WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18B-2C-1

§18B-2C-1. Legislative findings; intent.

(a) Legislative findings. --

(1) The Legislature hereby finds that for nearly two decades legislation has been enacted having as a principal goal creation of a strong, effective system of community and technical education capable of meeting the needs of the citizens of the state. In furtherance of that goal, the Legislature has passed the following major pieces of legislation:

(A) Enrolled Senate Bill 420, passed during the regular session of one thousand nine hundred eighty-nine, reorganized the governance structure of public higher education and created the Joint Commission for Vocational-technical-occupational Education to bridge the gap between secondary and post-secondary vocational, technical, and occupational education;

(B) Enrolled Senate Bill 377, passed during the regular session of one thousand nine hundred ninety-three, adopted goals and objectives for public post-secondary education, addressed the needs of nontraditional students, directed the institutions to include an assessment of work force development needs in their master plans and established the resource allocation model and policies to aid governing boards and institutions in meeting the established goals and objectives;

(C) Enrolled Senate Bill 547, passed during the regular session of one thousand nine hundred ninety-five, established goals and funding for faculty and staff salaries, required the governing boards to establish community and technical education with the administrative, programmatic and budgetary control necessary to respond to local needs and provided that community and technical college budgets be appropriated to a separate control account;

(D) Enrolled Senate Bill 653, passed during the regular session of two thousand, established the commission to develop a public policy agenda for higher education in conjunction with state leaders, set forth the essential conditions that must be met by each community and technical college in the state, and mandated that most component community and technical colleges move to independent accreditation.

(E) Enrolled Senate Bill 703, passed during the regular session of two thousand one, authorized the creation of a statewide community and technical college to provide leadership and technical support to the community and technical colleges to aid them in achieving independent accreditation, enhance their ability to serve the interests of the people of West Virginia, and focus attention on achieving established state goals.

(F) Enrolled House Bill 2224, passed during the regular session of two thousand three, created New River Community and Technical College of Bluefield State College as a

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multicampus institution from existing community and technical college components, branches and off-campus delivery sites in order to give greater cohesiveness, emphasis and priority to meeting the essential conditions pursuant to section three, article three-c of this chapter and to provide greater access to high-quality programs in the institution's expanded service district.

(G) Enrolled Senate Bill 448, passed during the regular session of two thousand four, established the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education as a separate coordinating agency with authority over state community and technical colleges, branches, centers, regional centers, and other delivery sites with a community and technical college mission.

(2) The Market Street Report, the McClenney Report, and the Implementation Board Report, cited in article two-b of this chapter, each reflects recent research and indicates that, while these legislative actions cited above have helped the state to make progress in certain areas of higher education, they have not offered a complete solution to the problems of community and technical colleges.

(b) Intent. -- Therefore, the intent of the Legislature in enacting these pieces of legislation is as follows:

(1) To provide logical steps in the process of developing strong institutions capable of delivering community and technical education to meet the needs of the state. Each act may be viewed as a building block added to the foundation laid by earlier legislation;

(2) To create a mechanism whereby the council, if necessary, can assure through its own direct action that the goals established in articles one, one-d, and three-c of this chapter are met; and

(3) To authorize the council to create the West Virginia Community and Technical College to serve the interests of the people of West Virginia by advancing the public policy agenda developed pursuant to article two-b of this chapter. If the council makes a determination under the provisions of this section that it is necessary or expedient to create the statewide community and technical college, the following goals are the specific focus of the college and its governing board:

(A) To encourage development of a statewide mission that raises education attainment, increases adult literacy, promotes work force and economic development, and ensures access to post-secondary education for every region of the state;

(B) To provide oversight or governance of the community and technical colleges, branches, centers, regional centers, and other delivery sites with a community and technical college mission;

(C) To provide leadership, support and coordination; and

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(D) To protect and expand the local autonomy and flexibility necessary for community and technical colleges to succeed.

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