

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 720

**FISCAL
NOTE**

By Senator Deeds

[Introduced February 3, 2026; referred
to the Committee on Education; and then to the
Committee on Finance]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article,
2 designated §18-36-1, §18-36-2, §18-36-3, §18-36-4, §18-36-5, §18-36-6, §18-36-7, §18-
3 36-8, §18-36-9, and §18-36-10, relating to the establishment of a Comprehensive Student
4 and Family Support program; providing legislative findings and purpose; defining terms;
5 designating the West Virginia Department of Education as the lead agency; establishing
6 local coordinating teams; creating a state fund; authorizing rulemaking; requiring
7 accountability, reporting, and audit; and making an appropriation.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

**ARTICLE 36. WEST VIRGINIA COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT AND FAMILY SUPPORT
ACT.**

§18-36-1. Short title.

1 This article shall be known and may be cited as the West Virginia Comprehensive Student
2 and Family Support Act.

§18-36-2. Legislative findings and purpose.

1 (a) The Legislature finds that:

2 (1) Many students in West Virginia face barriers to academic success due to behavioral,
3 emotional, developmental, or social challenges;

4 (2) Existing state and local programs often operate in isolation, leading to duplication of
5 effort and gaps in needed services;

6 (3) Coordinated, community-based, and school-linked supports can prevent out-of-home
7 placement, reduce dropout rates, and improve long-term educational outcomes;

8 (4) The Department of Education, in collaboration with other child-serving agencies, can
9 provide effective leadership in aligning resources for students in need.

10 (b) The purpose of this article is to:

11 (1) Establish a coordinated system of supports for children and youth requiring services

that span multiple agencies;

(2) Enable flexible use of pooled public funds to meet individual student needs;

(3) Promote collaboration among education, health, human services, and juvenile justice systems;

(4) Assure accountability, fiscal responsibility, and measurable outcomes for all participating programs.

§18-36-3. Definitions.

As used in this article:

(1) "Department" means the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE).

(2) "Eligible student" means a child or youth enrolled in a public school in West Virginia who:

(A) Requires coordinated services due to serious emotional, behavioral, or developmental needs;

(B) Is at risk of educational failure, suspension, expulsion, dropout, or out-of-home placement; or

(C) Has been referred by a local school system, court, or child-serving agency for comprehensive support.

(3) "Local Coordinating Team" or "LCT" means the multidisciplinary local body established under §18-36-6 of this code to plan and oversee services.

(4) "Outcome metrics" means the indicators used to assess program performance, such as attendance, academic progress, behavioral improvement, and cost efficiency.

(5) "Pooled Fund" means the state and local funds created under §18-36-8 of this code for services authorized by this article.

(6) "Services" means individualized educational, therapeutic, behavioral, or community supports not otherwise provided through existing programs, including counseling, mentoring, wraparound coordination, family engagement, and alternative education supports.

20 (7) "State Oversight Office" means the office created within the department under §18-36-4
21 of this code to administer this program.

§18-36-4. Lead agency; State Oversight Office; powers and duties.

1 (a) The department shall be the lead agency for the implementation and administration of
2 this article.

3 (b) There is hereby created within the department a State Oversight Office for
4 Comprehensive Student and Family Support to carry out the purposes of this article.

5 (c) The State Oversight Office shall:

6 (1) Develop statewide policies, procedures, and standards for program operation;

7 (2) Oversee and support Local Coordinating Teams;

8 (3) Manage and allocate the Pooled Fund;

9 (4) Provide technical assistance, training, and monitoring;

10 (5) Collect data, evaluate outcomes, and publish annual reports;

11 (6) Promulgate legislative and procedural rules under §18-36-9 of this code;

12 (7) Coordinate with the Departments of Human Services, Health, and Juvenile Services,
13 and other relevant agencies;

14 (8) Audit expenditures and ensure program integrity; and

15 (9) Withhold or reallocate funds in cases of noncompliance.

§18-36-5. Eligibility for services.

1 (a) Services funded under this article shall be limited to eligible students as defined in §18-
2 36-3 of this code.

3 (b) Priority shall be given to students who are:

4 (1) At risk of school exclusion or dropout;

5 (2) Transitioning from out-of-home care or juvenile justice settings; or

6 (3) Experiencing serious emotional or behavioral challenges impeding educational
7 progress.

8 (c) Services shall be individualized, family-engaged, and community-based, and provided
9 in the least restrictive setting possible.

§18-36-6. Local Coordinating Teams.

1 (a) Each county board of education shall establish or participate in a Local Coordinating
2 Team (LCT) responsible for program implementation at the local level.

3 (b) The LCT shall include representatives of the local school system, mental health
4 providers, the Department of Human Services, juvenile probation, and community organizations,
5 as well as family representatives.

6 (c) The LCT shall:

7 (1) Review referrals and determine eligibility;

8 (2) Develop and approve individualized service plans for each eligible student;

9 (3) Authorize expenditures from the Pooled Fund;

10 (4) Monitor service delivery and outcomes;

11 (5) Report required data to the department; and

12 (6) Ensure compliance with confidentiality and due process requirements.

§18-36-7. Individualized service planning; quality assurance.

1 (a) Each eligible student shall have a written service plan specifying goals, services, costs,
2 and responsible parties.

3 (b) Families shall participate in all planning and review meetings.

4 (c) The department shall establish quality standards and require periodic review and
5 approval of plans.

6 (d) The department may conduct utilization and performance audits to ensure fiscal and
7 programmatic compliance.

§18-36-8. Comprehensive Student and Family Support Fund; appropriations; allocations;
local match.

1 (a) There is hereby created in the State Treasury a special revenue account to be known

as the Comprehensive Student and Family Support Fund.

(b) The fund shall consist of:

(1) Appropriations from the General Revenue Fund;

(2) Federal funds, grants, and donations;

(3) Local contributions and matching funds; and

(4) Any other funds made available for this purpose.

(c) Appropriation. There is hereby appropriated from the General Revenue Fund for fiscal year 2026-2027, and each fiscal year thereafter, such amounts as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this article.

(d) The department shall allocate funds among counties according to a formula considering population, need indicators, and program performance.

§18-36-9. Rulemaking authority.

(a) The department shall promulgate legislative rules pursuant to §29A-3-1 *et seq.* of this code to implement this article.

(b) Rules shall include, at a minimum:

(1) Eligibility and referral procedures;

(2) Local team composition and operations;

(3) Fiscal management and auditing standards;

(4) Data collection, reporting, and confidentiality safeguards;

(5) Performance indicators and evaluation criteria;

(6) Procedures for corrective action, appeal, and dispute resolution.

§18-36-10. Reports; accountability; severability; effective date.

(a) The department shall submit an annual report to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability and the Governor detailing expenditures, services delivered, student outcomes, and recommendations for improvement.

(b) The Legislative Auditor may review program performance as part of its regular audit

5 schedule.

6 (c) If any provision of this article or its application is held invalid, the remainder shall not be

7 affected.

8 (d) This article shall take effect July 1, 2026.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to establish a Comprehensive Student and Family Support program; provide legislative findings and purpose; define terms; designate the West Virginia Department of Education as the lead agency; establish local coordinating teams; create a state fund; authorize rulemaking; require accountability, reporting, and audit; and make an appropriation.

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