WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18B-4-7A

§18B-4-7a. Choice of accreditors.

(a) The Legislature finds and declares that:

(1) The United States Department of Education promulgated new regulations on November 1, 2019, that revise the criteria used by the department to recognize accrediting agencies to allow competition (84 Fed. Reg. 58834);

(2) The council, commission, and governing boards of the exempted schools must take advantage of the new regulations in order to improve education quality through competition among accreditors by amending their own regulations;

(3) Regulatory references to accreditation involving the North Central Association are out of date because it was dissolved in 2014; and

(4) Seventeen accreditors are currently recognized by the United States Department of Education (seven traditionally "regional" accreditors and 10 traditionally "national" accreditors).

(b) Competition. —

(1) By December 31, 2023, the council, commission, and governing boards of the exempted schools must amend their regulations regarding accreditation to ensure that every postsecondary institution in the state may freely choose to pursue accreditation by any accreditor recognized by the United States Department of Education for the kinds of programs offered by the institution; and

(2) To the extent that such regulations imply or state that institutions default to, or normally would, should, or must be accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and/or the now-defunct North Central Association, such regulations are incorrect and must be amended.

wv legislature