

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

**2026 REGULAR SESSION**

**Committee Substitute**

**for**

**Senate Bill 899**

BY SENATORS THORNE, GRADY, AND DEEDS

[Reported February 18, 2026, from 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 teaching at the  
3 elementary, middle, or high school level to be certified to work as school principals at the  
4 school level in which they have the 15 years of experience teaching if they also  
5 successfully complete a year-long program developed and administered by the West  
6 Virginia Department of Education to ensure the candidate demonstrates competence in  
7 the core elements of school administration, including but not limited to, instructional  
8 leadership, school finance, personnel management, student discipline, and school law.

*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  
2 of education shall employ and assign, through written contract, public school principals who shall  
3 be 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  
5 and 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  
11 evaluation 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  
15 an 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: *Provided*, That the applicant successfully completes a year-long  
21 program developed and administered by the West Virginia Department of Education to ensure  
22 the candidate demonstrates competence in the core elements of school administration, including,  
23 but not limited to, instructional leadership, school finance, personnel management, student  
24 discipline, and school law.

25 (4) Beginning on July 1, 2026, the prerequisites for issuance of an administrative certificate  
26 for principals for middle schools shall be satisfied by teaching at the middle school level for a  
27 minimum of 15 years: *Provided*, That the applicant successfully completes a year-long program  
28 developed and administered by the West Virginia Department of Education to ensure the  
29 candidate demonstrates competence in the core elements of school administration, including, but  
30 not limited to, instructional leadership, school finance, personnel management, student discipline,  
31 and school law.

32 (5) Beginning on July 1, 2026, the prerequisites for issuance of an administrative certificate  
33 for principals for high schools shall be satisfied by teaching at the high school level for a minimum  
34 of 15 years: *Provided*, That the applicant successfully completes a year-long program developed  
35 and administered by the West Virginia Department of Education to ensure the candidate  
36 demonstrates competence in the core elements of school administration, including but not limited  
37 to, instructional leadership, school finance, personnel management, student discipline, and  
38 school law.

39 (c) Prior to employment as a principal or assistant principal, or in another administrative  
40 position the duties of which require conducting personnel performance evaluations, the principal,

41 assistant or administrator shall successfully complete education and training in evaluation skills  
42 approved by the state board.

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

45 (1) Shall assume administrative and instructional leadership responsibility for the planning,  
46 management, operation, and evaluation of the total educational program of the school or schools  
47 to which he or she is assigned;

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

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

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

58 (f) The assignment of principals and assistant principals by each county board of  
59 education is subject to the following:

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

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

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

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

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

69 (6) A principal assigned on a full-time basis to a school whose net enrollment is more than  
70 ~~seventy-five~~ 75 students but less than 170 students shall have a minimum of ~~twenty~~ 20 hours per  
71 week for non-teaching duties;

72 (7) A principal assigned on a full-time basis to a school with ~~seventy-five~~ 75 students or  
73 less shall have a minimum of 10 hours per week for non-teaching duties;

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

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