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OFFICE WEST VIRGINIA SECRETARY OF STATE

### **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

**SECOND REGULAR SESSION, 2012** 

## ENROLLED

House Bill No. 4583

(By Delegates M. Poling, Shaver, Caputo, Moye, Perry, Michael, Sumner and Duke)

Passed March 5, 2012

To Take Effect From Passage

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H. B. 4583

OFFICE WEST VIRGINIA SECRETARY OF STATE

(BY DELEGATES M. POLING, SHAVER, CAPUTO, MOYE, PERRY, MICHAEL, SUMNER AND DUKE)

[Passed March 5, 2012; to take effect from passage.]

AN ACT to amend and reenact §18A-2-2, §18A-2-6, §18A-2-7 and §18A-2-8a of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to amend and reenact §18A-4-7a of said code, all relating to school personnel; changing certain deadlines pertaining to termination of a continuing contract, resignation, retirement, transfer and rehiring of probationary employees; changing the number of days prior to the beginning of the instructional term for limiting the transfer of certain employees; and restricting application of certain provisions pertaining to limiting the transfer of certain employees.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That §18A-2-2, §18A-2-6, §18A-2-7 and §18A-2-8a of the code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended and reenacted; and that §18A-4-7a of said code be amended and reenacted, all to read as follows:

#### ARTICLE 2. SCHOOL PERSONNEL.

- §18A-2-2. Employment of teachers; contracts; continuing contract status; how terminated; dismissal for lack of need; released time; failure of teacher to perform contract or violation thereof; written notice bonus for teachers and professional personnel.
  - 1 (a) Before entering upon their duties, all teachers shall
  - 2 execute a contract with their county boards, which shall state

- the salary to be paid and shall be in the form prescribed by the state superintendent. Each contract shall be signed by the teacher and by the president and secretary of the county board and shall be filed, together with the certificate of the teacher, by the secretary of the office of the county board: Provided, That when necessary to facilitate the employment of employable professional personnel and prospective and recent graduates of teacher education programs who have not yet attained certification, the contract may be signed upon the condition that the certificate is issued to the employee prior to the beginning of the employment term in which the employee enters upon his or her duties.
  - (b) Each teacher's contract, under this section, shall be designated as a probationary or continuing contract. A probationary teacher's contract shall be for a term of not less than one nor more than three years, one of which shall be for completion of a beginning teacher internship pursuant to the provisions of section two-b, article three of this chapter, if applicable. If, after three years of such employment, the teacher who holds a professional certificate, based on at least a bachelor's degree, has met the qualifications for a bachelor's degree and the county board enter into a new contract of employment, it shall be a continuing contract, subject to the following:
  - (1) Any teacher holding a valid certificate with less than a bachelor's degree who is employed in a county beyond the three-year probationary period shall upon qualifying for the professional certificate based upon a bachelor's degree, if reemployed, be granted continuing contract status; and
  - (2) A teacher holding continuing contract status with one county shall be granted continuing contract status with any other county upon completion of one year of acceptable employment if the employment is during the next succeeding school year or immediately following an approved leave of absence extending no more than one year.
  - (c) The continuing contract of any teacher shall remain in full force and effect except as modified by mutual consent of

- 40 the school board and the teacher, unless and until terminated,41 subject to the following:
- 42 (1) A continuing contract may not be terminated except:
- (A) By a majority vote of the full membership of the county board on or before March 1 of the then current year, after written notice, served upon the teacher, return receipt requested, stating cause or causes and an opportunity to be heard at a meeting of the board prior to the board's action on the termination issue; or
- 49 (B) By written resignation of the teacher on or before 50 March 1 to initiate termination of a continuing contract;
- 51 (2) The termination shall take effect at the close of the school year in which the contract is terminated;
- (3) The contract may be terminated at any time by mutual
  consent of the school board and the teacher;
- 55 (4) This section does not affect the powers of the school 56 board to suspend or dismiss a principal or teacher pursuant to 57 section eight of this article;

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- (5) A continuing contract for any teacher holding a certificate valid for more than one year and in full force and effect during the school year 1984-1985 shall remain in full force and effect:
- (6) A continuing contract does not operate to prevent a teacher's dismissal based upon the lack of need for the teacher's services pursuant to the provisions of law relating to the allocation to teachers and pupil-teacher ratios. The written notification of teachers being considered for dismissal for lack of need shall be limited to only those teachers whose consideration for dismissal is based upon known or expected circumstances which will require dismissal for lack of need. An employee who was not provided notice and an opportunity for a hearing pursuant to this subsection may not be included on the list. In case of dismissal for lack of need,

a dismissed teacher shall be placed upon a preferred list in the order of their length of service with that board. No teacher may be employed by the board until each qualified teacher upon the preferred list, in order, has been offered the opportunity for reemployment in a position for which he or she is qualified, not including a teacher who has accepted a teaching position elsewhere. The reemployment shall be upon a teacher's preexisting continuing contract and has the same effect as though the contract had been suspended during the time the teacher was not employed.

- (d) In the assignment of position or duties of a teacher under a continuing contract, the board may provide for released time of a teacher for any special professional or governmental assignment without jeopardizing the contractual rights of the teacher or any other rights, privileges or benefits under the provisions of this chapter. Released time shall be provided for any professional educator while serving as a member of the Legislature during any duly constituted session of that body and its interim and statutory committees and commissions without jeopardizing his or her contractual rights or any other rights, privileges, benefits or accrual of experience for placement on the state minimum salary schedule in the following school year under the provisions of this chapter, board policy and law.
- (e) Any teacher who fails to fulfill his or her contract with the board, unless prevented from doing so by personal illness or other just cause or unless released from his or her contract by the board, or who violates any lawful provision of the contract, is disqualified to teach in any other public school in the state for a period of the next ensuing school year and the State Department of Education or board may hold all papers and credentials of the teacher on file for a period of one year for the violation: *Provided*, That marriage of a teacher is not considered a failure to fulfill, or violation of, the contract.
- (f) Any classroom teacher, as defined in section one, article one of this chapter, who desires to resign employment with a county board or request a leave of absence, the resignation or leave of absence to become effective on or

before July 15 of the same year and after completion of the employment term, may do so at any time during the school year by written notification of the resignation or leave of absence and any notification received by a county board shall automatically extend the teacher's public employee insurance coverage until August 31 of the same year.

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(g) (1) A classroom teacher who gives written notice to the county board on or before January 15 of the school year of his or her retirement from employment with the board at the conclusion of the school year shall be paid \$500 from the Early Notification of Retirement line item established for the Department of Education for this purpose, subject to appropriation by the Legislature. If the appropriations to the Department of Education for this purpose are insufficient to compensate all applicable teachers, the Department of Education shall request a supplemental appropriation in an amount sufficient to compensate all such teachers. Additionally, if funds are still insufficient to compensate all applicable teachers, the priority of payment is for teachers who give written notice the earliest. This payment shall not be counted as part of the final average salary for the purpose of calculating retirement.

(2) The position of a classroom teacher providing written notice of retirement pursuant to this subsection may be considered vacant and the county board may immediately post the position as an opening to be filled at the conclusion of the school year. If a teacher has been hired to fill the position of a retiring classroom teacher prior to the start of the next school year, the retiring classroom teacher is disqualified from continuing his or her employment in that position. However, the retiring classroom teacher may be permitted to continue his or her employment in that position and forfeit the early retirement notification payment if, after giving notice of retirement in accordance with this subsection, he or she becomes subject to a significant unforeseen financial hardship, including a hardship caused by the death or illness of an immediate family member or loss of employment of a spouse. Other significant unforeseen financial hardships shall be determined by the county superintendent on a case-by-case basis. This subsection does not prohibit a county school board from eliminating the position of a retiring classroom teacher.

## §18A-2-6. Continuing contract status for service personnel; termination.

1 After three years of acceptable employment, each service 2 personnel employee who enters into a new contract of 3 employment with the board shall be granted continuing contract 4 status: Provided, That a service personnel employee holding 5 continuing contract status with one county shall be granted 6 continuing contract status with any other county upon completion of one year of acceptable employment if such 7 8 employment is during the next succeeding school year or 9 immediately following an approved leave of absence extending no more than one year. The continuing contract of any such 10 11 employee shall remain in full force and effect except as modified 12 by mutual consent of the school board and the employee, unless 13 and until terminated with written notice, stating cause or causes, 14 to the employee, by a majority vote of the full membership of the 15 board before March 1 of the then current year, or by written 16 resignation of the employee on or before that date. The affected 17 employee has the right of a hearing before the board, if requested, before final action is taken by the board upon the 18 termination of such employment. 19

Those employees who have completed three years of acceptable employment as of the effective date of this legislation shall be granted continuing contract status.

# §18A-2-7. Assignment, transfer, promotion, demotion, suspension and recommendation of dismissal of school personnel by superintendent; preliminary notice of transfer; hearing on the transfer; proof required.

1 (a) The superintendent, subject only to approval of the 2 board, may assign, transfer, promote, demote or suspend school 3 personnel and recommend their dismissal pursuant to provisions 4 of this chapter. However, an employee shall be notified in 5 writing by the superintendent on or before March 1 if he or she 6 is being considered for transfer or to be transferred. Only those

employees whose consideration for transfer or intended transfer is based upon known or expected circumstances which will require the transfer of employees shall be considered for transfer or intended for transfer and the notification shall be limited to only those employees. Any teacher or employee who desires to protest the proposed transfer may request in writing a statement of the reasons for the proposed transfer. The statement of reasons shall be delivered to the teacher or employee within ten days of the receipt of the request. Within ten days of the receipt of the statement of the reasons, the teacher or employee may make written demand upon the superintendent for a hearing on the proposed transfer before the county board of education. The hearing on the proposed transfer shall be held on or before April 15. At the hearing, the reasons for the proposed transfer must be shown.

- (b) The superintendent at a meeting of the board on or before April 15 shall furnish in writing to the board a list of teachers and other employees to be considered for transfer and subsequent assignment for the next ensuing school year. An employee who was not provided notice and an opportunity for a hearing pursuant to subsection (a) of this section may not be included on the list. All other teachers and employees not so listed shall be considered as reassigned to the positions or jobs held at the time of this meeting. The list of those recommended for transfer shall be included in the minute record of the meeting and all those so listed shall be notified in writing, which notice shall be delivered in writing. by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the persons' last known addresses within ten days following the board meeting, of their having been so recommended for transfer and subsequent assignment and the reasons therefor.
- (c) The superintendent's authority to suspend school personnel shall be temporary only pending a hearing upon charges filed by the superintendent with the board of education and the period of suspension may not exceed thirty days unless extended by order of the board.
- (d) The provisions of this section respecting hearing upon notice of transfer is not applicable in emergency situations

- 45 where the school building becomes damaged or destroyed
- 46 through an unforeseeable act and which act necessitates a
- 47 transfer of the school personnel because of the
- 48 aforementioned condition of the building.

## §18A-2-8a. Notice to probationary personnel of rehiring or nonrehiring; hearing.

- 1 The superintendent at a meeting of the board on or before
- 2 April 15 of each year shall provide in writing to the board a list
- 3 of all probationary teachers that he or she recommends to be
- 4 rehired for the next ensuing school year. The board shall act
- 5 upon the superintendent's recommendations at that meeting in
- 6 accordance with section one of this article. The board at this
- 7 same meeting shall also act upon the retention of other
- 8 probationary employees as provided in sections two and five of
- 9 this article. Any such probationary teacher or other
- 10 probationary employee who is not rehired by the board at that
- 11 meeting shall be notified in writing, by certified mail, return
- 12 receipt requested, to such persons' last known addresses within
- 13 ten days following said board meeting, of their not having been
- 14 rehired or not having been recommended for rehiring.
- 15 Any probationary teacher who receives notice that he or she
- 16 has not been recommended for rehiring or other probationary
- 17 employee who has not been reemployed may within ten days
- 18 after receiving the written notice request a statement of the
- 19 reasons for not having been rehired and may request a hearing
- 20 before the board. The hearing shall be held at the next regularly
- 21 scheduled board of education meeting or a special meeting of the
- 22 board called within thirty days of the request for hearing. At the
- 23 hearing, the reasons for the nonrehiring must be shown.

#### ARTICLE 4. SALARIES, WAGES AND OTHER BENEFITS.

## §18A-4-7a. Employment, promotion and transfer of professional personnel; seniority.

- 1 (a) A county board of education shall make decisions affecting
- 2 the hiring of professional personnel other than classroom teachers
- 3 on the basis of the applicant with the highest qualifications.

- 4 (b) The county board shall make decisions affecting the 5 hiring of new classroom teachers on the basis of the applicant 6 with the highest qualifications. 7 (c) In judging qualifications for hiring employees pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) of this section, 8 9 consideration shall be given to each of the following: 10 (1) Appropriate certification, licensure or both; 11 (2) Amount of experience relevant to the position; or, in 12 the case of a classroom teaching position, the amount of 13 teaching experience in the subject area; 14 (3) The amount of course work, degree level or both in 15 the relevant field and degree level generally; 16 (4) Academic achievement; 17 (5) Relevant specialized training: 18 (6) Past performance evaluations conducted pursuant to 19 section twelve, article two of this chapter; and 20 (7) Other measures or indicators upon which the relative 21 qualifications of the applicant may fairly be judged. 22 (d) If one or more permanently employed instructional 23 personnel apply for a classroom teaching position and meet 24 the standards set forth in the job posting, the county board of 25 education shall make a decision affecting the filling of the 26 position on the basis of the following criteria: 27 (1) Appropriate certification, licensure or both; 28 (2) Total amount of teaching experience; 29 (3) The existence of teaching experience in the required 30 certification area:
- 31 (4) Degree level in the required certification area;

- 32 (5) Specialized training directly related to the 33 performance of the job as stated in the job description;
- 34 (6) Receiving an overall rating of satisfactory in the 35 previous two evaluations conducted pursuant to section 36 twelve, article two of this chapter; and

#### 37 (7) Seniority.

- (e) In filling positions pursuant to subsection (d) of this section, consideration shall be given to each criterion with each criterion being given equal weight. If the applicant with the most seniority is not selected for the position, upon the request of the applicant a written statement of reasons shall be given to the applicant with suggestions for improving the applicant's qualifications.
- (f) With the exception of guidance counselors, the seniority of classroom teachers, as defined in section one, article one of this chapter shall be determined on the basis of the length of time the employee has been employed as a regular full-time certified and/or licensed professional educator by the county board of education and shall be granted in all areas that the employee is certified, licensed or both.
- (g) Upon completion of one hundred thirty-three days of employment in any one school year, substitute teachers, except retired teachers and other retired professional educators employed as substitutes, shall accrue seniority exclusively for the purpose of applying for employment as a permanent, full-time professional employee. One hundred thirty-three days or more of said employment shall be prorated and shall vest as a fraction of the school year worked by the permanent, full-time teacher.
- (h) Guidance counselors and all other professional employees, as defined in section one, article one of this chapter, except classroom teachers, shall gain seniority in their nonteaching area of professional employment on the basis of the length of time the employee has been employed

by the county board of education in that area: Provided, That if an employee is certified as a classroom teacher, the employee accrues classroom teaching seniority for the time that that employee is employed in another professional area. For the purposes of accruing seniority under this paragraph, employment as principal, supervisor or central office administrator, as defined in section one, article one of this chapter, shall be considered one area of employment.

- (i) Employment for a full employment term shall equal one year of seniority, but no employee may accrue more than one year of seniority during any given fiscal year. Employment for less than the full employment term shall be prorated. A random selection system established by the employees and approved by the board shall be used to determine the priority if two or more employees accumulate identical seniority: *Provided*, That when two or more principals have accumulated identical seniority, decisions on reductions in force shall be based on qualifications.
- (j) Whenever a county board is required to reduce the number of professional personnel in its employment, the employee with the least amount of seniority shall be properly notified and released from employment pursuant to the provisions of section two, article two of this chapter. The provisions of this subsection are subject to the following:
- (1) All persons employed in a certification area to be reduced who are employed under a temporary permit shall be properly notified and released before a fully certified employee in such a position is subject to release;
- (2) An employee subject to release shall be employed in any other professional position where the employee is certified and was previously employed or to any lateral area for which the employee is certified, licensed or both, if the employee's seniority is greater than the seniority of any other employee in that area of certification, licensure or both;
- (3) If an employee subject to release holds certification, licensure or both in more than one lateral area and if the

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103 employee's seniority is greater than the seniority of any other employee in one or more of those areas of certification. 104 licensure or both, the employee subject to release shall be 105 106 employed in the professional position held by the employee 107 with the least seniority in any of those areas of certification. 108 licensure or both: and

(4) If, prior to August 1, of the year a reduction in force is approved, the reason for any particular reduction in force no longer exists as determined by the county board in its sole and exclusive judgment, the board shall rescind the reduction in force or transfer and shall notify the released employee in writing of his or her right to be restored to his or her position of employment. Within five days of being so notified, the released employee shall notify the board, in writing, of his or her intent to resume his or her position of employment or the right to be restored shall terminate. Notwithstanding any other provision of this subdivision, if there is another employee on the preferred recall list with proper certification and higher seniority, that person shall be placed in the position restored as a result of the reduction in force being rescinded.

(k) For the purpose of this article, all positions which meet the definition of "classroom teacher" as defined in section one, article one of this chapter shall be lateral positions. For all other professional positions, the county board of education shall adopt a policy by October 31, 1993, and may modify the policy thereafter as necessary, which defines which positions shall be lateral positions. The board shall submit a copy of its policy to the state board within thirty days of adoption or any modification, and the state board shall compile a report and submit the report to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Accountability by December 31, 1993, and by that date in any succeeding year in which any county board submits a 137 modification of its policy relating to lateral positions. In 138 adopting the policy, the board shall give consideration to the 139 rank of each position in terms of title; nature of 140 responsibilities; salary level; certification, licensure or both; 141 and days in the period of employment.

- (1) After the twentieth day prior to the beginning of the instructional term, no person employed and assigned to a professional position may transfer to another professional position in the county during that instructional term unless the person holding that position does not have valid certification. The provisions of this subsection are subject to the following:
- 149 (1) The person may apply for any posted, vacant 150 positions with the successful applicant assuming the position 151 at the beginning of the next instructional term;

- (2) Professional personnel who have been on an approved leave of absence may fill these vacancies upon their return from the approved leave of absence;
- (3) The county board, upon recommendation of the superintendent may fill a position before the next instructional term when it is determined to be in the best interest of the students. The county superintendent shall notify the state board of each transfer of a person employed in a professional position to another professional position after the twentieth day prior to the beginning of the instructional term;
  - (4) The provisions of this subsection do not apply to the filling of a position vacated because of resignation or retirement that became effective on or before the twentieth day prior to the beginning of the instructional term, but not posted until after that date; and
- (5) The Legislature finds that it is not in the best interest of the students particularly in the elementary grades to have multiple teachers for any one grade level or course during the instructional term. It is the intent of the Legislature that the filling of positions through transfers of personnel from one professional position to another after the twentieth day prior to the beginning of the instructional term should be kept to a minimum.
- 175 (m) All professional personnel whose seniority with the 176 county board is insufficient to allow their retention by the

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- county board during a reduction in work force shall be placed 177 178 upon a preferred recall list. As to any professional position 179 opening within the area where they had previously been 180 employed or to any lateral area for which they have 181 certification, licensure or both, the employee shall be recalled 182 on the basis of seniority if no regular, full-time professional 183 personnel, or those returning from leaves of absence with 184 greater seniority, are qualified, apply for and accept the 185 position.
- (n) Before position openings that are known or expected to extend for twenty consecutive employment days or longer for professional personnel may be filled by the board, the board shall be required to notify all qualified professional personnel on the preferred list and give them an opportunity to apply, but failure to apply shall not cause the employee to 192 forfeit any right to recall. The notice shall be sent by 193 certified mail to the last known address of the employee, and 194 it shall be the duty of each professional personnel to notify 195 the board of continued availability annually, of any change in 196 address or of any change in certification, licensure or both.
  - (o) Openings in established, existing or newly created positions shall be processed as follows:
- 199 (1) Boards shall be required to post and date notices 200 which shall be subject to the following:
- 201 (A) The notices shall be posted in conspicuous working 202 places for all professional personnel to observe for at least 203 five working days;
- 204 (B) The notice shall be posted within twenty working 205 days of the position openings and shall include the job 206 description;
- 207 (C) Any special criteria or skills that are required by the 208 position shall be specifically stated in the job description and 209 directly related to the performance of the job;

- 210 (D) Postings for vacancies made pursuant to this section 211 shall be written so as to ensure that the largest possible pool 212 of qualified applicants may apply; and
- 213 (E) Job postings may not require criteria which are not 214 necessary for the successful performance of the job and may 215 not be written with the intent to favor a specific applicant;
- 216 (2) No vacancy shall be filled until after the five-day minimum posting period;
- 218 (3) If one or more applicants meets the qualifications 219 listed in the job posting, the successful applicant to fill the 220 vacancy shall be selected by the board within thirty working 221 days of the end of the posting period;
- 223 (4) A position held by a teacher who is certified, licensed 223 or both, who has been issued a permit for full-time 224 employment and is working toward certification in the permit 225 area shall not be subject to posting if the certificate is 226 awarded within five years; and
  - (5) Nothing provided herein shall prevent the county board of education from eliminating a position due to lack of need.

- 229 (p) Notwithstanding any other provision of the code to 230 the contrary, where the total number of classroom teaching 231 positions in an elementary school does not increase from one 232 school year to the next, but there exists in that school a need 233 to realign the number of teachers in one or more grade levels. 234 kindergarten through six, teachers at the school may be reassigned to grade levels for which they are certified without 235 236 that position being posted: Provided, That the employee and the county board of education mutually agree to the 237 238 reassignment.
- 239 (q) Reductions in classroom teaching positions in 240 elementary schools shall be processed as follows:
- 241 (1) When the total number of classroom teaching 242 positions in an elementary school needs to be reduced, the

- reduction shall be made on the basis of seniority with the least senior classroom teacher being recommended for transfer; and
  - (2) When a specified grade level needs to be reduced and the least senior employee in the school is not in that grade level, the least senior classroom teacher in the grade level that needs to be reduced shall be reassigned to the position made vacant by the transfer of the least senior classroom teacher in the school without that position being posted: *Provided*, That the employee is certified, licensed or both and agrees to the reassignment.
  - (r) Any board failing to comply with the provisions of this article may be compelled to do so by mandamus and shall be liable to any party prevailing against the board for court costs and reasonable attorney fees as determined and established by the court. Further, employees denied promotion or employment in violation of this section shall be awarded the job, pay and any applicable benefits retroactive to the date of the violation and payable entirely from local funds. Further, the board shall be liable to any party prevailing against the board for any court reporter costs including copies of transcripts.
  - (s) The county board shall compile, update annually on July 1 and make available by electronic or other means to all employees a list of all professional personnel employed by the county, their areas of certification and their seniority.

The Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills hereby certifies that the foregoing bill is correctly enrolled.

Chairman, House Committee Originating in the House. To take effect from passage. Delegates Clerk of Clerk of the Senate of the Senate and this the 15 th The within (a) apon day of Marak , 2012.

#### PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNOR

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