

Joint Standing Committee on Education WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

State Capitol Building Charleston, WV 25305

Senate Education Committee Phone (304) 357-7805 Room M-427 House Education Committee Phone (304) 340-3265 Room M-434

Subcommittee Report

EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE A

Subcommittee on Public Education

January 9, 2007

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Study Areas

The mission of the Subcommittee was to study areas affecting public education assigned to it by the Joint Committee on Government and Finance and the Co-chairs of the Joint Standing Committee on Education. The following study issues were considered by the Subcommittee:

- 1. Public school dress codes and uniforms (Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 6, Regular Session, 2006);
 - 2. Inter-county Student Transfers;
 - 3. Next Generation Structures High Performance Classrooms;
- 4. The need for and appropriate methodology for providing salary improvements for counselors employed by the Division of Rehabilitation Services (House Concurrent Resolution 70, Regular Session, 2006); and
- 5. The application process, contracts and employment of coaches within the state's public schools (Senate Concurrent Resolution 66, Regular Session, 2006).

Study Summaries, Findings and Recommendations

1. <u>Public school dress codes and uniforms (SCR 6, Regular Session, 2006)</u>.

The Subcommittee reviewed information prepared by staff from a review of the literature on the historical precedent and legal issues surrounding the adoption and implementation of student dress codes and uniform policies.

Student dress codes have been used in the public schools for many years. Student uniform policies, a restrictive dress code typically used by private and parochial schools, gained acceptance in the public schools in the 1990's primarily to help combat violence and discipline problems in large urban schools. The proponents of uniform policies note that they are more objectively enforceable than dress codes and have a greater impact on improving school safety, learning climate and student self-esteem. The proponents of uniform policies also note that they lessen family stress and that the average cost of school uniforms is significantly less than non-uniform school clothing.

The primary challenge to uniform policies in the public schools revolves around whether they deprive students of fundamental freedoms. Opponents of the policies further argue that they are shallow solutions to deeper problems, have not been proven to enhance student performance and pose economic hardship for low income families.

No long-term empirical studies could be found that assess the effectiveness of school uniforms or dress codes in improving student academic performance.

Federal courts, including the U. S. Supreme Court, have ruled that, within certain parameters, school officials can legally regulate student's appearance and dress. Because student's First Amendment rights are not coextensive with those of adults, the courts generally examine the necessity of the rules for maintaining school environment. A 5th Circuit Court held that a school's uniform policy will pass constitutional scrutiny if it furthers an important or substantial government interest; if the interest is unrelated to the suppression of student expression; and if the incidental restrictions on First Amendment activities are no more than is necessary to facilitate that interest.

West Virginia is among the 21 states and the District of Columbia that have enacted statutes that give local districts authority to require students to wear uniforms. Four additional states specifically authorize districts to adopt dress codes which may

include uniforms and two state's statutes authorize local adoption of uniform policies in certain districts or with restrictions. No state legislature or state department of education mandates the use of student uniforms.

W. Va. Code §18-2-35, Dress codes requiring school uniforms for students, was enacted in 2002. It requires the State Board to promulgate a rule allowing county boards to implement a dress code requiring students to wear uniforms for any certain school or county wide. State Board Policy 4374, School Uniforms, became effective October 16, 2002. Kanawha County adopted a school uniform policy and two of the county's elementary schools (J.E. Robins and Glenwood) have successfully implemented uniform policies for several years.

A bill to modify the West Virginia statute authorizing counties to adopt a school uniform policy was reported from the House Education Committee during the 2005 Regular Session. The intent of the bill was to provide more detail to the statute to reflect many of the recommended guidelines reflected in the research, including a school-by-school approach to uniform adoption.

Findings and Recommendations

The Subcommittee finds that when instituted properly and with input from parents, school uniform policies have been successful in the West Virginia schools and others across the nation that have implemented them. The Subcommittee recommends that all schools consider the adoption of uniform policies. The Subcommittee also, therefore, recommends revision of W. Va. Code \$18-2-35, Dress Codes requiring school uniforms for students, to authorize the school-by-school adoption, subject to approval of the superintendent, of student uniform policies that meet the legal requirements and policy considerations recommended for successful implementation.

2. Report on Inter-county Student Transfers.

The Subcommittee reviewed information from the Department of Education on W. Va, Code §18-5-16 and W. Va. Board of Education Policy 7212, pertaining to inter-county student transfers. The Department also presented information on the historical background of the statute and policy, and the disposition of parent appeals to the State Superintendent of transfer requests denied at the county level.

The Department reported that since the 2002 amendments to the statutes which were prompted by the large number of Taylor County resident students attending Marion County schools, the number of appeals received by the State Superintendent has moderated. It further reported that, generally, the State Superintendent grants

transfer appeals of students who have previously attended school in a county other than their county of residence or who have siblings who have attended school in that county, but does not grant those of students who do not have such a tie to another county or that request a transfer simply because the desired school is more convenient to childcare or a parent's place of employment. The State Superintendent would only approve a transfer on appeal if it was determined that the transfer could enhance the education and welfare of the student. The financial impact on the county of residence is one of the things that the State Superintendent would have to look at if the county-level denial of a transfer request was appealed.

The Department's information on transfer request appeals indicated that of the 25 appeals filed in 2003 through 2005, 15 transfers were approved. Three transfer appeals were currently pending before the State Superintendent. These were all from Summers County.

Findings and Recommendations

The Subcommittee finds that when large numbers of a county's resident students attend the schools of another county the financial impact both from the loss of state aid and a greater difficulty passing local levies is a growing problem. The Subcommittee recommends that the State Superintendent be requested to annually report to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability on the number of transfer requests appealed and their disposition.

3. Next Generation Structures - High Performance Classrooms.

The Subcommittee heard a presentation by Thom Worledge, Architect, McKinley and Associates, on Next Generation Structures, an alternative, energy efficient building technology with an added advantage that the buildings can be quickly constructed and, also, disassembled and moved. He also pointed out building design features such as lighting, acoustics and air quality that enhance the learning environment.

The construction cost for these buildings is about \$90 per square foot, making them more expensive than the temporary, portable structures and less than traditional construction. However, because the Next Generation Structures are movable, they can be purchased as equipment and, in addition, they have a life expectancy of 50 years and have sufficient energy efficiency to recover their cost in about 20 years.

While several counties have expressed an interest in the

structures, it has been difficult to convince school officials to purchase them because it requires a greater initial expenditure of local dollars than purchasing portables and pursuing state funding for traditional bricks and mortar construction. Two building have been constructed as permanent school facilities in North Carolina and have been in use since 2004.

Findings and Recommendations

The Subcommittee finds that further exploration of this type of flexible, energy efficient and cost effective building technology is worth pursuing and recommends efforts to establish a demonstration site in West Virginia to test the technology.

4. House Concurrent Resolution 70 - Relating to a study on the need for and appropriate methodology for providing salary improvements for counselors employed by the Division of Rehabilitation Services.

The Subcommittee heard a presentation by Judy Neal, Counselor, Division of Rehabilitation Services, in support of establishing the salaries of counselors employed by the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) equivalent to the applicable daily teachers/counselors in the Kanawha County public schools for 261 days of employment per year. She said the salary of teachers employed by DRS were established at this level by statute in 1995, but the counselors were not included. She further said that, although counselor supervisors and four managers were not included in the bill considered during the last session, they are included in a revised fiscal estimate (\$2,653,597) and should be added to the bill.

Ms. Neal said the federal government now requires rehabilitation counselors to be licensed counselors with a Master's degree and, while they are not required to have teaching degrees, their qualifications are comparable to those of public school counselors. The current salaries are set by the Division and no local levy funds are involved.

There are about 140 DRS counselors who work out of the Rehabilitation Center in Kanawha County and DRS District Offices throughout the state. There were seventeen vacant DRS counselor positions and these were pretty evenly spread across the state.

DRS counselors from the Center and around the state currently are working with about 3,000 high school students who are rehabilitation clients. About 30% are in the schools while others are in hospitals or at home. Students are referred to DRS for rehabilitation services by the schools. They not eligible for medicaid reimbursement because they are DRS clients.

Findings and Recommendations

The Subcommittee finds that rehabilitation counselors provide a very important service in helping disabled persons return to productive roles in society and employment to the extent that they are able. The Subcommittee further finds that the Division of Rehabilitation Services is an executive agency under the Secretary of Education and the Arts and that the salary levels established for executive agency employees are under the purview of the Governor. The Subcommittee recommends that the Secretary of Education and the Arts advise the Governor on the salary levels needed to adequately compensate rehabilitation counselors for their valuable work and to maintain a highly qualified workforce. The Subcommittee further recommends that the Legislature support the Governor's decisions in this area.

5. Senate Concurrent Resolution 66 - Relating to a study on the application process, contracts and employment of coaches within the state's public schools.

The Subcommittee reviewed this issue with representatives of the Department of Education and the Secondary Schools Activities Commission (SSAC). The Subcommittee reviewed W. Va. Code \$18A-3-2a and State Board Policy 5202 relating to the certification and employment of coaches, and the role of the SSAC in providing rules and clinics for coaching certification.

The statute provides a preference for awarding coaching contracts to certified professional personnel notwithstanding the amount of prior coaching experience they may have relative to other applicants who are not certified professional personnel. A certified professional personnel employed as a substitute would also have a preference as a certified professional personnel and could be employed as a coach if they had the coaching certification. There is not a preference for service personnel.

There is always a concern about finding enough applicants for coaching positions in non revenue sports. The SSAC holds several clinics so persons who agree to take these positions late can still get the necessary training and certification.

Findings and Recommendations

The Subcommittee recommends consideration of a bill that would enable a non professional personnel who is employed in a coaching position for three or more years and received satisfactory evaluations to continue to be employed in the position without annual posting of the position.

1 . B. 2 3 (By) 4 [Introduced; referred to the 5 Committee on. 1 6 7 8 9 10 A BILL to amend and reenact \$18-2-35 of the Code of West Virginia, 11 1931, as amended, relating to authorizing school 12 implementation of student uniform policies; stating findings and 13 purposes; requiring State Board and county board policies; and 14 specifying certain provisions that must be addressed in county 15 policies. 16 Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia: 17 That \$18-2-35 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, 18 be amended and reenacted to read as follows: 19 ARTICLE 2. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION. 20 §18-2-35. Student uniforms; findings and purpose; state county and 21 school policies. 22 (a) The Legislature hereby finds that the clothing and footwear 23 worn by students in public schools often preoccupy and distract 24 students from their major purpose for being in school, which is 25 obtaining an education. The Legislature finds that in schools that 26 have adopted a dress code requiring students to wear school uniforms,

- 1 disparities in student socioeconomic levels are less obvious and
- 2 disruptive incidents are less likely to occur.
- 3 (b) The state board shall promulgate rules in accordance with
- 4 article three-b, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code that allow a
- 5 county board to implement a dress code requiring students to wear a
- 6 school uniform. The uniforms may be required by the county board for
- 7 either a school district, or for any certain school within the
- 8 district. The rules shall provide at least the following:
- 9 (1) The county board may create an advisory committee comprised of
- 10 parents, school employees and students for the purpose of considering
- 11 whether the board should adopt a dress code requiring school uniforms
- 12 for students in the district;
- 13 (2) The county board may create an advisory committee comprised of
- 14 parents, school employees and students for the purpose of considering
- 15 whether the board should adopt a dress code requiring school uniforms
- 16 for students in any certain school within the district;
- 17 (3) If the advisory committee recommends to the board that a dress
- 18 code requiring school uniforms for students be adopted either for the
- 19 district or for any certain school within the district, the advisory
- 20 committee also shall make recommendations on alternative methods of
- 21 paying for the school uniforms; and
- 22 (4) If the advisory committee recommends to the board that a dress
- 23 code requiring school uniforms for students be adopted either for the
- 24 district or for any certain school within the district and if the
- 25 advisory committee reports its recommendations on alternative methods
- 26 of paying for the school uniforms to the board, the board may adopt

- 1 a dress code requiring school uniforms for students.
- 2 <u>(a) Findings. -- The Legislature makes the following findings:</u>
- 3 (1) A review of the affects of public school student uniform
- 4 policies in districts throughout the country supports the conclusion
- 5 that appropriate student uniform policies are associated with:
- 6 (A) Enhanced school safety;
- 7 <u>(B) An improved learning environment;</u>
- 8 (C) A reduction in ethnic and racial tensions;
- 9 (D) Improved relations between students of differing
- 10 <u>socioeconomic backgrounds;</u>
- 11 <u>(E) Improved behavior;</u>
- 12 <u>(F) Improved self-esteem; and</u>
- (G) Cost savings for participating families;
- 14 (2) Several public schools in this state have adopted pilot
- 15 <u>student uniform policies</u> and report positive experiences that parallel
- 16 those reported by districts throughout the country;
- 17 (3) Recommendations for the implementation of student uniform
- 18 policies published by national organizations and also given to the
- 19 Legislature by representatives of the schools in this state that have
- 20 <u>successfully implemented</u> pilot student uniform policies include:
- 21 (A) Allowing policy adoption and implementation on a school-by-
- 22 school basis;
- 23 (B) Beginning the focus on policy adoption and implementation at
- 24 the elementary level before moving up to schools with higher grade
- 25 configurations;
- 26 (C) Including parent committees in planning, advocating and

- 1 assisting with the adoption and implementation of the policies;
- 2 (D) Requiring the approval of the parents by a super majority,
- 3 such as eighty percent, for the adoption and implementation of a
- 4 student uniform policy;
- 5 (E) Providing incentives for compliance with the student uniform
- 6 policy and assistance to disadvantaged students; and
- 7 (F) Anticipating a time frame from beginning advocacy, involving
- 8 parents, policy adoption and sufficient notice that may take at least
- 9 one year before final implementation of the uniform policy; and
- 10 (4) Information on public school student uniform policies and
- 11 successful strategies for implementing them should be reviewed by
- 12 county boards and disseminated to the schools so that they may make
- 13 an informed decision on whether to pursue adoption and implementation.
- 14 Organizations such as the West Virginia School Boards Association that
- 15 routinely present information on a variety of topics to county board
- 16 members could assist in this effort.
- 17 <u>(b) Purpose. -- The purpose of this section is to encourage the</u>
- 18 dissemination of information on public school student uniform policies
- 19 and successful strategies for implementing them to all public schools
- 20 in the state so that they may be discussed and considered on a school-
- 21 by-school basis for optional adoption and implementation. The further
- 22 purpose of this section is to establish a policy framework to
- 23 <u>authorize the adoption and implementation of student uniform policies</u>
- 24 by public schools in this state, including the minimum criteria that
- 25 must be included in the authorizing policies adopted by the county
- 26 boards.

- 1 (c) State Board rule. -- The State Board shall revise its
- 2 existing legislative rule, "School Uniforms," if necessary to comport
- 3 with the provisions of this section.
- 4 (d) County board policies. -- Each county board shall adopt a
- 5 policy under which the schools in the county may be authorized to
- 6 implement a student uniform policy. The policy must address at least
- 7 the following:
- 8 (1) The principal, the faculty senate and the local school
- 9 improvement council of the school must agree that a student uniform
- 10 policy would benefit the school and obtain a vote of sixty percent of
- 11 the parents and guardians of the students at the school, or a greater
- 12 percentage if established in the policy of the county, to adopt a
- 13 student uniform policy;
- 14 (2) The principal must obtain approval from the county
- 15 superintendent;
- 16 (3) The principal must appoint and may serve on a student uniform
- 17 policy committee comprised of professional and service personnel,
- 18 parents or quardians and, for schools with grade levels above grade
- 19 six, students of the school to formulate the school's student uniform
- 20 policy;
- 21 (4) The student uniform policy of a school must address at least
- 22 the following:
- 23 (A) The types and colors of the student uniform;
- 24 (B) Measures to encourage or compel compliance with the student
- 25 uniform policy including incentives and positive reinforcement
- 26 measures to encourage full compliance and disciplinary measures that

- 1 may be employed only after positive measures fail;
- 2 (C) Exemptions from the student uniform policy including, but not
- 3 limited to:
- 4 (i) Noncompliance with the student uniform policy that derives
- 5 from financial hardship;
- 6 (ii) Wearing a button, armband or other accounterment that is
- 7 protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United
- 8 States as an exercise of free speech in the public school setting;
- 9 <u>(iii) When wearing the uniform violates the student's sincerely</u>
- 10 held religious beliefs; and
- 11 (iv) Wearing the uniform of a nationally recognized youth
- 12 organization such as the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, or the Junior
- 13 ROTC on appointed days;
- 14 (D) A process to provide financial assistance for compliance with
- 15 the student uniform policy including, but not limited to:
- (i) The designation of an employee or school volunteer to assist
- 17 <u>families in need of assistance;</u>
- 18 <u>(ii) A procedure for families to apply for financial assistance;</u>
- 19 (iii) A procedure and criteria to identify families in need of
- 20 financial assistance; and
- 21 (iv) A description of the form and type of financial assistance
- 22 available in the school community which may include, but is not
- 23 <u>limited to, a method for recycling uniforms within the school</u>
- 24 community and any resources made available within the school community
- 25 and its business partners;
- 26 (5) The principal of the school must cause a brochure to be

- 1 <u>published</u> and <u>distributed</u> to the parents or <u>quardians</u> of the school's
- 2 students informing them of the implementation of a student uniform
- 3 policy at the beginning of the next school year. The brochure must:
- 4 (A) Fully describe the student uniform program;
- 5 (B) Contain a detailed description of the student uniform and
- 6 list the range of costs for each competitively priced item; and
- 7 (C) Describe the procedure for seeking financial assistance and
- 8 the contact person; and
- 9 (6) A student may not be suspended or expelled from school, nor
- 10 may a student receive a lower academic grade, for failure to comply
- 11 with a school's student uniform policy. A parent conference must be
- 12 held before the imposition of disciplinary measures on a student for
- 13 failure to comply with a school's student uniform policy.
- 14 (c) (e) Nothing in this section requires a county board or any
- 15 <u>public school</u> to adopt a dress code requiring school uniforms for
- 16 students.
- 17 (f) Nothing in this section requires a school with a uniform
- 18 policy in effect on the effective date of this section to modify or
- 19 repeal said policy.
- 20 (d) (g) Nothing in this section requires any level of funding by
- 21 the Legislature, boards of education or any other agency of
- 22 government.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to encourage the dissemination of information on public school student uniform policies and successful strategies for implementing them to all public schools in the state so that they may be discussed and considered on a school-by-

school basis for optional adoption and implementation. The further purpose of this section is to establish a policy framework to authorize the adoption and implementation of student uniform policies by public schools in this state, including the minimum criteria that must be included in the authorizing policies adopted by the county boards.

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

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3	(By DelegateKEYBOARD(SPONSOR))
4 5	[Introduced KEYBOARD(DATE); referred to the
5	Committee on KEYBOARD (COMMITTEE).]
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10	A BILL to amend and reenact \$18A-3-2a of the code of West Virginia,
11	1931, as amended, relating to persons who do not qualify for
12	professional certificates who are issued certificates to serve
13	in the public schools as athletic coaches or other
14	extracurricular activities coaches; removing certain
15	limitation on such service when certain conditions are met.
16	Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:
17	That \$18A-3-2a of the code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended,
18	be amended and reenacted to read as follows:
19	ARTICLE 3. TRAINING, CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, PROFESSIONAL
20	DEVELOPMENT.
21	§18A-3-2a. Authority of state superintendent to issue
22	certificates; kinds of certificates.
23	In accordance with state board of education rules for the
24	education of professional educators adopted after consultation with
25	the secretary of education and the arts, the state superintendent
26	of schools may issue certificates valid in the public schools of the
27	state: Provided, That a certificate shall not be issued to any

person who is not a citizen of the United States, is not of good moral character and physically, mentally and emotionally qualified to perform the duties for which the certification would be granted and who has not attained the age of eighteen years on or before the first day of October of the year in which the certificate is issued:

Provided, however, That an exchange teacher from a foreign country or an alien person who meets the requirements to teach may be granted a permit to teach within the public schools of the state.

Certificates authorized to be issued include:

- (1) **Professional teaching certificates.** -- A professional teaching certificate for teaching in the public schools may be issued to a person who:
- (A) Has at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education in this state, has completed a program for the education of teachers which meets the requirements approved by the state board of education or has met equivalent standards at institutions in other states and has passed appropriate state board approved basic skills and subject matter tests or has completed three years of successful experience within the last seven years in the area for which licensure is being sought; or
- (B) Has at least a bachelor's degree in a discipline taught in the public schools from an accredited institution of higher education, has passed appropriate state board approved basic skills and subject matter tests or has completed three years of successful experience within the last seven years in the area for which

licensure is being sought, has completed an alternative program for teacher education approved by the state board and is recommended for a certificate by the chairperson of the professional support team of the person's alternative program or the state superintendent based on documentation submitted.

The certificate shall be endorsed to indicate the grade level or levels or areas of specialization in which the person is certified to teach or to serve in the public schools. The initial professional certificate shall be issued provisionally for a period of three years from the date of issuance and may be converted to a professional certificate valid for five years subject to successful completion of a beginning teacher internship, if applicable, or renewed subject to rules adopted by the state board.

(2) Professional administrative certificate. -- A professional administrative certificate, endorsed for serving in the public schools, with specific endorsement as a principal, vocational administrator, supervisor of instructions or superintendent, may be issued to a person who has completed requirements all to be approved by the state board as follows: For a master's degree from an institution of higher education accredited to offer a master's degree, has successfully completed an approved program for administrative certification, developed by the state board of education in cooperation with the governing boards of the university of West Virginia system and the state college system, has successfully completed education and training in evaluation skills

through the center for professional development, or equivalent education and training in evaluation skills, and three years of management level experience: Provided, That anyone having received a certificate during the period from the thirtieth day of August, one thousand nine hundred ninety, until the effective date of this bill without having met the above requirements shall complete those requirements within five years after the effective date of this Provided, however, That any person serving in the position of dean of students on the effective date of this section shall not be required to hold a professional administrative certificate. Beginning the first day of September, one thousand nine hundred ninety-two, the initial professional administrative certificate shall be issued provisionally for a period of five years. certificate may be converted to a professional administrative certificate valid for five years or renewed, subject to the regulations of the state board.

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- (3) Paraprofessional certificate. -- A paraprofessional certificate may be issued to a person who has completed thirty-six semester hours of post-secondary education or its equivalent in subjects directly related to performance of the job, all approved by the state board, and can demonstrate the proficiencies to perform duties as required of a paraprofessional as defined in section eight, article four of this chapter.
- (4) Other certificates; permits. -- Other certificates and permits may be issued, subject to the approval of the state board,

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to persons who do not qualify for the professional or paraprofessional certificate. Such certificates or permits shall not be given permanent status and persons holding such shall meet renewal requirements provided by law and by regulation, unless the state board declares certain of these certificates to be the equivalent of the professional certificate.

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Within the category of other certificates and permits, the state superintendent may issue certificates for persons to serve in the public schools as athletic coaches or other extracurricular activities coaches whose duties may include the supervision of students, subject to the following limitations: (A) Such person shall be employed under a contract with the county board of education which specifies the duties to be performed, which specifies a rate of pay equivalent to the rate of pay for professional educators in the district who accept similar duties as extra duty assignments and which provides for liability insurance associated with the activity: Provided, That such persons shall not be considered employees of the board for salary and benefit purposes other than as specified in the contract; (B) a currently employed certified professional educator has not applied for the position: Provided, That after a person issued a certificate in compliance with this paragraph has been employed in the same position for three years and has received satisfactory evaluations, this limitation no longer applies and the county board is not required to annually post the position; and (C) such person completes an orientation program

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- designed and approved in accordance with state board rules which
- 2 shall be adopted no later than the first day of January, one
- 3 thousand nine hundred ninety-one.

Note: The purpose of this bill is allow persons employed in the public schools as athletic coaches or other extracurricular activities coaches, but who are not regular professional employees, to continued to be employed in the same position without the position being posted if they have served in the position for three years and received satisfactory evaluations.

Strike-throughs indicate existing language that would be removed, and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.