

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 554

By Senator Woelfel

[Introduced January 21, 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 section,
2 designated §18-9A-27, relating to public school support; establishing an enrollment
3 stabilizer mechanism within the public school support plan; providing for additional
4 enrollment stability protections for rural counties; and providing for rulemaking.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 9A. PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPPORT.

§18-9A-27. Enrollment stabilizer for budget planning.

1 (a) The purpose of this section is to provide for greater predictability and stability in county
2 board budgets and staffing by smoothing the impact of year-to-year enrollment changes used to
3 calculate state aid under this article.

4 (b) *Enrollment stabilizer.* – Notwithstanding any other provision of this code to the contrary,
5 for each county board, the net enrollment used in calculating state aid under this article for any
6 school year shall be the greater of:

7 (1) The actual net enrollment for the most recent school year as otherwise calculated by
8 law;

9 (2) A percentage, not to exceed 98 percent, of the prior school year's net enrollment; or
10 (3) A three-year rolling average of net enrollment, calculated as the average of the current
11 year and the two immediately preceding school years.

12 (c) *Rural stability add-on.* – The state board shall, by legislative rule, establish a rural
13 stability add-on to the enrollment stabilizer provided for in subsection (b) of this section to provide
14 additional protection for qualifying rural counties experiencing significant enrollment volatility. The
15 rural stability add-on may, in the discretion of the state board:

16 (1) Adjust the percentage floor set by subsection (b), subdivision (2) of this section for
17 qualifying counties; or

18 (2) Provide an additional small-district stabilization allowance based on geographic
19 isolation, sparsity, and local funding capacity.

20 (d) The enrollment stabilizer provided for in subsection (b) of this section shall not be
21 construed to increase the total statewide basic foundation program amount beyond the level
22 appropriated by the Legislature. The state board may phase-in implementation or prorate the
23 enrollment stabilizer if necessary to remain within appropriated funds.

24 (e) The state board shall promulgate legislative rules pursuant to §29A-3B-1 *et seq.* of this
25 code necessary to implement this section, including by establishing definitions, specifying
26 eligibility for rural stability adjustments, and providing any necessary phase-in or hold-harmless
27 provisions.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide a mechanism to smooth year-to-year enrollment fluctuations in county school systems to permit county boards to responsibility responsibly plan for staffing and services. The bill provides for an enrollment stabilizer mechanism within the public school support plan, and for additional enrollment stability protections for rural counties.

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