

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Committee Substitute

for

House Bill 5435

By Delegates Rohrbach, Ellington, Worrell, Criss,
Statler, Maynor, Green, Moore, T. Clark, Winzenreid,
and Campbell

[Originating in the Committee on Finance; Reported
on February 21, 2024]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,
2 designated §18B-3D-7, establishing the registered apprenticeship to associate of applied
3 science program to be administered by the Council for Community and Technical College
4 Education.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 3D. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE.

§18B-3D-7. STAND - Registered apprenticeship to associate in applied science degree program established; definitions; funding; annual reporting.

1 (a) Purpose and Intent. – The purpose of this section is to create a comprehensive
2 registered apprenticeship to associate of applied science degree program to be known as the
3 Skilled Trades Apprenticeship Nontraditional Degree (STAND) program to provide apprentices or
4 journeyworkers with the opportunity to obtain associate degrees in applied science while gaining
5 practical skills and on-the-job training through federally recognized apprenticeship programs. The
6 registered apprenticeship to associate of applied science degree program aims to bridge the gap
7 between postsecondary education and the apprenticeship learning experience, fostering a skilled
8 workforce that meets the demands of varied and evolving industries.

9 (b) Definitions. – As used in this section, unless used in a context that clearly requires a
10 different meaning, the term:

11 "Apprenticeship" or "apprenticeship program" means an apprenticeship program
12 registered under the federal National Apprenticeship Act, 29 U.S.C. 50, et seq., or another federal
13 apprenticeship program administered by the United States Department of Labor's Office of
14 Apprenticeship.

15 "Associate of applied science degree" means an associate-level college degree with a
16 focus on a particular applied science or technical skill designed for students planning to enter the
17 workforce upon degree completion.

18 "Eligible course" means any class or program of instruction offered at a public community
19 and technical college for which the eligible student receives credit toward the general education
20 requirements that lead to an associate of applied science degree. Applied academics for adult
21 education instruction, developmental education, physical education courses, and recreation and
22 leisure studies courses are not eligible courses for purposes of this program.

23 "Eligible student" means any person who has graduated from high school or has obtained
24 a general equivalency diploma or other approved equivalency-based test, is 18 years of age or
25 older, and is an apprentice or participating in an apprenticeship program as verified by the
26 registered apprenticeship program who registers to participate in the program. "Eligible student"
27 also includes journeyworkers who have received a certificate recognized by the United States
28 Department of Labor.

29 "Student-apprentice" means a student who has been accepted into and is participating in
30 the program created in this section.

31 (c) *Apprenticeship to associate of applied science degree program established.* – Under
32 the supervision of the council, the chancellor shall establish the STAND program whereby the
33 state's public community and technical colleges may offer general education courses to eligible
34 students in a manner and on a timeline that will allow the eligible student to earn at least 15 credit
35 hours of general education courses toward an associate of applied science degree.

36 (1) To be eligible for the STAND program, an individual must be enrolled in an
37 apprenticeship program recognized by the United States Department of Labor's Office of
38 Apprenticeship or must have received a United States Department of Labor Certificate of
39 Completion of Apprenticeship.

40 (2) An apprentice or journeyworker may apply for enrollment in the STAND program at the
41 next available program offering.

42 (3) Student-apprentices shall complete and pass all general education coursework within
43 six years from the initial date of enrollment in the STAND program or within two years after

44 completing the apprentice program, whichever is longer. Journeyworkers shall complete and pass
45 all general education coursework within six years from the initial date of enrollment.

46 (d) *Funding.* – From appropriations to the council for the purposes of implementing and
47 administering the STAND program established in this section, the council shall pay directly to the
48 participating public community and technical colleges the cost of the tuition and academic fees
49 incurred by eligible students taking courses through the STAND program. This funding may not be
50 used to pay for any of the costs associated with the apprenticeship program or otherwise incurred
51 by the apprenticeship program in conducting such training.

52 (e) *Rulemaking.* – The council may propose emergency and legislative rules pursuant to
53 §29A-3A-1 et seq. of this code to implement the provisions of this section.

54 (f) *Annual reports.* – By December 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, the chancellor shall
55 report to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability on any STAND
56 programs created. The report shall contain, at a minimum, the following information: the number
57 of student-apprentices and journeyworkers participating in the STAND program; the number of
58 associate of applied science degrees earned by students who have participated in the STAND
59 program; projected growth in the STAND program and funding needs for the next year; and any
60 issues with the STAND program reported by students, the registered apprenticeship program, and
61 the community and technical colleges, how these issues are being addressed, and whether the
62 issues require legislative action.