

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

## **2026 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

### **House Bill 5257**

By Delegates Pushkin and Garcia

[Introduced February 05, 2026; referred to the

Committee on Education then Finance]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §18-20-5 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to  
2 removing language requiring specific appropriations in order for the State Board of  
3 Education, State Department of Education, and the State Superintendent of Schools to  
4 provide education to children and adults housed in correctional facilities and regional jails.

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

**ARTICLE 20. EDUCATION OF EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN.**

**§18-20-5. Powers and duties of state superintendent.**

1 (a) The State Superintendent of Schools shall organize, promote, administer, and be  
2 responsible for:

3 (1) Providing leadership and support to local educational agencies (LEA) in establishing,  
4 organizing, and maintaining a continuum of services for students with exceptionalities.

5 (2) Stimulating and assisting county boards of education in establishing, organizing, and  
6 maintaining special schools, classes, regular class programs, home-teaching, and visiting-teacher  
7 services.

8 (2)(3) Cooperating with all other public and private agencies engaged in providing medical,  
9 mental health, educational, or respite services, for students with exceptionalities relieving, caring  
10 for, curing, educating, and rehabilitating students with exceptionalities, and in helping coordinate  
11 the services of such agencies.

12 (3)(A)(4)(A) Preparing the necessary rules, policies, and formulas for distribution of  
13 available appropriated funds, reporting forms, and procedures necessary to define minimum  
14 standards in providing suitable facilities for education of students with exceptionalities and  
15 ensuring the employment, certification, and approval of qualified teachers and therapists subject  
16 to approval by the State Board of Education: *Provided*, That no state rule, policy or standard under  
17 this article or any county board rule, policy, or standard governing special education may exceed  
18 the requirements of federal law or regulation.

19 (B) A separate appropriation shall be made to the Department of Education to be disbursed

20 to county boards and public charter schools authorized pursuant to §18-5G-1 et seq. of this code  
21 to assist them with serving exceptional students with high cost/high acuity exceptional needs that  
22 exceed the capacity of the local educational agency (LEA) to provide with funds available. Each  
23 local educational agency (LEA) shall apply to the state superintendent to receive this funding in a  
24 manner set forth by the state superintendent that assesses and takes into account varying acuity  
25 levels of the students with exceptionailities. Any remaining funds at the end of a fiscal year from the  
26 appropriation shall be carried over to the next fiscal year. When possible, federal funds shall be  
27 disbursed to local educational agencies (LEAs) for this purpose before any of the state  
28 appropriation is disbursed. The state board shall promulgate a rule in accordance with the  
29 provisions of §29A-3B-1 et seq. of this code that implements the provisions of this subdivision  
30 relating to disbursing the funds to the local educational agencies (LEAs). The rule at least shall  
31 include a definition for "children with high acuity needs".

32 (4) (5) Receiving from local educational agencies (LEAs) their applications, annual reports,  
33 and claims for reimbursement from such moneys as are appropriated by the Legislature, auditing  
34 such claims, and preparing vouchers to reimburse said local educational agencies the amounts  
35 reimbursable to them.

36 (5) (6) Assuring Ensuring that all students with exceptionailities in the state, including  
37 students in mental health facilities, residential institutions, private schools receiving public funds  
38 and correctional facilities as provided in §18-2-13f of this code receive an education in accordance  
39 with state and federal laws: *Provided*, That the state superintendent shall also assure ensure that  
40 adults in correctional facilities and regional jails receive an education. ~~to the extent funds are~~  
41 ~~provided therefor and to the extent that those adult students are still eligible to receive a free~~  
42 ~~appropriate public education (FAPE)~~

43 (6) (7) Performing other duties and assuming other responsibilities in connection with this  
44 program as needed.

45 (b) Nothing contained in this section shall may be construed to prevent any local education

46 agency (LEA) from establishing and maintaining a full continuum of services for students with  
47 exceptionalities out of funds available from local revenue.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to remove language requiring specific appropriations in order for the State Board of Education, State Department of Education, and the State Superintendent of Schools to provide education to children and adults housed in correctional facilities and regional jails.

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