

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2025 REGULAR SESSION

Committee Substitute

for

House Bill 3387

By Delegates Ellington, Statler, Mallow, Brooks,

Hanshaw (Mr. Speaker), Heckert, Criss,

Fehrenbacher, Riley, and Green

[Introduced March 14, 2025; referred to the
Committee on Education]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,
2 designated §18-2-5i, all relating to the creation of a regional school district pilot program;
3 providing for legislative findings; providing for enactment; and authorizing rulemaking to
4 aid in the transition process.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

§18-2-5i. Regional school district pilot program; enactment; rulemaking.

1 (a) Legislative findings – The Legislature finds that certain county school districts across
2 West Virginia face challenges related to accessibility, funding, population, operational efficiency
3 and topography. In many cases, the challenges county school districts face is shared by bordering
4 county school districts. With this knowledge, the Legislature recognizes the need to:

5 (1) Unify and consolidate county school districts when necessary;

6 (2) Plan for benefits and detriments that may come with unifying and consolidating county
7 school districts; and

8 (3) Determine issues that smaller or rural counties are dealing with that are not being
9 adequately addressed by a county board of education.

10 (b) Enactment. –

11 (1) The Legislature finds that the State Board of Education may implement a pilot program
12 and form regional school districts to address ongoing issues shared among neighboring counties.

13 (2) The pilot program shall consist of up to three contiguous counties in this state, at the
14 discretion of the State Board of Education and as authorized by the Legislature, who are or are
15 anticipated to be under emergency control of the board because of issues that are not being
16 adequately addressed by a county board of education: *Provided*, That a study resolution may be
17 prepared to address the consideration of additional counties into the pilot program, if necessary.

18 (3) Effective July 1, 2025, at the discretion of the State Board of Education, the initial pilot
19 program may begin.

20 (4) Regional school districts may consolidate schools, make financial decisions, and
21 otherwise hold the same powers otherwise provided to county boards of education.

22 (5) The decision of the leadership of the regional school districts shall supersede any
23 decisions made by the county board of education within the regional district.

24 (c) Rulemaking. – The State Board of Education is authorized to submit rules for legislative
25 consideration pursuant to §29A-3-1 et seq. of this code to determine legislative changes required
26 to aid in the orderly and efficient process during the regional school district unification process and
27 during the phase-out period prior to the termination of the county school districts. Further, the State
28 Board of Education shall report to LOCEA regarding the pilot program set forth in this section.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide for the creation of a regional school district pilot program. The bill provides for legislative findings. The bill provides for enactment. Finally, the bill authorizes rulemaking to aid in the transition process.

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