



# West Virginia Senate

## Select Committee on School Choice

### Minutes for January 28, 2026, 1:00 PM

Pursuant to the call of the Chair, the Senate Select Committee on School Choice met on January 28, 2026, 1:00 PM in Room 208-W.

Members present: Senators Rucker, Taylor, Azinger, Clements, Maynard, Roberts, Rose, Woelfel

Members absent: Senator Thorne

A silent roll call being taken, the presence of a quorum was established.

On motion of Chair Rucker, the committee rules were adopted.

**SB170** Allowing career technical education program to be part of local high school was discussed.

On motion of Vice-Chair Taylor, the committee moved Senate Bill 170 without recommendation as to passage but under the original double committee reference that it first be referred to the Committee on Finance.

**SB536** Relating to qualifications for serving on certain academic boards was discussed.

Melissa Alder, Counsel, explained the bill and responded to questions.

On motion of Vice-Chair Taylor, the committee reported the bill to the full Senate with the recommendation that it do pass.

**SB216** Restoring Private Schools Act of 2026 was discussed.

Melissa Alder, Counsel, explained the bill and responded to questions.

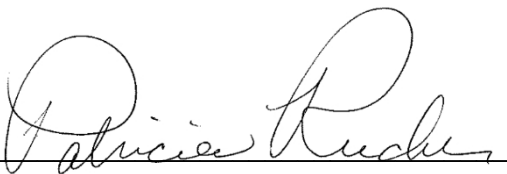
With leave of the committee and after having taken the prescribed oath, Eric Kerns, Superintendent of Faith Christian Academy, addressed the committee and responded to questions. (See attached oath.)

Senator Clements moved to amend the bill by striking out the word “may” and inserting the word “must” on page 3, subsection a, line 36, and by inserting “in grades 3,5,8, and 11, nationally standardized or state test” after the word “pupils” and before the word “as” on page 3, subsection a, line 37, and by inserting “, and will be made available to the parents” after the word “appropriate” on page 3, subsection a, line 37. The same was put and rejected.

Senator Woelfel moved to amend the bill by un-striking the words “Each school shall make and maintain” and “disease immunization records for each pupil enrolled and regularly attending classes” on page 1, subsection b, lines 4 and 5. The same was put, and a division of the body was demanded. The vote being 2 in favor and 6 opposed, the motion was rejected.

On motion of Vice-Chair Taylor, the committee reported the bill to the full Senate with the recommendation that it do pass.

On motion of Vice-Chair Taylor, the committee adjourned.



Patricia Puertas Rucker

Chair



Benjamin Mack

Clerk



The Senate of West Virginia

Remote/Virtual Testimony

Testimony taken this 28<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2026, in  
the Senate <sup>select</sup> Committee on School Choice.

"I solemnly swear (or affirm) that the testimony I shall give shall be  
the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me  
God."

Eric Kems

Print Witness Name

Brian Mah

Testimony Attested to by Committee  
Clerk

Oath was administered by:

Patricia Puertas Rucker

Print Member Name

Patricia Rucker

Sign Member Name