

**Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability Report
On Dropout Prevention, West Virginia Department of Education**

This year including:

H.B. 2550 – Redefined the number of days a student would be considered truant as ten (10) in place of five (5)

H. B. 4003 – Grants dual jurisdiction to counties where a student lives in one county and attends school in another to enforce truancy policies across county lines

July, 2015

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 April 15-16, 2014 and included the following topics:

- Dr. Martirano, State Superintendent of Schools, spoke to the County Attendance Directors/Homeless Liaisons and shared his vision for West Virginia Schools after which he remained to answer questions from the audience.
- Attendance directors studied H.B. 2550 and made revisions to both the state and county attendance policies accordingly.
- A presentation on using the new data system “ZoomWV for Educators” was demonstrated by the Office of Accountability.
- Information on new Home School Legislation was provided by the State Superintendent’s Office.
- Attendance directors discussed H.B. 4003 granting dual jurisdiction to counties where a student who lives in one county and attends school in another in order to enforce truancy policies

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%. (Information for the 2014-2015 school year will not be available until the December LOCEA report)

| | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-2014 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| Total # of 16 year olds who dropped out | *694 | *359 | 86 | 32 |
| Total # of 9 th Graders who were 16 years old who dropped out | *344 | *125 | 25 | 12 |
| Total # of 16 year olds included in the 9 th grade cohort to be impacted by raising the compulsory school age to 17 | | *1231 | 1165 | 1057 |

*These figures are calculated using students' birthdates

Attendance Matters Celebration 2015-2016:

The West Virginia Department of Education through the Office of the State Superintendent, Dr. Michael J. Martirano is kicking off a year-long “Attendance Matters: Every Student, Every Day” throughout the State. The beginning event on August 10, 2015 will combine with the opening of school in Wayne County and Dr. Martirano’s visiting tour schools in Wayne County; Fort Gay PK-8, Kellogg Elementary and Spring Valley High

School and Spring Valley High School Technical Center. September is designated nationwide as “Attendance Awareness Month” and West Virginia will pay particular attention to holding events in schools calling attention to the importance of attending school, especially the during the first month of school. The state sponsored events will include a monthly calendar of activities and social media events as well as partnership with “Attendance Works” a national and state initiative that promotes better policy and practice around school attendance <http://www.attendanceworks.org/>

West Virginia Department of Education Collaborative Dropout Prevention Initiatives:

Rural Dropout Prevention Grant – West Virginia is one of three states selected for a federal project to address dropout prevention as dropping out of school relates to more rural states. Through a series of meetings in West Virginia and at Clemson University, states have shared and showcased dropout prevention initiatives with the year-long technical assistance from the American Institute for Research. The researchers have provided technical assistance to the continued success of Innovation Zone Schools and how to expand the use of the state’ Early Warning System. In May, 2015 they produced a video highlighting Greenbrier and Monroe Counties and their success in reducing dropouts in rural communities that will be available the fall of 2015 for West Virginia and other rural states to see and share what is being effectively done toward rural dropout prevention.

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 for 2013-2014 school year:

- expanded High Schools that Work to 32 sites
- expanded Technical Center that Work from 14 to 20 sites
- expanded Advanced Career Programs from 12 to 14 high schools (with 5 additional interested)
- expanded Simulated Workplace pilot sites to 269 for the 2013-2014 school year
(New numbers not available until the end of August, 2015)

2015-2016 Innovation Zone Grants to include a STEM Priority Area: Innovation Zone Grants continue to evolve, the latest of which evolution will include a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). In a collaboration with The Education Alliance, the Office of the Governor and the West Virginia Department of Education one STEM Innovation School Grant will be funded by a portion of the dropout prevention monies designated through the State Legislature as part of this partnership for a three-year grant in the amount of \$266,000. This successful grant will contain the structure necessary to meet the requirements to be identified as a model STEM Innovation School. The statistics continue to show the value of Innovation Zone Grants in schools in terms of improvements in both graduation and dropout rates. Grantees for 2013-2014 have already seen an increase in graduation rates by 75% and dropout rates decreasing by 50%. Including the 2014-2015 Innovation Zone Grants there have been grants issued in 35 out of 55 counties. There have been 35 three-year grants issued and 42 one-year grants in 36 out of 55 counties.

The remainder of the Innovation Zone monies in the projected amount of \$2,500,000., will give counties/school(s) the ability to pick from the seven (7) priority areas (or a combination of several) including a STEM project at a school(s) to begin the possibility of becoming a STEM Innovation School. The grant application is available at <https://wvde.state.wv.us/innovationzones/>

In 2013-2014, 11,257 students graduated with **EDGE** (Earn a Degree-Graduate Early) credits, and 269 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 4932 credit recovery courses for the 2013-2014 school year

- Thirty-two counties registered students for credit recovery courses for the 2013-2014 school year

The **Option Pathway** is a blend of Career Technical Education (CTE) and the state approved high school equivalency assessment (HSEA).

- 1318 students were enrolled in the Option Pathway for the 2014-2015 school year, with over 604 Option Pathway seniors earning high school diplomas. 110 students received a high school equivalency diploma before leaving high school.

Mountaineer Challenge Academy will graduate 110 students on December, 2014 and 105 students in June, 2015, with a West Virginia High School Diploma through the Option Pathway.

Truancy Diversion Application:

SB 393 does not have a statutory requirement for counties to hire a truancy diversion specialist. However, there is funding available to cover a portion of the salary if the county chooses to partner with the local court system. Counties are encouraged to reach out to the court system and judge(s) to discuss ways in which you can collaborate to improve attendance in our schools. Completed applications are to be submitted electronically in a PDF document to Sarah Stewart at sarah.a.stewart@k12.wv.us. Applications for funding will be considered on a rolling basis. All application materials must be received before the application will be considered. Applications have been provided to county superintendents via e-mail on July 17, 2015.

Juvenile Drug Courts are operating in Boone/Lincoln, Brooke/Hancock, Cabell, Greenbrier/Pocahontas, Harrison, Jefferson, Kanawha, Logan, Mercer, Monongalia, Putnam, Randolph, Wayne, Wood, Ohio (new) 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%. (2014-2015 figures not available until August, 2015).

WVDE partnered with several advocacy organizations:

- Education Alliance Frontline Network – *Communities Unite for High School Success and Dropout Prevention in West Virginia* and the STEM initiative
- 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-host the Student Success Summit July 29-30, 2015.
- State attendance coordinator and the Office of the Secretary of Education, PASS Coordinator, presented the current data on dropout prevention together at the Student Success Summit July 29, 2015.