WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 861

By Senators Grady, Oliverio, Hamilton, Deeds, Caputo, Plymale and Roberts

[Introduced February 19, 2024; referred  
to the Committee on Education; and then to the Committee on Finance]

A BILL to amend and reenact §18-9A-10 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to amend and reenact §18A-3C-3 of said code, all relating to increasing support and professional development for educators; expanding factors used to determine how funds for supporting county-level implementation of the comprehensive systems for teacher and leader induction and professional growth are allocated to the counties; authorizing retention of additional funding for 2024 – 2025 school year by Department of Education to distribute to the county boards for the purpose of contracting with organizations that facilitate the school districts’ participation in regional professional learning cadres, or teacher leadership networks designed to support math and science improvement or supported by the Department of Education; requiring certain amount of funds be retained beginning with 2025 – 2026 school year to distribute to the county boards for the purpose of expanding the school districts’ ability to contract with organizations that facilitate the school districts’ participation in regional professional learning cadres, or teacher leadership networks designed to support math and science improvement or to support teachers who are less than fully certified for the teaching position in which they are employed; requiring the funds to be distributed to the county boards under a grant program to be established by the state board by rule; requiring the state board to ensure that the results on the comprehensive statewide student assessment for the students taught by each teacher are provided to that teacher; adding to topics to be addressed, the plan for implementation of a comprehensive system of support for improving professional practice; and requiring certain additional amounts paid to a teacher be only for the duration of any service provided and not be considered salary for the computation of an annuity under the Teachers Retirement System.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

CHAPTER 18. EDUCATION.

ARTICLE 9A. PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPPORT.

§18-9A-10. Foundation allowance to improve instructional programs, instructional technology, and teacher and leader induction and professional growth.

(a) The total allowance to improve instructional programs and instructional technology is the sum of the following:

(1) For instructional improvement, in accordance with county and school electronic strategic improvement plans required by §18-2E-5 of this code, an amount equal to 10 percent of the increase in the local share amount for the next school year shall be added to the amount of the appropriation for this purpose for the immediately preceding school year. The sum of these amounts shall be allocated to the counties as follows:

(A) One hundred fifty thousand dollars shall be allocated to each county; and

(B) Allocation to the counties of the remainder of these funds shall be made proportional to the average of each county’s average daily attendance for the preceding year and the county’s second month net enrollment.

Moneys allocated by this subdivision shall be used to improve instructional programs according to the county and school strategic improvement plans required by §18-2E-5 of this code and approved by the state board.

Up to 50 percent of this allocation for the improvement of instructional programs may be used to employ professional educators and service personnel in the county. Prior to the use of any funds from this subdivision for personnel costs, the county board must receive authorization from the State Superintendent. The State Superintendent shall require the county board to demonstrate: (1) The need for the allocation; (2) efficiency and fiscal responsibility in staffing; (3) sharing of services with adjoining counties in the use of the total local district board budget; and (4) employment of technology integration specialists to meet the needs for implementation of the West Virginia Strategic Technology Learning Plan. County boards shall make application for the use of funds for personnel for the next fiscal year by May 1 of each year. On or before June 1, the State Superintendent shall review all applications and notify applying county boards of the approval or disapproval of the use of funds for personnel during the fiscal year appropriate. The State Superintendent shall require the county board to demonstrate the need for an allocation for personnel based upon the county’s inability to meet the requirements of state law or state board policy.

The funds available for personnel under this subdivision may not be used to increase the total number of professional noninstructional personnel in the central office beyond four.

The plan shall be made available for distribution to the public at the office of each affected county board; plus

(2) For the purposes of improving instructional technology, an amount equal to 20 percent of the increase in the local share amount for the next school year shall be added to the amount of the appropriation for this purpose for the immediately preceding school year. The sum of these amounts shall be allocated to the counties as follows:

(A) Thirty thousand dollars shall be allocated to each county; and

(B) Allocation to the counties of the remainder of these funds shall be made proportional to the average of each county's average daily attendance for the preceding year and the county's second month net enrollment.

Moneys allocated by this subdivision shall be used to improve instructional technology programs according to the county board's strategic technology learning plan.

This allocation for the improvement of instructional technology programs may also be used for the employment of technology system specialists essential for the technology systems of the schools of the county to be fully functional and readily available when needed by classroom teachers. The amount of this allocation used for the employment of technology system specialists shall be included and justified in the county board's strategic technology learning plan; plus

(3) One percent of the state average per pupil state aid multiplied by the number of students enrolled in dual credit, advanced placement, and international baccalaureate courses, as defined by the state board, distributed to the counties proportionate to enrollment in these courses in each county; plus

(4) For the purpose of supporting county-level implementation of the comprehensive systems for teacher and leader induction and professional growth pursuant to §18A-3C-3 of this code, an amount equal to 20 percent of the increase in the local share amount for the next school year shall be added to the amount of the appropriation for this purpose for the immediately preceding school year. The sum of these amounts shall be allocated to the counties in a manner established by the state board which considers the following factors:

(A) The number of full-time-equivalent teachers employed by the county with zero years of experience;

(B) The number of full-time-equivalent teachers employed by the county who are less than fully certified for the teaching position in which they are employed;

~~(B)~~ (C) The total number of full-time-equivalent teachers employed by the county with one year of experience, with two years of experience, and with three years of experience;

~~(C)~~ (D) The number of full-time-equivalent principals, assistant principals, and vocational administrators employed by the county who are in their first or second year of employment as a principal, assistant principal, or vocational administrator;

~~(D)~~ (E) The number of full-time-equivalent principals, assistant principals, and vocational administrators employed by the county who are in their first year in an assignment at a school with a programmatic level in which they have not previously served as a principal, assistant principal, or vocational administrator; and

~~(E)~~ (F) Needs identified in the strategic plans for continuous improvement of schools and school systems including those identified through the performance evaluations of professional personnel.

Notwithstanding any provision of this subsection to the contrary, no county may receive an allocation for the purposes of this subdivision which is less than the county’s total 2016-2017 allocation from the Teacher Mentor and Principals Mentorship appropriations to the Department of Education. Moneys allocated by this subdivision shall be used for implementation of the comprehensive systems for teacher and leader induction and professional growth pursuant to §18A-3C-3 of this code. Notwithstanding any provision of this subsection to the contrary, for each of the five school years beginning with the school year 2020 – 2021 and ending after the school year 2024 – 2025, from funds to be allocated under this subdivision, $100,000 shall be retained by the Department of Education to assist county boards with the design and implementation of a teacher leader framework to accomplish the teacher induction and professional growth aspects of their comprehensive systems of support for teacher and leader induction and professional growth pursuant to §18A-3C-3 of this code. The Department of Education may also retain an additional amount of funds to be allocated under this subdivision for school year 2024 – 2025, not exceeding $200,000, to distribute to the county boards for the purpose of contracting with organizations that facilitate the school districts’ participation in regional professional learning cadres or teacher leadership networks designed to support math and science improvement or supported by the Department of Education. Notwithstanding any provision of this subsection to the contrary, beginning with the school year 2025 – 2026, $2 million from funds to be allocated under this subdivision shall be retained by the Department of Education to distribute to the county boards for the purpose of expanding the school districts' ability to contract with organizations that facilitate the school districts' participation in regional professional learning cadres or teacher leadership networks designed to support math and science improvement or to support teachers who are less than fully certified for the teaching position in which they are employed as further provided in §18A-3C-3 of this code. The $200,000 retained in school year 2024 – 2025 and the $2 million retained beginning with the school year 2025 -2026, shall be distributed to the county boards under a grant program to be established by the state board by rule pursuant to §29A-3B-1 *et seq*. of this code. The rule shall at least include the following:

(A) A requirement and procedures for county boards to submit applications for a grant;

(B) Criteria on which awards of the grants will be based on;

(C) A requirement for an external evaluation for any program funded by a grant.

(b) Notwithstanding the restrictions on the use of funds pursuant to subdivisions (1) and (2), subsection (a) of this section, a county board may:

(1) Utilize up to 25 percent of the allocation for the improvement of instructional programs in any school year for school facility and equipment repair, maintenance, and improvement or replacement and other current expense priorities and for emergency purposes. The amount of this allocation used for any of these purposes shall be included and justified in the county and school strategic improvement plans or amendments thereto; and

(2) Utilize up to 50 percent of the allocation for improving instructional technology in any school year for school facility and equipment repair, maintenance, and improvement or replacement and other current expense priorities and for emergency purposes. The amount of this allocation used for any of these purposes shall be included and justified in the county board’s strategic technology learning plan or amendments thereto.

CHAPTER 18A. SCHOOL PERSONNEL.

ARTICLE 3C. IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING.

§18A-3C-3. Comprehensive system for teacher and leader induction and professional growth.

(a) The intent of the Legislature is to allow for local-level implementation of comprehensive systems of support for building professional practice consistent with sound educational practices and resources available. In this regard, it is the intent of the Legislature that the comprehensive systems of support shall incorporate support for improved professional performance that begins with meaningful assistance for beginning teachers and leaders and also is targeted on deficiencies identified through the educator personnel evaluation process and other professional development needs identified in the strategic plans for continuous improvement of schools and school systems. Further, because of significant variability among the counties, not only in the size of their teaching force, distribution of facilities and available resources, but also because of their varying needs, the Legislature intends for the implementation of this section to be accomplished in a manner that provides adequate flexibility to the counties to design and implement a comprehensive system of support for improving professional performance that best achieves the goals of this section within the county. Finally, because of the critical importance of ensuring that all teachers perform at the accomplished level or higher in the delivery of instruction that at least meets the West Virginia Professional Teaching Standards, and because achieving this objective at a minimum entails providing assistance to address the needs as indicated by the data informed results of annual performance evaluations, including the self-assessed needs of the teachers themselves, the Legislature expects the highest priority for county and state professional development will be on meeting these needs and that the comprehensive systems of support for improving professional practice will reflect substantial redirection of existing professional development resources toward this highest priority.

(b) The state board shall ensure that the results on the comprehensive statewide student assessment for the students taught by each teacher are provided to that teacher so that the teacher can see the performance of the students he or she taught the previous school year.

~~(b)~~ (c) On or before July 1, 2018, the state board shall publish guidelines on the design and implementation of a county-level comprehensive system of support for improving professional practice. The purpose of the guidelines is to assist the county board with the design and implementation of a system that best achieves the goals of this section within the county. The guidelines may include examples of best practices and resources available to county boards to assist them with the design and implementation of a comprehensive system of support and may include guidelines for the design and implementation of a teacher leader framework committed to improving the quality of instruction.

~~(c)~~ (d) Effective for the school year beginning July 1, 2018, and thereafter, a county board is not eligible to receive state funding appropriated for the purposes of this section or any other provision of law related to beginning teacher and principal internships and mentor teachers and principals unless it has adopted a plan for implementation of a comprehensive system of support for improving professional practice, the plan has been verified by the state board as meeting the requirements of this section and the county is implementing the plan. The plan shall address the following:

(1) The manner in which the county will provide the strong school-based support and supervision that will assist beginning teachers in developing instructional and management strategies, procedural and policy expertise, and other professional practices they need to be successful in the classroom and perform at the accomplished level. Nothing in this subdivision prohibits a school or school system that was granted an exception or waiver from §18A-3-2c of this code prior to the effective date of this section from continuing implementation of the program in accordance with the exception or waiver;

(2) The manner in which the county will provide the strong support and supervision necessary to assist teachers employed by the county who are less than fully certified for the teaching position in which they are employed to include an emphasis on grade-level content, standards driven instruction, research-based instructional strategies, and mentoring support consistent with the West Virginia Professional Teaching Standards.

~~(2)~~ (3) The manner in which the county will provide the strong support and supervision that will assist beginning principals in developing instructional leadership, supervisory, and management strategies, procedural and policy expertise, and other professional practices they need to be successful in leading continuous school improvement and performing at the accomplished level or above;

~~(3)~~ (4) The manner in which the county in cooperation with the teacher preparation programs in this state will provide strong school-based support and assistance necessary to make student and resident teaching a productive learning experience;

~~(4)~~ (5) The manner in which the county will use the data from the educator performance evaluation system to serve as the basis for providing professional development specifically targeted on the area or areas identified through the evaluation process as needing improvement. If possible, this targeted professional development should be delivered at the school site using collaborative processes, mentoring or coaching, or other approaches that maximize use of the instructional setting;

~~(5)~~ (6) The manner in which the county will use the data from the educator performance evaluation system to serve as the basis for establishing priorities for the provision of county-level professional development when aggregate evaluation data from the county's schools indicates an area or areas of needed improvement;

~~(6)~~ (7) If a county uses master teachers, mentors, academic coaches, or any other approaches using individual employees to provide support, supervision, or other professional development or training to other employees for the purpose of improving their professional practice, the manner in which the county will select each of these individual employees based upon demonstrated superior performance and competence as well as the manner in which the county will coordinate support for these employees. If the duties of the position are to provide mentoring to an individual teacher at only one school, then priority shall be given to applicants employed at the school at which those duties will be performed;

~~(7)~~ (8) The manner in which the county will use local resources available, including, but not limited to, funds for professional development and academic coaches, to focus on the priority professional development goals of this section;

~~(8)~~ (9) The manner in which the county will adjust its scheduling, use of substitutes, collaborative planning time, calendar, or other measures as may be necessary to provide sufficient time for professional personnel to accomplish the goals of this section as set forth in the county's plan; and

~~(9)~~ (10) The manner in which the county will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of implementation and outcomes of the county system of support for improving professional practice.

~~(d)~~ (e) Effective the school year beginning July 1, 2020, and thereafter, appropriations for supporting county level implementation of the comprehensive systems of support for teacher and leader induction and professional growth pursuant to §18-9A-10 of this code and any new appropriation which may be made for the purposes of this section, shall be expended by county boards only to accomplish the activities as set forth in their county plan pursuant to this section. Effective the school year beginning July 1, 2020, and thereafter, any employee service or employment as a mentor is not subject to the provisions of this code governing extra duty contracts. A county board may adopt a teacher leader framework designed to accomplish the purposes of this section related to teacher induction and professional growth and, if the county board adopts a county salary supplement pursuant to §18A-4-5a of this code to provide additional compensation to teachers who, in addition to teaching duties, are assigned other duties for new teacher induction, improving professional practice and furthering professional growth among teachers as set forth in the county's comprehensive system of support, then appropriations made for supporting the purposes of this section may be applied to that salary supplement and other associated costs which may include a reduction in the teaching load of the teacher leader: *Provided*, That effective July 1, 2024, and thereafter, any additional amount paid to a teacher pursuant to this section shall only be for the duration of any service provided under this section and not be considered salary for the purposes of the computation of an annuity under §18-7A-26of this code.

~~(e)~~ (f) The Department of Education shall assist county boards with the design and implementation of a teacher leader framework to accomplish the teacher induction and professional growth aspects of their comprehensive systems of support pursuant to this section. The goals of a teacher leader framework are to achieve:

(1) Increased student achievement and growth through the development of a shared leadership structure at the school level;

(2) Broader dissemination and use of effective teacher strategies through an increase in teacher collaboration; and

(3) Stronger and more positive school and district culture through the development and retention of highly effective teachers.

~~(f)~~ (g) The Department of Education may form networks among schools or school systems, or both, of comparable size and interests for the design and implementation of teacher leader frameworks that are ~~shall be~~:

(A) Driven by varying district and school needs;

(B) Related to existing state and district initiatives;

(C) Designed to improve student achievement and growth; and

(D) Designed to ﬁt district size, current culture for collaboration, and funding capacity.

~~(g)~~ (h) A teacher leader framework adopted by a county board must:

(1) Create speciﬁc roles and responsibilities, eligibility requirements, and compensation plans for each teacher leader position, and clearly communicate these to teacher leaders, administrators, and other stakeholders;

(2) Provide regular, targeted professional learning opportunities for teacher leaders, and encourage redelivery within their respective schools;

(3) Provide time and opportunities for teacher leaders to collaborate with administrators, curriculum staﬀ, other teacher leaders, and teachers;

(4) Monitor and evaluate the eﬀectiveness of the teacher leader program through surveys from school administrators and school faculty; and

(5) Include teacher leaders in the school improvement planning process;

~~(h)~~ (i) The Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability shall review the progress of the implementation of the comprehensive systems of support for teacher and leader induction and professional growth and may make any recommendations it considers necessary to the Legislature during the next regular legislative session.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to increase support and professional development for educators; expand factors used to determine how funds for supporting county-level implementation of the comprehensive systems for teacher and leader induction and professional growth are allocated to the counties; authorize retention of additional funding for 2024 – 2025 school year by Department of Education to distribute to the county boards for the purpose of contracting with organizations that facilitate the school districts' participation in regional professional learning cadres or teacher leadership networks designed to support math and science improvement or supported by the Department of Education; require certain amount of funds be retained beginning with 2025 – 2026 school year to distribute to the county boards for the purpose of expanding the school districts' ability to contract with organizations that facilitate the school districts' participation in regional professional learning cadres or teacher leadership networks designed to support math and science improvement or to support teachers who are less than fully certified for the teaching position in which they are employed; require the funds to be distributed to the county boards under a grant program to be established by the state board by rule; require the state board to ensure that the results on the comprehensive statewide student assessment for the students taught by each teacher are provided to that teacher; add to topics the plan for implementation of a comprehensive system of support for improving professional practice is to address; and require certain additional amounts paid to a teacher be only for the duration of any service provided and not be considered salary for the computation of an annuity under the Teachers Retirement System.

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