COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

FOR

Senate Bill No. 576

(By Senators Beach, Edgell and Williams)

[Originating in the Committee on Education; reported February 23, 2012.]

A BILL to amend and reenact §18A-2-2, §18A-2-6, §18A-2-7 and §18A-2-8a of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to amend and reenact §18A-4-7a of said code, all relating to school personnel; changing certain deadlines pertaining to termination of a continuing contract, resignation, retirement, transfer and rehiring of probationary employees; changing the number of days prior to the beginning of the instructional term for limiting the transfer of certain employees; and restricting application of certain provisions pertaining to limiting the transfer of certain employees.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That §18A-2-2, §18A-2-6, §18A-2-7 and §18A-2-8a of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended and reenacted; and that §18A-4-7a of said code be amended and reenacted, all to read as follows:

ARTICLE 2. SCHOOL PERSONNEL.

§18A-2-2. Employment of teachers; contracts; continuing contract status; how terminated; dismissal for lack of need; released time; failure of teacher to perform contract or violation thereof; written notice bonus for teachers and professional personnel.

1 (a) Before entering upon their duties, all teachers shall $\mathbf{2}$ execute a contract with their county boards, which shall state the salary to be paid and shall be in the form prescribed 3 4 by the state superintendent. Each contract shall be signed by the teacher and by the president and secretary of the county 5 board and shall be filed, together with the certificate of the 6 7 teacher, by the secretary of the office of the county board: *Provided*, That when necessary to facilitate the employment 8 of employable professional personnel and prospective and 9 recent graduates of teacher education programs who have 10 11 not yet attained certification, the contract may be signed 12 upon the condition that the certificate is issued to the

(b) Each teacher's contract, under this section, shall be 1516designated as a probationary or continuing contract. A probationary teacher's contract shall be for a term of not less 17than one nor more than three years, one of which shall be for 18 completion of a beginning teacher internship pursuant to the 1920provisions of section two-b, article three of this chapter, if 21applicable. If, after three years of such employment, the teacher who holds a professional certificate, based on at least 2223a bachelor's degree, has met the qualifications for a bache-24lor's degree and the county board enter into a new contract of employment, it shall be a continuing contract, subject to 25the following: 26

(1) Any teacher holding a valid certificate with less than
a bachelor's degree who is employed in a county beyond the
three-year probationary period shall upon qualifying for the
professional certificate based upon a bachelor's degree, if
reemployed, be granted continuing contract status; and
(2) A teacher holding continuing contract status with one

34 other county upon completion of one year of acceptable

county shall be granted continuing contract status with any

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35 employment if the employment is during the next succeeding
36 school year or immediately following an approved leave of
37 absence extending no more than one year.

(c) The continuing contract of any teacher shall remain
in full force and effect except as modified by mutual consent
of the school board and the teacher, unless and until terminated, subject to the following:

(1) A continuing contract may not be terminated except:
(A) By a majority vote of the full membership of the
county board on or before February 1 March 1 of the then
current year, after written notice, served upon the teacher,
return receipt requested, stating cause or causes and an
opportunity to be heard at a meeting of the board prior to the
board's action on the termination issue; or

49 (B) By written resignation of the teacher on or before
50 February 1 March 1 to initiate termination of a continuing
51 contract;

52 (2) The termination shall take effect at the close of the53 school year in which the contract is terminated;

54 (3) The contract may be terminated at any time by55 mutual consent of the school board and the teacher;

56 (4) This section does not affect the powers of the school
57 board to suspend or dismiss a principal or teacher pursuant
58 to section eight of this article;

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(5) A continuing contract for any teacher holding a
certificate valid for more than one year and in full force and
effect during the school year 1984-1985 shall remain in full
force and effect;

63 (6) A continuing contract does not operate to prevent a teacher's dismissal based upon the lack of need for the 64 65 teacher's services pursuant to the provisions of law relating 66 to the allocation to teachers and pupil-teacher ratios. The written notification of teachers being considered for dis-67 missal for lack of need shall be limited to only those teachers 68 whose consideration for dismissal is based upon known or 69 70expected circumstances which will require dismissal for lack of need. An employee who was not provided notice and an 7172opportunity for a hearing pursuant to this subsection may 73not be included on the list. In case of dismissal for lack of 74 need, a dismissed teacher shall be placed upon a preferred list in the order of their length of service with that board. No 7576 teacher may be employed by the board until each qualified teacher upon the preferred list, in order, has been offered the 77

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opportunity for reemployment in a position for which he or she is qualified, not including a teacher who has accepted a teaching position elsewhere. The reemployment shall be upon a teacher's preexisting continuing contract and has the same effect as though the contract had been suspended during the time the teacher was not employed.

84 (d) In the assignment of position or duties of a teacher 85 under a continuing contract, the board may provide for released time of a teacher for any special professional or 86 87 governmental assignment without jeopardizing the contrac-88 tual rights of the teacher or any other rights, privileges or 89 benefits under the provisions of this chapter. Released time shall be provided for any professional educator while serving 90 as a member of the Legislature during any duly constituted 91 92session of that body and its interim and statutory committees 93 and commissions without jeopardizing his or her contractual 94 rights or any other rights, privileges, benefits or accrual of experience for placement on the state minimum salary 95 96 schedule in the following school year under the provisions of this chapter, board policy and law. 97

98 (e) Any teacher who fails to fulfill his or her contract99 with the board, unless prevented from doing so by personal

illness or other just cause or unless released from his or her
contract by the board, or who violates any lawful provision
of the contract, is disqualified to teach in any other public
school in the state for a period of the next ensuing school
year and the State Department of Education or board may
hold all papers and credentials of the teacher on file for a
period of one year for the violation: *Provided*, That marriage
of a teacher is not considered a failure to fulfill, or violation

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109 (f) Any classroom teacher, as defined in section one, 110 article one of this chapter, who desires to resign employment 111 with a county board or request a leave of absence, the resignation or leave of absence to become effective on or 112before July 15 of the same year and after completion of the 113 114 employment term, may do so at any time during the school 115year by written notification of the resignation or leave of 116 absence and any notification received by a county board shall automatically extend the teacher's public employee 117 118 insurance coverage until August 31 of the same year.

(g) (1) A classroom teacher who gives written notice to
the county board on or before December 1 January 15 of the
school year of his or her retirement from employment with

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122the board at the conclusion of the school year shall be paid 123 \$500 from the Early Notification of Retirement line item 124 established for the Department of Education for this pur-125pose, subject to appropriation by the Legislature. If the appropriations to the Department of Education for this 126 127purpose are insufficient to compensate all applicable teachers, the Department of Education shall request a 128 129supplemental appropriation in an amount sufficient to 130 compensate all such teachers. Additionally, if funds are still 131insufficient to compensate all applicable teachers, the 132 priority of payment is for teachers who give written notice 133 the earliest. This payment shall not be counted as part of the final average salary for the purpose of calculating retire-134135ment.

136 (2) The position of a classroom teacher providing written notice of retirement pursuant to this subsection may be 137138 considered vacant and the county board may immediately post the position as an opening to be filled at the conclusion 139140 of the school year. If a teacher has been hired to fill the position of a retiring classroom teacher prior to the start of 141 142 the next school year, the retiring classroom teacher is disqualified from continuing his or her employment in that 143

144 position. However, the retiring classroom teacher may be 145permitted to continue his or her employment in that position 146 and forfeit the early retirement notification payment if, after 147 giving notice of retirement in accordance with this subsection, he or she becomes subject to a significant unforeseen 148 149 financial hardship, including a hardship caused by the death 150 or illness of an immediate family member or loss of employ-151ment of a spouse. Other significant unforeseen financial 152hardships shall be determined by the county superintendent on a case-by-case basis. This subsection does not prohibit a 153154 county school board from eliminating the position of a 155 retiring classroom teacher.

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§18A-2-6. Continuing contract status for service personnel; termination.

1 After three years of acceptable employment, each service 2 personnel employee who enters into a new contract of 3 employment with the board shall be granted continuing 4 contract status: *Provided*, That a service personnel employee 5 holding continuing contract status with one county shall be 6 granted continuing contract status with any other county 7 upon completion of one year of acceptable employment if 8 such employment is during the next succeeding school year

9 or immediately following an approved leave of absence 10 extending no more than one year. The continuing contract of any such employee shall remain in full force and effect 11 12except as modified by mutual consent of the school board 13and the employee, unless and until terminated with written notice, stating cause or causes, to the employee, by a major-14 ity vote of the full membership of the board before February 1516 + March 1 of the then current year, or by written resignation of the employee on or before that date. The affected em-17ployee has the right of a hearing before the board, if re-18 quested, before final action is taken by the board upon the 19 termination of such employment. 20

Those employees who have completed three years ofacceptable employment as of the effective date of thislegislation shall be granted continuing contract status.

§18A-2-7. Assignment, transfer, promotion, demotion, suspension and recommendation of dismissal of school personnel by superintendent; preliminary notice of transfer; hearing on the transfer; proof required.

(a) The superintendent, subject only to approval of the
 board, may assign, transfer, promote, demote or suspend
 school personnel and recommend their dismissal pursuant to

11 [Com. Sub. for S. B. No. 576 4 provisions of this chapter. However, an employee shall be 5 notified in writing by the superintendent on or before February 1 March 1 if he or she is being considered for 6 7 transfer or to be transferred. Only those employees whose consideration for transfer or intended transfer is based upon 8 known or expected circumstances which will require the 9 transfer of employees shall be considered for transfer or 10 11 intended for transfer and the notification shall be limited to only those employees. Any teacher or employee who desires 12to protest the proposed transfer may request in writing a 13 statement of the reasons for the proposed transfer. The 14 statement of reasons shall be delivered to the teacher or 15employee within ten days of the receipt of the request. 16 Within ten days of the receipt of the statement of the reasons, 1718 the teacher or employee may make written demand upon the superintendent for a hearing on the proposed transfer before 19 20the county board of education. The hearing on the proposed transfer shall be held on or before March 15 April 15. At the 2122hearing, the reasons for the proposed transfer must be 23 shown.

(b) The superintendent at a meeting of the board on or
before March 15 April 15 shall furnish in writing to the

board a list of teachers and other employees to be considered 2627for transfer and subsequent assignment for the next ensuing school year. An employee who was not provided notice and 2829an opportunity for a hearing pursuant to subsection (a) of this section may not be included on the list. All other 30 teachers and employees not so listed shall be considered as 31reassigned to the positions or jobs held at the time of this 3233 meeting. The list of those recommended for transfer shall be included in the minute record of the meeting and all those so 34listed shall be notified in writing, which notice shall be 35 36 delivered in writing, by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the persons' last known addresses within ten days 37following the board meeting, of their having been so recom-38 mended for transfer and subsequent assignment and the 39 reasons therefor. 40

(c) The superintendent's authority to suspend school
personnel shall be temporary only pending a hearing upon
charges filed by the superintendent with the board of
education and the period of suspension may not exceed thirty
days unless extended by order of the board.

46 (d) The provisions of this section respecting hearing upon47 notice of transfer is not applicable in emergency situations

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48 where the school building becomes damaged or destroyed
49 through an unforeseeable act and which act necessitates a
50 transfer of the school personnel because of the aforemen51 tioned condition of the building.

§18A-2-8a. Notice to probationary personnel of rehiring or nonrehiring; hearing.

1 The superintendent at a meeting of the board on or before March 15 April 15 of each year shall provide in 2 3 writing to the board a list of all probationary teachers that he or she recommends to be rehired for the next ensuing 4 school year. The board shall act upon the superintendent's 5 recommendations at that meeting in accordance with section 6 7 one of this article. The board at this same meeting shall also act upon the retention of other probationary employees as 8 provided in sections two and five of this article. Any such 9 probationary teacher or other probationary employee who is 10 11 not rehired by the board at that meeting shall be notified in 12writing, by certified mail, return receipt requested, to such persons' last known addresses within ten days following said 13 14 board meeting, of their not having been rehired or not having 15 been recommended for rehiring.

16 Any probationary teacher who receives notice that he or 17she has not been recommended for rehiring or other proba-18 tionary employee who has not been reemployed may within 19 ten days after receiving the written notice request a state-20ment of the reasons for not having been rehired and may 21request a hearing before the board. The hearing shall be held 22at the next regularly scheduled board of education meeting or a special meeting of the board called within thirty days of 2324 the request for hearing. At the hearing, the reasons for the 25 nonrehiring must be shown.

ARTICLE 4. SALARIES, WAGES AND OTHER BENEFITS.

§18A-4-7a. Employment, promotion and transfer of professional personnel; seniority.

(a) A county board of education shall make decisions
 affecting the hiring of professional personnel other than
 classroom teachers on the basis of the applicant with the
 highest qualifications.

5 (b) The county board shall make decisions affecting the
6 hiring of new classroom teachers on the basis of the appli7 cant with the highest qualifications.

8 (c) In judging qualifications for hiring employees pursu9 ant to subsections (a) and (b) of this section, consideration
10 shall be given to each of the following:

11 (1) Appropriate certification, licensure or both;

(2) Amount of experience relevant to the position; or, in
the case of a classroom teaching position, the amount of
teaching experience in the subject area;

(3) The amount of course work, degree level or both inthe relevant field and degree level generally;

17 (4) Academic achievement;

18 (5) Relevant specialized training;

(6) Past performance evaluations conducted pursuant tosection twelve, article two of this chapter; and

(7) Other measures or indicators upon which the relativequalifications of the applicant may fairly be judged.

(d) If one or more permanently employed instructional
personnel apply for a classroom teaching position and meet
the standards set forth in the job posting, the county board
of education shall make a decision affecting the filling of the
position on the basis of the following criteria:

28 (1) Appropriate certification, licensure or both;

29 (2) Total amount of teaching experience;

30 (3) The existence of teaching experience in the required31 certification area;

32 (4) Degree level in the required certification area;

33 (5) Specialized training directly related to the perfor-34 mance of the job as stated in the job description;

35 (6) Receiving an overall rating of satisfactory in the
36 previous two evaluations conducted pursuant to section
37 twelve, article two of this chapter; and

38 (7) Seniority.

(e) In filling positions pursuant to subsection (d) of this
section, consideration shall be given to each criterion with
each criterion being given equal weight. If the applicant with
the most seniority is not selected for the position, upon the
request of the applicant a written statement of reasons shall
be given to the applicant with suggestions for improving the
applicant's qualifications.

46 (f) With the exception of guidance counselors, the seniority of classroom teachers, as defined in section one, 47article one of this chapter shall be determined on the basis of 48 the length of time the employee has been employed as a 49 50 regular full-time certified and/or licensed professional 51educator by the county board of education and shall be granted in all areas that the employee is certified, licensed or 5253 both.

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54 (g) Upon completion of one hundred thirty-three days of 55 employment in any one school year, substitute teachers, except retired teachers and other retired professional 5657educators employed as substitutes, shall accrue seniority exclusively for the purpose of applying for employment as a 58 permanent, full-time professional employee. One hundred 59thirty-three days or more of said employment shall be 60 61 prorated and shall vest as a fraction of the school year 62 worked by the permanent, full-time teacher.

63 (h) Guidance counselors and all other professional employees, as defined in section one, article one of this 64 chapter, except classroom teachers, shall gain seniority in 65 their nonteaching area of professional employment on the 66 basis of the length of time the employee has been employed 67 68 by the county board of education in that area: Provided, That if an employee is certified as a classroom teacher, the 69 70employee accrues classroom teaching seniority for the time that that employee is employed in another professional area. 7172For the purposes of accruing seniority under this paragraph, employment as principal, supervisor or central office 7374administrator, as defined in section one, article one of this chapter, shall be considered one area of employment. 75

76 (i) Employment for a full employment term shall equal 77 one year of seniority, but no employee may accrue more than one year of seniority during any given fiscal year. Employ-78 79ment for less than the full employment term shall be pro-80 rated. A random selection system established by the employees and approved by the board shall be used to determine the 81 priority if two or more employees accumulate identical 82 83 seniority: *Provided*, That when two or more principals have accumulated identical seniority, decisions on reductions in 84 force shall be based on qualifications. 85

(j) Whenever a county board is required to reduce the number of professional personnel in its employment, the employee with the least amount of seniority shall be properly notified and released from employment pursuant to the provisions of section two, article two of this chapter. The provisions of this subsection are subject to the following:

92 (1) All persons employed in a certification area to be
93 reduced who are employed under a temporary permit shall
94 be properly notified and released before a fully certified
95 employee in such a position is subject to release;

96 (2) An employee subject to release shall be employed in97 any other professional position where the employee is

98 certified and was previously employed or to any lateral area
99 for which the employee is certified, licensed or both, if the
100 employee's seniority is greater than the seniority of any other

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101 employee in that area of certification, licensure or both;

(3) If an employee subject to release holds certification,
licensure or both in more than one lateral area and if the
employee's seniority is greater than the seniority of any other
employee in one or more of those areas of certification,
licensure or both, the employee subject to release shall be
employed in the professional position held by the employee
with the least seniority in any of those areas of certification,
licensure or both; and

110 (4) If, prior to August 1, of the year a reduction in force 111 is approved, the reason for any particular reduction in force no longer exists as determined by the county board in its sole 112and exclusive judgment, the board shall rescind the reduc-113tion in force or transfer and shall notify the released em-114 115ployee in writing of his or her right to be restored to his or 116her position of employment. Within five days of being so notified, the released employee shall notify the board, in 117 118 writing, of his or her intent to resume his or her position of 119 employment or the right to be restored shall terminate.

120 Notwithstanding any other provision of this subdivision, if 121 there is another employee on the preferred recall list with 122 proper certification and higher seniority, that person shall be 123 placed in the position restored as a result of the reduction in 124 force being rescinded.

125(k) For the purpose of this article, all positions which meet the definition of "classroom teacher" as defined in 126 section one, article one of this chapter shall be lateral 127 128 positions. For all other professional positions, the county board of education shall adopt a policy by October 31, 1993, 129130and may modify the policy thereafter as necessary, which defines which positions shall be lateral positions. The board 131132shall submit a copy of its policy to the state board within 133thirty days of adoption or any modification, and the state 134board shall compile a report and submit the report to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Account-135 136ability by December 31, 1993, and by that date in any 137succeeding year in which any county board submits a 138 modification of its policy relating to lateral positions. In adopting the policy, the board shall give consideration to the 139140 rank of each position in terms of title; nature of responsibili21 [Com. Sub. for S. B. No. 576
141 ties; salary level; certification, licensure or both; and days in
142 the period of employment.

(1) After the fifth twentieth day prior to the beginning of
the instructional term, no person employed and assigned to
a professional position may transfer to another professional
position in the county during that instructional term unless
the person holding that position does not have valid certification. The provisions of this subsection are subject to the
following:

(1) The person may apply for any posted, vacant positions
with the successful applicant assuming the position at the
beginning of the next instructional term;

(2) Professional personnel who have been on an approved
leave of absence may fill these vacancies upon their return
from the approved leave of absence; and

(3) The county board, upon recommendation of the
superintendent may fill a position before the next instructional term when it is determined to be in the best interest of
the students. *Provided*, That The county superintendent shall
notify the state board of each transfer of a person employed
in a professional position to another professional position

162 after the fifth twentieth day prior to the beginning of the163 instructional term;

164 (4) The provisions of this subsection do not apply to the
165 filling of a position vacated because of resignation or
166 retirement that became effective on or before the twentieth
167 day prior to the beginning of the instructional term, but not
168 posted until after that date; and
169 (5) The Legislature finds that it is not in the best interest

170 of the students particularly in the elementary grades to have 171 multiple teachers for any one grade level or course during 172 the instructional term. It is the intent of the Legislature that 173 the filling of positions through transfers of personnel from 174 one professional position to another after the fifth twentieth 175 day prior to the beginning of the instructional term should 176 be kept to a minimum.

(m) All professional personnel whose seniority with the county board is insufficient to allow their retention by the county board during a reduction in work force shall be placed upon a preferred recall list. As to any professional position opening within the area where they had previously been employed or to any lateral area for which they have certification, licensure or both, the employee shall be recalled on the basis of seniority if no regular, full-time
professional personnel, or those returning from leaves of
absence with greater seniority, are qualified, apply for and
accept the position.

188 (n) Before position openings that are known or expected to extend for twenty consecutive employment days or longer 189 for professional personnel may be filled by the board, the 190 191 board shall be required to notify all qualified professional 192personnel on the preferred list and give them an opportunity to apply, but failure to apply shall not cause the employee to 193 194 forfeit any right to recall. The notice shall be sent by certi-195fied mail to the last known address of the employee, and it shall be the duty of each professional personnel to notify the 196board of continued availability annually, of any change in 197 198 address or of any change in certification, licensure or both. 199 (o) Openings in established, existing or newly created 200 positions shall be processed as follows:

201 (1) Boards shall be required to post and date notices202 which shall be subject to the following:

203 (A) The notices shall be posted in conspicuous working
204 places for all professional personnel to observe for at least
205 five working days;

206 (B) The notice shall be posted within twenty working207 days of the position openings and shall include the job208 description;

209 (C) Any special criteria or skills that are required by the
210 position shall be specifically stated in the job description and
211 directly related to the performance of the job;

(D) Postings for vacancies made pursuant to this section
shall be written so as to ensure that the largest possible pool
of qualified applicants may apply; and

(E) Job postings may not require criteria which are not
necessary for the successful performance of the job and may
not be written with the intent to favor a specific applicant;
(2) No vacancy shall be filled until after the five-day
minimum posting period;

(3) If one or more applicants meets the qualifications
listed in the job posting, the successful applicant to fill the
vacancy shall be selected by the board within thirty working
days of the end of the posting period;

(4) A position held by a teacher who is certified, licensed
or both, who has been issued a permit for full-time employment and is working toward certification in the permit area

shall not be subject to posting if the certificate is awardedwithin five years; and

(5) Nothing provided herein shall prevent the countyboard of education from eliminating a position due to lack ofneed.

232(p) Notwithstanding any other provision of the code to the contrary, where the total number of classroom teaching 233 positions in an elementary school does not increase from one 234 235 school year to the next, but there exists in that school a need 236to realign the number of teachers in one or more grade levels, 237kindergarten through six, teachers at the school may be reassigned to grade levels for which they are certified 238239without that position being posted: Provided, That the employee and the county board of education mutually agree 240to the reassignment. 241

(q) Reductions in classroom teaching positions inelementary schools shall be processed as follows:

(1) When the total number of classroom teaching positions in an elementary school needs to be reduced, the
reduction shall be made on the basis of seniority with the
least senior classroom teacher being recommended for
transfer; and

(2) When a specified grade level needs to be reduced and 249the least senior employee in the school is not in that grade 250level, the least senior classroom teacher in the grade level 251252that needs to be reduced shall be reassigned to the position 253made vacant by the transfer of the least senior classroom 254teacher in the school without that position being posted: *Provided*, That the employee is certified, licensed or both 255and agrees to the reassignment. 256

257(r) Any board failing to comply with the provisions of this article may be compelled to do so by mandamus and 258259shall be liable to any party prevailing against the board for 260court costs and reasonable attorney fees as determined and 261established by the court. Further, employees denied promo-262 tion or employment in violation of this section shall be 263awarded the job, pay and any applicable benefits retroactive to the date of the violation and payable entirely from local 264265funds. Further, the board shall be liable to any party prevail-266ing against the board for any court reporter costs including 267copies of transcripts.

(s) The county board shall compile, update annually onJuly 1 and make available by electronic or other means to all

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270 employees a list of all professional personnel employed by

271 the county, their areas of certification and their seniority.