WEST virginia legislature

2023 regular session

Committee Substitute

for

Senate Bill 691

By Senator Maynard

[Originating in the Committee on Education; reported on February 23, 2023]

A BILL to amend and reenact §15-1B-24 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to requiring the Mountaineer Challenge Academy and the Bureau for Social Services to implement a plan that requires the Bureau for Social Services to provide room and board reimbursement for cadets’ enrollment costs at the Mountaineer Challenge Academy; and limiting application of plan to cadets who are eligible for the payments by the Bureau.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 1B. NATIONAL GUARD.

§15-1B-24. Mountaineer Challenge Academy; expansion; cooperation of state executive agencies.

(a) Subject to the agreement entered ~~into~~ between the United States Secretary of Defense and the Governor to establish, organize, and administer the Mountaineer Challenge Academy pursuant to 32 U.S.C. § 509, the Governor shall:

(1) Expand the capacity of the Mountaineer Challenge Academy location in Preston County to accept cadets up to its maximum capacity;

(2) Expand the Mountaineer Challenge Academy to a second location in Fayette County; and

(3) To the extent necessary to accomplish the requirements set forth in this subsection and to maximize the use of federal funds, pursue an amendment to the agreement entered ~~into~~ with the United States Secretary of Defense pursuant to 32 U.S.C. § 509.

(b) The Mountaineer Challenge Academy, operated by the Adjutant General at Camp Dawson, is hereby acknowledged to be a program of great value in meeting the educational needs of at-risk youth throughout the state. Further, the Mountaineer Challenge Academy is hereby designated as a special alternative education program as is further provided pursuant to section §18-2-6 of this code. It is, therefore, the intent of the Legislature that the Mountaineer Challenge Academy should enjoy the full cooperation of the executive agencies of state government in carrying out its program.

To this end, the State Board of Education shall, notwithstanding any other provision in this code to the contrary:

(1) Include the Mountaineer Challenge Academy in the child nutrition program;

(2) Provide the names and mailing addresses of all high school dropouts in the state to the director of the Mountaineer Challenge Academy annually; and

(3) Provide for Mountaineer Challenge Academy graduates to participate in the adult basic education program.

(c) Further cooperation with the Mountaineer Challenge Academy is encouraged by the Legislature for the purpose of assisting the Mountaineer Challenge Academy to achieve its mission and help prepare young people for productive adulthood.

(d) The Mountaineer Challenge Academy and the Bureau for Social Services shall implement a plan that requires the Bureau for Social Services to provide room and board reimbursement for cadets’ enrollment costs at the Mountaineer Challenge Academy starting no later than July 1, 2024: *Provided*, That all children subject to the plan are eligible for the payments by the Bureau.