

# **WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE**

**2022 REGULAR SESSION**

**Introduced**

## **Senate Bill 711**

BY SENATOR RUCKER

[Introduced February 21, 2022; referred  
to the Committee on Education]



1 A BILL to amend and reenact §18-2-7f of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating  
2 to establishing alternative educational opportunities for elective course credit; requiring  
3 the state board to establish, develop, and maintain a program whereby students can earn  
4 elective course credit for extended learning opportunities; establishing eligibility  
5 requirements for extended learning opportunity programs; setting forth parameters for the  
6 implementation of the program by the state board; providing for an application, denial, and  
7 appeals process; allowing for the auditing of approved programs; and providing guidelines  
8 for student credit transfers and transportation.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

**ARTICLE 2. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.**

**§18-2-7f. Alternative educational opportunities for elective course credit.**

1 (a) The Legislature finds and declares that:

2 (1) Programs outside of the traditional classroom have educational value;

3 (2) Many entities, including, but not limited to, nonprofit organizations, afterschool  
4 programs, businesses, and trade associations may have an interest in offering programs outside  
5 of the traditional classroom that are attractive to students and contain educational value;

6 (3) Learning opportunities that are designed to address the interests and aptitudes of the  
7 individual student will enable students to discover, develop, and apply their individual talents to  
8 realize their full potential;

9 (4) Policies that allow for educational opportunities outside of the traditional classroom  
10 exist in other states;

11 (5) Providing credit for alternative educational opportunities will enrich the learning  
12 environment of students and develop well-rounded individuals ready for a life of learning,  
13 productive work, and community involvement.

14 ~~(b) The State Board of Education shall promulgate a rule requiring county boards of~~  
15 ~~education to develop an alternative educational opportunities policy that provides students~~

16 involved in educational opportunities outside of the traditional classroom to receive elective  
17 course credit.

18 ~~(c) The county boards of education shall adopt an alternative educational opportunities~~  
19 ~~policy that recognizes learning opportunities outside of the traditional classroom and grants~~  
20 ~~elective course credit. The policy shall:~~

21 ~~(1) Provide for an application process for entities to submit proposals for alternative~~  
22 ~~educational programs that will qualify for elective course credit;~~

23 ~~(2) Define which entities are eligible to submit applications for alternative educational~~  
24 ~~programs: *Provided*, That entities which are deemed eligible shall be broadly defined and shall~~  
25 ~~include, but not be limited to:~~

26 ~~(A) Nonprofit organizations;~~

27 ~~(B) Businesses with established locations in the state;~~

28 ~~(C) Trade associations;~~

29 ~~(D) Parents of students involved in programs that may otherwise qualify as an alternative~~  
30 ~~educational program;~~

31 ~~(E) Teachers involved in programs outside of the traditional classroom; and~~

32 ~~(F) School personnel involved in programs outside of the traditional classroom;~~

33 ~~(3) Provide for the criteria to be used to evaluate the alternative educational program;~~

34 ~~(4) Describe any communication and collaboration needed between the local school,~~  
35 ~~county board, or State Board of Education to implement alternative educational opportunities;~~

36 ~~(5) Place requirements on the entity, such as background checks for key personnel, and~~  
37 ~~minimum accountability standards; and~~

38 ~~(6) Provide a process for student credit transfer.~~

39 ~~(d) The county boards of education shall have the authority to approve or deny an~~  
40 ~~application for an alternative educational program: *Provided*, That if the application is denied, the~~

41 ~~county board shall provide a detailed explanation of the reasons for its denial and suggest ways~~  
42 ~~to improve the application that will assist its more favorable view by the county board.~~

43 ~~(e) The county boards of education shall have the authority to audit approved alternative~~  
44 ~~educational programs at any time. If the audit results in findings that an approved program is not~~  
45 ~~meeting the provisions of this section or the policy outlined in subsection (c) of this section, then~~  
46 ~~the county board may disqualify the program immediately~~

47 (b) Program established. — The State Board of Education shall establish, develop, and  
48 maintain a program whereby students can earn elective course credit for extended learning  
49 opportunities that take place outside of the traditional classroom setting. In accordance with the  
50 requirements of this section, the State Board of Education shall permit any high school student to  
51 receive up to six elective course credits towards graduation for participating and completing any  
52 approved extending learning opportunity program.

53 (c) Eligibility of extended learning opportunity programs. — Entities eligible to provide  
54 extended learning opportunity programs within a county shall be broadly defined and shall include,  
55 but are not limited to, the following:

56 (1) Nonprofit organizations;

57 (2) Businesses with established locations in the state;

58 (3) Trade associations;

59 (4) Parents of students involved in programs that may otherwise qualify as an alternative  
60 educational program;

61 (5) Teachers involved in programs outside of the traditional classroom; and

62 (6) School personnel involved in programs outside of the traditional classroom.

63 In order to be certified as an eligible extended learning opportunity program, an individual  
64 or entity shall successfully complete an application process as established by the State Board of  
65 Education pursuant to the requirements of this section.

66 (d) Application process. — An extended learning opportunity program shall qualify for  
67 elective course credit if it has been approved by the State Board of Education. Individuals or  
68 entities seeking program accreditation shall complete an application form promulgated by the  
69 board, which shall include the following application criteria:

70 (1) A general explanation of the program’s qualifications and benefits;

71 (2) An outline of the overall program, including its goals, competencies, and expected  
72 student outcomes;

73 (3) An outline of specific instructional activities, materials, and learning environments;

74 (4) Written content standards and objectives;

75 (5) A description of the facilities, if any, utilized by the program; and

76 (6) An explanation of how the program intends to monitor student progress and complete  
77 assessment and grading for participating students.

78 The State Board of Education shall consider a completed extended learning opportunity  
79 program application within 45 days of receipt. An approved extended learning opportunity provider  
80 shall comply with all applicable federal and state health and safety laws and regulations, as well  
81 as any standards and safeguards as provided by the State Board of Education. Background  
82 checks are required for all key personnel or instructional staff of an extended learning opportunity  
83 provider, and a program shall provide its background check policy to participating families. A  
84 participating program shall also have proof of insurance.

85 (e) Program denial and appeal process. — If an extended learning opportunity program  
86 application is denied, the State Board of Education shall provide a detailed explanation of the  
87 reasons for the denial as well as an explanation of ways in which the program may improve its  
88 application in order to obtain a more favorable review by the board. An extended learning  
89 opportunity provider may appeal any program application denial by the State Board of Education  
90 to the circuit court of Kanawha County or to the circuit court of the county in which the program is  
91 administered. Denial of an extended learning opportunity program application appeal may not

92 prohibit a provider from submitting another application aimed at addressing the concerns or  
93 improvements originally suggested by the board.

94 (f) *Program evaluation.* — An approved extended learning opportunity program shall be  
95 monitored and evaluated at the end of its first year by the State Board of Education, which may  
96 consider in its evaluation input from any participating school’s principal or guidance counselors.  
97 If an extended learning opportunity program continues to meet the requirements of this section,  
98 its approval may be extended by the board for a period of five years.

99 Thereafter, the extended learning opportunity program shall be inspected and monitored  
100 on an annual basis. The State Board of Education may evaluate an approved program at any  
101 time and may disqualify an approved program if the provider has violated the requirements of  
102 state law or State Board of Education policies. An extended learning opportunity program may  
103 appeal any disqualification to the circuit court of Kanawha County or to the circuit court of the  
104 county in which the program is administered.

105 (g) *Program implementation and participation.* — Approved extended learning opportunity  
106 programs shall be implemented and coordinated at the local school level. The county boards of  
107 education shall adopt an alternative educational opportunities policy that facilitates  
108 implementation and participation in accordance with this section. The policy shall:

109 (1) Provide for a designee within each school that shall have primary responsibility for  
110 ensuring implementation and coordination of the extended learning opportunity policy; and

111 (2) Provide for a student seeking elective course credit in an accredited extended learning  
112 opportunity program to work with his or her designated advisor or guidance counselor towards  
113 participation in the program.

114 Students under the age of 18 shall have approval from a parent or legal guardian to  
115 participate in an extended learning opportunity program.

116 (h) *Student credit transfer.* — Students transferring from other schools may request  
117 acceptance of elective course credits awarded for completed extended learning opportunity

118 programs. If the transferring student has completed a program previously approved by the State  
119 Board of Education, the credits shall be accepted and applied toward the student's transcript.  
120 Completion of nonapproved extended learning opportunity programs shall be evaluated in  
121 accordance with a county board of education's adopted policy on alternative educational  
122 opportunities for purposes of awarding credit.

123 (i) *Transportation.* — Because extending learning opportunity programs take place outside  
124 of the traditional classroom, transportation to and from an approved program is the responsibility  
125 of a student and his or her parent or legal guardian: *Provided*, That a local school district may  
126 provide transportation at its discretion.

127 (j) *Auditing of approved programs.* — The State Board of Education may audit approved  
128 extended learning opportunity programs at any time. If the audit results in findings that an  
129 approved program is not meeting the provisions of this section, then the board may disqualify the  
130 program immediately.

131 (k) The Department of Education shall prepare a report with respect to the implementation  
132 of extended learning opportunity programs in accordance with the provisions of this section to the  
133 Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability no later than December 31, 2022.