

1 **H. B. 3245**

2  
3 (By Delegates Manypenny and White)

4 [Introduced February 21, 2011; referred to the  
5 Committee on Education then Finance.]

6 **FISCAL**  
7 **NOTE**

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10 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by  
11 adding thereto a new section, designated §18-8-12, relating to  
12 education; compulsory school attendance; establishing "The  
13 School Truancy Pilot Study Project Act", a pilot program to  
14 allow the five or six counties with the highest dropout rate  
15 to implement a program to help reduce truancy; and to provide  
16 for its funding.

17 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

18 That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended  
19 by adding thereto a new section, designated §18-8-12, to read as  
20 follows:

21 **ARTICLE 8. COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.**

22 **§18-8-12. The School Truancy Pilot Study Project Act.**

23 (a) This section is known and may be cited as "The School

1 Truancy Pilot Study Project Act.”

2 (b) The Legislature makes the following findings:

3 (1) West Virginia has a dire need to implement a comprehensive  
4 approach to addressing the high school truancy and dropout rates,  
5 and to develop policies and strategies that successfully assist  
6 at-risk students to stay in school, earn a high school diploma, and  
7 ultimately become productively contributing members of society;

8 (2) The current demands for a highly skilled workforce require  
9 a high school diploma at the very minimum;

10 (3) The state has several dynamic programs that are capable of  
11 actively engaging students in learning, providing students with a  
12 sense of relevancy in academics, and motivating students to succeed  
13 in school and ultimately earn a high school diploma;

14 (4) Dealing with the compulsory school attendance age and high  
15 truancy rates may help to increase the graduation rate and decrease  
16 the drop-out rate;

17 (5) Absenteeism is proven to be the highest predictor of  
18 course failure. Truant students face low self-confidence in their  
19 ability to succeed in school because their absences cause them to  
20 fall behind their classmates, and the students find dropping out  
21 easier than catching up. Students who are chronically truant from  
22 elementary school onward, miss school more and more each year,  
23 eventually dropping out of high school;

24 (6) Dropping out of school has a profound negative impact on

1 an individual's future, resulting in limited job choices,  
2 substantially lower wages and less earned over a lifetime than high  
3 school graduates, and a greater likelihood of depending on public  
4 assistance and engaging in criminal activity;

5 (c) The Legislature declares as follows:

6 (1) The purpose of this legislation is to establish a  
7 framework for addressing high dropout and truancy rates in the  
8 various counties in the state;

9 (2) The State Superintendent of Schools shall establish  
10 standards and criteria to allow the five or six counties with the  
11 highest truancy and dropout rates to implement a pilot plan to  
12 reduce truancy by allowing Saturday attendance or during the summer  
13 if a student misses more than five permitted absences, which  
14 standards and criteria shall include a plan to pay for the cost of  
15 Saturday or summer attendance for make up days;

16 (3) Any county school board in the top ten percent of the  
17 state for the highest dropout rate may apply for this program. If  
18 for any reason the first five or six counties do not choose to  
19 participate in this program, then the next county with the highest  
20 dropout rate may apply and so forth until ten percent of the  
21 state's counties are represented in this pilot program.

22 (d) The pilot program shall commence no later than September  
23 1, 2011 and continue until July 1, 2017, unless sooner terminated  
24 by the Legislature.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to create a pilot program to allow the five or six counties with the highest dropout rates to implement a program to help reduce truancy; and to authorize Saturday or Summer make up days.

This section is new; therefore, it has been completely underscored.