# WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

**2019 FIRST EXTRAORDINARY SESSION** 

### Introduced

## **House Bill 176**

By Delegate Espinosa

[Introduced June 17, 2019; Referred

to the Select Committee on Education Reform B]

A BILL to amend and reenact §18-5-14 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to amend and reenact §18-5A-2 and §18-5A-3 of said code, all relating to powers, duties, membership and meetings of local school improvement councils; requiring county board to meet at least annually with local school improvement council of low performing school and making meetings with other councils optional; removing requirement to file school board effectiveness policies with state board; requiring certain improvement council officers to address council's dialogue with parents and others at meeting with county board; removing requirement for county boards to report details of meetings with councils to state board; modifying membership of improvement councils; increasing prior notice of council meetings; removing council duty for meeting on student discipline issues and reporting to countywide council on productive and safe schools; requiring at least one council meeting annually for dialogue with parents and others on school's academic performance and standing; requiring meeting of certain council members of low performing school with state board and providing minimum issues to be addressed; referencing council authority to propose alternatives and request waivers of rules, policies, interpretations and state statutes; expanding issues on which school required to cooperate with council to promote innovations and improvements; reorganizing and clarifying authority and procedures for local school improvement councils to propose alternatives to the operation of school including request of waiver to rules, policies, interpretations and state statutes; and preserving primary authority of county board to approve alternatives subject to grant of necessary waivers by other bodies.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

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#### ARTICLE 5. COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION.

#### §18-5-14. Policies to promote school board effectiveness.

(a) No later than August 1, 2003, January, 2020, each county board shall adopt and file with the state board copies of policies and summaries of policies that promote school board

effectiveness and may modify the policies as necessary. These policies may be modified by the county board as necessary, but shall be refiled with the state board following each modification. The policies shall address the following objectives:

- (1) Establishing direct links between the county board and its local school improvement councils and between the county board and its faculty senates for the purpose of enabling the county board to receive information, comments and suggestions directly from the councils and faculty senates regarding the broad guidelines for oversight procedures, standards of accountability and planning for future needs as required by this section. To further development of these linkages, each county board shall:
- (A) Meet at least annually with a quorum of members from each the local school improvement council in the district of each school deemed to be low performing under the accountability system established by the state board. The meeting or meetings shall be held at a time and in a manner to be determined by the county board; except, in order to facilitate scheduling, the county board may adopt an alternate procedure allowing it to conduct the required annual meeting with each council in the absence of a quorum of council members if the alternate procedure has received prior approval from the state board and if the school district serves more than twenty thousand students or has more than twelve public schools.

Nothing in this section prohibits a county board from meeting with representatives of a local school improvement council, but at least one annual meeting shall be held, as specified in this section.

At any time and with reasonable advance notice, county boards may schedule additional meetings with the council for any low performing school in the district

(B) At least 30 days before an annual <u>a</u> meeting with each <u>the</u> local school improvement council <u>of a school deemed to be low performing</u>, develop and submit to the council an agenda for the <u>annual</u> meeting which requires the <u>school principal and</u> council chair or a member designated by the chair, to address items designated by the county board from the report created

pursuant to this section the dialogue of its meeting or meetings at which the parents, students, school employees, business partners and other interested parties were given the opportunity to make specific suggestions on how to address issues which are seen to affect the school's academic performance. The principal, council chair or other designated member shall also address any reports by the county superintendent with respect to the school's performance and progress, and any one or more of the following issues as determined by the county board:

- (i) School performance;
- (ii) Curriculum;

- (iii) Status of the school in meeting the <u>unified school school's strategic</u> improvement plan established pursuant to <u>section five</u>, <u>article two-e of this chapter</u> §18-2E-5 of this code; and
- (iv) Status of the school in meeting the county relevant parts of the county's strategic improvement plan established pursuant to section five, article two-e of this chapter §18-2E-5 of this code;
- (C) Make written requests for information from the local school improvement council throughout the year or hold community forums to receive input from the affected community as the county board considers necessary; and
- (D) Nothing in this subdivision prohibits a county board from meeting with and requesting information from representatives of any of its local school improvement councils such times and in such manner determined by the county board.
- (D) Report details to the state board concerning the meeting or meetings held with councils, as specified in this section. The information shall be provided to the state board at the conclusion of the school year, but no later than September 1, of each year, and shall become an indicator in the performance accreditation process for each county. In order to facilitate development of this report, a county board may consult with and request assistance from members of the councils
  - (2) Providing for the development of direct links between the county board and the

community at large allowing for community involvement at regular county board meetings and specifying how the county board will communicate regularly with the public regarding important issues:

- (3) Providing for the periodic review of personnel policies of the district in order to determine their effectiveness;
- (4) Setting broad guidelines for the school district, including the establishment of specific oversight procedures, the development and implementation of standards of accountability and the development of long-range plans to meet future needs as required by this section; and
- (5) Using school-based accreditation accountability and performance data provided by the state board and other available data in county board decision-making to meet the education goals of the state and other goals as the county board may establish.
- (b) On or before August 1, of each year, county school boards shall review the policies listed in subsection (a) of this section and may modify these policies as necessary.

#### ARTICLE 5A. LOCAL SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT.

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## §18-5A-2. Local school improvement councils; election and appointment of members and officers; meetings; required meetings with county board; assistance from state board.

- (a) A local school improvement council shall be established at every school consisting of 2 the following:
  - (1) The principal, who serves as an ex officio member of the council and is entitled to vote;
- 4 (2) Three teachers elected by the faculty senate of the school;
  - (3) Two service persons elected by the service personnel employed at the school, one of whom shall be a one bus operator who transports students enrolled at the school; and one school service person, each elected by the school service personnel employed at the school;
    - (4) Three parent(s), guardian(s) or custodian(s) of students enrolled at the school elected by the parent(s), guardian(s) or custodian(s) members of the school's parent teacher organization.

If there is no parent teacher organization, the parent(s), guardian(s) or custodian(s) members shall be elected by the parent(s), guardian(s) or custodian(s) of students enrolled at the school in such manner as may be determined by the principal. <u>Under no circumstances may a parent member of the council be then employed at that school in any capacity;</u>

- (5) Two Three at-large members appointed by the principal, at least one of whom resides in the school's attendance area, and at least one of whom represents business or industry, neither of whom is are eligible for any local school improvement council membership under any of the other elected classes of members;
- (6) In the case of vocational-technical schools, <u>comprehensive middle schools and comprehensive high schools</u>, the vocational director <u>or principal</u>, as applicable, <u>lf there is no vocational director</u>, then the principal may appoint no more than two additional representatives, <u>one of whom represents business and one of whom represents industry shall appoint up to four additional members from any one or more of the following categories: <u>Employer</u>; <u>employer sponsored training program</u>; apprenticeship program; and post-secondary education; and</u>
- (7) In the case of a school with students in grade seven or higher, the student body president or other student in grade seven or higher elected by the student body in those grades.
- (b) Under no circumstances may more than one parent member of the council be then employed at that school in any capacity
- (e) (b) The principal shall arrange for such elections the election of members to the local school improvement council to be held prior to September 15, of each school year to elect a council and shall give notice of the elections at least one week prior to the elections being held. To the extent practicable, all elections to select council members shall be held within the same week.
- (d) (c) Parent(s), guardian(s) or custodian(s), teachers and service personnel elected to the council shall serve a two-year term and elections shall be arranged in such a manner that no more than two teachers, no more than two parent(s), guardian(s) or custodian(s) and no more

than one service person are elected in a given year. All other nonex officio members shall serve one-year terms.

- (e) (d) Council members may only be replaced upon death, resignation, failure to appear at three consecutive meetings of the council for which notice was given, or a change in personal circumstances so that the person is no longer representative of the class of members from which appointed. In the case of a vacancy in an elected position, the chair of the council shall appoint another qualified person to serve the unexpired term of the person being replaced or, in the case of an appointed member of the council, the principal shall appoint a replacement as soon as practicable.
- (f) (e) As soon as practicable after the election of council members, and no later than October 1, of each school year, the principal shall convene an organizational meeting of the school improvement council. The principal shall notify each member in writing by written or electronic means at least two five-employment days in advance of the organizational meeting. At this meeting, the principal shall provide each member with the following:
  - (1) A copy of the current applicable sections of this code;
- (2) Any state board rule or regulation promulgated pursuant to the operation of these councils; and
- (3) Any information as may be developed by the Department of Education on the operation and powers of local school improvement councils and their important role in improving student and school performance and progress.
- (g) (f) The council shall elect from its membership a chair and two members to assist the chair in setting the agenda for each council meeting. The chair shall serve a term of one year. and a person may not serve as chair for more than two consecutive terms If the chair's position becomes vacant for any reason, the principal shall call a meeting of the council to elect another qualified person to serve the unexpired term. Once elected, the chair is responsible for notifying each member of the school improvement council in writing two five employment days in advance

of any council meeting.

(h) (g) School improvement councils shall meet at least once every nine weeks or equivalent grading period at the call of the chair or by the petition of three fourths of its members.

The principal shall notify each member by written or electronic means at least five employment days in advance of the organizational meeting.

(1) The school improvement council shall schedule any meeting that involves the issue of student discipline pursuant to subdivision (2), subsection (I) of this section, outside the regularly scheduled working hours of any school employee member of the council.

(2) (h) The school improvement council annually shall conduct a <u>at least one</u> meeting to engage parents, students, school employees, <u>business partners</u> and other interested parties in a positive and interactive dialogue regarding effective discipline policies. The meeting shall afford ample time for the dialogue and comply with any applicable provision of state, federal or county beard policy, rule or law, as appropriate, regarding student privacy rights the school's academic performance and standing as determined by measures adopted by the state board. The dialogue shall include an opportunity for the parents, students, school employees, business partners and other interested parties to make specific suggestions on how to address issues which are seen to affect the school's academic performance which may include, but not limited to, parent and community involvement, the learning environment, student engagement, attendance, supports for at-risk students, curricular offerings, resources and the capacity for school improvement. The council shall announce any such meeting ten employment days in advance.

(i) The local school improvement council of each school deemed to be low performing under the accountability system established by the state board shall meet at least annually with the county board. in accordance with the provisions in section fourteen, article five of this chapter. At this annual any such meeting, the principal and local school improvement council chair, or another member designated by the chair, shall be prepared to address the dialogue at its meeting or meetings to give the parents, students, school employees, business partners and other

interested parties an opportunity to make specific suggestions on how to address issues which are seen to affect the school's academic performance and any other matters as may be requested by the county board as specified in the meeting agenda provided to the council and may further provide any other information, comments or suggestions the local school improvement council wishes to bring to the county board's attention. Anything presented under this subsection shall be submitted to the county board in writing.

- (j) <u>Local</u> school improvement councils shall be considered for the receipt of school of excellence awards under section three of this article and competitive grant awards under section twenty-nine, article two of this chapter and may receive and expend such grants for the purposes provided. in such section <u>Local school improvement councils may propose alternatives to the operation of the school in accordance with §18-5A-3 of this code and may include in the proposal a request for a waiver of rules and policies of the county board and state board, state superintendent interpretations, and state statutes if necessary to implement the proposal.</u>
- (k) In any and all matters which may fall within the scope of both the school improvement councils and the school curriculum teams authorized in section five of this article, the school curriculum teams have jurisdiction.
- (k) (I) In order to promote innovations and improvements in the environment for teaching and learning at the school, a school improvement council shall receive cooperation from the school in implementing policies and programs it may adopt to:
- (1) Encourage the involvement of parent(s), guardian(s) or custodian(s) in their child's educational process and in the school;
- (2) Encourage businesses to provide time for their employees who are parent(s), quardian(s) or custodian(s) to meet with teachers concerning their child's education;
  - (3) Encourage advice and suggestions from the business community;
  - (4) Encourage school volunteer programs and mentorship programs; and
  - (5) Foster utilization of the school facilities and grounds for public community activities;

114 (6) Encourage students to adopt safe and healthy lifestyles; and (7) Communicate to students the common skills and attributes sought by employers in 115 116 prospective employees. 117 (I) Each local school improvement council annually shall develop and deliver a report to 118 the countywide council on productive and safe schools. The report shall include: 119 (1) Guidelines for the instruction and rehabilitation of students who have been excluded 120 from the classroom, suspended from the school or expelled from the school, the description and 121 recommendation of in-school suspension programs, a description of possible alternative settings, 122 schedules for instruction and alternative education programs and an implementation schedule for 123 such guidelines. The guidelines shall include the following: 124 (A) A system to provide for effective communication and coordination between school and 125 local emergency services agencies; 126 (B) A preventive discipline program which may include the responsible students program 127 devised by the West Virginia Board of Education as adopted by the county board, pursuant to the 128 provisions of subsection (e), section one, article five, chapter eighteen-a of this code; and 129 (C) A student involvement program, which may include the peer mediation program or 130 programs devised by the West Virginia Board of Education as adopted by the county board, 131 pursuant to the provisions of subsection (e), section one, article five, chapter eighteen-a of this 132 code; and 133 (2) The local school improvement council's findings regarding its examination of the 134 following, which also shall be reported to the county superintendent: 135 (A) Disciplinary measures at the school; and 136 (B) The fairness and consistency of disciplinary actions at the school. If the council 137 believes that student discipline at the school is not enforced fairly or consistently, it shall transmit 138 that determination in writing, along with supporting information, to the county superintendent. 139 Within ten days of receiving the report, the superintendent, or designee, shall respond in writing

to the council. The county board shall retain and file all such correspondence and maintain it for public review.

(C) Any report or communication made as required by this subdivision shall comply with any applicable provision of state, federal or county board policy, rule or law, as appropriate, regarding student privacy rights.

(m) The council may include in its report to the county-wide council on productive and safe schools provisions of the state Board of Education policy 4373, student code of conduct, or any expansion of such policy which increases the safety of students in schools in this state and is consistent with the policies and other laws of this state

(n) (m) Councils may adopt their own guidelines established under this section. In addition, the councils may adopt all or any part of the guidelines proposed by other local school improvement councils, as developed under this section, which are not inconsistent with the laws of this state, the policies of the West Virginia Board of Education or the policies of the county board.

(e) (n) The State Board of Education shall provide assistance to a local school improvement council upon receipt of a reasonable request for that assistance. The state board also may solicit proposals from other parties or entities to provide orientation training for local school improvement council members and may enter into contracts or agreements for that purpose. Any training for members shall meet the guidelines established by the state board.

## §18-5A-3. Authority and procedures for local school improvement councils to request waivers of certain rules, policies, and interpretations and statutes.

(a) The intent of this section is to establish a mechanism which allows local school level initiatives to be designed and implemented to meet local school needs and circumstances. In accordance with this intent, a local school improvement council established under the provisions of this article §18-5A-2 of this code may propose alternatives to the operation of the public school which alternatives will meet or exceed the high quality standards established by the state board

and will increase administrative efficiency, enhance the delivery of instructional programs, promote student engagement in the learning process, promote business partnerships, promote parent and community involvement at the school in the local school system or any other alternatives that will improve the educational performance of the school generally. For an alternative to be proposed, at least two thirds of the members of the local school improvement council must vote in favor of the proposal.

- (b) The proposal of the council An alternative proposed by a local school improvement council shall set forth:
  - (1) The objective or objectives to be accomplished under the proposal;
- (2) How the accomplishment of such objective or objectives will meet or exceed the standards established by the state board;
  - (3) The indicators upon which the meeting of such standards should be judged; and
- (4) A projection of any funds to be saved by the proposal and how such funds will be reallocated within the school, or any costs associated with the proposal and proposed funding sources;
- (5) The alternatives proposed by the council may include matters which require the waiver of Any policies or rules promulgated by the state or county board, and any state superintendent interpretations and any state statutes for which a waiver will be required for the proposed alternative to be implemented; and *Provided*, That such request for waiver be submitted to the appropriate board adopting said rule or policy and that board may approve the waiver.
- (6) If the alternative to be proposed includes the request for a waiver of policies or rules promulgated by the state or county board, state superintendent interpretations or state statutes affecting employees, then prior to the proposal of the alternative, a majority of the local affected employee group must agree.
- (c) A local school improvement council shall submit its proposed alternative to the county board. The county board shall acknowledge receipt of the proposal and promptly review the

proposed alternative. The county board may request additional information and clarifications from the local school improvement council regarding the proposed alternative. The county board shall approve or disapprove the proposal and return it to the council with a statement of the reasons for the action taken, subject to the following:

(1) If an alternative proposed by the local school improvement council requires the waiver of any policies or rules promulgated by the county board, approval of the proposal by the county board constitutes a grant of the waiver;

(2) If an alternative proposed by the local school improvement council requires the waiver of any policies or rules promulgated by the state board and the county board approves the proposal except that a waiver by the state board is required, the county board shall forward the approved proposal to the state board for final determination. The state board shall acknowledge receipt of the proposal and promptly review the proposed alternative in consultation with the county board or their agents and, in its discretion, approve implementation of the alternative or reply to the county board and council within a reasonable time as to its reasons for not approving the proposed alternative. Approval of the proposal by the state board constitutes a grant of the waiver;

(3) If an alternative proposed by the local school improvement council requires the waiver of a state superintendent's interpretation and the county board county approves the proposal except that a waiver by the state superintendent is required, the county board shall forward the approved proposal to the state superintendent for final determination. The state superintendent shall acknowledge receipt of the proposal and promptly review the proposed alternative in consultation with the county board or their agents and, in his or her discretion, approve implementation of the alternative or reply to the county board and council within a reasonable time as to its reasons for not approving the proposed alternative. Approval of the proposal by the state superintendent constitutes a grant of the waiver;

(4) If an alternative proposed by the local school improvement council requires the waiver

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of a state statute and the county board county approves the proposal except that a waiver of the statute is required, the county board shall forward the approved proposal to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability. The commission shall acknowledge receipt of the proposal and promptly review the proposed alternative in consultation with the county board or their agents and determine whether a recommendation should be made for an Act of the Legislature to waive the statute to permit implementation of the proposed alternative;

(5) If an alternative that requires a waiver is proposed by more than one local school improvement council in the county and the county board approves, the county board may forward a consolidated proposal requesting the waiver to the appropriate bodies as provided in this subsection; and

(6) When an alternative to the operation of a school is approved, the county board shall

69 establish a process for evaluation of the operation of the alternative. Approval for the operation of 70 the alternative may be continued or revoked at any time based on the results and findings of the 71 evaluation. 72 When a county board does not act within two months after receiving a request for waiver of a 73 county board policy or rule or disapproves such a request, the local school improvement council 74 may seek an advisory opinion from the state board regarding the waiver request. The county 75 board shall furnish the state board with copies of all waiver requests together with their response 76 thereto. Provided, however, That when a local school improvement council votes to waive a state 77 superintendent's interpretation, the state superintendent need only be notified that the local 78 council intends to waive the state superintendent's interpretation: Provided further, That 79 notwithstanding any other provisions of the law to the contrary, council is not prohibited from 80 permitting off-site classrooms to be developed in conjunction with local businesses if those sites 81 have met the requirements established by the local board and if sites are located off campus. For 82 an alternative to be proposed, at least two thirds of the members must vote in favor thereof: And 83 provided further. That if the alternative to be proposed relates to a waiver of policies or rules

promulgated by the state or county board and state superintendent interpretations affecting employees, then prior to the proposal of the alternative, a majority of the local affected employee group involved must agree.

A council may also submit a written statement, with supporting reasons, to the Legislative Oversight commission on education accountability recommending a waiver of a statute or legislative rule, which the commission shall review and determine whether a recommendation should be made to the Legislature to waive such statute or rule.

When a council decides to propose an alternative, it shall forward a copy of the proposal to the state board and the affected local board. The state board shall acknowledge receipt of the proposed alternative, promptly review the proposed alternative in consultation with the county board or their agents and, in its discretion, approve implementation of the alternative or reply to the council within a reasonable time as to its reasons for not approving the proposed alternative. If the state board approves a proposed alternative, the state board shall provide appropriate notice to the local school improvement council and the county board and shall establish a process for evaluation of the operation of the alternative. Approval for the operation of the alternative may be continued or revoked at any time based on the results and findings of the evaluation

- (d) Notwithstanding any other provisions of the law to the contrary, a local school improvement council is not prohibited from permitting off-site classrooms to be developed in conjunction with local businesses if those sites have met the requirements established by the local board and if sites are located off campus.
- (e) The state board shall submit a report to the Legislative Oversight commission on education accountability and the Governor on September 1, of each year summarizing the proposed alternatives received, approved or rejected, continued or revoked during the preceding school year and the results and findings of the evaluations. The report shall specifically identify all policy, rule, and interpretation waiver requests including those requests made to county boards by local school improvement councils received during the preceding year and the disposition of

110 each.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to clarify and streamline the authority and procedures for local school improvement councils to propose alternatives to the operation of their schools including requesting of waivers to rules, policies, interpretations and state statutes. The bill also enhances the powers, duties and membership of the councils, particularly those at comprehensive middle and high schools. It requires the councils to hold at least one meeting annually for a dialogue with parents and others on the school's academic performance and standing and illicit suggestions. The local school improvement council of a low performing school will be required to meet with the county board to address this dialogue with the parents and others. The requirement for the council to meet annually on student discipline issues and report to the countywide council on productive and safe schools is removed.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.