

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Committee Substitute

for

Senate Bill 232

By Senator Fuller

[Reported February 4, 2026, from the Committee on
Education]

A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article, designated §18-14-1, §18-14-2, §18-14-3, §18-14-4, §18-14-5, §18-14-6, and §18-14-7, relating to the creation of the West Virginia Public Secondary School Athletic Trainer and Career Technical Education Program Act; providing for findings, purpose, and intent; providing for establishment of the five-year program for the placement of licensed athletic trainers in all public secondary schools by having the athletic trainer on staff or contracted through the county board; requiring annual appropriation to fund the program; providing for expansion of the current career and technical education sports medicine programs; requiring alignment with accreditation and certification standards necessary for students to continue their education in athletic training or related health care fields at institutions of higher education; requiring West Virginia Board of Education rule to implement; requiring program development and maintenance in compliance with West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission rules; requiring commission to provide certain guidance; allowing state to use the West Virginia Underwood-Smith Loan Repayment Program to provide student loan payments to certain individuals; and providing for a timeline of implementation.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

**ARTICLE 14. WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL ATHLETIC TRAINER
AND CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM ACT.**

§18-14-1. **Short** **title.**

This article shall be known and cited as the "West Virginia Public Secondary School Athletic Trainer and Career Technical Education Program Act."

§18-14-2. **Findings** **and** **Purpose.**

(a) The Legislature finds that access to licensed athletic trainers in public secondary schools is essential to ensuring the safety, health, and well-being of student-athletes.

3 (b) The purpose of this article is to establish a five-year program to place licensed athletic
4 trainers in all public secondary schools in West Virginia by having the athletic trainer on staff or
5 contracted through the county board; and to ensure that career and technical education (CTE)
6 programs for athletic training is available to all public high school students in the state.

7 (c) The article is also intended to serve as a health and safety initiative to ensure student-
8 athletes at the public secondary level receive appropriate medical attention, injury prevention
9 resources, and emergency care when needed.

§18-14-3. Establishment of the Five-Year Program.

1 (a) The West Virginia Board of Education, in collaboration with the West Virginia Board of
2 Physical Therapy, shall implement a five-year program for the placement of licensed athletic
3 trainers in all public secondary schools by having the athletic trainer on staff or contracted through
4 the county board.

5 (b) The program shall be fully implemented by July 1, 2032, at which time all public
6 secondary schools shall have a licensed athletic trainer on staff or contracted through the county
7 board.

8 (c) Funding for the program shall be appropriated annually to the West Virginia Board of
9 Education to support the expansion of career and technical sports medicine programs throughout
10 the state and the recruitment, hiring or contracting with, and retention of athletic trainers, including
11 distributions to the county boards of education for their expenses in hiring or contracting with and
12 retaining a licensed athletic trainer for every public secondary school. If appropriations for this
13 purpose are insufficient, the state board shall request a supplemental appropriation in a sufficient
14 amount to support the recruitment, hiring or contracting with, and retention of athletic trainers
15 pursuant to this section.

§18-14-4. Career and Technical Education Programs.

1 (a) There are currently nine career and technical education sports medicine programs
2 throughout the state. The West Virginia Board of Education shall expand these programs to

ensure that all public high school students have access to a sports medicine program. This expansion shall be done in the most cost-efficient manner feasible through methods such as:

(1) Transporting students from public high schools without a sports medicine program to a public high school or multicounty career and technical education center that does have a sports medicine program;

(2) Each instructor traveling to multiple public high schools; or

(3) Any other efficient method of giving public high school students access to a sports medicine program pursuant to this subsection.

(b) These programs shall align with accreditation and certification standards necessary for students to continue their education in athletic training or related health care fields at institutions of higher education in West Virginia.

(c) The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules pursuant to §29A-3B-1 *et seq.* to implement this section.

§18-14-5. Compliance with WVSSAC Regulations.

(a) The program shall be developed and maintained in accordance with the rules of the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission.

(b) The West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission shall provide guidance in facilitating the successful implementation of athletic trainer placements and adherence to best practices in student-athlete health and safety.

§18-14-6. Workforce Recruitment and Financial Incentives.

(a) To address workforce shortages, the state may use the West Virginia Underwood-Smith Loan Repayment Program to provide student loan repayments for individuals who commit to working as a licensed athletic trainer in a public secondary school in this state: *Provided, That* to be eligible for the loan repayments pursuant to this section, the individual shall work in a dual capacity as both a teacher and an athletic trainer.

(b) The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, in coordination with the state

7 board, shall develop criteria for loan repayment eligibility, application, and distribution of funds.

§18-14-7. Implementation Timeline and Effective Date.

1 (a) The five-year program shall commence on July 1, 2027, with a phased approach to
2 ensure full implementation by July 1, 2032.

3 (b) By July 1, 2032, all public secondary schools in the state shall be required to employ a
4 licensed athletic trainer or contract with a licensed athletic trainer through the county board.