

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4480

FISCAL
NOTE

By Delegate Holstein

[Introduced January 10, 2024; Referred
to the Committee on Education then Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new article,
 2 designated §18C-10-1, §18C-10-2, §18C-10-3, §18C-10-4, and §18C-10-5, all relating to
 3 the creation of the West Virginia STEM Scholarship Act; providing for a short title; providing
 4 for legislative findings and purpose; establishing the West Virginia STEM Scholarship
 5 Program and setting forth the amount of scholarship money to be paid to educators who
 6 satisfy the thresholds; setting forth criteria and creating a sunset provision; and providing
 7 for an effective date.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 10. WEST VIRGINIA STEM SCHOLARSHIP ACT.

§18C-10-1. Short title.

1 This article shall be known and may be cited as the "West Virginia STEM Scholarship Act."

§18C-10-2. Legislative findings and purpose.

1 (a) The Legislature hereby finds and declares that:

2 (1) Every West Virginia student should have access to education and training that will lead
 3 directly to quality employment opportunities within the state that is directly related to science,
 4 technology, engineering or mathematics, otherwise known as "STEM." In order for West Virginia to
 5 retain and attract teachers and educators in this particular field, our state must ensure that its
 6 workforce in West Virginia schools has such education and training; and

7 (2) West Virginia currently faces a shortage of educators in West Virginia, particularly with
 8 those who have specialized training in STEM fields.

9 (b) The purpose of this article is to provide West Virginia educators with increased
 10 opportunities to pursue a lifelong career in helping educate students in STEM fields through the
 11 creation of a scholarship program designed to fill more job opportunities in our state with quality
 12 educators in these fields.

§18C-10-3. West Virginia STEM Scholarship Program; funding.

1 (a) There is hereby created a scholarship program known as the "West Virginia STEM

2 Scholarship Program," which shall be administered by the vice chancellor for administration
3 pursuant to §18B-4-2 of this code.

4 (b) The scholarship program shall be available to all West Virginia certified teachers with
5 specializations in a science, technology, engineering or mathematics ("STEM") field. If any teacher
6 is employed in a school in this state for a minimum of five years and while employed in a STEM
7 position, then they shall be eligible for up to \$5,000 in debt relief through this scholarship. If a
8 teacher has been employed in a school in this state for a minimum of 10 years and holds a STEM
9 specialization, then that teacher shall be eligible for up to \$10,000 in debt relief, or for an additional
10 amount of \$5,000 if a five-year option was taken after their initial five years of employment.

11 (c) Funding for this program shall be done through a line item in the budget.

§18C-10-4. Eligibility requirements; agreements; sunset provision.

1 (a) To be eligible for the West Virginia STEM Scholarship Program, an individual must
2 satisfy the following requirements:

3 (1) Be a citizen or legal resident of the United States and have been a resident of West
4 Virginia for at least one year immediately preceding the date of application for a scholarship;

5 (2) Have completed at least a master's degree in education;

6 (3) Be employed by a kindergarten through 12 school in this state for a minimum of five
7 years;

8 (4) Fill a science, technology, engineering or mathematics ("STEM") position; and

9 (5) Have available debt to qualify, as scholarship funds to recipients shall not exceed any
10 debt owed.

11 (b) The West Virginia STEM Scholarship Program shall begin in January 2025 and shall
12 sunset in January 2031.

§18C-10-5. Effective date.

1 This article shall become effective upon passage.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to create of the West Virginia STEM Scholarship Act. The

bill provides for a short title. The bill provides for legislative findings and a purpose. The bill provides for the West Virginia STEM Scholarship Program and sets forth the amount of scholarship money to be paid to educators who satisfy the thresholds. The bill sets forth criteria and creates a sunset provision. Finally, the bill provides for an effective date.

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