

H. B. 4146

(By Delegates Fragale and Iaquina)
[Introduced January 14, 2014; referred to the
Committee on Education.]

A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new article, designated §5-30-1, §5-30-2 and §5-30-3, all relating to the creation of the Governor's Committee on School Board Unification; explaining the purpose for creating the committee; establishing the committee; naming the committee's members; listing the committee's reimbursable expenses; setting a quorum for the committee; establishing the committee's meeting schedule; planning for the committee's termination; and specifying what the committee must include in its report to the Governor.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended by adding thereto a new article, designated §5-30-1, §5-30-2 and §5-30-3, all to read as follows:

1 **Article 30. Governor's Committee on School Board Unification.**

2 **§5-30-1. Legislative purpose.**

3 (a) The Legislature finds that the fifty-five county school
4 boards across West Virginia face challenges related to
5 accessability, funding, population and topography. In many cases,
6 the challenges county school boards face are shared by bordering
7 county school boards. With this knowledge, the Legislature
8 recognizes the need to study:

9 (1) The feasibility of unifying and consolidating county
10 school boards;

11 (2) The possible benefits and detriments that may come with
12 unifying and consolidating county school boards;

13 (3) The challenges and political realities that would be
14 encountered when unifying and consolidating school boards; and

15 (4) How the county school boards could be unified and
16 consolidated into no more than twenty-seven districts.

17 (b) The Legislature therefore declares that creation of the
18 Governor's Committee on School Board Unification will enable the
19 study of the possibilities for and implications of school board
20 unification.

21 **§5-30-2. Governor's Committee on School Board Unification;**

22 **establishment of committee; members; expenses;**

23 **quorum; meetings; termination.**

1 (a) This section establishes the Governor's Committee on
2 School Board Unification. The committee consists of nine members
3 representing educational interests across West Virginia.

4 (b) The following people serve as ex officio members of the
5 committee:

6 (1) The State Superintendent of Schools, who serves as chair;

7 (2) The chair of the House of Delegates Committee on
8 Education; and

9 (3) The chair of the Senate Committee on Education.

10 (c) The Governor shall appoint members of the committee by
11 August 1, 2014, and shall appoint the following people to serve as
12 members of the committee:

13 (1) One person representing the interests of the West Virginia
14 School Board Association;

15 (2) One person representing the interests of the American
16 Federation of Teachers--West Virginia;

17 (3) One person representing the interests of the West Virginia
18 Education Association;

19 (4) A public school teacher currently teaching a kindergarten
20 through fifth grade class;

21 (5) A public school teacher currently teaching a sixth through
22 eighth grade class; and

23 (6) A public school teacher currently teaching a ninth through
24 twelfth grade class.

1 (d) Other than the State Superintendent of Schools, and the
2 chairpersons of the House of Delegates Education Committee and
3 Senate Education Committee, none of the committee members may
4 reside in the same county.

5 (e) Members of the committee who serve in the Legislature are
6 not entitled to compensation, but are entitled to reimbursement for
7 travel expenses as if on an interim assignment, pursuant to the
8 provisions of section seven, article two-a, chapter four of this
9 code.

10 (f) The State Superintendent of Schools and appointed members
11 of the committee are not entitled to compensation for service on
12 the committee but may be reimbursed by the West Virginia Department
13 of Education for all reasonable and necessary expenses actually
14 incurred in the performance of their duties in a manner consistent
15 with guidelines of the Travel Management Office of the Department
16 of Administration.

17 (g) A majority of the members constitutes a quorum for the
18 purpose of conducting business.

19 (h) The committee shall meet at least once per month between
20 August 1, 2014 and January 1, 2015. All committee meetings shall be
21 conducted in accordance with article nine-a, chapter six of this
22 code.

23 (i) The committee shall prepare a report of its findings to
24 present to the Governor no later than January 1, 2015. The

1 committee is terminated upon the Governor receiving the committee's
2 report.

3 **§5-30-3. The Governor's Committee on School Board Unification**
4 **Report.**

5 The committee shall:

6 (1) Study issues pertaining to the unification and
7 consolidation of county school board in West Virginia;

8 (2) Develop legislation for consideration during the 2015
9 Regular Session of the Legislature, that is designed to encourage
10 the unification and consolidation of existing county school
11 districts into not more than twenty-seven districts;

12 (3) Consider any recommendations or proposals for possible
13 school district unifications or consolidations that include:

14 (A) A regionally facilitated process that allows a school
15 district governing board to develop its own unification or
16 consolidation plans; and

17 (B) A process for a county superintendent to develop a school
18 district unification or consolidation plan.

19 (4) Submit to the Governor, the Senate President, and the
20 Speaker of the House of Delegates, a report regarding the
21 committee's activities and recommendations on or before January 1,
22 2015.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to establish the Governor's Committee on School Board Unification, which will prepare a report for the Governor on unifying and consolidating county school

boards.

This article is new; therefore, it has been completely underscored.