



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

AFT-West Virginia, AFL-CIO



Fighting for Public Education... From Statehouse to Schoolhouse

New Bills on the Move:

[HB 2362](#) requires the State Board of Education to implement trauma-informed practices in grades K-12 and provide the necessary training and support to implement the program. AFT-WV President Fred Albert was asked to testify before the House Education Committee on Thursday on this bill. The committee passed the bill and it now moves to the House floor.

House Education also originated a bill on Thursday (no bill number assigned yet) relating to enrollment at the county vocational schools. The bill allows universal acceptance of non-public students to participate in vocational programs throughout all 55 counties. The bill was passed and now moved the House floor.

[HB 2267](#) establishes an optional bus operator in residence program. The bill is on 2nd reading on the House Special Calendar.

Status Update on Major Education Bills:

Charter School Expansion

[HB 2012](#) quickly advanced from the House Education Committee and passed the full house 66-32. Initially this bill:

- Changed limitations on amount of Charter Schools from 3 to 10
- Removed revocation provisions
- Created new authorizer as “West Virginia Professional Charter School Board”
- Created Virtual Charter Schools
- Passed the full House and was sent to the Senate Education Committee

Senator Romano was successful in getting an amendment to HB 2012 during the committee meeting.

The amendment:

- Limits Charter Schools back to three (3) for the next 3 years, and
- Limits Virtual Charter Schools to a total of 1500 students for 3 years.

The amendment was narrowly approved by the committee, 7-6.

HB 2012 will be on second reading, which is amendment stage, on Friday on the House floor. There is a possibility of additional amendments.

Hope Scholarships (Education Savings Accounts)

[HB 2013](#) creates Hope Scholarships, which are basically education savings accounts or ESAs. This bill quickly moved through committee and passed the House 60-39 on Thursday. However, last Friday the House moved to reconsider and recommitted the bill to House Finance. House Finance has not considered the bill yet. AFT-WV will post any updates as they become available.

Specifics of the bill include:

- 100% of state aid formula on base granted per student annually
- Can be used for private schools and/ or related educational expenses by definition
- Creates a new Board- “Hope Scholarship Board”
- Shall be operational by July 2022
- Approximately \$4600/yr based on previous year state aid formula per pupil average
- Must apply annually
- Contains no anti-discrimination provisions for students

Alternative Certification

[Eng. Committee Sub for SB 14](#) weakens the standards for alternative certification for teachers. The bill has passed Senate on a 25-9 vote and is on 3rd reading in House on Friday.

Work Stoppages and Strikes

While strikes by public employees are already prohibited, the House and Senate decided to take up the matter again, with each putting forth their own version of a bill.

The Senate version, [Committee Sub for SB 11](#), passed with an amendment to take out the entire provision that stated if an originally scheduled instructional day or noninstructional day is canceled due to a concerted work stoppage or strike by the employees assigned to a school, the school for which the day was canceled may not participate in any extracurricular activities during any part of that same day. SB 11 is on 3rd reading on the House floor, but was moved to the House calendar, which stalls passage.

Paycheck Deception

[Committee Sub for HB 2009](#), a bill to attack and silence the voices of workers, passed the House of Friday. It is currently awaiting consideration by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The bill:

- Relates to limitations on the use of wages and agency shop fees by employers and labor organizations for political activities
- Attacks on payroll deduction and unions
- Forces annual reauthorization for deductions regardless of member's wishes
- Is a direct interference of government into private contract between employee and union
- Attempts to silence workers' collective voices by limiting the ability to invest in elections

Changes in Master's Degree Pay

[Committee Sub for SB 15](#) changes the salary increase provisions in state code for a master's degree and passed the Senate on a 24-9 vote. It is currently pending consideration in the House Education Committee.

The changes would be effective July 1, 2022, and states that classroom teachers receiving a master's degree on or after that date cannot qualify for "M.A." and may only qualify for an in-field master's degree. The salary increase for holding an in-field master's degree is contingent upon a classroom teacher's assignment teaching in that MA field for at least one half of the total classes assigned.

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