

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2020 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4942

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BOWE, LONGSTRETH, ZUKOFF AND STAGGERS

[Introduced February 11, 2020; Referred to the
Committee on Education]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §18-5-45 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
 2 to establishing that the educational instructional term for students shall begin no earlier
 3 than Labor Day.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 5. COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION.

§18-5-45. School calendar.

1 (a) As used in this section:

2 (1) "Instructional day" means a day within the instructional term which meets the following
 3 criteria:

4 (A) Instruction is offered to students for at least the minimum number of minutes as follows:

5 (i) For early childhood programs as provided in §18-5-44(d) of this code;

6 (ii) For schools with grade levels kindergarten through and including grade five, 315
 7 minutes of instructional time per day;

8 (iii) For schools with grade levels six through and including grade eight, 330 minutes of
 9 instructional time per day; and

10 (iv) For schools with grade levels nine through and including grade 12, 345 minutes of
 11 instructional time per day.

12 (B) Instructional time is used for instruction and cocurricular activities; and

13 (C) Other criteria as the state board determines appropriate.

14 (2) "Cocurricular activities" are activities that are closely related to identifiable academic
 15 programs or areas of study that serve to complement academic curricula as further defined by
 16 the state board; and

17 (3) "Instruction delivered through alternative methods" means a plan developed by a
 18 county board and approved by the state board for teachers to assign and grade work to be
 19 completed by students on days when schools are closed due to inclement weather or other
 20 unforeseen circumstances.

21 (b) *Findings.* –

22 (1) The primary purpose of the school system is to provide instruction for students.

23 (2) The school calendar, as defined in this section, is designed to define the school term
24 both for employees and for instruction.

25 (3) The school calendar shall provide for 180 separate instructional days or an equivalent
26 amount of instructional time as provided in this section.

27 (c) The county board shall provide a school term for its schools that contains the following:

28 (1) An employment term that excludes Saturdays and Sundays and consists of at least
29 200 days, which need not be successive. The beginning and closing dates of the employment
30 term may not exceed 48 weeks;

31 (2) Within the employment term, an instructional term for students of no less than 180
32 separate instructional days, which includes an inclement weather and emergencies plan designed
33 to guarantee an instructional term for students of no less than 180 separate instructional days,
34 subject to the following:

35 (A) A county board may increase the length of the instructional day as defined in this
36 section by at least 30 minutes per day to ensure that it achieves at least an amount of instructional
37 time equivalent to 180 separate instructional days within its school calendar and:

38 (i) Apply up to five days of this equivalent time to cancel days lost due to necessary school
39 closures;

40 (ii) Plan within its school calendar and not subject to cancellation and rescheduling as
41 instructional days up to an additional five days or equivalent portions of days, without students
42 present, to be used as determined by the county board exclusively for activities by educators at
43 the school level designed to improve instruction; and

44 (iii) Apply any additional equivalent time to recover time lost due to late arrivals and early
45 dismissals;

46 (B) Subject to approval of its plan by the state board, a county board may deliver

47 instruction through alternative methods on up to five days when schools are closed due to
48 inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances and these days are instructional days
49 notwithstanding the closure of schools; and

50 (C) The use of equivalent time gained by lengthening the school day to cancel days lost,
51 and the delivery of instruction through alternative methods, both as defined in this section, shall
52 be considered instructional days for the purpose of meeting the 180 separate day requirement
53 and as employment days for the purpose of meeting the 200 day employment term.

54 (D) Beginning for the school year 2021 – 2022, the instructional term for students shall
55 begin no earlier than Labor Day.

56 (3) Within the employment term, noninstructional days shall total 20 and shall be
57 comprised of the following:

58 (A) Seven paid holidays;

59 (B) Election day as specified in §18A-5-2 of this code;

60 (C) Six days to be designated by the county board to be used by the employees outside
61 the school environment, with at least four outside the school environment days scheduled to occur
62 after the 130th instructional day of the school calendar;

63 (D) One day to be designated by the county board to be used by the employees for
64 preparation for opening school and one day to be designated by the county board to be used by
65 the employees for preparation for closing school: *Provided*, That the school preparation days may
66 be used for the purposes set forth in paragraph (E) of this subdivision at the teacher's discretion;
67 and

68 (E) The remaining days to be designated by the county board for purposes to include, but
69 not be limited to:

70 (i) Curriculum development;

71 (ii) Professional development;

72 (iii) Teacher-pupil-parent conferences;

73 (iv) Professional meetings;
74 (v) Making up days when instruction was scheduled but not conducted; and
75 (vi) At least six two-hour blocks of time for faculty senate meetings with at least one two-
76 hour block of time scheduled in the first month of the employment term, at least one two-hour
77 block of time scheduled in the last month of the employment term and at least one two-hour block
78 of time scheduled in each of the months of October, December, February and April; and

79 (4) Scheduled out-of-calendar days that are to be used for instructional days in the event
80 school is canceled for any reason.

81 (d) A county board of education shall develop a policy that requires additional minutes of
82 instruction in the school day or additional days of instruction to recover time lost due to late arrivals
83 and early dismissals.

84 (e) If it is not possible to complete 180 separate instructional days with the current school
85 calendar and the additional five days of instructional time gained by increasing the length of the
86 instructional day as provided in subsection (c) of this section are insufficient to offset the loss of
87 separate instructional days, the county board shall schedule instruction on any available
88 noninstructional day, regardless of the purpose for which the day originally was scheduled, or an
89 out-of-calendar day and the day will be used for instruction of students: *Provided*, That the
90 provisions of this subsection do not apply to:

91 (1) Holidays;

92 (2) Election day;

93 (3) Saturdays and Sundays; and

94 (4) The five days or equivalent portions of days planned within the school calendar
95 exclusively for activities by educators at the school level to improve instruction that are gained by
96 increasing the length of the instructional day as provided in subsection (c) of this section.

97 (f) The instructional term shall commence and terminate on a date selected by the county
98 board.

99 (g) The state board may not schedule the primary statewide assessment program more
100 than 30 days prior to the end of the instructional year unless the state board determines that the
101 nature of the test mandates an earlier testing date.

102 (h) The following applies to cocurricular activities:

103 (1) The state board shall determine what activities may be considered cocurricular;

104 (2) The state board shall determine the amount of instructional time that may be consumed
105 by cocurricular activities; and

106 (3) Other requirements or restrictions the state board may provide in the rule required to
107 be promulgated by this section.

108 (i) Extracurricular activities may not be used for instructional time.

109 (j) Noninstructional interruptions to the instructional day shall be minimized to allow the
110 classroom teacher to teach.

111 (k) Prior to implementing the school calendar, the county board shall secure approval of
112 its proposed calendar from the state board or, if so designated by the state board, from the state
113 superintendent.

114 (l) In formulation of a school's calendar, a county school board shall hold at least two public
115 meetings that allow parents, teachers, teacher organizations, businesses and other interested
116 parties within the county to discuss the school calendar. The public notice of the date, time and
117 place of the public hearing must be published in a local newspaper of general circulation in the
118 area as a Class II legal advertisement, in accordance with the provisions of §59-3-1 *et seq.* of this
119 code.

120 (m) The county board may contract with all or part of the personnel for a longer term of
121 employment.

122 (n) The minimum instructional term may be decreased by order of the state superintendent
123 in any county declared a federal disaster area and in any county subject to an emergency or
124 disaster declaration by the Governor when the event causing the declaration is substantially

125 related to the loss of instructional days in the county.

126 (o) Notwithstanding any provision of this code to the contrary, the state board may grant
127 a waiver to a county board for its noncompliance with provisions of chapters 18, 18A, 18B, and
128 18C of this code to maintain compliance in reaching the mandatory 180 separate instructional
129 days established in this section.

130 (p) The state board shall promulgate a rule in accordance with the provisions of §29A-3B-
131 1 *et seq.* of this code for the purpose of implementing the provisions of this section.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to establish that the educational instructional term for students shall begin no earlier than Labor Day.

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