WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18A-3C-1

§18A-3C-1. Findings; purposes and definition.

(a) The Legislature makes the following findings:

(1) Processes set forth in this article for the performance evaluation of professional personnel and the induction and professional growth of teachers and leaders are not intended to make up for substandard initial preparation, but instead are intended to build on a solid foundation created by the teacher and principal preparation programs. Therefore, the Legislature expects the teacher preparation programs to graduate teachers and leaders who can perform at a level that increases student achievement. The Legislature expects that the processes set forth in this article will allow a teacher and principal to excel beyond that level in the classroom and in school leadership positions;

(2) The comprehensive system of support provided in this article should be implemented in a way that effectively provides for the professional growth of teachers and principals;

(3) In order for the comprehensive system of support to much more effectively provide for the professional growth of teachers and principals, professional development resources must be focused in the most cost effective manner on the unique needs of individual schools, including their professional personnel evaluation data, to increase the school's capacity to improve student performance and progress; and

(4) Although the quality of the teacher is extremely important to the academic achievement of students, students cannot learn if they are not present to receive the instruction. Therefore, attending school on a regular basis is of utmost importance to the academic success of students.

(b) The purpose of this article is to create a comprehensive infrastructure that routinely supports a continuous process for improving teaching and learning. Its focus is on developing strong teaching and school leadership, without which effective learning does not occur. The general components of this infrastructure include the following:

(1) High-quality teacher and principal preparation, induction, and evaluation;

(2) Universal support for emerging teachers and principals including comprehensive induction and support for (A) Beginning teachers, student teachers, teachers teaching in assignments for which they have less than a full professional credential, and teacher candidates pursuing certification through an alternative route; and (B) beginning principals, assistant principals, and vocational administrators, and those of them beginning a new assignment at a school with a significantly different grade level configuration;

(3) Evaluation of the performance of teachers and leaders in demonstrating high quality

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professional practice, leadership, and collaboration and the resulting growth in student learning;

(4) Focused improvement in teaching and learning through the use of evaluation data to inform the delivery of professional development and additional supports to improve teaching based on the evaluation results and to inform the need for improvements in teacher preparation programs; and

(5) The creation of a leadership culture that seeks and builds powerful alliances among all stakeholders focused on continuous growth in student learning.

(c) For purposes of this article "professional personnel" includes classroom teachers, assistant principals, and principals as defined in §18A-1-1 of this code.

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