

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2025 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **House Bill 2504**

By Delegate Pritt

[Introduced February 17, 2025; referred to the  
Committee on Education]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §18-5-13 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to  
2 ensuring that counties or their officers may not prevent crowd-sourcing, or other  
3 meaningful current methods for fundraising, from the available fundraising methods  
4 available to teachers.

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

## **ARTICLE 5. COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION.**

### **§18-5-13. Authority of boards generally.**

1 Subject to the provisions of this chapter and the rules of the state board, each county board  
2 may:

3 (a) Control and manage all of the schools and school interests for all school activities and  
4 upon all school property owned or leased by the county, including:

5 (1) Requiring schools to keep records regarding funds connected with the school or school  
6 interests, including all receipts and disbursements of all funds collected or received by:

7 (A) Any principal, teacher, student or other person in connection with the schools and  
8 school interests;

9 (B) Any program, activity or other endeavor of any nature operated or conducted by or in  
10 the name of the school; and

11 (C) Any organization or body directly connected with the school;

12 (2) Allowing schools to expend funds for student, parent, teacher, and community  
13 recognition programs. A school may use only funds it generates through a fund-raising or  
14 donation-soliciting activity. No county board member, officer, or school administrator may prevent  
15 teachers from using crowd-sourcing or other meaningful current methods of fundraising to  
16 generate funds. Prior to commencing the activity, the school shall:

17 (A) Publicize the activity as intended for this purpose; and

18 (B) Designate for this purpose the funds generated;

19 (3) Auditing the records and conserving the funds, including securing surety bonds by

expending board moneys. The funds described in this subsection are quasipublic funds, which means the moneys were received for the benefit of the school system as a result of curricular or noncurricular activities;

(b) Establish:

(1) Schools, from preschool through high school;

(2) Vocational schools; and

(3) Schools and programs for post-high school instruction, subject to approval of the state board;

(c) Close any school:

(1) Which is unnecessary and assign the students to other schools. The closing shall occur pursuant to official action of the county board. Except in emergency situations when the timing and manner of notification are subject to approval by the state superintendent, the county board shall notify the affected teachers and service personnel of the county board action not later than the first Monday in April. The board shall provide notice in the same manner as set forth in section four of this article; or

(2) Pursuant to subsection (e) of this section;

(d) Consolidate schools;

(e) Close any elementary school whose average daily attendance falls below twenty students for two consecutive months. The county board may assign the students to other schools in the district or to schools in adjoining districts. If the teachers in the closed school are not transferred or reassigned to other schools, they shall receive one month's salary;

(f) Provide transportation according to rules established by the county board, as follows:

(1) To provide at public expense adequate means of transportation:

(A) For all children of school age who live more than two-miles distance from school by the nearest available road;

(B) For school children participating in county board-approved curricular and

46 extracurricular activities;

47 (C) Across county lines for students transferred from one district to another by mutual  
48 agreement of both county boards. The agreement shall be recorded in the meeting minutes of  
49 each participating county board and is subject to subsection (h) of this section; and

50 (D) Within available revenues, for students within two-miles distance of the school; and

51 (2) To provide transportation for participants in projects operated, financed, sponsored or  
52 approved by the Bureau of Senior Services. This transportation shall be provided at no cost to the  
53 county board. All costs and expenses incident in any way to this transportation shall be borne by  
54 the bureau or the local or county affiliate of the bureau;

55 (3) Any school bus owned by the county board may be operated only by a bus operator  
56 regularly employed by the county board, except as provided in subsection (g) of this section;

57 (4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this code to the contrary and pursuant to rules  
58 established by the state board, the county board may provide for professional or service  
59 employees to be certified to drive county board-owned and insured vehicles: *Provided*, That:

60 (A) No more than 10 passengers including the driver may be transported at one time;

61 (B) Not more than two of these vehicles may be used for any school-sponsored activity;

62 and

63 (C) The certified employees may use the vehicles to transport students for school-  
64 sponsored activities, but may not use the vehicles to transport students between school and  
65 home.

66 (5) Notwithstanding any other provision of this code to the contrary, students may be  
67 transported to a school-sponsored activity in a county-owned or leased vehicle that does not meet  
68 school bus or public transit ratings: *Provided*, That no more than 10 passengers including the  
69 driver may be transported at one time: *Provided, however*, That this section does not prohibit a  
70 parent, guardian, or other adult approved in writing by the parent or guardian from transporting  
71 students in a privately-owned vehicle;

(6) Students may be transported to a school-sponsored activity in a vehicle that has a seating capacity of 16 or more passengers which is not owned and operated by the county board only as follows:

(A) The state board shall promulgate a rule to establish requirements for:

(i) Automobile insurance coverage;

(ii) Vehicle safety specifications;

(iii) School bus or public transit ratings; and

(iv) Driver training, certification and criminal history record check; and

(B) The vehicle owner shall provide to the county board proof that the vehicle and driver satisfy the requirements of the state board rule; and

(7) Buses shall be used to transport 19 or more passengers for extracurricular activities as provided in this section only when the insurance coverage required by this section is in effect;

(g) Lease school buses pursuant to rules established by the county board.

(1) Leased buses may be operated only by bus operators regularly employed by the county board, except that these buses may be operated by bus operators regularly employed by another county board in this state if bus operators from the owning county are unavailable.

(2) The lessee shall bear all costs and expenses incurred by, or incidental to the use of, the bus.

(3) The county board may lease buses to:

(A) Public and private nonprofit organizations and private corporations to transport school-age children for camps or educational activities;

(B) Any college, university or officially recognized campus organization for transporting students, faculty and staff to and from the college or university. Only college and university students, faculty and staff may be transported pursuant to this paragraph. The lease shall include provisions for:

(i) Compensation for bus operators;

(ii) Consideration for insurance coverage, repairs and other costs of service; and

(iii) Any rules concerning student behavior;

(C) Public and private nonprofit organizations, including education employee organizations, for transportation associated with fairs, festivals and other educational and cultural events. The county board may charge fees in addition to those charges otherwise required by this subsection;

(h) To provide at public expense for insurance coverage against negligence of the drivers of school buses, trucks or other vehicles operated by the county board. Any contractual agreement for transportation of students shall require the vehicle owner to maintain insurance coverage against negligence in an amount specified by the county board;

(i) Provide for the full cost or any portion thereof for group plan insurance benefits not provided or available under the West Virginia Public Employees Insurance Act. Any of these benefits shall be provided:

(1) Solely from county board funds; and

(2) For all regular full-time employees of the county board;

(j) Employ teacher aides; to provide in-service training for the aides pursuant to rules established by the state board; and, prior to assignment, to provide a four-clock-hour program of training for a service person assigned duties as a teacher aide in an exceptional children program. The four-clock-hour program shall consist of training in areas specifically related to the education of exceptional children;

(k) Establish and operate a self-supporting dormitory for:

(1) Students attending a high school or participating in a post high school program; and

(2) Persons employed to teach in the high school or post high school program;

(l) At the county board's discretion, employ, contract with or otherwise engage legal counsel in lieu of using the services of the prosecuting attorney to advise, attend to, bring, prosecute or defend, as the case may be, any matters, actions, suits and proceedings in which the

124 county board is interested;

125 (m) Provide appropriate uniforms for school service personnel;

126 (n) Provide at public expense for payment of traveling expenses incurred by any person  
127 invited to appear to be interviewed concerning possible employment by the county board, subject  
128 to rules established by the county board;

129 (o) Allow designated employees to use publicly provided carriage to travel from their  
130 residences to their workplace and return. The use:

131 (1) Is subject to the supervision of the county board; and

132 (2) Shall be directly connected with, required by and essential to the performance of the  
133 employee's duties and responsibilities;

134 (p) Provide at public expense adequate public liability insurance, including professional  
135 liability insurance, for county board employees;

136 (q)(1) Enter into cooperative agreements with one or more county boards or educational  
137 services cooperative to provide improvements to the instructional needs of each district. The  
138 cooperative agreements may be used to employ specialists in a field of academic study or for  
139 support functions or services for the field.

140 (2) Enter into cooperative agreements with one or more county boards to facilitate  
141 coordination and cooperation in areas of service to reduce administrative and/or operational costs,  
142 including the consolidation of administrative, coordinating, and other county level functions into  
143 shared functions to promote the efficient administration and operation of the public school systems  
144 including, but not limited to:

145 (A) Purchasing;

146 (B) Operation of specialized programs for exceptional children;

147 (C) Employment of any school personnel as defined in §18A-1-1 of this code;

148 (D) Professional development;

149 (E) Technology including, but not limited to WVEIS; and

(F) Billing for school-based Medicaid services in schools throughout the state.

Each such cooperative agreement shall be in writing and agreed to by each county board participating in the cooperative agreement. Each cooperative agreement that is an employment agreement may be entered into on a case-by-case basis. Notwithstanding the geographic quadrants as provided in §18-5-13b of this code, school systems may enter into cooperative agreements with any school system in the state.

(3) Enter into a cooperative agreement with other county boards to establish educational services cooperatives as provided in §18-5-13c of this code.

(r) Provide information about vocational and higher education opportunities to exceptional students. The county board shall provide in writing to the students and their parents or guardians information relating to programs of vocational education and to programs available at state institutions of higher education. The information may include sources of available funding, including grants, mentorships and loans for students who wish to attend classes at institutions of higher education;

(s) Enter into agreements with other county boards for the transfer and receipt of any funds determined to be fair when students are permitted or required to attend school in a district other than the district of their residence. These agreements are subject to the approval of the state board; and

(t) Enter into job-sharing arrangements, as defined in section one, article one, chapter eighteen-a of this code, with its employees, subject to the following provisions:

(1) A job-sharing arrangement shall meet all the requirements relating to posting, qualifications and seniority, as provided in §18A-4-1 *et seq.* of this code;

(2) Notwithstanding any contrary provision of this code or legislative rule and specifically §5-16-1 *et seq.* of this code, a county board that enters into a job-sharing arrangement:

(A) Shall provide insurance coverage to the one employee mutually agreed upon by the employees participating in that arrangement; and



176 (B) May not provide insurance benefits of any type to more than one of the job-sharing  
177 employees, including any group plan available under the State Public Employees Insurance Act;

178 (3) Each job-sharing agreement shall be in writing on a form prescribed and furnished by  
179 the county board. The agreement shall designate specifically one employee only who is entitled to  
180 the insurance coverage. Any employee who is not designated is not eligible for state public  
181 employees insurance coverage regardless of the number of hours he or she works;

182 (4) All employees involved in the job-sharing agreement shall meet the requirements of §5-  
183 16-2 (3) of this code; and

184 (5) When entering into a job-sharing agreement, the county board and the participating  
185 employees shall consider issues such as retirement benefits, termination of the job-sharing  
186 agreement and any other issue the parties consider appropriate. Any provision in the agreement  
187 relating to retirement benefits may not cause any cost to be incurred by the retirement system that  
188 is more than the cost that would be incurred if a single employee were filling the position; and

189 (u) Under rules it establishes for each child, expend an amount not to exceed the  
190 proportion of all school funds of the district that each child would be entitled to receive if all the  
191 funds were distributed equally among all the children of school age in the district upon a per capita  
192 basis.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to ensure that counties or their officers may not prevent crowd-funding, or other meaningful current methods for fundraising, from the available fundraising methods available to teachers.

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