

**Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability Report  
H. B. 4593 - Compulsory School Age Raised to 17  
December, 2013**

West Virginia School Law §18-8-3 requires the employment of a county director of school attendance. The West Virginia Department of Education Coordinator of Attendance provides professional development to county attendance directors regarding changes in both federal and state laws. The issues of both truancy and dropout prevention continue to be the focus of bi-annual attendance directors' meetings. The last meeting was held October 15-16, 2013 and included the following topics:

- Early Warning System - is a web-based tool available to all counties to help educators identify at-risk students in grades 6-12 from research-based indicators (attendance, behavior and course performance).  
The West Virginia Department of Education is currently working on an Early Warning System for elementary schools.
- A presentation through the West Virginia Teen Court Association on establishing teen courts in communities in order to assist young offenders an opportunity for their offenses through community service rather than facing fines and sentences that may be handed down by the criminal justice system. This can be particularly effective with truancy by enabling students to remain in school rather than being removed and putting them at risk of dropping out.

**The High School Graduation Improvement Act Study examines the impact of raising the dropout age from 16 to 17 beginning with the 2011-2012 freshman cohort.**

**Data Summary:** The total number of 16 year olds who dropped out decreased 52% from the 2011 to 2012 school year. There was a decrease of the total number of 16 year olds who dropped out from 2011-12 to 2012-13 by 24%.

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Total # of 16 year olds who dropped out	*694	*359	86
Total # of 9 <sup>th</sup> Graders who were 16 years old who dropped out	*344	*125	25
Total # of 16 year olds included in the 9 <sup>th</sup> grade cohort to be impacted by raising the compulsory school age to 17		*1231	1165

\*These figures are calculated using students' birthdates

**West Virginia Department of Education Collaborative Dropout Prevention Initiatives:**

The West Virginia Department of Education is committed to developing ways to help young people stay in school and provide them with the support they need to be successful. WVDE is a collaborative partner in several initiatives to increase attendance and graduation rates:

- ✓ Career Technical Education Opportunities
  - expanded High Schools that Work to 25 sites
  - expanded Technical Center that Work from 7 to 14 sites

- expanded Advanced Career Programs from 3 to 12 high schools
  - expanded Simulated Workplace pilot sites to 44 for the 2013-2014 school year
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- ✓ In October, 2013 a total of \$1,411,933.00 dollars was distributed to five (5) counties with successful applications for Innovation Zone grants for three years and \$46,500.00 to one (1) county with a successful application for a Dropout Prevention grant. Two (2) of the six (6) grants incorporated the Community Schools Model into their application, one (1) will focus on “expeditionary learning”, and three (3) will continue to support students transitioning from middle to high school with new technical programs and support for struggling students.
  - ✓ In 2012-2013, 10,339 students graduated with EDGE (Earn a Degree-Graduate Early) credits, and 193 students applied for EDGE credits at a West Virginia community and technical college
  - ✓ West Virginia Department of Education Virtual School currently offers 43 credit recovery courses.
    - West Virginia students registered for 2246 credit recovery courses to date for 2013-2014
    - Twenty-five counties registered students for credit recovery courses to date for 2013-2014
  - ✓ The Option Pathway is a blend of Career Technical Education (CTE) and the state approved high school equivalency assessment (HSEA).
    - 1124 students were enrolled in the Option Pathway to date for the 2013-2014 school year, with over 553 Option Pathway seniors earning high school diplomas. 125 students received a high school equivalency diploma before leaving high school.
  - ✓ Mountaineer Challenge Academy will graduate 124 students on December 13, 2013 with a West Virginia High School Diploma through the Option Pathway.
  - ✓ The WVDE partnered with the Supreme Court of Appeals and Judicial Systems to create Community Awareness and Action on truancy and dropout prevention.
  - ✓ Juvenile Drug Courts are operating in Boone/Lincoln, Brooke/Hancock, Cabell, Greenbrier/Pocahontas, Harrison, Jefferson, Kanawha, Logan, Mercer, Monongalia, Putnam, Randolph, Wayne, Wood and McDowell counties.
  - ✓ School-based probation officers serve in eight counties: Cabell, Logan, Mercer, Greenbrier, Monongalia, Wayne, Boone and Putnam.
  - ✓ Alternative education programs enrolled 3,558 students during the 2012-2013 school year. The 4-Year graduation average for alternative education students is 72.7%.
  - ✓ WVDE partnered with several advocacy organizations:
    - Education Alliance Frontline Network – *Communities Unite for High School Success and Dropout Prevention in West Virginia*
    - Legal Aid of West Virginia through “Youth M.O.V.E. West Virginia”
    - Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) and the West Virginia Department of Education co-hosted Student Success Summit August 5 -6, 2013