



# AFT-West Virginia 2020 Legislative Agenda

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## 1. **Providing a Safe, Equitable, and High-Quality Work Environment**

- a. Address and revise legislation to ensure employees are appropriately protected from danger and abuse by instituting and ensuring safeguards in areas such as, but not limited to, work environments, employee to student ratios, classroom aides in first grade, and safety aides on every bus.
- b. Address and revise legislation to allow employees to expeditiously allege and resolve potential violations of the Safe Schools Act by allowing these actions to immediately proceed to a Level 3 Hearing for consideration and resolution. Also, provide legislation and resources that facilitate and require Safe Schools trainings for all employees.
- c. Provide all resources necessary to ensure mental health and 1-on-1 comprehensive counseling services for students and staff, as well as appropriate and sometimes alternate placements for students who exhibit emotional/mental health/behavioral disorder problems that impede the learning process for all students, including constant and consistent service personnel supervision of students who impede the learning process. Additionally, service personnel need to be provided time for planning, collaboration and training to effectively support these services and assist students.
- d. Provide legislation and resources that facilitate resolutions to problems encountered with “sick schools”.

## 2. **Attracting and Retaining High-Quality Educators and Support Staff for All Students**

- a. Fully-fund PEIA by securing sustainable funding sources and allowing sensible and non-discriminatory utilization of this state-provided healthcare that reflects input from stakeholders.
- b. Provide appropriate funding for a 3-year salary package; \$7,000 raise across-the-board for teachers, service personnel, and public employees with automatic cost of living increases. This salary proposal would be in accordance with SB 391, a bill passed in 2014 that called for a beginning WV teacher salary of \$43,000 by fiscal year 2019.
- c. Ensure class-size equity for all grade levels and content areas with grades k-2 class sizes not to exceed 20 students and grades 3-12 not to exceed 25 students. Permit overages of three students per class and provide financial compensation for teachers and aides when a class size overage occurs.
- d. Revise legislation and provide funding to ensure school districts must hire the most highly qualified applicant, as determined by certification and years of experience, in every classroom, in every school and for every student.
- e. Ensure increased planning time and collaboration time for all educators and support staff.

- f. Provide a state tax exemption of up to \$1,000 on out-of-pocket classroom expenses accrued by educators.

**3. Addressing Transparency and Reduction of Top-Heavy Administration**

- a. Close the salary gap between the administration and the workforce across all divisions of public education and state agencies by creating a percentage/proportional pay scale for administrators and employees, including the requirement that administrators will be paid no more than 1.5 times the daily rate.
- b. Provide legislation that defines a reasonable cap, as defined by all stakeholders, for the creation of and continuance of administrative positions in relation to teacher positions at the county level.
- c. Require all county school systems to post job vacancies on WV K12 Job Bank; additionally, all county boards of education will post expenditures and pending hires prior to the county board meeting and publish the same in the meeting minutes.

**4. Improving Salary and Benefits for All Retirees**

- a. Provide automatic cost-of-living increases for all retirees.
- b. Provide a state tax exemption for retired educators and retired public employees.
- c. Provide retired teachers and retired service personnel their daily rate per employment as a substitute, with restrictions on daily rate being removed.

**5. Providing for the Quality of Education and Financial Stability of Higher Education Institutions**

- a. Ensure an exemption for higher education from any proposed budget reduction, especially in the teacher education programs.
- b. Ensure a tenure system that provides security and respect to the profession.
- c. Provide an annual cost-of-living increase for staff and faculty with merit increases given only after the annual cost-of-living increase is given.

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