

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

ENGROSSED

Committee Substitute

for

House Bill 4573

By Delegates Dittman, Pinson, Moore, Drennan,
Foggin, Hott, Campbell, Toney, Ellington, and Statler

[Originating February 11, 2026 in the Committee on
Education]

1 A BILL to amend the code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new section,
2 designated §18-5-55, relating to foster children; and authorizing the Department of Human
3 Services to provide to the West Virginia Department of Education and county boards of
4 education information regarding available post-secondary transition programs and
5 services for students with current or former foster care experience.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 5. COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION.

§18-5-55. Foster youth post-secondary transition support.

1 (a) Information sharing by the Department of Human Services. – The Department of
2 Human Services ("DoHS") shall, using electronic communication to minimize cost, provide to
3 the West Virginia Department of Education and county boards of education information regarding
4 available post-secondary transition programs and services for students with current or former
5 foster care experience.

6 (b) The information shared under this subsection may include, but is not limited to:

7 (1) Post-secondary education opportunities;

8 (2) Workforce training and career technical programs;

9 (3) Housing assistance and independent living services;

10 (4) Financial aid, scholarships, and tuition assistance;

11 (5) Counseling, mentoring, and support services; and

12 (6) Any other state or federally funded transitional programs available to foster youth.

13 (c) Continued direct communication permitted. – Nothing in this section shall prohibit the
14 Department of Human Services from continuing to share information directly with students in
15 foster care and their foster families or legal guardians as part of routine case management and
16 service delivery, provided such communication complies with applicable privacy laws.

17 (d) Integration into personal education planning. – Each county board of education shall
18 ensure that information received pursuant to subsection (a) is shared with appropriate school
19 personnel and used for student informational purposes only, as follows:

20 (1) Beginning in grade eight, for students in foster care, the availability of post-secondary
21 transition programs shall be discussed during the student's Personal Education Planning
22 ("PEP") process so that the student and family are aware of available supports; and

23 (2) For students in grades nine through twelve, the school shall provide periodic
24 informational touch points throughout high school, including at least one discussion per school
25 year, to ensure continued awareness of available transition programs and services.

26 (e) Privacy protections. – Nothing in this section requires the disclosure of a student's
27 foster care status in violation of state or federal privacy laws, including the Family Educational
28 Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA").