

# WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

## 2021 REGULAR SESSION

### Introduced

## Senate Bill 235

FISCAL  
NOTE

BY SENATORS BALDWIN, BEACH, CAPUTO, IHLENFELD,  
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UNGER, WOELFEL, HAMILTON, AND GRADY

[Introduced February 11, 2021; referred  
to the Committee on Education; and then to the  
Committee on Finance]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §18-2-42 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; to amend  
2 said code by adding thereto a new section, designated §18-2B-9; to amend said code by  
3 adding thereto a new article, designated §18-21A-1, §18-21A-2, §18-21A-3, §18-21A-4,  
4 §18-21A-5, §18-21A-6, and §18-21A-7; and to amend said code by adding thereto a new  
5 article, designated §18-34-1, §18-34-2, §18-34-3, and §18-34-4, all relating to vocational  
6 and technical education programs; requiring State Board and Commerce Department to  
7 create lists of apprenticeships, certifications, and credentials to provide to students;  
8 providing for Governor's Workforce Credential initiative; creating a career and technical  
9 education pilot program to introduce middle school students to career and technical  
10 education opportunities in the state; requiring county school districts to provide certain  
11 information to students; establishing the Governor's Workforce Credential; establishing  
12 requirements for the Governor's Workforce Credential; mandating graduation recognition  
13 for recipients of credential; and creating monetary incentive for schools who graduate  
14 credentialed students.

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

## **ARTICLE 2. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.**

### **§18-2-42. Providing career and technical education program information to students and parents; transcript of post-secondary credit; career technical education student participation in graduation ceremony.**

1 (a) The State Board of Education, the Council for Community and Technical College  
2 Education, and the Department of Commerce shall coordinate efforts for the collection and  
3 dissemination of information on the career and technical cluster and major programs of study  
4 established for the public schools, as well as on careers following graduation, including, but not  
5 limited to, the following:

6 (1) Programs of study and the curriculum of courses at the secondary and post-secondary  
7 level established pursuant to §18B-3C-4 of this code that lead to an industry-recognized

8 credential, a certificate of applied science degree, or an associate degree that satisfy a workforce  
9 need;

10 (2) Programs of study and the curriculum of courses at the secondary level recognized  
11 pursuant to §21-1E-1 *et seq.* of this code, §29-3-9 of this code and §30-1E-1 *et seq.* of this code  
12 as satisfying a portion of the requirements for an apprenticeship and other employer sponsored  
13 training programs, as well as any associated programs of study and the curriculum of courses at  
14 the post-secondary level that enable the student to also satisfy the requirements for an associate  
15 degree; and

16 (3) The EDGE program, established by §18-13-1 *et seq.* of this code, which provides the  
17 opportunity for the student to obtain articulated credits that count toward high school graduation  
18 requirements, as well as count toward the student's achievement of a certificate or associate  
19 degree;

20 (4) Other career and technical education programs within the state;

21 (5) Existing apprenticeships throughout the state;

22 (6) A list of certifications and other credentials that reflect current workforce needs; and

23 (7) Details regarding enlistment and opportunities within the armed forces, including local  
24 recruiter contact information.

25 (b) ~~The~~ Each county school district has the responsibility for dissemination of the  
26 information ~~on programs of study as provided~~ described in subsection (a) of this section ~~shall be~~  
27 ~~easily accessible~~ to all students and their parents beginning in the middle school grades.

28 (c) All post-secondary credits earned by a public school student through the EDGE  
29 program and any other articulated credit and dual credit program shall be transcribed and  
30 provided to the student by the post-secondary institution at which the credit was earned.

31 (d) Any career technical education student who fulfills the high school graduation  
32 requirements required of other students in the district in which he or she is enrolled shall be eligible  
33 to participate in the graduation ceremony in the same manner as all other students in the district.

**ARTICLE 2B. AREA VOCATIONAL PROGRAM.**

**§18-2B-9. Governor’s Workforce Credential.**

1        (a) The Governor’s Workforce Credential is a joint initiative between the Governor, the  
2 State Board, and the State Superintendent aimed at preparing students to enter the workforce  
3 with industry ready skills and abilities that meet business and industry expectations. This  
4 credential creates a way for employers to identify potential employees who are prepared to enter  
5 the workforce and understand the industry accepted expectations of such employees. The  
6 credential honors those students who are able to meet or exceed rigorous requirements within  
7 their Career and Technical Education programs.

8        (b) The State Superintendent shall annually award the Governor’s Workforce Credential  
9 to students in their senior year who meet the requirements to receive the credential as set forth  
10 in State Board policy.

**ARTICLE 21A. CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM FOR**  
**MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS.**

**§18-21A-1. Short title.**

1        This article may be cited as the “Middle School Technical Education Program Act” or the  
2 “Middle School STEP Act.”

**§18-21A-2. Legislative findings.**

1        (a) Career and technical education prepares students to be both college and career ready  
2 by providing core academic, technical, and employment ready skills.

3        (b) High-quality career and technical education programs not only ensure that coursework  
4 is aligned with rigorous academic standards and post-secondary expectations, but are built to  
5 address specific skills needed in certain career pathways.

6        (c) Research data show that 80 percent of students taking a college preparatory academic  
7 curriculum with rigorous career and technical education courses met college and career readiness  
8 goals, compared to only 63 percent of students taking the same academic core who did not

9 experience rigorous career and technical education courses.

10 (d) Furthermore, a 2008 study from American College Testing showed that if students are  
11 not on target for college and career readiness by the end of eighth grade the impact may be nearly  
12 irreversible. The level of academic achievement that students attain by eighth grade has a larger  
13 impact on their college and career readiness by the time they graduate from high school than any  
14 other academic factor.

15 (e) Given the importance of career and technical education programs in fostering college  
16 and career readiness, and the determinative impact that eighth grade achievement has on future  
17 academic and professional success, it is essential that middle school students are informed about  
18 and prepared to take advantage of career and technical education programs in their local  
19 communities.

**§18-21A-3. Purpose.**

1 The purpose of the pilot program shall be to better prepare seventh and eighth grade  
2 students to take advantage of West Virginia's Career and Technical Education programs and to  
3 improve students' college and career readiness prior to high school. For the purposes of this  
4 article, "middle school" means any school containing the seventh and eighth grade levels.

**§18-21A-4. Organization of special pilot program.**

1 (a) *Funding.* — Participating middle schools shall use existing resources to implement the  
2 pilot program.

3 (b) *Instructor Qualifications.* — Qualified instructors include, but are not limited to,  
4 teachers, counselors, and other middle school staff possessing a post-secondary degree.  
5 Instructors are not required to obtain any additional certification or license to instruct the course.  
6 Nothing in this article or Chapter 18A of this code prohibits principals, or vice-principals, on a  
7 voluntary basis, from participating in the program as a guest instructor or speaker.

8 (c) *Elective Course.* — The pilot program shall be a one semester elective course:  
9 *Provided,* That middle schools with alternative scheduling systems may adapt the program to suit

10 their scheduling needs.

11 (d) Local Partners. — High schools, vocational schools, community colleges, public  
12 universities, and any other institute of higher learning that receives funding from the State of West  
13 Virginia shall provide speakers to participating middle schools upon the middle school's request:  
14 Provided, That the entity providing the speaker is located within 50 miles of the requesting middle  
15 school.

**§18-21A-5. Curriculum.**

1 (a) Guest Speakers. — Course instructors shall schedule weekly guest speakers to  
2 introduce students to a particular career and to prepare students to pursue the featured career by  
3 providing relevant information on:

- 4 (1) Education requirements;  
5 (2) Cost of education;  
6 (3) Availability of education;  
7 (4) Average salary;  
8 (5) Average longevity; and  
9 (6) Transferability of skills.

10 Instructors are encouraged to invite professionals excelling in fields where training is  
11 available at the local career and technical education school.

12 (b) On-Site Research. — Instructors may organize field trips to visit local employers, job  
13 fairs, high schools, vocational schools, community colleges, technical schools, public and private  
14 universities, and other post-secondary academic institutions to introduce students to potential  
15 career paths via on-site presentations and experiential learning.

16 (c) Career Skills. — The course shall include instruction on skill sets required to discover  
17 and take advantage of employment opportunities, including, but not limited to:

- 18 (1) Performing a job search;  
19 (2) Developing a résumé;

20 (3) Preparing for a job interview; and

21 (4) Developing and deploying personal networks to find job opportunities.

22 (d) Academic Skills. — The course shall include instruction on skill sets required to  
23 discover and take advantage of educational opportunities, including, but not limited to:

24 (1) Researching admissions requirements for vocational schools, community colleges,  
25 technical schools, public and private universities, and other post-secondary academic institutions;

26 (2) Researching employment rates and average salaries for graduates of vocational  
27 schools, community colleges, technical schools, public and private universities, and other post-  
28 secondary academic institutions;

29 (3) Researching employment rates and average salaries for specific degrees,  
30 certifications, and majors from post-secondary academic institutions;

31 (4) Researching state, federal, and private scholarship and grant opportunities; and

32 (5) Preparing a college or technical school application.

33 (e) Personal Graduation Plan. — For successful completion of the course, a student shall  
34 create a “Personal Graduation Plan” outlining his or her plan to become employable following high  
35 school or post-secondary school.

**§18-21A-6. Admission process for middle schools.**

1 (a) Authority. — The State Board shall establish guidelines for middle schools to submit a  
2 request for the school’s admission in the pilot program and the State Board may admit middle  
3 schools into the pilot program.

4 (b) Admissions. — Middle schools may volunteer to implement the program by submitting  
5 a request to the State Board and admission shall be on a first-come, first-served basis.

6 (c) Minimum School Participation. — It is the goal of the pilot program that a minimum of  
7 10 middle schools participate each year during the pilot program’s existence. If 10 middle schools  
8 have not been admitted into the program by July 1 preceding the academic year, the State Board  
9 may solicit additional middle schools to participate in the pilot program to meet the minimum

10 participation goal, but may not require the participation of any middle school.

**§18-21A-7. Certification and monitoring.**

1 (a) Certificate of Completion. — Students shall receive a West Virginia STEP Certificate  
2 verifying their participation in the pilot program upon successful completion of the course.

3 (b) Monitoring. — The State Board shall report to the Legislative Oversight Commission  
4 on Education Accountability each year on the graduation, post-secondary participation, and to the  
5 extent practicable, job placement rates, in the aggregate, of students that have received a West  
6 Virginia STEP Certificate following successful completion of the pilot program.

**ARTICLE 34. GOVERNOR’S WORKFORCE CREDENTIAL.**

**§18-34-1. Establishing the Governor’s Workforce Credential.**

1 The Governor’s Workforce Credential is an initiative aimed at preparing students to enter  
2 the workforce with industry ready skills and abilities to meet business and industry expectations.  
3 It also creates a way for employers to identify potential employees who are prepared to enter the  
4 workforce and understand the industry accepted expectations of such employees. The credential  
5 honors those students who are able to meet or exceed rigid requirements within their Career and  
6 Technical Education (CTE) programs.

**§18-34-2. Requirements.**

1 In order to receive the Governor’s Workforce Credential, a student must:

2 (1) Complete the four required state-approved CTE Program of Study Courses, and  
3 achieve a minimum of 95 percent Portfolio score; and

4 (2) Have a verified minimum attendance rate of 95 percent; and

5 (3) Achieve a minimum of Level 3 on the Math and ELA categories of the WV Summative  
6 Assessment or Level 5/85 percent on a Career Readiness Assessment (ACT Work Keys, ACT  
7 Key Train, or WIN) or 15 percent above the NOCTI criterion-referenced cut score; and

8 (4) Earn a nationally-recognized industry credential that coincides with a state-approved  
9 program of study; and



10           (5) Obtain a drug-free certification.

**§18-34-3. Recognition for recipients of credential upon graduation.**

1           Any student who fulfills the requirements of the Governor's Workforce Credential and has  
2 also met their graduation requirements will receive individual recognition at their high school  
3 graduation ceremony.

**§18-34-4. Incentive for high schools.**

1           The State Board of Education shall award \$250 per student to a high school that graduates  
2 a Governor's Workforce Credential recipient.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide information to high school students regarding career and technical educational opportunities during and after high school, to create a career and technical education for middle school students, and to codify the Governor's Workforce Credential.

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