrates shall have concurrent jurisdiction with circuit courts for the trial of offenses arising under this section.

(d) Jurisdiction to enforce compulsory school attendance laws lies in the county in which a student resides and in the county where the school at which the student is enrolled is located. When the county of residence and enrollment are different, an action to enforce compulsory school attendance may be brought in either county and the magistrates and

www.LegisNature

circuit courts of either county have concurrent jurisdiction for the trial of offenses arising under this section.

WV Legislature

§18-8-3. Employment of county director of school attendance and assistants; qualifications; salary and traveling expenses; removal.

(a) The county board of education of every county, no later than August 1 of each year, shall employ the equivalent of a full-time county director of school attendance if such county has a net enrollment of more than 4,000 pupils, at least a half-time director of school attendance if such county has a net enrollment equal to or less than 4,000 pupils and such assistant attendance directors as deemed necessary. All persons to be employed as attendance directors shall have the written recommendation of the county superintendent.

(b) The county board of education may establish special and professional qualifications for attendance directors and assistants as are deemed expedient and proper and are consistent with regulations of the State Board of Education relating thereto: Provided, That if the position of attendance director has been posted, the county may employ a person who holds full attendance certification or a person who holds a professional administrative certificate.

(c) The attendance director or assistant director shall be paid a monthly salary as fixed by the county board. The attendance director or assistant director shall prepare attendance reports and such other reports as the county superintendent may request.

(d) The county board of education shall reimburse the attendance directors or assistant directors for their necessary traveling expenses upon presentation of a monthly, itemized, sworn statement approved by the county superintendent.

WV Legislature

§18-8-4. Duties of attendance director and assistant directors; complaints, warrants, and hearings.

(a) For the purposes of this article, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Excused absence" means:

(A) A medical or dental appointment with written excuse from physician or dentist;

(B) Personal illness or injury of the student accompanied by a timely written excuse from the student's parent, guardian, or custodian: *Provided*, That the total absences under this section combined with absences permitted under paragraph (C) of this subdivision do not exceed more than 10 per school year unless supported by a physician's note: *Provided, however*, That a medically documented chronic health condition or disability that adversely impacts in-person attendance approved by a county school board or the principal is not subject to this limitation, and that absences of students with disabilities shall be in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 and the federal and state regulations adopted in compliance therewith;

(C) Personal illness or injury of the student's parent, guardian, custodian, or family member: *Provided*, That the excuse must provide a reasonable explanation for why the student's absence was necessary and caused by the illness or injury in the family, and the total absences under this section in combination with paragraph (B) of this subdivision may not exceed more than 10 excuses per school year;

(D) Death in the family;

(E) School-approved or county-approved curricular or extra-curricular activities;

(F) A judicial obligation or court appearance involving the student;

(G) A military requirement for students enlisted or enlisting in the military;

(H) Up to five college visits; and

(I) A student in any West Virginia Department of Education recognized and sanctioned student organization to enhance student enrichment and success, including, but not limited to, SkillsUSA, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA), the Common Ground Partnership, or 4-H or FFA-sanctioned activity or program, subject to the following:

(i) A student who participates in an activity or program sanctioned in paragraph (I) of this subdivision shall be credited as present by the school in which the student is enrolled in the same manner as a student participating in an educational field trip. A school principal, or the principal's designee, shall not count a student absent for participating in an activity or program sanctioned in paragraph (I) of this subdivision.

WV Legislature

(ii) An agent of a sanctioned organization set forth in paragraph (I) of this subdivision shall provide documentation as proof of a student's participation in an activity or program sanctioned in paragraph (I) of this subdivision.

(iii) A student shall make up any schoolwork missed while the student was participating in an activity or program sanctioned by paragraph (I) of this subdivision and shall not have the student's class grades adversely affected for lack of attendance or participation due to the student's participation in an activity or program sanctioned in paragraph (I) of this subdivision.

(iv) A school principal, or the principal's designee, shall not credit a student who participates in an activity or program sanctioned in paragraph (I) of this subdivision as present if the student's participation in the activity or program sanctioned in paragraph (I) of this subdivision occurs during any period of time for which the student has been suspended, expelled, or assigned to an alternative school or alternative program under this chapter and the student's suspension, expulsion, or assignment to an alternative school or alternative program would preclude the student from participating in an educational field trip.

(J) The total amount of excused absences under paragraphs (E), (H), and (I) of this subdivision may not exceed more than 10 per school year.

(K) Nothing in this section shall interfere with the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), which does not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences.

(2) "Meaningful contact" means two-way communication by the school administrator or other school designee and the student’s parent, guardian, or custodian to discuss the student’s attendance record in an effort to prevent subsequent truancy or other legal proceedings relating to compulsory school attendance, and to minimize additional absences. Methods of meaningful contact include, but are not limited to, phone calls, video conferencing, home visits, and the use of digital platforms.

(3) "System of Support Plan" (“SOS Plan") refers to a plan to be developed by the State Board of Education designed to encourage students to attend school. It shall, at a minimum, require county attendance directors, principals, or other school designees to make periodic contact with the parent, guardian, or custodian of a student subject to compulsory school attendance to ascertain the reason or reasons for the student’s absence or absences and what measures the school may employ to assist the student in attending school and not incurring additional absences. It shall also impart upon the student’s parents, guardians, and custodians the importance of the student’s attendance and the seriousness of failing to do so.

(4) "Unexcused absence" means any absence not specifically included in the definition of "excused absence".

(b) The county attendance director and his or her assistants shall diligently promote regular

WV Legislature

school attendance. The director and assistants shall:

(1) Ascertain the reasons for unexcused absences from school of students of compulsory school age; and students who remain enrolled beyond the compulsory school age;

(2) Ensure the implementation of the SOS Plan as developed by the state board, including encouraging the attendance of students and imparting upon the parents, guardians, and custodians the important of attendance and the seriousness of failing to do so.

(c) All documentation relating to absences shall be provided to the school no later than three instructional days after the first day the student returns to school. In the event documentation is not provided to the school within three instructional days after the first day the student returns to school, the absences are unexcused.

(d) In the case of three total unexcused absences of a student during a school year, the attendance director, his or her assistant, or the principal shall make meaningful contact with the parent, guardian, or custodian of the student to ascertain the reasons for the unexcused absences and what measures the school may employ to assist the student in attending and not incurring any additional unexcused absences.

(e) In the case of five total unexcused absences, the attendance director, his or her assistant or the principal shall again make meaningful contact with the parent, guardian, or custodian of the student to ascertain the reasons for the unexcused absences and what measures the school may employ to assist the student in attending school and not incurring any additional unexcused absences.

(f) In the case of 10 total unexcused absences of a student during a school year, the attendance director or assistant may make a complaint against the parent, guardian, or custodian before a magistrate of the county. If it appears from the complaint that there is probable cause to believe that an offense has been committed and that the accused has committed it, a summons or a warrant for the arrest of the accused shall issue to any officer authorized by law to serve the summons or to arrest persons charged with offenses against the state. More than one parent, guardian, or custodian may be charged in a complaint. Initial service of a summons or warrant issued pursuant to the provisions of this section shall be attempted within 10 calendar days of receipt of the summons or warrant and subsequent attempts at service shall continue until the summons or warrant is executed or until the end of the school term during which the complaint is made, whichever is later.

(g) The magistrate court clerk, or the clerk of the circuit court performing the duties of the magistrate court as authorized in §50-1-8 of this code, shall assign the case to a magistrate within 10 days of execution of the summons or warrant. The hearing shall be held within 20 days of the assignment to the magistrate, subject to lawful continuance. The magistrate shall provide to the accused at least 10 days' advance notice of the date, time, and place of the hearing.

WV Legislature

(h) When any doubt exists as to the age of a student absent from school, the attendance director and his or her assistants may require a properly attested birth certificate or an affidavit from the parent, guardian, or custodian of the student stating the age of the student. In the performance of his or her duties, the county attendance director and his or her assistants have authority to take without warrant any student absent from school in violation of the provisions of this article and to place the student in the school in which he or she is or should be enrolled.

(i) The county attendance director and his or her assistants shall devote as much time as is required to the duties of attendance director in accordance with this section during the instructional term and at any other times as the duties of an attendance director are required. All attendance directors and assistants hired for more than 200 days may be assigned other duties determined by the superintendent during the period in excess of 200 days. The county attendance director is responsible under direction of the county superintendent for efficiently administering school attendance in the county.

(j) In addition to those duties directly relating to the administration of attendance, the county attendance director and his or her assistant directors also shall perform the following duties:

(1) Assist in directing the taking of the school census to see that it is taken at the time and in the manner provided by law;

(2) Confer with principals and teachers on the comparison of the school census and enrollment for the detection of possible non-enrollees;

(3) Cooperate with existing state and federal agencies charged with enforcing child labor laws;

(4) Promote attendance in the county by compiling data for schools and by furnishing suggestions and recommendations for publication through school bulletins and the press, or in any manner directed by the county superintendent;

(5) Participate in school teachers' conferences with parents and students;

(6) Assist in any other ways directed by the county superintendent for improving school attendance;

(7) Make home visits of students who have excessive unexcused absences, as provided in subsection (a) of this section, or if requested by the chief administrator, principal, or assistant principal; and

(8) Serve as the liaison for homeless children and youth.

WV Legislature

§18-8-5. Duties of principal, administrative head or other chief administrator.

It shall be the duty of the principal, administrative head or other chief administrator of each school, whether public or private, to make prompt reports to the county attendance director, or proper assistant, of all cases of unexcused absences arising within the school which require the services of an attendance worker. Such reports shall be on the form prescribed for such purpose, by telephone, or in person, and shall include essential information about the child and the name and residence of any parent, guardian or custodian of a child.

It shall also be the duty of each principal, administrative head or other chief administrator of each public school to ascertain and report promptly the name of any parent, guardian or custodian of any child of compulsory school age as defined in this article who was or should be enrolled in the school reporting and who has not enrolled in any school that year. By way of ascertaining the status of school attendance, each principal, administrative head or other chief administrator shall compare the school census with the school enrollment at the opening of the school term and each month thereafter, or as directed by the county superintendent of schools, and report the same to the county attendance director: Provided, That any child who was or should be enrolled in a particular school, but who is at the time enrolled in another school shall be considered as attending the school in which enrolled and shall be included only in the report of attendance from the school in which the child is enrolled at the time.

If the principal, administrative head or other chief administrator of a school determines that an enrolled pupil has accumulated unexcused absences from attendance at such school for five instructional days during any one half of the instructional term, the principal, administrative head or other chief administrator shall contact any parent, guardian or custodian of the pupil and shall hold a meeting with any person so contacted, and the pupil, and any other person that the administrator deems a relevant participant in such meeting.

WV Legislature

§18-8-5a. Home visitations.

If approved by the principal, administrative head or other chief administrator, a teacher may use one noninstructional day during an employment term for the purpose of home visitations with the parent, guardian or custodian of any pupil or pupils designated by the principal, administrative head or other chief administrator. Priority shall be given to those pupils identified as potential school dropouts or whose school attendance is otherwise jeopardized.

Such home visitations shall be deemed the equivalent of one day of continuing education in accordance with rules and regulations of the state board requiring such education.

The county board may adopt rules and regulations regarding such home visitations and shall reimburse a teacher for the necessary traveling expenses upon presentation of an itemized, sworn statement.

WV Legislature

§18-8-6. The High School Graduation Improvement Act.

(a) This section is known and may be cited as "The High School Graduation Improvement Act."

(b) The Legislature makes the following findings:

(1) West Virginia has a dire need to implement a comprehensive approach to addressing the high school drop-out crisis, and to develop policies and strategies that successfully assist at-risk students to stay in school, earn a high school diploma, and ultimately become productively contributing members of society;

(2) The current demands for a highly skilled workforce require a high school diploma at the very minimum;

(3) The state has several dynamic programs that are capable of actively engaging students in learning, providing students with a sense of relevancy in academics, and motivating students to succeed in school and ultimately earn a high school diploma;

(4) Raising the compulsory school attendance age alone will neither increase the graduation rate nor decrease the drop-out rate. It is imperative that the state shift the focus from merely compelling students to attend school to instead providing vibrant and engaging programs that allow students to recognize the value of a high school diploma or workforce credential and inspire students to graduate from high school, especially those students who are at risk of dropping out of school;

(5) Investing financially in this focus shift will result in the need for fewer resources to be committed to enforcing compulsory attendance laws and fewer incidents of disruptive student behavior;

(6) Absenteeism is proven to be the highest predictor of course failure. Truant students face low self-confidence in their ability to succeed in school because their absences cause them to fall behind their classmates, and the students find dropping out easier than catching up;

(7) There is a strong relationship between truancy and dropping out of high school. Frequent absences are one of the most common indicators that a student is disengaging from the learning process and likely to drop out of school early. Intervention after fewer absences is likely to have a positive impact on a student's persistence to graduation;

(8) Students cite many reasons for dropping out of school, some of which include engaging in drug culture, lack of positive influence, role model or parental involvement, absence of boundaries and direction, lack of a positive home environment, peer pressure, and poor community expectations;

(9) Dropping out of school has a profound negative impact on an individual's future, resulting in limited job choices, substantially lower wages and less earned over a life-time

WV Legislature

than high school graduates, and a greater likelihood of depending on public assistance and engaging in criminal activity;

(10) Career-technical education is a dynamic system in West Virginia which offers numerous concentrations that provide students with industry-recognized credentials, while also preparing them for post-secondary education;

(11) All career-technical education students in the state have an opportunity to earn free college credit through the Earn a Degree-Graduate Early (EDGE) program;

(12) The current high school graduation rate for secondary career-technical education completers is significantly higher than the state graduation rate;

(13) Students involved in career-technical education learn a marketable skill, are likely to find jobs, and become prepared for post-secondary education;

(14) A significant number of students who could benefit from participating in a career-technical program are denied access due to a number of factors, such as dropping out of high school prior to enrolling in career-technical education, requirements that students repeat academic courses that they have failed, and scheduling conflicts with the high schools;

(15) There has been a dramatic change over the years from vocational education, which was very basic and lacked high level skills, to the career-technical programs of today which are computer based, require national tests and certification, and often result in jobs with high salaries;

(16) West Virginia's employers and technical education job placement rates show that the state needs graduates with technical skills to compete in the current and future job markets;

(17) The job placement rate for students graduating from career-technical programs statewide is greater than ninety-five percent;

(18) Among the reasons students cite for dropping out of school are feelings of hopelessness when they have failed classes and can not recover credits in order to graduate;

(19) The state offers full-day programs consisting of credit recovery, hands on experiences in career-technical programs and basic education, which are valuable resources for re-engaging students who have dropped out of school, or have a potential for or are at risk of dropping out;

(20) A student is significantly more likely to graduate from high school if he or she completes four units of training in technical education;

(21) Learning is increased and retained at a higher level if the content is taught through a relevant and applied experience, and students who are able to experience academics

WV Legislature

through real life projects have a higher probability of mastering the appropriate concepts;

(22) Programs such as "GED Option" and "Techademics" are valuable resources for providing relevant and applied experience for students;

(23) The Techademics programs administered by the department of education has embedded math competencies in career-technical program curricula whereby students simultaneously earn credit for mastery of math competencies and career-technical courses;

(24) Students would greatly benefit if West Virginia were designated as a "GED Option" state. Currently a student is ineligible to take the General Educational Development (GED) exam if he or she is enrolled in school, which requires the student to drop out of high school in order to participate in a GED preparation program or take the exam, even if the student desires to remain enrolled;

(25) A GED Option state designation by the American Council on Education would allow students in this state to remain enrolled in school and continue acquiring academic and career-technical credits while pursuing a GED diploma. The GED Option would be blended with the West Virginia virtual schools or a career-technical education pathway. Upon completion, rather than being a dropout, the student would have a GED diploma and a certification in the chosen career-technical or virtual school pathway;

(26) The Mountaineer Challenge Academy is a positive option for students at risk of dropping out of school, as it provides students with structure, stability, and a focus on positive change, all in an environment where negative influences and distractions can be left behind;

(27) Students attending the Mountaineer Challenge Academy would greatly benefit if the GED Option were implemented at the Academy;

(28) The Health Sciences and Technology Academy (HSTA) program prepares rural, minority and economically disadvantaged students for college and careers in the health sciences, and demonstrates tremendous success in its high percentage of students who graduate from high school and participate in post-secondary education.

(29) The West Virginia GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) program is aimed at increasing the academic performance and rigorous preparation of students, increasing the number of high-poverty, at-risk students who are prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education, and increasing the high school graduation rate;

(30) The GEAR UP program successfully aids students in planning, applying and paying for education and training beyond high school;

(31) Each dropout involved in drugs or crime or dependent on public assistance creates a huge fiscal burden on society;

WV Legislature

(32) The intense treatment and individual monitoring provided through the state's juvenile drug courts have proven to be highly effective in treating drug addictions, and rehabilitating drug-addicted youth and improving their educational outcomes;

(33) Services provided by juvenile drug courts include substance abuse treatment, intervention, assessment, juvenile and family counseling, heavy supervision by probation officers including school-based probation officers who provide early intervention and diversion services, and addressing some of the underlying reasons why students are not successful in school;

(34) School participation and attendance are required for students participating in juvenile drug courts, and along with academic progress are closely monitored by the courts;

(35) Juvenile drug courts are an important strategy to improve substance abuse treatment outcomes, and serve to save the state significant cost on incarceration of the juveniles, along with the future costs to society of individuals who remain substance abusers;

(36) Juvenile drug courts produce greater cost benefits than other strategies that address criminal activity related to substance abuse and addiction that bring individuals into the criminal justice system;

(37) Funding for the increased number of students enrolled in school during the 2010-2011 school year due to the compulsory school attendance age increase established by this act will not be reflected in the state aid formula allocation until the 2011-2012 school year, which will require additional funds to be provided to county boards for the 2010-2011 school year to accommodate the increased enrollment;

(38) The state will benefit both fiscally and through improved quality of life if scarce state resources are targeted toward programs that result in providing a competitive advantage as adults for those students who are at risk of dropping out of school;

(39) Funds invested toward education and ensuring that students complete high school pay tremendous dividends through the moneys saved on incarceration, unemployment and underemployment as those students reach adulthood;

(40) Increasing the compulsory school attendance age will have little effect in aiding students to complete high school if additional resources, both fiscal and programmatic, are not dedicated to supporting student achievement, providing real-life relevancy in curriculum, and engaging students in learning, particularly for those students who have become so disengaged from school and learning that they are at risk of dropping out of school; and

(41) Schools cannot solve the dropout problem alone. Research shows when educators, parents, elected officials, business leaders, faith-based leaders, human service personnel, judicial personnel and civic leaders collectively work together they are often able to find innovative solutions to address school and community problems. (c) The Legislature intends

WV Legislature

as follows:

(1) The state will continue to explore diverse instructional delivery strategies to accommodate various learning styles and will focus on a state-wide dropout intervention and prevention program to provide support for students having academic difficulty;

(2) A general credit recovery program shall be implemented statewide, including delivery through West Virginia virtual schools;

(3) The state board will continue to improve the way career-technical education is offered, including expansion of the Techademics program;

(4) Up to five additional juvenile drug courts shall be established by January 1, 2012;

(5) The state will invest additional state funds and other resources in strategies and programs that engage disconnected and discouraged students in a positive learning environment as a critical first step to ensuring that students persist and graduate;

(6) County boards will develop plans to demonstrate how they will use available funds to implement the intent of this section; and

(7) The state board shall develop a statewide system in electronic format that will provide schools with easily identifiable early warning indicators of students at risk of not graduating from high school. The system shall be delivered through the uniform integrated regional computer information system (commonly known as the West Virginia Education Information System) and shall at a minimum incorporate data on the attendance, academic performance and disciplinary infractions of individual students. The state board shall require implementation of the system in Local Solution Dropout Prevention and Recovery Innovation Zones along with a plan of interventions to increase the number of students earning a high school diploma, and may utilize the zones as a pilot test of the system.

(d) Each county board shall include in its alternative education program plan required by section six, article two, of this chapter a plan to improve student retention and increase the graduation rate in the county. The plan is subject to approval of the state board, and shall include strategies the county board will implement to achieve the following goals:

(1) Increasing the graduation rate for the county;

(2) Identifying at the earliest age possible those students who are at risk of dropping out of school prior to graduation; and

(3) Providing additional options for delivering to at-risk students academic credentials and career-technical training if appropriate or desired by the student. The options may include such programs as Techademics, Earn a Degree-Graduate Early (EDGE), Health Sciences and Technology Academy (HSTA), Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), truancy diversion, early intervention, dropout prevention, prevention

WV Legislature

resource officers, GED option, credit recovery, alternative learning environments, or any other program or strategy approved by the state board.

(e) As soon as is practicable the state superintendent or his or her designee shall pursue designation of West Virginia as a "GED Option" state by the American Council on Education. If so designated, the state board shall:

(1) Develop and implement a program whereby a student may pursue a GED diploma while remaining enrolled in high school; and

(2) Ensure that the GED Option is offered to students attending the Mountaineer Challenge Academy.

(f) The state board shall continue to expand:

(1) The Techademics program to include each major academic subject and increase the academic credit available through the program to students; and

(2) The Health Sciences and Technology Academy to ensure that the program is available for any school containing any of the grade levels of eligible students.

(g) The state board shall ensure that the dropout information required by section twenty-four, article one-b, chapter fifteen of this code is provided annually to the Mountaineer Challenge Academy.

(h) Some career and technical education programs only accept students in certain upper high school grade levels due to lack of capacity to accept the students in the lower high school grade levels. This can be detrimental to efforts to keep students identified as at risk of dropping out of school prior to graduation in school. Therefore, those career and technical education programs that limit enrollment to students in certain upper high school grade levels may make exceptions for those at risk students and enroll any of those at risk students who are in grades nine and above.

WV Legislature

§18-8-6a. Incentive for county board participation in circuit court juvenile probation truancy programs.

A county board that enters into a truancy program agreement with the circuit court of the county that (1) provides for the referral of truant juveniles for supervision by the court's probation office pursuant to §49-4-711 of this code and (2) requires the county board to pay for the costs of the probation officer or officers assigned to supervise truant juveniles, shall be reimbursed for one half of the costs of the probation officer or officers, subject to appropriation of the Legislature for this purpose to the West Virginia Department of Education. For any year in which the funds appropriated are insufficient to cover the reimbursement costs, the county's costs shall be reimbursed pro rata.

WV Legislature

§18-8-7. Aiding or abetting violations of compulsory attendance; penalty.

Any person who induces or attempts to induce any child or student unlawfully to absent himself or herself from school, or who harbors or employs any child or student of compulsory school age or any student over sixteen years of age who is enrolled in a school while the school to which he or she belongs and which he or she is required to attend is in session, or who employs such child or student within the term of such school on any day such school is in session without the written permission of the county superintendent of schools, or for a longer period than such work permit may specify shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than $25 nor more than $50 and may be confined in jail not less than ten nor more than thirty days.

WV Legislature

§18-8-8. Child suspended for failure to comply with requirements and regulations treated as unlawfully absent.

If a child be suspended from school because of improper conduct or refusal of such child to comply with the requirements of the school, the school shall immediately notify the county superintendent of such suspension, and specify the time or conditions of such suspension. Further admission of the child to school may be refused until such requirements and regulations be complied with. Any such child shall be treated by the school as being unlawfully absent from the school during the time he refuses to comply with such requirements and regulations, and any person having legal or actual control of such child shall be liable to prosecution under the provisions of this article for the absence of such child from school: Provided, That the county board of education does not exclude or expel the suspended child from school.

WV Legislature

§18-8-9. Report and disposition of fines collected.

All fines collected under the provisions of this article shall be paid on or before the last day of each calendar month by the magistrate, or other proper official having jurisdiction in the case, to the sheriff and by him credited to the county school fund; and the magistrate shall file with the county superintendent on the last day of each month an itemized statement of all fines paid over to the sheriff.

WV Legislature

§18-8-10. Compulsory education of deaf and blind; offenses; penalties; names of deaf and blind.

Every parent, guardian or other person having control of any mentally normal minor over six years of age, who is defective in sight or hearing to the extent that he cannot be benefited by instruction in the public schools, shall be required to send such minor to the West Virginia schools for the deaf and the blind at Romney. Such minor shall continue to attend such schools for a term of at least thirty-six weeks each year until he has completed the course of instruction prescribed for such schools by the state Board of Education, or has been discharged by the superintendent of said school.

Any such deaf or blind minor shall be exempt from attendance at said schools for any of the following reasons: (a) Instruction by a private tutor or in another school approved by the state Board of Education for a time equal to that required by the first paragraph of this section; (b) physical incapacity for school work; (c) any other reason deemed good and sufficient by the superintendent of such schools, with the approval of the state Board of Education.

Any parent, guardian or other persons in charge of such minor or minors who fails or refuses to comply with the requirements of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than ten nor more than $30 for each offense. Failure for the period of one week within the school year to send such minor to school shall constitute an offense: Provided, That the time necessary for such minor to travel from his home to the school shall not be counted as time absent from school.

Any person who induces or attempts to induce such blind or deaf minor to absent himself from school, or who employs or harbors such minor unlawfully, while said school is in session, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than twenty nor more than $50 for each offense.

It shall be the duty of school attendance directors and assistants, prosecuting attorneys, and any special attendance directors appointed by said school for the deaf and the blind to enforce the provisions of this section.

The county superintendent of schools shall furnish to the superintendents of the state-supported schools for the deaf and/or blind and to the state Superintendent of Schools the names of persons in his county between the ages of six and eighteen reported to him to be deaf and blind with the names and addresses of their parents or guardians.

WV Legislature

§18-8-11. School attendance and satisfactory academic progress as conditions of licensing for privilege of operation of motor vehicle.

(a) Whenever a student at least 15 but less than 17 years of age, except as provided in subsection (e) of this section, withdraws from school, the attendance director or chief administrator shall notify the Division of Motor Vehicles of the student's withdrawal no later than five days from the date of the withdrawal. Within five days of receipt of the notice, the Division of Motor Vehicles shall send notice to the student that the student's instruction permit or license to operate a motor vehicle will be restricted to driving for work or medical purposes or educational or religious pursuits under the provisions of §17B-3-6 of this code on the 30th day following the date the notice was sent unless documentation of compliance with the provisions of this section is received by the Division of Motor Vehicles before that time. The notice shall also advise the student that he or she is entitled to a hearing before the county superintendent of schools or his or her designee or before the appropriate private school official concerning whether the student's withdrawal from school was due to a circumstance or circumstances beyond the control of the student. If restricted, the division may not reinstate an instruction permit or license until the student returns to school and shows satisfactory academic progress or until the student attains 17 years of age.

(b) Whenever a student at least 15 but less than 17 years of age is enrolled in a secondary school and fails to maintain satisfactory academic progress, the attendance director or chief administrator shall follow the procedures set out in subsection (a) of this section to notify the Division of Motor Vehicles. Within five days of receipt of the notice, the Division of Motor Vehicles shall send notice to the student that the student's instruction permit or license will be restricted to driving for work or medical purposes or educational or religious pursuits under the provisions of §17B-3-6 of this code on the 30th day following the date the notice was sent unless documentation of compliance with the provisions of this section is received by the Division of Motor Vehicles before that time. The notice shall also advise the student that he or she is entitled to a hearing before the county superintendent of schools or his or her designee or before the appropriate private school official concerning whether the student's failure to make satisfactory academic progress was due to a circumstance or circumstances beyond the control of the student. Once the restriction is ordered, the division may not reinstate an instruction permit or license until the student shows satisfactory academic progress or until the student attains 17 years of age.

(c) Upon written request of a student, within 10 days of receipt of a notice of restriction as provided by this section, the Division of Motor Vehicles shall afford the student the opportunity for an administrative hearing. The scope of the hearing shall be limited to determining if there is a question of improper identity, incorrect age, or some other clerical error.

(d) For the purposes of this section:

(1) "Withdrawal" is defined as more than 10 consecutive or 15 total days unexcused absences during a school year, or suspension pursuant to §18A-5-1a(a) and §18A-5-1a(b) of

this code.

(2) “Satisfactory academic progress” means the attaining and maintaining of grades sufficient to allow for graduation and course work in an amount sufficient to allow graduation in five years or by age 19, whichever is earlier.

(3) “Circumstances outside the control of the student” shall include, but not be limited to, medical reasons, familial responsibilities, and the necessity of supporting oneself or another.

(4) Suspension or expulsion from school or imprisonment in a jail or a West Virginia correctional facility is not a circumstance beyond the control of the student.

(e) Whenever the withdrawal from school of the student, the student’s failure to enroll in a course leading to or to obtain a GED or high school diploma, or the student’s failure to make satisfactory academic progress is due to a circumstance or circumstances beyond the control of the student, or the withdrawal from school is for the purpose of transfer to another school as confirmed in writing by the student’s parent or guardian, no notice shall be sent to the Division of Motor Vehicles to restrict the student’s motor vehicle operator’s license and if the student is applying for a license, the attendance director or chief administrator shall provide the student with documentation to present to the Division of Motor Vehicles to excuse the student from the provisions of this section. The school district superintendent (or the appropriate school official of any private secondary school) with the assistance of the county attendance director and any other staff or school personnel shall be the sole judge of whether any of the grounds for restriction of a license as provided by this section are due to a circumstance or circumstances beyond the control of the student.

(f) The state board shall promulgate rules necessary for uniform implementation of this section among the counties and as may otherwise be necessary for the implementation of this section. The rule may not include attainment by a student of any certain grade point average as a measure of satisfactory progress toward graduation.

WV Legislature

§18-8-12. Issuance of a diploma or other appropriate credential by public, private, home

school, microschool, or learning pod administrator.

A person who administers a program of secondary education at a public school, private school, home school, microschool, learning pod, or individualized instructional program pursuant to the Hope Scholarship Act that meets the requirements of this chapter may issue a diploma or other appropriate credential to a person who has completed the program of secondary education. Such diploma or credential is legally sufficient to demonstrate that the person meets the definition of having a high school diploma or its equivalent. No state agency or institution of higher learning in this state may reject or otherwise treat a person differently solely on the grounds of the source of such a diploma or credential. Nothing in this section prevents an institution, once a student has been fully admitted, from administering placement tests or other assessments to determine the appropriate placement of students into college-level course sequences or to assess the content thereof for the purposes of determining whether a person meets other requirements for a specific program.

WV Legislature