WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18B-3C-14

§18B-3C-14. Findings; intent; advanced technology centers established; administration; boards of advisors.

(a) Findings. --

(1) The Legislature finds that ninety percent of the high-demand, high-wage new economy occupations require education and training beyond high school. Technology has permeated every industry requiring higher skill levels for technician-level occupations. Technician skills, learning capacities and adaptability to changing technologies affect the viability both of individual employers and entire industries. Unless West Virginia takes immediate steps to produce additional skilled workers to replace the aging and retiring work force, the state faces a critical shortage of technician-level workers which it must have to ensure economic growth. State employers must have access to a technically proficient work force able to keep pace with the changing nature of occupations in the global economy and educating and training this technician-level work force is a vital component in the state's plan for economic development.

(2) The Legislature further finds that establishment of advanced technology centers will increase the capacity of West Virginia's community and technical colleges to deliver state-of-the-art technical education and training. The centers will serve as models for the most effective delivery of technician-level education and training with the potential to develop programs of excellence that attract participants from outside the state adding to their value as an economic stimulus. The centers serve as catalysts for state and regional economic development by educating and training a highly skilled technical work force capable of meeting both the current and emerging needs of West Virginia employers.

(b) Legislative intent. --

(1) It is the intent of the Legislature to establish advanced technology centers to provide advanced instruction capable of meeting the current and future demands of occupations requiring technical skills including the following:

(A) Addressing skills sets needed for emerging and high technology businesses and industries which are of vital importance to expanding the economy of the state;

(B) Training and retraining personnel for West Virginia's new and existing business and industries;

(C) Providing instruction in strategic technical program areas that advances the economic development initiatives of the state and regions within the state by providing access to a skilled work force for companies expanding or locating in West Virginia;

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(D) Providing a setting for collaboration in the delivery of technical programs among community and technical colleges, secondary career-technical education and baccalaureate institutions;

(E) Invigorating teaching by providing models for program delivery that can be shared and replicated at all state community and technical colleges; and

(F) Developing student interest in pursuing technical occupations through exposure to advanced technologies.

(2) It is further the intent of the Legislature that programming offered by the centers be driven by the needs of state and local employers and economic development considerations. Centers shall be constructed with the flexibility to accommodate various programs simultaneously and to react quickly to adjust programming as employer and economic development demands change. They are furnished with state-of-the-art equipment conducive to delivering advanced technology programs and to providing students with real-world experiences that reflect industry standards. Education and training at the centers includes delivery of credit and noncredit instruction, seminars, skill sets, industry recognized certifications, certificates and associate degree programs. Curricula is designed in modular and other innovative formats allowing for open entry and open exit, compressed time frames, skill upgrades, and easy transfer from career-technical centers and other education providers. Centers shall embrace and promote collaborative programming among community and technical colleges and other providers of education and training programs and serve as receiving sites for programs to be delivered by community and technical colleges utilizing distance education, simulation and other collaborative, innovative approaches to increase the capacity of the community and technical college network to deliver technical education.

(c) Boards of Advisors. --

(1) There is hereby established a board of advisors for each advanced technology center in the state specifically to provide advice, assistance and programmatic oversight to the president of the community and technical college, director of the center, and others involved in its operation in areas relevant to program delivery and general operation of the center. In order to be successful, each center must act assertively to develop collaborative partnerships with employers, community and technical colleges in its service region, and local economic development entities. It is the responsibility of the board of advisors to promote this vital participation.

(A) For a center which has a single participating community and technical college in its service region, the board of Governors of the institution is designated as the board of advisors for the center.

(B) For a center which has more than one participating community and technical college in its service region, the board of advisors consists of eleven members, of which a minimum of

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seven shall represent employers located in the region served by the center.

(i) The advisory board provides guidance to all governing boards and consists of the following members:

(I) Two members from the board of Governors of each participating community and technical college which is located in the center's service region, appointed by the board of Governors of each institution.

(II) One member representing regional economic development entities, appointed by the council, with advice from the governing boards of the appropriate community and technical colleges; and

(III) Sufficient at-large members appointed by the council, with advice from the governing boards of the appropriate community and technical colleges, to fill the remaining seats equal to a membership of eleven.

(ii) Members of an advisory board serve staggered terms of up to four years beginning on September 1, 2008, except that five of the initial appointments to an advisory board are for terms of two years and six of the initial appointments are for terms of four years. Each member who qualifies under the provisions of this section may serve for no more than one additional term. The council shall fill a vacancy in an unexpired term of a member for the unexpired term within thirty days of the occurrence of the vacancy in the same manner as the original appointment.

(iii) The chancellor for community and technical college education shall call the first meeting of the board of advisors and shall serve as chairperson until a permanent chairperson is elected.

(iv) The president of each community and technical college located in the center's service region shall make resources available for conducting the business of the center's board of advisors. The presidents of the institutions shall work collaboratively to provide support for conducting board business.

(2) Each board of advisors, including each board of Governors when sitting as a board of advisors, shall hold at least one regular meeting during each quarter of the fiscal year including an annual meeting in June for the purpose of electing a chairperson and other officers as the board considers appropriate.

(A) Additional meetings may be held at the call of the chairperson or upon written request of five or more members of the advisory board.

(B) Officers serve a term of one year beginning on July 1, and ending on June 30, except for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2008, terms begin on September 1, 2008 and end on June 30, 2009.

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(C) One of the members representing employers shall be elected to serve as chairperson at the annual meeting in June except, for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2008, the chairperson and other officers shall be elected in September, 2008, and their terms shall expire on June 30, 2009. A member may not serve as chairperson for more than two consecutive terms.

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