

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 899

By Senators Thorne and Grady

[Introduced February 10, 2026; referred
to the Committee on Education]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §18A-2-9 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
 2 to permitting teachers with a minimum of 15 years of experience in their respective school
 3 level to be certified to work as school principals.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. SCHOOL PERSONNEL.

§18A-2-9. Duties and responsibilities of school principals; assistant principals.

1 (a) Upon the recommendation of the county superintendent of schools, the county board of
 2 education shall employ and assign, through written contract, public school principals who shall be
 3 the principal instructional leader of the school and shall supervise the management and the
 4 operation of the school or schools to which they are assigned to improve student performance and
 5 progress. The principals shall hold valid administrative certificates appropriate for their
 6 assignments.

7 (b)(1) Beginning on July 1, 1994, the prerequisites for issuance of an administrative
 8 certificate for principals shall include that the person has successfully completed at least six credit
 9 hours of approved course work in public school management techniques at an accredited
 10 institution of higher education and has successfully completed education and training in evaluation
 11 skills approved by the state board.

12 (2) Beginning on July 1, 2019, the prerequisites for issuance of an administrative certificate
 13 for principals shall include that the person has successfully completed at least six credit hours of
 14 approved course work in public school instructional leadership and management techniques at an
 15 accredited institution of higher education, including, but not limited to, the standards for high
 16 quality schools, the school accreditation process and strategic planning for continuous
 17 improvement.

18 (3) Beginning on July 1, 2026, the prerequisites for issuance of an administrative certificate
 19 for principals for elementary schools shall be satisfied by teaching at the elementary school level
 20 for a minimum of 15 years.

21 (4) Beginning on July 1, 2026, the prerequisites for issuance of an administrative certificate
22 for principals for middle schools shall be satisfied by teaching at the middle school level for a
23 minimum of 15 years.

24 (5) Beginning on July 1, 2026, the prerequisites for issuance of an administrative certificate
25 for principals for high schools shall be satisfied by teaching at the high school level for a minimum
26 of 15 years.

27 (c) Prior to employment as a principal or assistant principal, or in another administrative
28 position the duties of which require conducting personnel performance evaluations, the principal,
29 assistant or administrator shall successfully complete education and training in evaluation skills
30 approved by the state board.

31 (d) Under the supervision of the superintendent and in accordance with the rules and
32 regulations of the county board of education, the principal:

33 (1) Shall assume administrative and instructional leadership responsibility for the planning,
34 management, operation, and evaluation of the total educational program of the school or schools
35 to which he or she is assigned.

36 (2) May submit recommendations to the superintendent regarding the appointment,
37 assignment, promotion, transfer and dismissal of all personnel assigned to the school or schools
38 under said principal's control. The recommendations shall be submitted in writing as prescribed by
39 the superintendent; and

40 (3) Shall perform such other duties as may be assigned by the superintendent pursuant to
41 the rules and regulations of the county board of education.

42 (e) Upon recommendation of the county superintendent of schools, the county board of
43 education shall, when needed, employ and assign, through written contract, assistant principals
44 who shall work under the direction of the school principal. Such assistant principals shall hold valid
45 administrative certificates appropriate for their assignments.

46 (f) The assignment of principals and assistant principals by each county board of education

47 is subject to the following:

48 (1) A certificated principal shall be assigned to each school;

49 (2) A principal may not be assigned more than two schools;

50 (3) No additional schools may be assigned to the principal of a school where enrollment
51 exceeds 400 students;

52 (4) A principal assigned to more than one school may not be assigned any teaching duties
53 except on a temporary emergency basis;

54 (5) A principal shall be assigned full-time at each school whose net enrollment equals or
55 exceeds 170 students and may not be assigned any teaching duties except on a temporary
56 emergency basis;

57 (6) A principal assigned on a full-time basis to a school whose net enrollment is more than
58 seventy-five students but less than 170 students shall have a minimum of twenty hours per week
59 for nonteaching duties;

60 (7) A principal assigned on a full-time basis to a school with seventy-five students or less
61 shall have a minimum of 10 hours per week for nonteaching duties;

62 (8) Nothing in this section prohibits a county board of education from assigning a full-time
63 principal to a school with a net enrollment of less than 170 students; and

64 (9) The State Board of Education may not deny a county board of education the right to
65 place a principal in a school with less than 170 students.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to permit teachers with 15 years of experience at the elementary, high school, or middle school level to be certified to be principals at the levels they have taught in for the minimum of 15 years.

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