

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2021 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 2486

BY DELEGATES HIGGINBOTHAM, HANNA, AND ZUKOFF

[Introduced February 15, 2021; Referred to the
Committee on Education then Finance]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §18-2E-11 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to
 2 amend and reenact §18C-9-3 of said code, all relating to qualifying not-for-profit private
 3 baccalaureate institutions for the Advanced Career Education Programs and the West
 4 Virginia Invests Grant Program.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

CHAPTER 18. EDUCATION.

ARTICLE 2E. HIGH QUALITY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.

§18-2E-11. Advanced Career Education.

1 (a) The Legislature hereby makes the following findings:

2 (1) Preparing West Virginia students to achieve post-secondary career education and to
 3 excel in the workforce is a responsibility shared among all state education agencies and
 4 institutions. The state’s education agencies and institutions can fulfill this responsibility by
 5 establishing partnerships that enable students to attain advanced career education and valuable
 6 workforce skills in a more efficient and advantageous manner;

7 (2) The formation of partnerships between public secondary schools and community and
 8 technical colleges, or public, or not-for-profit private baccalaureate institutions which establish
 9 advanced career education programs would ensure that a full range of community and technical
 10 college programs and services are provided in all areas of the state;

11 (3) Programs which create clear and efficient pathways that begin during secondary
 12 education and lead to obtaining advanced certifications and associate degrees will increase the
 13 number of students that ultimately obtain a post-secondary credential or degree; and

14 (4) West Virginia’s economic prosperity is directly tied to the level and quality of its
 15 workforce career education. Providing the students of this state with increased access to career
 16 education will not only improve the general well-being of its citizens, but greatly enhance the
 17 economic prosperity of the state.

18 (b) The purpose of this section and the Advanced Career Education (ACE) programs
19 authorized herein is to connect secondary schools with community and technical colleges, or
20 public, or not-for-profit private baccalaureate institutions that provide associate degrees to
21 accomplish the following:

22 (1) Prepare secondary students for success in post-secondary education and the
23 workforce; and

24 (2) Provide more opportunities for secondary students to earn post-secondary college
25 credits, certifications, and associate degrees.

26 (c) To effectuate the purposes set forth in §18-2E-11(b) of this code, community and
27 technical colleges, public, or not-for-profit private baccalaureate institutions, career technical
28 education centers, and county boards of education, or any combination of such secondary and
29 postsecondary entities, shall establish partnerships that provide for ACE programs which feature
30 defined pathways that begin when a student is in secondary education and that ultimately lead to
31 advanced certifications or associate degrees awarded by community and technical colleges or
32 baccalaureate institutions. ACE programs shall be equally available to public, nonpublic, and
33 homeschool students.

34 (d) ACE programs shall include pathways that consist of a curriculum of courses leading
35 to advanced certifications or an associate degree that have been deemed to satisfy a workforce
36 need as determined by the Department of Commerce.

37 (1) The Department of Commerce shall, on occasion, but at least annually, provide written
38 notification to the State Board of Education, the West Virginia Council for Community and
39 Technical College Education and the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission of a
40 determination of areas of workforce need within the state.

41 (2) The Department of Commerce, in consultation with the council, the commission, and
42 business partners, ~~will~~ shall develop a hierarchy of high demand skilled professions and workforce
43 needs with shortages, which shall be given priority in administration of the program.

44 (e) The State Superintendent of Schools, the Chancellor of the Council for Community
45 and Technical College Education, and the Chancellor of the Higher Education Policy Commission,
46 or their designees, shall facilitate the ACE programs. At a minimum, an ACE program shall satisfy
47 the following objectives:

48 (1) Provide additional opportunities to students in this state to attain advanced
49 certifications and college credentials leading to associate degrees through ACE pathways;

50 (2) Increase the number of students in this state that attain advanced certifications and
51 college credentials leading to associate degrees through ACE pathways;

52 (3) Allow students in this state to attain advanced certifications and college credentials
53 leading to associate degrees through ACE pathways at little or no cost;

54 (4) Ensure that ACE pathways provide a clear roadmap to the courses and requirements
55 necessary to attain advanced certifications and college credentials leading to associate degrees;
56 and

57 (5) Ensure that course requirements within ACE pathways are not duplicated.

58 (f) The board and council shall jointly promulgate guidelines for the administration of ACE
59 programs and pathways, which must be affirmatively adopted by the board and the council. At a
60 minimum, such guidelines shall provide for the following:

61 (1) That ACE program partnerships established between community and technical
62 colleges, public, or not-for-profit private baccalaureate institutions, career technical education
63 centers, and county boards of education, or any combination of such secondary and
64 postsecondary entities, shall be reduced to written partnership agreements;

65 (2) The information required to be contained within partnership agreements;

66 (3) That ACE programs and pathways ~~must~~ shall meet the requirements of the accrediting
67 entity for the community and technical college, or public, or not-for-profit private baccalaureate
68 institution awarding the associate degrees or advanced certificates;

69 (4) That partnership agreements shall be approved by the State Superintendent of

70 Schools, the Chancellor for the Council for Community and Technical College Education and the
71 Chancellor of the Higher Education Policy Commission; and

72 (5) Any other provisions necessary to effectuate the purposes of this section.

73 (g) The board and the council shall maintain and annually report to the Governor and the
74 Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability the following information about
75 ACE programs:

76 (1) The identity and number of partnership agreements;

77 (2) The ACE programs and pathways that are being utilized by career technical education
78 centers, county boards of education, community, and technical colleges, and public, or not-for-
79 profit private baccalaureate institutions; and

80 (3) The nature and number of degrees and certifications awarded to students participating
81 in ACE programs by each community and technical college, public, or not-for-profit private
82 baccalaureate institution and career technical education center.

CHAPTER 18C. STUDENT LOANS; SCHOLARSHIPS AND STATE AID.

ARTICLE 9. WEST VIRGINIA INVESTS GRANT PROGRAM.

§18C-9-3. Definitions.

1 As used in this article:

2 “Council” means the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College
3 Education;

4 “Commission” means the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission;

5 “Eligible institution” means a public community and technical college under the authority
6 of the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education, or a public, or not-
7 for-profit private baccalaureate institution that grants associate degrees satisfying the
8 requirements of participating in Advanced Career Education (ACE) program partnerships in
9 accordance with §18-2E-11 of this code;

10 “Eligible post-secondary program” means a curriculum of courses leading to a certificate
11 or associate degree at an eligible institution which satisfies a course of study that has been
12 deemed by the Department of Commerce to satisfy a workforce need as determined by the
13 department in accordance with §18-2E-11(d) of this code; and

14 “Tuition” means the semester or term charges imposed by an eligible institution and,
15 additionally, all mandatory fees required as a condition of enrollment by all students.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to qualify not-for-profit private baccalaureate institutions for the Advanced Career Education Programs and the West Virginia Invests Grant Program.

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