

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2017 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 2574

BY DELEGATES ROBINSON, THOMPSON, LOVEJOY,

COOPER, ROWAN, HARTMAN, STATLER, BLAIR,

ROHRBACH, CANESTRARO AND ESPINOSA

[Introduced February 20, 2017; referred
to the Committee on Education then Finance.]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new article,
 2 designated §18-21A-1, §18-21A-2, §18-21A-3, §18-21A-4, §18-21A-5, §18-21A-6 and
 3 §18-21A-7, all relating to creating a special pilot program to introduce middle school
 4 students to Career and Technical Education opportunities in the State of West Virginia
 5 and to better prepare students for postsecondary education and participation in the
 6 workforce.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

1 That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended by adding thereto a new
 2 article, designated §18-21A-1, §18-21A-2, §18-21A-3, §18-21A-4, §18-21A-5, §18-21A-6 and
 3 §18-21A-7, all to read as follows:

**ARTICLE 21A. CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM FOR
 MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS.**

§18-21A-1. Short title.

1 This article may be cited as the “Middle School Technical Education Program Act” or the
 2 “Middle School STEP Act.”

§18-21A-2. Legislative findings.

1 (a) Career and technical education prepares students to be both college and career ready
 2 by providing core academic, technical and employability skills.

3 (b) High-quality career and technical education programs not only ensure that coursework
 4 is aligned with rigorous academic standards and post-secondary expectations, but are built to
 5 address specific skills needed in certain career pathways.

6 (c) Eighty percent of students taking a college preparatory academic curriculum with
 7 rigorous career and technical education courses met college and career readiness goals,
 8 compared to only sixty-three percent of students taking the same academic core who did not
 9 experience rigorous career and technical education courses.

10 (d) Furthermore, a 2008, study from American College Testing showed that if students are
11 not on target for college and career readiness by the end of eighth grade the impact may be nearly
12 irreversible. The level of academic achievement that students attain by eighth grade has a larger
13 impact on their college and career readiness by the time they graduate from high school than any
14 other academic factor.

15 (e) Given the importance of career and technical education programs in fostering college
16 and career readiness, and the determinative impact that eighth grade achievement has on future
17 academic and professional success, it is essential that middle school students are informed about
18 and prepared to take advantage of career and technical education programs in their local
19 communities.

§18-21A-3. Purpose.

1 The purpose of the pilot program shall be to better prepare seventh and eighth grade
2 students to take advantage of West Virginia's Career and Technical Education programs and to
3 improve students' college and career readiness prior to high school.

§18-21A-4. Organization of special pilot program.

1 (a) Funding. -- Participating middle schools shall use existing resources to implement the
2 pilot program.

3 (b) Instructor Qualifications. -- Qualified instructors include, but are not limited to,
4 principals, vice-principals, teachers, counselors and other middle school staff possessing a post-
5 secondary degree. Instructors are not required to obtain any additional certification or license to
6 instruct the course.

7 (c) Elective Course. -- The pilot program shall be a one semester elective course:
8 Provided, That middle schools with alternative scheduling systems may adapt the program to suit
9 their scheduling needs.

10 (d) Local Partners. -- High schools, vocational schools, community colleges, public
11 universities and any other institute of higher learning that receives funding from the State of West

12 Virginia shall provide speakers to participating middle schools upon the middle school's request:
13 Provided, That the entity providing the speaker is located within fifty miles of the requesting middle
14 school.

§18-21A-5. Curriculum.

1 (a) Guest Speakers. -- Course instructors shall schedule weekly guest speakers to
2 introduce students to a particular career and to prepare students to pursue the featured career by
3 providing relevant information on:

- 4 (1) Education requirements;
5 (2) Cost of education;
6 (3) Availability of education;
7 (4) Average salary;
8 (5) Average longevity; and
9 (6) Transferability of skills.

10 Instructors are encouraged to invite professionals excelling in fields where training is
11 available at the local career and technical education school.

12 (b) On-Site Research. -- Instructors may organize field trips to visit local employers, job
13 fairs, high schools, vocational schools, community colleges, technical schools, public and private
14 universities and other post-secondary academic institutions to introduce students to potential
15 career paths via on-site presentations and experiential learning.

16 (c) Career Skills. -- The course shall include instruction on skill sets required to discover
17 and take advantage of employment opportunities, including, but not limited to:

- 18 (1) Performing a job search;
19 (2) Developing a résumé;
20 (3) Preparing for a job interview; and
21 (4) Developing and deploying personal networks to find job opportunities.

22 (d) Academic Skills. -- The course shall include instruction on skill sets required to discover

23 and take advantage of educational opportunities, including, but not limited to:

24 (1) Researching admissions requirements for vocational schools, community colleges,
25 technical schools, public and private universities and other post-secondary academic institutions;

26 (2) Researching employment rates and average salaries for graduates of vocational
27 schools, community colleges, technical schools, public and private universities and other post-
28 secondary academic institutions;

29 (3) Researching employment rates and average salaries for specific degrees, certifications
30 and majors from post-secondary academic institutions;

31 (4) Researching state, federal and private scholarship and grant opportunities; and

32 (4) Preparing a college or technical school application.

33 (e) Personal Graduation Plan. -- In order to graduate from the course, students shall create
34 a "Personal Graduation Plan" outlining their plan to become employable following high school or
35 post-secondary school.

§18-21A-6. Admission process for middle schools.

1 (a) Authority. -- The State Board of Education shall have authority to admit middle schools
2 into the pilot program.

3 (b) Admissions. -- Middle schools may volunteer to implement the program by submitting
4 a request to the state board and admission shall be on a first-come, first-serve basis.

5 (c) Minimum School Participation. -- A minimum of ten middle schools shall participate
6 each year during the pilot program's existence. If ten middle schools have not been admitted into
7 the program by July 1 preceding the academic year, the state board shall select middle schools
8 to participate in the pilot program to meet the minimum participation requirement.

§18-21A-7. Certification and monitoring.

1 (a) Certificate of Completion. -- Students shall receive a West Virginia STEP Certificate
2 verifying their participation in the pilot program upon successful completion of the course.

3 (b) Monitoring. -- The State Board of Education shall create a database for students that

4 have received a West Virginia STEP Certificate. The state board shall track the academic and
5 employment progress of certificate recipients for a period of ten years following successful
6 completion of the program.

7 (c) Data Collection. -- High schools, vocational schools, community colleges, public
8 universities and any other institute of higher learning that receive funding from the State of West
9 Virginia shall provide yearly academic progress reports to the State Board of Education for
10 students that have received a West Virginia STEP Certificate.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to create a special pilot program to introduce middle school students to career and technical education opportunities in the State of West Virginia and to better prepare students for post-secondary education and participation in the workforce.

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