

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2020 REGULAR SESSION

Committee Substitute

for

Senate Bill 707

SENATORS RUCKER, CLINE, MARONEY, PLYMALE,

TAKUBO, AND STOLLINGS, *original sponsors*

[Originating in the Committee on Education; reported

on February 19, 2020]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,
2 designated §18-2E-11a, relating to making a nursing career pathway available to students
3 statewide; setting forth legislative findings; requiring that a nursing career pathway
4 workgroup be convened; charging the workgroup with developing a career pathway to
5 address the unmet need for nursing assistants, licensed practical nurses, registered
6 nurses, and registered nurses with a bachelor's degree in nursing; requiring the nursing
7 career pathway to be made available to students statewide; requiring report to the
8 Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability every month that the
9 commission meets on the progress in implementing the career pathway; and requiring
10 consideration of certain specified ideas in establishing the pathway.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2E. HIGH QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.

§18-2E-11a. Nursing career pathway.

1 (a) The Legislature finds that:
2 (1) There are numerous reports relating that the nursing shortage is causing currently
3 employed nurses to be overworked and that hospitals are bringing in travel nurses from other
4 states;
5 (2) While the recent passage of the Advance Career Education and West Virginia Invests
6 Grant programs legislation would address nursing shortages along with addressing other
7 shortage areas, having a sufficient number of qualified nurses is of such importance to the health
8 of the citizens of the state that additional efforts should be made to ensure that there is an
9 adequate number of nurses to meet the state's health care needs as soon as possible; and
10 (3) Providing a seamless process for students pursuing careers in nursing from high
11 school through attainment of a nursing credential or degree would assist in ensuring an adequate
12 nursing workforce.

13 (b) The State Superintendent, the Chancellor for Higher Education, and the Chancellor for
14 Community and Technical College Education shall convene the West Virginia Nursing Career
15 Pathway Workgroup consisting of:

16 (1) Representatives of health care providers that need nurses and could potentially
17 provide clinical space. Due to the importance of health care providers providing clinical space,
18 as many representatives of health care providers as possible, especially the largest health care
19 providers, shall be invited to be members of the workgroup, provide input, and be encouraged to
20 provide clinical space. Invitations to join the workgroup at least shall be extended to the West
21 Virginia Health Care Association and the West Virginia Hospital Association;

22 (2) A representative of the West Virginia Department of Education;

23 (3) A representative of the Higher Education Policy Commission;

24 (4) A representative of the Council for Community and Technical College Education;

25 (5) Representatives of institutions of higher education in West Virginia;

26 (6) A representative of the Board for Registered Professional Nurses;

27 (7) A representative of the Board of Examiners for Licensed Practical Nurses; and

28 (8) Any other persons that the State Superintendent, the Chancellor for Higher Education,
29 and the Chancellor for Community and Technical College Education determine beneficial.

30 (c) The West Virginia Nursing Career Pathway Workgroup shall be charged with
31 developing a career pathway to address the unmet need for nursing assistants, licensed practical
32 nurses, registered nurses, and registered nurses with a bachelor's degree in nursing. The nursing
33 program of study will begin in high school and progress through college, providing employment
34 opportunity with industry partners and pathway re-entry at specified student attainment points:
35 Nursing assistant certification, licensed practical nurse diploma and licensure, registered nurse
36 associate degree and licensure, and bachelor of science in nursing completion. The career
37 pathway will align secondary to post-secondary nursing programs to increase credential

38 attainment for a broad and diverse student population within operational delivery models that are
39 effective, affordable, and sustainable.

40 (1) The career pathway shall include participating high school students enrolling in a
41 specified curriculum of college preparatory, career and technical health science courses, or dual
42 college-high school credit courses, as well as participating in career experiences through a health
43 care provider or a work-based learning clinical experience.

44 (2) Students shall have the opportunity to apply for admission to a practical nursing
45 program at a community and technical college.

46 (3) Upon completion of a practical nursing program, students shall have the opportunity to
47 apply for admission to a licensed practical nursing to registered nurse associate degree program.

48 (4) Upon completion of a licensed practical nursing to registered nurse associate degree
49 program, students then shall have the opportunity to apply for admission to a registered nurse to
50 bachelor of science in nursing program.

51 (5) The career pathway shall be made available to students statewide beginning with the
52 cohort of students entering ninth grade during the 2021-2022 school year.

53 (d) The State Superintendent, the Chancellor for Higher Education, the Chancellor for
54 Community and Technical College Education, or any combination thereof, shall report to the
55 Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability every month that the commission
56 meets on the progress in implementing the career pathway up until such time as the career
57 pathway is fully implemented statewide.

58 (e) In establishing the nursing career pathway, the State Superintendent, the Chancellor
59 for Higher Education, the Chancellor of Community and Technical College Education, and the
60 workgroup created pursuant to subsection (c) of this section shall consider the following:

61 (1) If the career pathway is difficult to implement due to nursing programs being at full
62 capacity, the workgroup shall explore the use of online programs currently in existence or the

63 creation of new online programs in overcoming any lack of capacity in the current nursing
64 programs and to make programs more accessible to students; and

65 (2) The nursing career pathway shall include the use of any available financial assistance
66 in order to minimize, or if possible, eliminate tuition costs for students and their families. This
67 assistance can include, if a student is eligible, the Federal Pell Grant Program, the Higher
68 Education Grant Program, the PROMISE Scholarship Program, the West Virginia Invests Grant
69 Program, and any other grants or scholarships that might be available. Health care providers in
70 need of nurses also shall be encouraged to establish scholarship programs to help cover tuition
71 costs.