WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION, 2010

ENROLLED

House Bill No. 4593

(By Delegates Stowers, Perry, M. Poling, Paxton, D. Walker and Duke)

Passed March 13, 2010

In Effect July 1, 2010
AN ACT to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section, designated §18-8-6; to amend and reenact §18-8-1, §18-8-1a and §18-8-4 of said code; to amend and reenact §18-9A-21 of said code; and to amend and reenact §62-15-4 of said code, all relating to improving student participation, success and high school graduation rates; increasing the minimum age for ending compulsory school attendance; reducing the number of days of unexcused absences at which proceedings to enforce attendance begin; establishing the "High School Graduation Improvement Act"; establishing legislative findings and intent; requiring county board of education plan for improving student retention and increasing graduation rate; requiring state board of education to develop, expand and assist certain programs; requiring certain state superintendent reports to Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability; increasing funding for alternative education programs; and authorizing establishment of additional juvenile drug courts.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended by adding thereto a new section, designated §18-8-6; that §18-8-1,
§18-8-1a and §18-8-4 of said code be amended and reenacted; that §18-9A-21 of said code be amended and reenacted; and that §62-15-4 of said code be amended and reenacted, all to read as follows:

ARTICLE 8. COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

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

(a) Exemption from the requirements of compulsory public school attendance established in section one-a of this article 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.

(b) A child is exempt from the compulsory school attendance requirement set forth in section one-a of this article 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 section forty-five, article five of this chapter. 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 section one-a of this article 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
section forty-five, article five of this chapter. 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 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) Annually, the person or persons providing home
instruction shall present to the county superintendent or
county board a notice of intent to provide home instruction
and the name, address, age and grade level of any child of
compulsory school age to be instructed: Provided, That if a
child is enrolled in a public school, notice of intent to provide
home instruction shall be given at least two weeks prior to
withdrawing the child from public school;
(B) The person or persons providing home instruction shall submit satisfactory evidence of a high school diploma or equivalent;

(C) The person or persons providing home instruction shall outline a plan of instruction for the ensuing school year; and

(D) On or before June 30 annually, the person or persons providing home instruction shall obtain an academic assessment of the child for the previous school year and submit the results to the county superintendent. When the academic assessment takes place outside of a public school, the parent or legal guardian shall pay the cost. The requirement of an academic assessment is satisfied in one of the following ways:

(i) The child receiving home instruction takes a nationally normed standardized achievement test to be administered under standardized conditions as set forth by the published instructions of the selected test in the subjects of reading, language, mathematics, science and social studies. The child’s parent or legal guardian may not administer the test in any event. The publication date of the chosen test may not be more than ten years from the date the test is administered. 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 meets or exceeds the fiftieth percentile or, if below the fiftieth percentile, 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) The county superintendent is provided with a written narrative indicating that a portfolio of samples of the child’s work has been reviewed and that the child’s academic progress for the year is in accordance with the child’s abilities. 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. This narrative shall be prepared by a certified teacher whose certification number shall be provided. The narrative shall include a statement 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; 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. Criteria for acceptable progress shall be mutually agreed upon by the same parties; and

(E) When the annual assessment fails to show acceptable progress as defined under the appropriate assessment option set forth in paragraph (D) of this subdivision, the person or persons providing home instruction shall initiate a remedial program to foster acceptable progress. The county board 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 as defined under the appropriate assessment option set forth in paragraph (D) of this subdivision 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.
(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 section one-a of this article 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 section one-a of this article 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 section one-a of this article 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 section one-a of this article 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 termination age designated in section one-a of this article, 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 section one-a of this article 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 section one-a of this article 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 section one-a of this article 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 section one-a of this article 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 article twenty-eight of this chapter.

(l) Completion of the eighth grade does not exempt any child under the termination age designated in section one-a of this article from the compulsory attendance provision of this article.

§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 September 1 of such year or upon enrolling in a publicly supported kindergarten program and, subject to subdivision (3) of this subsection, continues to the sixteenth birthday or for as long as the student continues to be enrolled in a school system after the sixteenth birthday.
(1) A child may be removed from such kindergarten program when the principal, teacher and parent or guardian concur 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 eighteen 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) Beginning with the 2011-2012 high school freshman cohort class of students, and 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 seventeenth birthday.

(4) Beginning with the December 2010 interim meeting period, and semiannually thereafter, the state superintendent shall report to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability on the impact of the increased age requirement of subdivision (3) of this subsection, and the progress of the state board and the county boards in implementing the requirements of section six of this article.

(b) Attendance at a state-approved or Montessori kindergarten, as provided in section eighteen, article five of this chapter, is deemed school attendance for purposes of this section. Prior to entrance into the first grade in accordance
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with section five, article two of this chapter, each child must have either:

(1) Successfully completed such publicly or privately supported, state-approved kindergarten program or Montessori kindergarten program; or

(2) Successfully completed an entrance test of basic readiness skills approved by the county in which the school is located. The test may be administered in lieu of kindergarten attendance only under extraordinary circumstances to be determined by the county board.

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section and of section five, article two of this chapter and section eighteen, article five of this chapter, 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.

(d) This section does not prevent a student from another state from enrolling in the same grade in a public school in West Virginia as the student was enrolled at the school from which the student transferred.

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

(a) The county attendance director and the assistants shall diligently promote regular school attendance. The director and assistants shall:

(1) Ascertain reasons for inexcusable absences from school of students of compulsory school age and students who remain enrolled beyond the compulsory school age as defined under section one-a of this article; and
(2) Take such steps as are, in their discretion, best calculated to correct attitudes of parents and students which result in absences from school even though not clearly in violation of law.

(b) In the case of five total unexcused absences of a student during a school year, the attendance director or assistant shall:

(1) Serve written notice to the parent, guardian or custodian of the student that the attendance of the student at school is required and that within ten days of receipt of the notice the parent, guardian or custodian, accompanied by the student, shall report in person to the school the student attends for a conference with the principal or other designated representative of the school in order to discuss and correct the circumstances causing the inexcusable absences of the student; and if the parent, guardian or custodian does not comply with the provisions of this article, then the attendance director or assistant shall make 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 ten 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.

(c) The magistrate court clerk, or the clerk of the circuit court performing the duties of the magistrate court as
authorized in section eight, article one, chapter fifty of this
code, shall assign the case to a magistrate within ten days of
execution of the summons or warrant. The hearing shall be
held within twenty days of the assignment to the magistrate,
subject to lawful continuance. The magistrate shall provide
to the accused at least ten days’ advance notice of the date,
time and place of the hearing.

(d) When any doubt exists as to the age of a student
absent from school, the attendance director has authority to
require a properly attested birth certificate or an affidavit
from the parent, guardian or custodian of the student, stating
age of the student. In the performance of his or her duties,
the county attendance director has 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.

(e) The county attendance director shall devote such time
as is required by section three of this article to the duties of
attendance director in accordance with this section during the
instructional term and at such other times as the duties of an
attendance director are required. All attendance directors
hired for more than two hundred days may be assigned other
duties determined by the superintendent during the period in
excess of two hundred days. The county attendance director
is responsible under direction of the county superintendent
for efficiently administering school attendance in the county.

(f) In addition to those duties directly relating to the
administration of attendance, the county attendance director
and 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 school census and enrollment for the detection of possible nonenrollees;

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

(4) Prepare a report for submission by the county superintendent to the State Superintendent of Schools on school attendance, at such times and in such detail as may be required. The state board shall promulgate a legislative rule pursuant to article three-b, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code that sets forth student absences that are excluded for accountability purposes. The absences that are excluded by the rule include, but are not be limited to, excused student absences, students not in attendance due to disciplinary measures and absent students for whom the attendance director has pursued judicial remedies to compel attendance to the extent of his or her authority. The attendance director shall file with the county superintendent and county board at the close of each month a report showing activities of the school attendance office and the status of attendance in the county at the time;

(5) 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 such manner as the county superintendent may direct;

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

(7) Assist in such other ways as the county superintendent may direct for improving school attendance;
(8) Make home visits of students who have excessive unexcused absences, as provided above, or if requested by the chief administrator, principal or assistant principal; and

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

§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 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 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;

(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; and

(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.

(c) The Legislature intends 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; and

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

(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
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for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), truancy diversion, early intervention, dropout prevention, prevention 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 except students in certain upper high school grade levels due to lack of capacity to accept the students in the lower high
266 school grade levels. This can be detrimental to efforts to keep
267 students identified as at risk of dropping out of school prior
268 to graduation in school. Therefore, those career and technical
269 education programs that only students in certain upper high
270 school grade levels to enroll may make exceptions for those
271 at risk students and enroll any of those at risk students who
272 are in grades nine and above.

ARTICLE 9A. PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPPORT.


(a) An appropriation may be made to the state department
to be distributed to county boards for the operation of
alternative education and prevention programs established in
accordance with policies and procedures adopted by the state
board under section six, article two of this chapter. The
appropriation shall be an amount equal to eighteen dollars per
student in net enrollment, subject to appropriation by the
Legislature. The state board shall distribute ninety-eight
percent of the total appropriation to the county boards
proportionate to each county's net enrollment. The
remaining two percent of the appropriation shall be retained
by the state department to support the provision of services
to the county boards in administering programs established
in accordance with policies and procedures adopted by the
state board under section six, article two of this chapter.

(b) Nothing in this section may be construed to require
any specific level of funding by the Legislature.

(c) The increase from $12 per student in net enrollment
to $18 per student in net enrollment pursuant to the
amendment and enactment of this section during the 2010
regular session of the Legislature is not subject to the
provisions of section three-a.
ARTICLE 15. DRUG OFFENDER ACCOUNTABILITY AND TREATMENT ACT.


(a) Each judicial circuit or two or more adjoining judicial circuits may establish a drug court or regional drug court program under which drug offenders will be processed to address appropriately, the identified substance abuse problem as a condition of pretrial release, probation, incarceration, parole or other release from a correctional facility.

(b) The structure, method, and operation of each drug court program may differ and should be based upon the specific needs of and resources available to the judicial circuit or circuits where the drug court program is located.

(c) A drug court program may be preadjudication or post-adjudication for an adult offender.

(d) Participation in drug court, with the consent of the prosecution and the court, shall be pursuant to a written agreement.

(e) A drug court may grant reasonable incentives under the written agreement if it finds that the drug offender:

(1) Is performing satisfactorily in drug court;

(2) Is benefitting from education, treatment and rehabilitation;

(3) Has not engaged in criminal conduct; or

(4) Has not violated the terms and conditions of the agreement.
(f) A drug court may impose reasonable sanctions on the drug offender, including incarceration for the underlying offense or expulsion from the program, pursuant to the written agreement, if it finds that the drug offender:

1. Is not performing satisfactorily in drug court;
2. Is not benefitting from education, treatment or rehabilitation;
3. Has engaged in conduct rendering him or her unsuitable for the program;
4. Has otherwise violated the terms and conditions of the agreement; or
5. Is for any reason unable to participate.

(g) Upon successful completion of drug court, a drug offender’s case shall be disposed of by the judge in the manner prescribed by the agreement and by the applicable policies and procedures adopted by the drug court. This may include, but is not limited to, withholding criminal charges, dismissal of charges, probation, deferred sentencing, suspended sentencing, split sentencing, or a reduced period of incarceration.

(h) Drug court shall include the Ten Key Components and the drug court team shall act to ensure compliance with them.

(i) Nothing contained in this article confers a right or an expectation of a right to participate in a drug court nor does it obligate a drug court to accept every drug offender.

(j) Neither the establishment of a drug court nor anything herein may be construed as limiting the discretion of the
jurisdiction's prosecutor to act on any criminal case which he or she deems advisable to prosecute.

(k) Each drug court judge may establish rules and may make special orders as necessary that do not conflict with rules and orders promulgated by the Supreme Court of Appeals which has administrative authority over the courts. The Supreme Court of Appeals shall provide uniform referral, procedure and order forms that shall be used in all drug courts in this state.

(l) In addition to the number of juvenile drug courts operating on the effective date of this section, up to five additional juvenile drug courts or regional juvenile drug court programs may be established by January 1, 2012, as determined by the Supreme Court of Appeals.
That Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills hereby certifies that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

Chairman Senate Committee

Chairman House Committee

Originating in the House.

In effect July 1, 2010.

Clerk of the Senate

Clerk of the House of Delegates

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House of Delegates

The within was approved this the __th day of ____, 2010.

Governor