

1 (a) (1) The Legislature finds that achieving a nationally
2 recognized professional certification in speech-language pathology
3 or audiology involves a rigorous process of demonstrating both
4 knowledge and skills and results in highly trained and capable
5 employees. Individuals who attain national professional
6 certification by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association
7 provide needed and essential services to the school students of
8 this state. Individuals should be encouraged to achieve and
9 maintain the national professional certification through
10 reimbursement of expenses and a salary bonus which reflects their
11 additional certification.

12 (2) The Legislature finds that the rigorous standards and
13 processes for advanced certification by either the National Board
14 of Certified Counselors or the West Virginia Board of Examiners in
15 Counseling helps to promote the quality of counseling in schools.
16 Counselors in the public schools of West Virginia should be
17 encouraged to achieve and maintain the advanced certification
18 through reimbursement of expenses and a salary bonus that reflects
19 their additional certification.

20 (3) The Legislature finds that achieving a nationally
21 recognized professional certification in school psychology involves
22 a rigorous process of demonstrating competencies in scientific
23 research-based knowledge and skills. School psychologists provide
24 assessment, counseling and consultation to students, teachers,

1 school administrators and parents. Individuals who attain national
2 professional certification by the National Association of School
3 Psychologists provide services to students, families and school
4 systems in this state. School psychologists should be encouraged
5 to achieve and maintain this national professional certification
6 through reimbursement of expenses and a salary bonus which reflects
7 their additional certification.

8 (4) The Legislature finds that achieving a nationally
9 recognized professional certification in school nursing involves a
10 rigorous process of demonstrating competencies in health care and
11 nursing applications, knowledge and skills. School nurses provide
12 assessment, counseling and consultation to students, teachers,
13 school administrators and parents. School nurses who attain
14 national professional certification by the National Board for
15 Certification of School Nurses provide services to students,
16 families and school systems in this state. School nurses should be
17 encouraged to achieve and maintain this national professional
18 certification through reimbursement of expenses and a salary bonus
19 which reflects their additional certification.

20 (5) The Legislature finds that achieving a nationally
21 recognized professional certification in school social work helps
22 promote the quality of social work services in schools. School
23 social workers provide psychosocial assessment, counseling,
24 conflict resolution, case management, community resource

1 development, referral services and consultation to students,
2 teachers, school administrators and parents. School social workers
3 who achieve certification are better equipped to address the
4 negative psycho-social, socio-economic, human relationship, family
5 and systemic factors which impair student attendance and success.
6 Individuals who attain the National Association of Social Workers'
7 Certified School Social Work Specialist certification provide
8 services to students, families and school systems in this state.
9 School social workers should be encouraged to achieve and maintain
10 this national professional certification through reimbursement of
11 expenses and a salary bonus which reflects their additional
12 certification.

13 (6) Therefore, the purpose of this section is:

14 (A) To provide a statewide salary supplement for certain
15 professional personnel employed in the public schools who hold
16 nationally recognized professional certification in speech-language
17 pathology, audiology, counseling, school psychology, ~~or~~ school
18 nursing, or school social work;

19 (B) To treat these professional certifications equally;

20 (C) To encourage others to attain such a certification; and

21 (D) To help school systems recruit these highly qualified
22 professionals.

23 (b) In addition to any amounts prescribed in the applicable
24 state minimum salary schedule, any professional personnel who hold

1 national certification or other credential as provided in this
2 section shall be paid an annual salary supplement of \$2,500. The
3 payment is:

4 (1) To be made in equal monthly installments;

5 (2) To be considered a part of the state minimum salaries for
6 teachers; and

7 (3) To continue for the life of the certification, or for ten
8 years for any one certification, whichever first expires.

9 (c) Professional personnel employed as speech-language
10 pathologists, audiologists, counselors, school psychologists, ~~or~~
11 school nurses or school social work are eligible upon enrollment
12 for reimbursement for one half of the fee for certification in
13 accordance with this section. In addition, these personnel are
14 eligible upon attainment of the certification for reimbursement of
15 the remainder of the application fee plus other expenses actually
16 incurred toward attainment of the certification, not exceeding
17 \$600, upon approval by the Department of Education. Not more than
18 one hundred fifteen speech-language pathologists, audiologists,
19 counselors, school psychologists, ~~and~~ school nurses or school
20 social workers, combined total, are eligible for reimbursement in
21 any one fiscal year.

22 (d) Notwithstanding subsection (b) of this section, for the
23 school year beginning July 1, 2008, the number of speech-language
24 pathologists, audiologists, counselors, school psychologists, ~~and~~

1 school nurses or school social workers paid the annual salary
2 supplement provided ~~for~~ in said subsection may not exceed the
3 number of speech-language pathologists, audiologists, ~~and~~
4 counselors or school social workers eligible to be paid the annual
5 salary supplement under the provisions of this section in effect
6 during the school year beginning July 1, 2007, by more than one
7 hundred fifteen qualified recipients, and the total amount of
8 qualified recipients may not increase thereafter by more than one
9 hundred fifteen in each subsequent fiscal year.

10 (e) The state board shall promulgate a legislative rule
11 establishing criteria for selection of the individuals eligible for
12 reimbursement and a salary supplement in accordance with this
13 section. The selection criteria shall prioritize the length of
14 time the certification has been held and the years of experience of
15 the holder in determining eligibility.

16 (f) The state board shall report the rule to the Legislative
17 Oversight Commission on Education Accountability by the January,
18 2009, legislative interim meeting period and shall report on its
19 progress in developing the rule to the commission during prior
20 interim meetings as requested.

21 (g) No provision of this section may be construed to require
22 any appropriation, or any specific level of appropriation, by the
23 Legislature, or payment of any supplement or reimbursement
24 described in this section for which a specific appropriation has

1 not been made.

2 (h) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section or the
3 provisions of section two-a of this article, professional personnel
4 may not be paid a salary supplement pursuant to the provisions of
5 both said sections.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to add school social workers to the list of professional personnel who may receive salary supplement and educational expense reimbursement for achieving recognized national certification. The maximum number of professional personnel eligible to receive salary supplement and education expense reimbursement remains unchanged.

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