

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2022 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **Senate Bill 658**

BY SENATOR RUCKER

[Introduced February 16, 2022; referred  
to the Committee on Education; and then to the Committee  
on Finance]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §18A-4-2b of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating  
2 to making school psychologists holding a license in school psychology from the West  
3 Virginia Board of Examiners of Psychologists eligible for the same annual salary  
4 supplement and expense reimbursements that school psychologists who attain national  
5 professional certification by the National Association of School Psychologists are eligible  
6 for; and removing obsolete language.

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

#### **ARTICLE 4. SALARIES, WAGES AND OTHER BENEFITS.**

##### **§18A-4-2b. State minimum salary supplement and educational expense reimbursement for professional personnel with recognized national certification in speech-language pathology, audiology, counseling, school psychology or school nursing.**

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

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

15 (3) The Legislature finds that achieving a nationally recognized professional certification

16 in school psychology or a license in school psychology from the West Virginia Board of Examiners  
17 of Psychologists involves a rigorous process of demonstrating competencies in scientific  
18 research-based knowledge and skills. School psychologists provide assessment, counseling and  
19 consultation to students, teachers, school administrators and parents. Individuals who attain  
20 national professional certification by the National Association of School Psychologists or a license  
21 in school psychology from the West Virginia Board of Examiners of Psychologists provide services  
22 to students, families, and school systems in this state. School psychologists should be  
23 encouraged to achieve and maintain this national professional certification or this state license  
24 through reimbursement of expenses and a salary bonus which reflects their additional  
25 certification.

26 (4) The Legislature finds that achieving a nationally recognized professional certification  
27 in school nursing involves a rigorous process of demonstrating competencies in health care and  
28 nursing applications, knowledge, and skills. School nurses provide assessment, counseling and  
29 consultation to students, teachers, school administrators and parents. School nurses who attain  
30 national professional certification by the National Board for Certification of School Nurses provide  
31 services to students, families, and school systems in this state. School nurses should be  
32 encouraged to achieve and maintain this national professional certification through  
33 reimbursement of expenses and a salary bonus which reflects their additional certification.

34 (5) Therefore, the purpose of this section is:

35 (A) To provide a statewide salary supplement for certain professional personnel employed  
36 in the public schools who hold nationally recognized professional certification in speech-language  
37 pathology, audiology, counseling, school psychology, or school nursing or other credential as  
38 provided in this section;

39 (B) To treat these professional certifications equally;

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

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

42 (b) In addition to any amounts prescribed in the applicable state minimum salary schedule,  
43 any professional personnel who hold national certification or other credential as provided in this  
44 section shall be paid an annual salary supplement of \$2,500. The payment is:

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

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

47 (3) To continue for the life of the certification, or for 10 years for any one certification,  
48 whichever first expires.

49 (c) Professional personnel employed as speech-language pathologists, audiologists,  
50 counselors, school psychologists or school nurses are eligible upon enrollment for reimbursement  
51 for one-half of the fee for certification in accordance with this section. In addition, these personnel  
52 are eligible upon attainment of the certification for reimbursement of the remainder of the  
53 application fee plus other expenses actually incurred toward attainment of the certification, not  
54 exceeding \$600, upon approval by the Department of Education. Not more than 115 speech-  
55 language pathologists, audiologists, counselors, school psychologists and school nurses,  
56 combined total, are eligible for reimbursement in any one fiscal year.

57 ~~(d) Notwithstanding subsection (b) of this section, for the school year beginning July 1,~~  
58 ~~2008, the number of speech-language pathologists, audiologists, counselors, school~~  
59 ~~psychologists and school nurses paid the annual salary supplement provided for in said~~  
60 ~~subsection may not exceed the number of speech-language pathologists, audiologists and~~  
61 ~~counselors eligible to be paid the annual salary supplement under the provisions of this section~~  
62 ~~in effect during the school year beginning July 1, 2007, by more than one hundred fifteen qualified~~  
63 ~~recipients, and the The total amount number of qualified recipients to be paid the annual salary~~  
64 ~~supplement pursuant to this section may not increase thereafter by more than 115 in each~~  
65 ~~subsequent fiscal year.~~

66 (e) The state board shall promulgate a legislative rule establishing criteria for selection of  
67 the individuals eligible for reimbursement and a salary supplement in accordance with this section.

68 The selection criteria shall prioritize the length of time the certification has been held and the years  
69 of experience of the holder in determining eligibility.

70 ~~(f) The state board shall report the rule to the Legislative Oversight Commission on~~  
71 ~~Education Accountability by the January, 2009, legislative interim meeting period and shall report~~  
72 ~~on its progress in developing the rule to the commission during prior interim meetings as~~  
73 ~~requested~~

74 ~~(g)~~ (f) No provision of this section may be construed to require any appropriation, or any  
75 specific level of appropriation, by the Legislature, or payment of any supplement or  
76 reimbursement described in this section for which a specific appropriation has not been made.

77 ~~(h)~~ (g) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section or the provisions of section two-  
78 a of this article, professional personnel may not be paid a salary supplement pursuant to the  
79 provisions of both said sections.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to make school psychologists holding a license in school psychology from the West Virginia Board of Examiners of Psychologists eligible for the same annual salary supplement and expense reimbursements that school psychologists who attain national professional certification by the National Association of School Psychologists are eligible for.

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