WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2023 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 3228

By Delegates Clark, Ridenour, Mazzocchi, Hornby, and Willis

[Introduced February 02, 2023; Referred to the Committee on Education]

A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section, designated §18-2E-12, relating to the creation of the Heart Health Equity Inclusion Program; providing for legislative findings; and providing for required physical education program in physical fitness.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2E. HIGH QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.

§18-2E-12. Heart Health Equity Inclusion Program; legislative findings; required physical education program in physical fitness.

(a) *Legislative Findings*:

(1) The Legislature hereby finds that obesity is a significant problem of epidemic proportions in this state.

(2) There is increasing evidence that all segments of the population, beginning with children, are becoming more sedentary, more overweight, and more likely to develop health risks and diseases, including Type II Diabetes, high blood cholesterol, and high blood pressure.

(3) The Legislature further finds that the promotion of physical activity during the school day for school children is a crucial step in combating this growing epidemic and in changing the attitudes and behavior of the residents of this state toward health-promoting physical activity.

(b) *Enactment*. – The West Virginia Department of Education shall establish the requirement that each child enrolled in the public schools of this state actively participates in nutrition, and aerobic exercise classes during the month of February for four weeks straight to the level of his or her ability as follows:

(1) Heart heath education shall be taught during the month of February, and shall require the teaching of proper nutrition, and aerobic exercise, consisting of at least 20 minutes of aerobic exercise in conjunction with numeracy and literacy at least 3 days per week.

(2) Selected programs need to be aligned to the state literacy, numeracy, and health standards. Upon completion of the program required herein, the child shall receive a pass or fail grade.

(3) The program required herein shall be selected from nationally accepted nutrition and aerobic exercise programs designed for school-aged children that test nutrition knowledge, cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, and endurance. The program shall include modified tests for exceptional students.

(4) Each school in the state of West Virginia shall participate in Heart Health education during the month of February for four weeks straight and shall make available to schools within the district a program in which the subject of proper nutrition and aerobic exercise education is taught that focuses on the importance of how nutrition (nutrients) and regular aerobic exercise improve heart health to prevent hypertension, obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

(5) The heart health program shall include a provision for evidence-based nutrition and aerobic exercise education for all teachers and children in grades three through six. The education for teachers shall include all classroom teachers, including physical education teachers and teachers teaching health.

(6) The program shall be four weeks long and shall include the provision of all third-through sixth-grade teachers and students with complete access to turnkey, evidence- based nutrition and aerobic exercise education to implement in the classroom, during school, before school, after school, and/or at home with the family.

(7) The nutrition and aerobic exercise education may be in the form of book, DVD, CD, online, or another form of technology. Each school in a school district shall ensure the following:

(A) Time is allowed during the school day for the classroom, physical education, and/or health education teaching personnel to provide students with up to 30 minutes of aerobic exercise and education to learn how exercise improves heart health;

(B) Time is allowed during the school day for the classroom, physical education, and/or health education teaching personnel to provide students with proper nutrition education that teaches about the nutrients and their relationship to improving heart health;

(C) Time is allowed during the school day for the classroom, physical, and/or health education teaching personnel to provide both students and the teacher with time to fill out a journal to track information relating to any of the following: Food, nutrient, and exercise. The nutrient information may include information such as the amounts of water, carbohydrates, protein, fat, minerals, and vitamins consumed;

(D) All data that is necessary to comply with the accountability measures set forth by the Department of Education and its service providers. Data collected pursuant to this program is subject to state and federal data privacy laws to protect the privacy and confidentiality of individual students and not subject to disclosure under the West Virginia Freedom of Information Act set forth in §29B-1-1 *et seq*. of this code.

(8) School districts may issue a request for proposals to contract with qualified service providers on a per-student rate to provide evidence-based nutrition and aerobic exercise programs and/or products consisting of nutrition education, aerobic exercise, use of technology, and associated licenses for teachers and students in grades three through six in school districts provided for under this section.

(9) School districts may consider all providers of programs and products that meet the following criteria:

(A) The provider has operated for 10 or more years in schools serving primarily underserved, low-income students; and

(B) The provider has at least 10 years of empirical research data demonstrating improvement in students’ nutrition knowledge, heart health measurements, such as blood pressure and resting heart rate, and strength endurance, such as through push-ups and sit-ups.

(10) Programs implemented pursuant to this section shall include the following accountability measures:

(A) Annually, school districts shall report the identity of the participating schools and accountability measures in the aggregate to the West Virginia Department of Education, which shall make such reports available to the general public.

(B) At a minimum, reports submitted to the West Virginia Department of Education shall include aggregated student pre- and post-testing data in the areas of:

(i) Nutrition knowledge;

(ii) Heart health using such measures as blood pressure and heart rate;

(iii) Strength endurance using such measures as push-ups and sit-ups;

(C) The pre-testing required by subdivision of this subsection shall occur prior to the beginning of the nutrition and aerobic exercise instruction each school year, and the post-testing shall occur each school year near or after the conclusion of the instruction.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to create the heart health equity inclusion program. The bill provides for legislative findings. Finally, the bill provides for required physical education program in physical fitness.

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