

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2021 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 2546

BY DELEGATES PUSHKIN, HIGGINBOTHAM, THOMPSON

AND WALKER

[Introduced February 16, 2021; Referred to the
Committee on Education then Finance]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §18-20-5 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
 2 to removing language requiring specific appropriations in order for the State Board of
 3 Education, State Department of Education, and the State Superintendent of Schools to
 4 provide education to children and adults housed in correctional facilities and regional jails.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 20. EDUCATION OF EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN.

§18-20-5. Powers and duties of state superintendent.

1 (a) The State Superintendent of Schools shall organize, promote, administer, and be
 2 responsible for:

3 (1) Stimulating and assisting county boards of education in establishing, organizing and
 4 maintaining special schools, classes, regular class programs, home-teaching, and visiting-
 5 teacher services.

6 (2) Cooperating with all other public and private agencies engaged in relieving, caring for,
 7 curing, educating, and rehabilitating exceptional children, and in helping coordinate the services
 8 of such agencies.

9 (3) (A) Preparing the necessary rules, policies, formula for distribution of available
 10 appropriated funds, reporting forms, and procedures necessary to define minimum standards in
 11 providing suitable facilities for education of exceptional children and ensuring the employment,
 12 certification, and approval of qualified teachers and therapists subject to approval by the State
 13 Board of Education: *Provided*, That no state rule, policy or standard under this article or any
 14 county board rule, policy, or standard governing special education may exceed the requirements
 15 of federal law or regulation.

16 (B) An appropriation shall be made to the Department of Education to be distributed to
 17 county boards to support children with high acuity needs that exceed the capacity of county to
 18 provide with funds available. Each county board shall apply to the State Superintendent for receipt
 19 of this funding in a manner set forth by the State Superintendent that assesses and takes into

20 account varying acuity levels of the exceptional students. Any remaining funds at the end of a
21 fiscal year from the appropriation shall be carried over to the next fiscal year. When possible,
22 federal funds shall be distributed to county boards for this purpose before any of the state
23 appropriation is distributed. The state board shall promulgate a rule in accordance with the
24 provisions of §29A-3B-1 *et seq.* of this code that implements the provisions of this subdivision
25 relating to distributing the funds to the county boards. The rule at least shall include a definition
26 for “children with high acuity needs”.

27 (4) Receiving from county boards of education their applications, annual reports, and
28 claims for reimbursement from such moneys as are appropriated by the Legislature, auditing such
29 claims, and preparing vouchers to reimburse said counties the amounts reimbursable to them.

30 (5) ~~Assuring~~ Ensuring that all exceptional children in the state, including children in mental
31 health facilities, residential institutions, private schools, and correctional facilities as provided in
32 §18-2-13f of this code receive an education in accordance with state and federal laws: *Provided,*
33 That the state superintendent shall also ~~assure~~ ensure that adults in correctional facilities and
34 regional jails receive an education. ~~to the extent funds are provided therefor~~

35 (6) Performing other duties and assuming other responsibilities in connection with this
36 program as needed.

37 (7) Receive the county plan for integrated classroom submitted by the county boards of
38 education and submit a state plan, approved by the State Board of Education, to the Legislative
39 Oversight Committee on Education Accountability no later than December 1, 1995.

40 (b) Nothing contained in this section shall may be construed to prevent any county board
41 of education from establishing and maintaining special schools, classes, regular class programs,
42 home-teaching, or visiting-teacher services out of funds available from local revenue.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to remove language requiring specific appropriations in order for the State Board of Education, State Department of Education, and the State Superintendent of Schools to provide education to children and adults housed in

correctional facilities and regional jails.

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