

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 5518

By Delegates Campbell, E. Pritt, Dittman, Shamblin,
Toney, Dean, Ross, Foggin, Heckert, Ferrell, and
Stephens

[Introduced February 07, 2024; Referred to the
Committee on Education then Finance

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §18-9A-7 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
 2 to adjusting the school aid formula's transportation calculations from its current standard of
 3 student enrollment to school bus mileage traveled daily to provide assistance to larger
 4 counties that are currently mandated to offer school bus transportation to all students.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 9A. PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPPORT.

§18-9A-7. Foundation allowance for transportation cost.

1 (a) The allowance in the foundation school program for each county for transportation is
 2 the sum of the following computations:

3 (1) A percentage of the transportation costs incurred by the county for maintenance,
 4 operation and related costs exclusive of all salaries, including the costs incurred for contracted
 5 transportation services and public utility transportation, as follows:

6 (A) For each high-density county, 87.5 percent;

7 (B) For each medium-density county, 90 percent;

8 (C) For each low-density county, 92.5 percent;

9 (D) For each sparse-density county, 95 percent;

10 (E) For any county for the transportation cost for maintenance, operation and related costs,
 11 exclusive of all salaries, for transporting students to and from classes at a multicounty vocational
 12 center, the percentage provided in paragraphs (A) through (D) of this subdivision as applicable for
 13 the county plus an additional 10 percent; and

14 (F) For any county for that portion of its school bus system that uses as an alternative fuel
 15 compressed natural gas, propane, or is fully powered by electricity that is stored in an onboard
 16 rechargeable battery or other storage device, the percentage provided in paragraphs (A) through
 17 (D) of this subdivision as applicable for the county plus an additional 10 percent, as well as an
 18 additional 5% for the portion of its school bus system that is manufactured within the state of West
 19 Virginia: *Provided*, That any county using an alternative fuel and qualifying for the additional

20 allowance under this subdivision shall submit a plan regarding the intended future use of
21 alternatively fueled school buses;

22 (2) The total cost, within each county, of insurance premiums on buses, buildings and
23 equipment used in transportation;

24 (3) An amount equal to 8.33 percent of the current replacement value of the bus fleet within
25 each county as determined by the state board. The amount shall only be used for the replacement
26 of buses except as provided in subdivision (4) of this subsection. Buses purchased after July 1,
27 1999, that are driven 180,000 miles, regardless of year model, are subject to the replacement
28 value of 8.33 percent as determined by the state board. In addition, in any school year in which its
29 net enrollment increases when compared to the net enrollment the year immediately preceding, a
30 school district may apply to the state superintendent for funding for an additional bus or buses. The
31 state superintendent shall make a decision regarding each application based upon an analysis of
32 the individual school district's net enrollment history and transportation needs: *Provided*, That the
33 superintendent may not consider any application which fails to document that the county has
34 applied for federal funding for additional buses. If the state superintendent finds that a need exists,
35 a request for funding shall be included in the budget request submitted by the state board for the
36 upcoming fiscal year;

37 (4) Notwithstanding the restriction on the use of funds for the replacement of buses
38 pursuant to subdivision (3) of this subsection, up to \$200,000 of these funds in any school year
39 may be used by a county for school facility and equipment repair, maintenance and improvement
40 or replacement or other current expense priorities if a request by the county superintendent listing
41 the amount, the intended use of the funds and the serviceability of the bus fleet is approved by the
42 state superintendent. Before approving the request, the state superintendent shall verify the
43 serviceability of the county's bus fleet based upon the state school bus inspection defect rate of the
44 county over the two prior years; and

45 (5) Aid in lieu of transportation equal to ~~the state average amount per pupil for each pupil~~

46 ~~receiving the aid within each county~~ school bus mileage traveled daily within each county.

47 (b) The total state share for this purpose is the sum of the county shares: *Provided*, That a
48 county may not receive an allowance which is greater than one-third above the computed state
49 average allowance per transportation mile multiplied by the total transportation mileage in the
50 county exclusive of the allowance for the purchase of additional buses.

51 (c) One half of one percent of the transportation allowance distributed to each county is for
52 the purpose of trips related to academic classroom curriculum and not related to any
53 extracurricular activity. Any remaining funds credited to a county for the purpose of trips related to
54 academic classroom curriculum during the fiscal year shall be carried over for use in the same
55 manner the next fiscal year and shall be separate and apart from, and in addition to, the
56 appropriation for the next fiscal year. The state board may request a county to document the use of
57 funds for trips related to academic classroom curriculum if the board determines that it is
58 necessary.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is relating to adjust the school aid formula's transportation calculations from its current standard of student enrollment to school bus mileage traveled daily to provide assistance to larger counties that are mandated to offer school bus transportation to all students.

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