

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2019 REGULAR SESSION

Enrolled

Committee Substitute

for

Committee Substitute

for

Senate Bill 1

SENATORS CARMICHAEL (MR. PRESIDENT), SYPOLT,
CLINE, TAKUBO, BOSO, CLEMENTS, SWOPE, SMITH,
IHLENFELD, BALDWIN, STOLLINGS, WELD, AND PLYMALE,
original sponsors

[Passed March 7, 2019; in effect 90 days from passage]

1 AN ACT to amend and reenact §18-2-6 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; to amend
2 said code by adding thereto a new section, designated §18-2E-11; to amend and reenact
3 §18-9A-2 of said code; to amend said code by adding thereto a new section, designated
4 §18B-3C-16; and to amend said code by adding thereto a new article, designated §18C-
5 9-1, §18C-9-2, §18C-9-3, §18C-9-4, §18C-9-5, and §18C-9-6, all relating generally to
6 increasing access to career education and workforce training; requiring State Board of
7 Education to promulgate rules for advanced certifications; providing that certain individuals
8 who have completed a secondary education program in a public, private, or home school
9 shall be considered adults enrolled in regular secondary programs for funding purposes;
10 redesignating certain qualifying tests as high school equivalency tests; requiring pathways
11 and other additional requirements for Advanced Career Education programs; requiring
12 community and technical colleges, public baccalaureate institutions, career technical
13 education centers, and county boards of education, or any combination of such secondary
14 and postsecondary entities, to establish partnerships that provide for Advanced Career
15 Education programs; providing requirements for Advanced Career Education programs
16 and pathways; requiring Department of Commerce to provide written notification to State
17 Board of Education, West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College
18 Education, and West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission of a determination of
19 areas of workforce need within the state and to develop a hierarchy therefor; requiring
20 State Superintendent of Schools, Chancellor of the Council for Community and Technical
21 College Education, Chancellor of the Higher Education Policy Commission, and the
22 Chancellor of the Higher Education Policy Commission to facilitate the Advanced Career
23 Education programs; requiring State Board of Education and West Virginia Council for
24 Community and Technical College Education to jointly promulgate certain guidelines and
25 maintain and report certain information to Governor and Legislative Oversight Commission
26 on Education Accountability; requiring State Superintendent of Schools, Chancellor for the

27 Council for Community and Technical College Education, and Chancellor of the Higher
28 Education Policy Commission to approve written partnership agreements; modifying
29 definition of “net enrollment” to increase number of Advanced Career Education programs
30 students for which secondary education funding may be provided and imposing conditions
31 on certain institutions to receive funding; encouraging community and technical colleges
32 that offer associate degrees to enter into collaborative agreements with federally
33 registered apprenticeship programs and requiring a report regarding such collaborative
34 agreements be provided to the Legislature and Governor annually; establishing WV
35 Invests Grant Program; providing findings and purposes; defining terms; providing for
36 administration of program by vice chancellor for administration; requiring West Virginia
37 Council for Community and Technical College Education to award WV Invests grants
38 under certain terms and conditions; requiring the council to report certain information on
39 WV Invests Grant Program to Governor and Legislature; requiring the council to propose
40 legislative rules and authorizing emergency rules; limiting eligibility for funding beginning
41 fiscal year 2021; providing eligibility and renewal requirements for a WV Invests Grant;
42 requiring applicants enter into certain agreements; and establishing the WV Invests Fund.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

CHAPTER 18. EDUCATION.

ARTICLE 2. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

§18-2-6. Classification and standardization of schools; standards for degrees and diplomas; certificates of proficiency; establishment of alternative education programs.

1 (a) The state board shall promulgate rules for the accreditation, classification, and
2 standardization of all schools in the state, except institutions of higher education, and shall
3 determine the minimum standards for granting diplomas, advanced certifications, and certificates
4 of proficiency by those schools.

5 (1) The certificates of proficiency shall include specific information regarding the
6 graduate's skills, competence, and readiness for employment, or honors and advanced education
7 and shall be granted, along with the diploma, to every eligible high school graduate.

8 (2) The certificate of proficiency shall include the program of study major completed by the
9 student only for those students who have completed the required major courses, or higher level
10 courses, advanced placement courses, college courses, or other more rigorous substitutes
11 related to the major, and the recommended electives.

12 (3) Students who have completed a secondary education program in a public, private, or
13 home school and have continued to be enrolled in a program leading to an advanced certification
14 or an advanced career education program shall be considered adults enrolled in regular
15 secondary programs in accordance with §18-9A-2(i) of this code: *Provided*, That the State
16 Superintendent of Schools, the Chancellor for the Council for Community and Technical College
17 Education, the Chancellor of the Higher Education Policy Commission, and the Secretary of the
18 Department of Commerce may designate additional programs that provide valuable workplace
19 credentials and students enrolled in such programs shall also be considered adults enrolled in
20 regular secondary programs in accordance with §18-9A-2(i) of this code.

21 (b) An institution of less than collegiate or university status may not grant any diploma or
22 certificate of proficiency on any basis of work or merit below the minimum standards prescribed
23 by the state board.

24 (c) A charter or other instrument containing the right to issue diplomas or certificates of
25 proficiency may not be granted by the State of West Virginia to any institution or other associations
26 or organizations of less than collegiate or university status within the state until the condition of
27 granting or issuing the diplomas or other certificates of proficiency has first been approved in
28 writing by the state board.

29 (d) The state board shall promulgate a rule for the approval of alternative education
30 programs for disruptive students who are at risk of not succeeding in the traditional school
31 structure.

32 (1) This rule may provide for the waiver of other policies of the state board, the
33 establishment and delivery of a nontraditional curriculum, the establishment of licensure
34 requirements for alternative education program teachers, and the establishment of performance
35 measures for school accreditation.

36 (2) This rule shall provide uniform definitions of disruptive student behavior and uniform
37 standards for the placement of students in alternative settings or providing other interventions
38 including referrals to local juvenile courts to correct student behavior so that they can return to a
39 regular classroom without engaging in further disruptive behavior.

40 (e) The state board shall establish up to five pilot projects at the elementary or middle
41 school levels, or both, that employ alternative schools or other placements for disruptive students
42 to learn appropriate behaviors so they can return to the regular classroom without further
43 disrupting the learning environment. The state board shall report to the Legislative Oversight
44 Commission on Education Accountability by December 1, 2010, on its progress in establishing
45 the pilot projects and by December 1 in each year after that for the duration of the pilot projects
46 on the effect of the projects on maintaining student discipline.

47 (f) If a student attends an approved alternative education program or the Mountaineer
48 Challenge Academy, which is designated as a special alternative education program pursuant to
49 §15-1B-24 of this code, and the student graduates or passes the high school equivalency tests
50 within five years of beginning ninth grade, that student shall be considered graduated for the
51 purposes of calculating the high school graduation rate used for school accreditation and school
52 system approval, subject to the following:

53 (1) The student shall be considered graduated only to the extent that this is not in conflict
54 with any provision of federal law relating to graduation rates;

55 (2) If the state board determines that this is in conflict with a provision of federal law relating
56 to graduation rates, the state board shall request a waiver from the United States Department of
57 Education; and

58 (3) If the waiver is granted, notwithstanding the provisions of §18-2-6(f)(1) of this code, the
59 student graduating or passing the high school equivalency tests within five years shall be
60 considered graduated.

61 (g) The state board shall promulgate a rule to support the operation of the National Guard
62 Youth Challenge Program operated by the Adjutant General and known as the Mountaineer
63 Challenge Academy which is designated as a special alternative education program pursuant to
64 §15-1B-24 of this code for students who are at risk of not succeeding in the traditional school
65 structure. The rule shall set forth policies and procedures applicable only to the Mountaineer
66 Challenge Academy that provide for, but are not limited to, the following:

67 (1) Implementation of provisions set forth in §15-1B-24 of this code;

68 (2) Precedence of the policies and procedures designated by the National Guard Bureau
69 for the operation of the Mountaineer Challenge Academy special alternative education program;

70 (3) Consideration of a student participating in the Mountaineer Challenge Academy special
71 alternative education program at full enrollment status in the referring county for the purposes of
72 funding and calculating attendance and graduation rates, subject to the following:

73 (A) The student shall be considered at full enrollment status only for the purposes of
74 calculating attendance and graduation rates to the extent that this is not in conflict with any
75 provision of federal law relating to attendance or graduation rates;

76 (B) If the state board determines that this is in conflict with a provision of federal law
77 relating to attendance or graduation rates, the state board shall request a waiver from the United
78 States Department of Education;

79 (C) If the waiver is granted, notwithstanding the provisions of §18-2-6(g)(3)(A) of this code,
80 the student shall be considered at full enrollment status in the referring county for the purposes
81 of calculating attendance and graduation rates; and

82 (D) Consideration of the student at full enrollment status in the referring county is for the
83 purposes of funding and calculating attendance and graduation rates only. For any other purpose,
84 a student participating in the academy is considered withdrawn from the public school system;

85 (4) Articulation of the knowledge, skills, and competencies gained through alternative
86 education so that students who return to regular education may proceed toward attainment or
87 may attain the standards for graduation without duplication;

88 (5) Consideration of eligibility to take the high school equivalency tests by qualifying within
89 the extraordinary circumstances provisions established by state board rule for a student
90 participating in the Mountaineer Challenge Academy special alternative education program who
91 does not meet any other criteria for eligibility; and

92 (6) Payment of tuition by a county board to the Mountaineer Challenge Academy for each
93 student graduating from the academy with a high school diploma that resides in that county
94 board's school district. For purposes of this subdivision, "tuition" means an amount equal to 75
95 percent of the amount allotted per pupil under the school aid formula.

96 (h) Nothing in this section or the rules promulgated under this section compels the
97 Mountaineer Challenge Academy to be operated as a special alternative education program or to
98 be subject to any other laws governing the public schools except by its consent.

99 (i) The Legislature makes the following findings regarding students at risk:

100 (1) *Defeated and discouraged learners.* —

101 (A) Any child who is unlikely to graduate on schedule with both the skills and self-esteem
102 necessary to exercise meaningful options in the areas of work, leisure, culture, civic affairs, and
103 personal relationships may be defined as being an at-risk student;

104 (B) Problems associated with students at risk often begin for them in the early grades as
105 they gradually fall further behind in the essential skills of reading, writing, and math;

106 (C) These problems may be accompanied by such behavior patterns as poor attendance,
107 inattentiveness, negative attitudes, and acting out in class. These patterns are both symptoms of
108 and added catalysts for students to become increasingly defeated and discouraged learners;

109 (D) By the middle grades, students with growing skill deficits usually know they are behind
110 other students and have good reason to feel discouraged. A growing lack of self-confidence and

111 self-worth, limited optimism for the future, avoidance of school and adults, and a dimming view of
112 the relationship between effort and achievement are among the characteristics of defeated and
113 discouraged learners;

114 (E) Public schools are expected to address the needs of all students, minimizing the
115 likelihood that they will become at risk and giving additional attention to those who do; however,
116 the circumstances involved with a becoming at risk often are complex and may include influences
117 both within and outside of the school environment; and

118 (F) In fragile homes, a child who is at risk and is becoming a discouraged and defeated
119 learner often lacks adequate support and may develop peer relationships that further exacerbate
120 the difficulty of reengaging him or her in learning, school, and responsible social behavior.

121 (2) The Legislature further finds that the public schools should not be deterred from
122 seeking and assisting with enrollment of students in an alternative program that helps remedy the
123 discouragement, lessens skill deficits, and facilitates a successful return to public school.

124 (j) For this purpose, subject to approval of the county superintendent, a student enrolled
125 in the public schools of the county may continue to be enrolled while also enrolled in an alternative
126 program subject to the following conditions:

127 (1) The alternative program is approved by the state board;

128 (2) The student meets the general description of an at-risk student and exhibits behaviors
129 and characteristics associated with a discouraged and defeated learner;

130 (3) The alternative program complies with all requests of the county superintendent for
131 information on the educational program and progress of the student;

132 (4) The alternative program includes a family involvement component in its program. This
133 component shall include, but is not limited to, providing for student and parent participation in
134 activities that help address the challenging issues that have hindered the student's engagement
135 and progress in learning;

136 (5) The alternative program includes an on-site boarding option for students;

137 (6) The alternative program provides an individualized education program for students that
138 is designed to prepare them for a successful transition back into the public schools; and

139 (7) The parents or legal guardian of the student make application for enrollment of the
140 student in the alternative program, agree to the terms and conditions for enrollment, and enroll
141 the student in the program.

ARTICLE 2E. HIGH QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.

§18-2E-11. Advanced Career Education.

1 (a) The Legislature hereby makes the following findings:

2 (1) Preparing West Virginia students to achieve post-secondary career education and to
3 excel in the workforce is a responsibility shared among all state education agencies and
4 institutions. The state's education agencies and institutions can fulfill this responsibility by
5 establishing partnerships that enable students to attain advanced career education and valuable
6 workforce skills in a more efficient and advantageous manner;

7 (2) The formation of partnerships between public secondary schools and community and
8 technical colleges or public baccalaureate institutions which establish advanced career education
9 programs would ensure that a full range of community and technical college programs and
10 services are provided in all areas of the state;

11 (3) Programs which create clear and efficient pathways that begin during secondary
12 education and lead to obtaining advanced certifications and associate degrees will increase the
13 number of students that ultimately obtain a post-secondary credential or degree; and

14 (4) West Virginia's economic prosperity is directly tied to the level and quality of its
15 workforce career education. Providing the students of this state with increased access to career
16 education will not only improve the general well-being of its citizens, but greatly enhance the
17 economic prosperity of the state.

18 (b) The purpose of this section and the Advanced Career Education (ACE) programs
19 authorized herein is to connect secondary schools with community and technical colleges or
20 public baccalaureate institutions that provide associate degrees to accomplish the following:

21 (1) Prepare secondary students for success in post-secondary education and the
22 workforce; and

23 (2) Provide more opportunities for secondary students to earn post-secondary college
24 credits, certifications, and associate degrees.

25 (c) To effectuate the purposes set forth in §18-2E-11(b) of this code, community and
26 technical colleges, public baccalaureate institutions, career technical education centers, and
27 county boards of education, or any combination of such secondary and postsecondary entities,
28 shall establish partnerships that provide for ACE programs which feature defined pathways that
29 begin when a student is in secondary education and that ultimately lead to advanced certifications
30 or associate degrees awarded by community and technical colleges or baccalaureate institutions.
31 ACE programs shall be equally available to public, nonpublic, and homeschool students.

32 (d) ACE programs shall include pathways that consist of a curriculum of courses leading
33 to advanced certifications or an associate degree that have been deemed to satisfy a workforce
34 need as determined by the Department of Commerce.

35 (1) The Department of Commerce shall, on occasion, but at least annually, provide written
36 notification to the State Board of Education, the West Virginia Council for Community and
37 Technical College Education and the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission of a
38 determination of areas of workforce need within the state.

39 (2) The Department of Commerce, in consultation with the council, the commission, and
40 business partners, will develop a hierarchy of high demand skilled professions and workforce
41 needs with shortages, which shall be given priority in administration of the program.

42 (e) The State Superintendent of Schools, the Chancellor of the Council for Community
43 and Technical College Education, and the Chancellor of the Higher Education Policy Commission,

44 or their designees, shall facilitate the ACE programs. At a minimum, an ACE program shall satisfy
45 the following objectives:

46 (1) Provide additional opportunities to students in this state to attain advanced
47 certifications and college credentials leading to associate degrees through ACE pathways;

48 (2) Increase the number of students in this state that attain advanced certifications and
49 college credentials leading to associate degrees through ACE pathways;

50 (3) Allow students in this state to attain advanced certifications and college credentials
51 leading to associate degrees through ACE pathways at little or no cost;

52 (4) Ensure that ACE pathways provide a clear roadmap to the courses and requirements
53 necessary to attain advanced certifications and college credentials leading to associate degrees;
54 and

55 (5) Ensure that course requirements within ACE pathways are not duplicated.

56 (f) The board and council shall jointly promulgate guidelines for the administration of ACE
57 programs and pathways, which must be affirmatively adopted by the board and the council. At a
58 minimum, such guidelines shall provide for the following:

59 (1) That ACE program partnerships established between community and technical
60 colleges, public baccalaureate institutions, career technical education centers, and county boards
61 of education, or any combination of such secondary and postsecondary entities, shall be reduced
62 to written partnership agreements;

63 (2) The information required to be contained within partnership agreements;

64 (3) That ACE programs and pathways must meet the requirements of the accrediting entity
65 for the community and technical college or public baccalaureate institution awarding the associate
66 degrees or advanced certificates;

67 (4) That partnership agreements shall be approved by the State Superintendent of
68 Schools, the Chancellor for the Council for Community and Technical College Education and the
69 Chancellor of the Higher Education Policy Commission; and

70 (5) Any other provisions necessary to effectuate the purposes of this section.

71 (g) The board and the council shall maintain and annually report to the Governor and the
72 Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability the following information about
73 ACE programs:

74 (1) The identity and number of partnership agreements;

75 (2) The ACE programs and pathways that are being utilized by career technical education
76 centers, county boards of education, community and technical colleges, and public baccalaureate
77 institutions; and

78 (3) The nature and number of degrees and certifications awarded to students participating
79 in ACE programs by each community and technical college, public baccalaureate institution and
80 career technical education center.

ARTICLE 9A. PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPPORT.

§18-9A-2. Definitions.

1 For the purpose of this article:

2 (a) "State board" means the West Virginia Board of Education.

3 (b) "County board" or "board" means a county board of education.

4 (c) "Professional salaries" means the state legally mandated salaries of the professional
5 educators as provided in §18A-4-1 *et seq.* of this code.

6 (d) "Professional educator" shall be synonymous with and shall have the same meaning
7 as "teacher" as defined in §18-1-1 of this code, and includes technology integration specialists.

8 (e) "Professional instructional personnel" means a professional educator whose regular
9 duty is as that of a classroom teacher, librarian, attendance director, or school psychologist. A
10 professional educator having both instructional and administrative or other duties shall be
11 included as professional instructional personnel for that ratio of the school day for which he or she
12 is assigned and serves on a regular full-time basis in appropriate instruction, library, attendance,
13 or psychologist duties.

14 (f) "Professional student support personnel" means a "teacher" as defined in §18-1-1 of
15 this code who is assigned and serves on a regular full-time basis as a counselor or as a school
16 nurse with a bachelor's degree and who is licensed by the West Virginia Board of Examiners for
17 Registered Professional Nurses. For all purposes except for the determination of the allowance
18 for professional educators pursuant to §18-9A-4 of this code, professional student support
19 personnel are professional educators.

20 (g) "Service personnel salaries" means the state legally mandated salaries for service
21 personnel as provided in §18A-4-8a of this code.

22 (h) "Service personnel" means all personnel as provided in §18A-4-8 of this code. For the
23 purpose of computations under this article of ratios of service personnel to net enrollment, a
24 service employee shall be counted as that number found by dividing his or her number of
25 employment days in a fiscal year by 200: *Provided*, That the computation for any service person
26 employed for three and one-half hours or fewer per day as provided in §18A-4-8a of this code
27 shall be calculated as one-half an employment day.

28 (i) "Net enrollment" means the number of pupils enrolled in special education programs,
29 kindergarten programs, and grades one to 12, inclusive, of the public schools of the county. Net
30 enrollment further shall include:

31 (1) Adults enrolled in regular secondary vocational programs, subject to the following:

32 (A) Net enrollment includes no more than 2,500 of those adults counted on the basis of
33 full-time equivalency and apportioned annually to each county to support Advanced Career
34 Education programs, as provided in §18-2E-11 of this code, in proportion to the adults
35 participating in regular secondary vocational programs in the prior year counted on the basis of
36 full-time equivalency: *Provided*, That beginning with the 2021 fiscal year and every year
37 thereafter, a career technical education center may only receive the funding for enrollment as
38 authorized by this paragraph if the center has satisfied the requirements of §18-2E-11 of this
39 code; and

40 (B) Net enrollment does not include any adult charged tuition or special fees beyond that
41 required of the regular secondary vocational student;

42 (2) Students enrolled in early childhood education programs as provided in §18-5-44 of
43 this code, counted on the basis of full-time equivalency;

44 (3) A pupil may not be counted more than once by reason of transfer within the county or
45 from another county within the state, and a pupil may not be counted who attends school in this
46 state from another state;

47 (4) The enrollment shall be modified to the equivalent of the instructional term and in
48 accordance with the eligibility requirements and rules established by the state board; and

49 (5) For the purposes of determining the county's basic foundation program only, for any
50 county whose net enrollment as determined under all other provisions of this definition is less than
51 1,400, the net enrollment of the county shall be increased by an amount to be determined in
52 accordance with the following:

53 (A) Divide the state's lowest county student population density by the county's actual
54 student population density;

55 (B) Multiply the amount derived from the calculation in §18-9A-2(i)(5)(A) of this code by
56 the difference between 1,400 and the county's actual net enrollment;

57 (C) If the increase in net enrollment as determined under this subdivision plus the county's
58 net enrollment as determined under all other provisions of this subsection is greater than 1,400,
59 the increase in net enrollment shall be reduced so that the total does not exceed 1,400; and

60 (D) During the 2008-2009 interim period and every three interim periods thereafter, the
61 Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability shall review this subdivision to
62 determine whether or not these provisions properly address the needs of counties with low
63 enrollment and a sparse population density.

64 (j) "Sparse-density county" means a county whose ratio of net enrollment, excluding any
65 increase in the net enrollment of counties, pursuant to §18-9A-2(i)(5) of this code, of the definition
66 of "net enrollment", to the square miles of the county is less than five.

67 (k) "Low-density county" means a county whose ratio of net enrollment, excluding any
68 increase in the net enrollment of counties, pursuant to §18-9A-2(i)(5) of this code, of the definition
69 of "net enrollment", to the square miles of the county is equal to or greater than five but less than
70 10.

71 (l) "Medium-density county" means a county whose ratio of net enrollment, excluding any
72 increase in the net enrollment of counties, pursuant to §18-9A-2(i)(5) of this code, of the definition
73 of "net enrollment", to the square miles of the county is equal to or greater than 10 but less than
74 20.

75 (m) "High-density county" means a county whose ratio of net enrollment, excluding any
76 increase in the net enrollment of counties, pursuant to §18-9A-2(i)(5) of this code, of the definition
77 of "net enrollment", to the square miles of the county is equal to or greater than 20.

78 (n) "Levies for general current expense purposes" means 90 percent of the levy rate for
79 county boards of education calculated or set by the Legislature pursuant to §11-8-6f of this code.

80 (o) "Technology integration specialist" means a professional educator who has expertise
81 in the technology field and is assigned as a resource teacher to provide information and guidance
82 to classroom teachers on the integration of technology into the curriculum.

83 (p) "State aid eligible personnel" means all professional educators and service personnel
84 employed by a county board in positions that are eligible to be funded under this article and whose
85 salaries are not funded by a specific funding source such as a federal or state grant, donation,
86 contribution, or other specific funding source not listed.

CHAPTER 18B. HIGHER EDUCATION.

ARTICLE 3C. COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM.

§18B-3C-16. Encouragement of collaborative agreements between community and technical colleges and federally registered apprenticeship programs.

1 (a) The Legislature finds that apprenticeship programs provide a valuable educational
2 opportunity that can be enhanced by community and technical colleges that offer associate
3 degrees. Accordingly, the Legislature hereby encourages, but is not requiring, community and
4 technical colleges that offer associate degrees to enter into collaborative agreements with
5 federally registered apprenticeship programs that are registered with the United States
6 Department of Labor.

7 (b) On or before January 1 of each year, the council shall provide to the Legislature and
8 the Governor a report regarding the collaborative agreements between community and technical
9 colleges and federally registered apprenticeships programs. The report should identify those
10 community and technical colleges that have entered into a collaborative agreement with federally
11 registered apprenticeship programs, the number of students participating in such apprenticeship
12 programs, the number of community and technical colleges credits earned by students in such
13 apprenticeship programs, the number of students employed in a relevant field of study during
14 such apprenticeship programs and for the year after completion of such apprenticeship programs,
15 and the average compensation of the students employed in a relevant field of study during their
16 enrollment in such apprenticeship programs and for the year after completion of such
17 apprenticeship programs.

CHAPTER 18C. STUDENT LOANS; SCHOLARSHIPS AND STATE AID.

ARTICLE 9. WEST VIRGINIA INVESTS GRANT PROGRAM.

§18C-9-1. Short title.

1 This article shall be known and may be cited as the WV Invests Grant Program.

§18C-9-2. Legislative findings and purpose.

1 (a) The Legislature hereby finds and declares that:

2 (1) Every West Virginian should have access to education and training that will lead
3 directly to quality employment opportunities within the state. In order for West Virginia to retain
4 and attract business and industry, it must ensure that its workforce has such education and
5 training;

6 (2) West Virginia currently faces a human capital crisis, as the state regularly ranks
7 amongst the lowest states in the nation in workforce participation rates. Improving the state's
8 workforce participation rates and the level of the workforce's career education is critical to
9 economic development and making West Virginia a more prosperous state;

10 (3) The 2017 West Virginia Forward Report, a strategy for economic development and job
11 growth, found that "investments in improving human capital are considered the most significant
12 opportunity for improvement in West Virginia, especially because access to a specialized
13 workforce is a significant factor for investment attraction...";

14 (4) According to the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, the
15 median yearly earnings of an individual with an associate's degree is approximately \$6,604 more
16 than an individual with only a high school diploma. Therefore, any investment by the state into a
17 citizen obtaining such a degree would be repaid multiple times over through the citizen's
18 increased contributions to the economy and tax base;

19 (5) West Virginia is currently facing a devastating drug epidemic, and the hope that comes
20 with increased access to career education and higher quality employment opportunities is an
21 indispensable tool against the spread of drug addiction; and

22 (6) An investment by the state into increasing access to post-secondary career education
23 will provide its citizens the hope and opportunity for better career opportunities, and provide the
24 state with the trained workforce needed to attract significant economic development.

25 (b) The purpose of this article is to provide West Virginians with hope and economic
26 prosperity by increasing access to a higher level of career education that is needed to fulfill the
27 needs of today's workforce and provide for further economic development.

§18C-9-3. Definitions.

1 As used in this article:

2 “Council” means the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College
3 Education;

4 “Commission” means the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission;

5 “Eligible institution” means a public community and technical college under the authority
6 of the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education or a public
7 baccalaureate institution that grants associate degrees satisfying the requirements of participating
8 in Advanced Career Education (ACE) program partnerships in accordance with §18-2E-11 of this
9 code;

10 “Eligible post-secondary program” means a curriculum of courses leading to a certificate
11 or associate degree at an eligible institution which satisfies a course of study that has been
12 deemed by the Department of Commerce to satisfy a workforce need as determined by the
13 department in accordance with §18-2E-11(d) of this code; and

14 “Tuition” means the semester or term charges imposed by an eligible institution and,
15 additionally, all mandatory fees required as a condition of enrollment by all students.

§18C-9-4. WV Invests Grant Program.

1 (a) There is hereby created a grant program known as the WV Invests Grant Program,
2 which shall be administered by the vice chancellor for administration in accordance with this
3 article.

4 (b) The council shall award WV Invests Grants pursuant to the following terms and
5 conditions:

6 (1) A WV Invests Grant may only be awarded to applicants satisfying the requirements
7 provided in §18C-9-5 of this code;

8 (2) The maximum amount of a WV Invests Grant shall be the cost of tuition charged to all
9 students for coursework leading to completion of the chosen associate degree or certificate, less

10 all other state and federal scholarships and grants for which the student is eligible. All other state
11 and federal scholarships and grants for which the grant recipient is eligible shall be deducted from
12 the amount of the WV Invests Grant for each individual student. The amount of a WV Invests
13 Grant at an eligible public baccalaureate institution shall not exceed the average cost of tuition
14 and mandatory fees of the community and technical colleges.

15 (3) Grant payments shall be made directly to the eligible institutions;

16 (4) If a grant recipient transfers from one eligible institution to another, the grant is
17 transferable only with approval of the vice chancellor for administration;

18 (5) A WV Invests Grant may be used at any eligible institution to seek an associate degree
19 or certificate in an eligible post-secondary program. An institution is not required to accept a grant
20 recipient for enrollment and may enforce its own admission requirements, standards, and policies;
21 and

22 (6) If a WV Invests Grant recipient terminates enrollment for any reason during the
23 academic year, the unused portion of the grant shall be returned by the institution to the council
24 in accordance with the council's policy for issuing refunds. The council shall transfer such funds
25 to the WV Invests Fund for allocation and expenditure.

26 (c) On or before January 1 annually, the council shall provide to the Legislature and the
27 Governor a report on the WV Invests Grant Program, which shall include, but not be limited to,
28 research and data concerning student success and grant retention.

29 (d) The council shall propose legislative rules for legislative approval pursuant to §29A-
30 3A-1 *et seq.* of this code to implement the provisions of this article, which shall provide for:

31 (1) Application requirements and deadlines fully implementing requirements of this article;

32 (2) Appeal procedures for the denial or revocation of the grant; and

33 (3) Any other provisions necessary to effectuate the purposes of this article.

34 (e) The Legislature hereby declares that an emergency situation exists and, therefore, the
35 council may establish, by emergency rule, under the procedures of §29A-3A-1 *et seq.* of this code,
36 a rule to implement the provisions of this article.

37 (f) Beginning with the 2021 fiscal year, and for every fiscal year thereafter, any
38 appropriation by the Legislature to support and or alleviate the cost to citizens in this state to
39 obtain advanced certifications and associate degrees shall only be distributed to those community
40 and technical colleges or public baccalaureate institutions that form one or more partnerships to
41 establish ACE programs and pathways. Once distributed, such funds may be used to support any
42 eligible post-secondary program or pathway provided by an eligible institution leading to the award
43 of such degree or certification.

§18C-9-5. Eligibility requirements; agreements.

1 (a) To be eligible for a WV Invests Grant, an individual must satisfy the following
2 requirements:

3 (1) Be a citizen or legal resident of the United States and have been a resident of West
4 Virginia for at least one year immediately preceding the date of application for a grant;

5 (2) Have completed a secondary education program in a public, private, or home school;

6 (3) Have not been previously awarded a post-secondary degree;

7 (4) Be at least 18 years of age: *Provided*, That individuals younger than 18 years of age
8 may qualify for the grant upon completion of a secondary education program in a public, private,
9 or home school;

10 (5) Meet the admission requirements of, and be admitted into, an eligible institution;

11 (6) Satisfactorily meet any additional qualifications of enrollment, academic promise, or
12 achievement as established by the council through rule;

13 (7) Have filed a completed free application for federal student aid for the academic year in
14 which the grant award is sought;

15 (8) Be enrolled in an eligible post-secondary program;

16 (9) Be enrolled in at least six credit hours per semester;

17 (10) Have completed a WV Invests Grant application as provided by the council in
18 accordance with a schedule established by the council; and

19 (11) Have, prior to the start of each semester, satisfactorily passed a drug test
20 administered by the eligible institution: *Provided*, That the applicant shall be responsible for the
21 actual cost of the drug test.

22 (b) Each grant may be renewed until the course of study is completed as long as the
23 following qualifications, as determined by the vice chancellor for administration and the council,
24 are satisfied:

25 (1) Maintaining satisfactory academic standing, including a cumulative grade point
26 average of at least 2.0;

27 (2) Making adequate progress toward completion of the eligible post-secondary program;

28 (3) Satisfactory participation in a community service program authorized by the council.

29 The council shall include in the legislative rules, required by §18C-9-4 of this code, provisions for
30 the administration of community service requirements, including, but not limited to, requiring
31 completion of at least eight hours of unpaid community service during the time of study, which
32 may include, but is not limited to, participating with nonprofit, governmental, institutional, or
33 community-based organizations designed to improve the quality of life for community residents,
34 meet the needs of community residents, or foster civic responsibility;

35 (4) Continued satisfaction of eligibility requirements provided by §18C-9-5(a) of this code;

36 and

37 (5) Satisfaction of any additional eligibility criteria established by the council through
38 legislative rule.

39 (c) Each recipient of a WV Invests Grant shall enter into an agreement with the vice
40 chancellor for administration, which shall require repayment of an amount of the grant or grants
41 awarded to the recipient, in whole or in part, if a recipient chooses to reside outside the state

42 within two years following obtainment of the degree or certificate for which the grant or grants
43 were awarded. The council may not require a recipient to repay grants, in whole or in part, unless
44 the prospective recipient has been informed of this requirement in writing before initial acceptance
45 of the grant award. Each WV Invests Grant agreement shall include the following:

46 (1) Disclosure of the full terms and conditions under which assistance under this article is
47 provided and under which repayment may be required; and

48 (2) A description of the appeals procedure required to be established under this article.

49 (d) WV Invests Grant recipients found to be in noncompliance with the agreement entered
50 into under §18C-9-5(c) of this code shall be required to repay the amount of the grant awards
51 received, plus interest, and, where applicable, reasonable collection fees, on a schedule and at a
52 rate of interest prescribed in rules promulgated by the council. The council shall also provide for
53 proration of the amount to be repaid by a recipient who maintains employment in the state for a
54 period of time within the time period required under §18C-9-5(c) of this code.

55 (e) A recipient is not in violation of an agreement entered into pursuant to §18C-9-5(c) of
56 this code during any period in which the recipient is meeting any of the following conditions:

57 (1) Pursuing a half-time course of study at an accredited institution of higher education;

58 (2) Serving as a member of the armed services of the United States;

59 (3) Failing to comply with the terms of the agreement due to death or permanent or
60 temporary disability as established by sworn affidavit of a qualified physician; or

61 (4) Satisfying the provisions of any additional repayment exemptions prescribed by the
62 council through rule.

§18C-9-6. WV Invests Fund; established.

1 (a) The WV Invests Fund is hereby created in the State Treasury as a special revenue
2 account. The fund shall be administered by the vice chancellor for administration and may consist
3 of:

4 (1) All appropriations by the Legislature for the WV Invests Fund;

5 (2) Any gifts, grants, or contributions received for the WV Invests Fund; and

6 (3) All interest or other income earned from investment of the WV Invests Fund.

7 (b) The WV Invests Fund shall be expended for the purpose of administering the WV
8 Invests Grant Program, including the awarding of grants authorized by this article. Any funds
9 remaining in the fund at the close of the fiscal year are carried forward for use in the next fiscal
10 year.

11 (c) Nothing in this section requires any specific level of funding by the Legislature nor
12 guarantees or entitles any individual to any benefit or grant of funds.

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

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Chairman, Senate Committee

.....
Chairman, House Committee

Originated in the Senate.

In effect 90 days from passage.

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Clerk of the Senate

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Clerk of the House of Delegates

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President of the Senate

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Speaker of the House of Delegates

The within this the.....
Day of, 2019.

.....
Governor