

AFT-WV LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

FIGHTING FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION



FROM STATEHOUSE TO SCHOOLHOUSE

April 7, 2025

2025 Session hits the Crossover Day milestone

Last Wednesday was the 50th day of the session and last day to consider bills on third reading in their house of origin, which is commonly known as crossover day. Bills that are not passed from their originating chamber by the 50th day are “mostly” dead—barring a situation where they would be amended into another active bill that addresses the same section of state code. Legislators will have until midnight on April 12th to take action on the bills that were passed and received from the other chamber.

Bills That Died after Crossover Day

[HB 2087](#) opens up access to online curriculum, and allows the general public to inspect additional instructional material adopted by the county board, including books in the classroom. The bill expands access beyond parent/guardians, which is existing law. AFT-WV opposed this bill as it created additional administrative burdens on educators’ time and also opens the door to outside groups without children in the local schools to attack and disrupt school systems to advance a political agenda.

[SB 146](#) provides for substantial deference to state school superintendent’s interpretations of school laws. AFT-WV viewed the bill as an attack on the grievance process for school employees and their ability to resolve employee-employer disputes in an impartial venue and opposed this bill.

[HB 3387](#) would permit the creation of a regional school district pilot program. School systems in the pilot would have to be in financial distress, neighbor each other and, be under control of the state. AFT-WV opposed this bill as it usurps the local control of county school systems and their elected boards of education.

[HB 2187](#) permits teachers in K-12 schools be authorized to carry concealed firearms as a designated school protection officer. AFT-WV maintains that the role of armed school protection officer is best left in the hands of trained law enforcement.

[SB 434](#) promulgates rules for implementing the use of wearable panic alarms by school employees for the purpose initiating campus-wide lockdowns and of notifying law enforcement during emergencies.

[Com. Sub. for HB 3452](#) transfers administration of Advanced Career Education (ACE) classes and programs from county boards of education to community and technical colleges.

[HB 3507](#) establishes a mental health pilot program, which requires the counties participating (limited to 10) to have at least one qualified mental health professional (QMHP) in each public school in that county.

[Com. Sub. for HB 2614](#) allows for a lump sum payment based on accrued leave to be paid to an employee’s estate. Every full-time employee of a county board (at the time his or her active employment ends due to death) may be paid in a lump sum amount to the personal representative of the estate of the employee for accrued and unused personal leave at the employee’s usual rate of pay, not to exceed \$6000.

[SB 122](#) establishes minimum student enrollment for the school aid formula, and would help counties that have a net enrollment of under 1200 students .

[Com. Sub. for HB 2355](#) permits middle or high school students to participate in travel sports teams without repercussion.

[HB 3508](#) modifies the school aid formula to provide more support for schools under certain circumstances.

[SB 516](#) provides extra state aid to school districts for students enrolled in extremely remote schools.



[SB 558](#) requires students take a computer science course prior to graduation.

[HB 3438](#) allows retired teachers in long-term substitute positions with specialties in math, sciences, English, and foreign languages to remain in the substitute teaching positions for the entire school year without interruption to their retirement pay in order to allow students to have a quality, uninterrupted education.

[SB 516](#) provides extra state aid to school districts for students enrolled in extremely remote schools.

CONTACT THE GOVERNOR: WHAT ABOUT PEIA? DEMAND STABILIZATION!

It's the final week of the 2025 Legislative Session and the Governor still has not put forth his plan to address PEIA, despite mentioning it as a priority in his State of the State address. Additionally, neither chamber of the legislature has put forth an effort to stabilize PEIA and make it a high-quality healthcare plan that is affordable for teachers and service personnel. However, all three have found time to introduce and pass legislation on gender and bathrooms and riding a motorcycle while standing up.

Elected leaders ignoring the health insurance of thousands of WV public employees is unacceptable! Contact the Governor and members of the legislature and ask them to stop wasting time chasing culture war headlines and to stabilize the health care of over a hundred thousand hard-working West Virginia public employees.

[Click here to contact Governor Morrisey.](#) **Remind the Governor he mentioned PEIA as a priority in his State of the State address and ask him hold to his word to address it!**

Pay Raise Bills Die; Both Governor and Legislature Fail to Address Pay

Governor Morrisey mentioned the need for a pay raise in his State of the State address but never put forth a bill to address the issue. Additionally, the legislative leadership did not prioritize a pay increase for educators as part of their agenda.

[HB 2476](#) provides a 25% pay increase for teachers.

[HB 2519](#) provides a \$900 monthly increase (25%) to state school service personnel.

[SB 506](#) provides for market pay enhancement for teacher salaries in certain circumstances. This bill is essentially permitting locality pay. The bill moved from committee but died in Senate Rules.

Bills Passed by Both Chambers

Comm. Sub. for [SB 199](#) outlines specific actions taken for grades K-6 when a student exhibits violent, threatening, or disruptive behavior: immediate removal of the student, parental notification, potential suspension, evaluation and a possible alternative learning environment. First, the student would be subject to a behavior plan. If adequate progress is being made after two weeks then that plan would continue. If the student is not making progress, then the behavioral plan could be changed and followed for another two weeks. If another two weeks pass without adequate progress, then the student would be placed in a behavioral intervention program or with a licensed behavioral health agency where the county has access. If the county has no behavioral intervention program, the student would be immediately removed from the classroom, parents would be notified to pick up the child, and the student would be suspended for one to three days while alternative accommodations are made. The student would not return to school until a risk assessment is done. After the risk assessment, the student could return to school provisionally for five to 10 days. If another incident occurs, the student would be placed in an alternative learning environment for the rest of the semester or school year. That alternative learning environment could, in some cases, be virtual school.

[SB 283](#) expands grade levels of personal finance course requirements needed for graduation. The bill passed the Senate and the House and has completed the legislative process.

[SB 282](#) modifies provisions for employment of retired teachers as substitutes in areas of critical need and shortage. The bill passed both chambers and has completed legislation.

[HB 3313](#) provides more opportunities for high school students in community colleges. The bill passed both the House and Senate, completing the legislative process.

Notable Bills Still Alive

[HB 3209](#) provides at least one counselor for every 250 students in public schools and public charter schools in this state. The bill advanced from the House and is pending consideration by the Senate Education Committee.

[HB 2624](#) permits students in eighth and ninth grade to attend summer school in order to raise their grades and establish academic eligibility to play sports in the fall. The bill passed the House and now moves to the Senate for consideration.

[SB 646](#) increases the number of non-traditional instructional days available to use from 5 to 10. The bill also states that scheduled out-of-calendar days may not be rescheduled as instructional days in the event school is canceled for any reason. The bill passed the Senate and now awaits consideration by the House Education Committee.

[SB 37](#) allows Teachers Retirement System members (after July 1, 2015) to exchange unused leave for monetary compensation. Employees would be able to sell up to 10 days accrued personal leave back to the county board for 80% of the pay rate. This is a bill that did not pass last year, but AFT-WV supported. The bill passed the Senate now is pending consideration by the House Finance Committee.

[HB 2499](#) calls for creating an in-person training course for principals on IDEA in public schools; informing teachers of their state rights and protections related to such, and providing for an Individualized Education Program meeting format. The bill passed the House and is on 3rd reading in the Senate.

[SB 154](#) prohibits public schools from requiring students to participate in sexual orientation or gender identity instruction. This bill prohibits from teaching gender identity, giving false information to parents about a child transitioning and mandates reporting students if they come to teacher to talk about their gender identity. The bill allows parents to bring civil actions against the school. The bill advanced after lengthy discussion in the Senate Education Committee and was second referenced to the Senate Judiciary Committee, where it advanced to the floor as a second committee substitute version. AFT-WV has concerns about the bill as it relates to employee discipline and the grievance procedure. AFT-WV believes parts of this bill could diminish the grievance rights of educators. The bill passed the Senate and is pending consideration by the House Education Committee.

[HB 2411](#) provides and changes graduation requirements and duties relating to academic content standards. The bill passed the House and Senate, but waiting on concurrence of amendments.

[Comm. Sub. for HB 2164](#) allows for public and private schools in West Virginia to employ security personnel. Guidelines and certification standards will be created by the Division of Protective Services for these positions. There is no fiscal note; the bill would be permissive, not a mandate, and up to the counties to fund. The bill passed the House and is on second reading in the Senate.

[HB 2635](#) makes classroom sizes equal so that aides can be best utilized and one-on-one time with teachers and students can be maximized without losing the use of an aide. The bill would not allow the split to be inequitable, and specifies that grade level 1-3 classes of 12 or more students would get a classroom aide. This is a positive bill, and AFT-WV supports passage. It was passed by the House and is pending consideration by the Senate Education Committee.

[SB 450](#) establishes the WV Guardian Program, which permits and creates rules for county boards to contract with former law enforcement officers to provide public safety and school security. The bill passed the Senate and is pending consideration by the House Education Committee.

[SB 547](#) creates the Charter Schools Startup Fund for the purpose of providing financial support to charter school applicants and charter schools that may not otherwise have the resources for start-up costs. AFT-WV opposes the further defunding of the public school system, particularly at a time when many of our local schools are in need of facility improvements. The bill passed the Senate and is pending consideration by the House Finance Committee.

[SB 548](#) creates the Safety and Violence Education for Students Act. The bill provides suicide and violence training and materials to help identify self harm, social isolation, violence or red flags for school shootings. This would help peers identify red flags. Some senators had some worries that there would not be enough time in the day to compete this requirement and it is an added requirement, but it was stated this would not take any time away from any core instruction. The bill passed the Senate and is pending consideration by the House Education Committee.

[SB 650](#) relates to the employment of interventionists by county school systems. The bill passed the Senate and is in the markup phase in the House Education Committee.

[SB 275](#) removes the requirement for school cooks or custodians to have a high school diploma or equivalent, if they are over 21 years of age. The bill is intended to help alleviate shortages in these classifications. The bill passed the Senate and House, but the House made amendments, therefore the Senate must accept or act on those changes.

Comm. Sub for [HB 2515](#), relating to elementary behavior intervention and safety, passed the full House and moves to the Senate for consideration This bill is similar to one from last year that did not pass. It establishes clear discipline procedures, including a statewide discipline policy, provisions for removing violent students from the classroom and student support services to address the behaviors. The Committee Substitute version contains several amendments that improved the bill from its original version and gained bipartisan support. The bill has passed the House and is pending consideration by the Senate Education Committee.

[HB 2774](#) is the Coach Protection Act, which modifies the criminal and administrative penalties for assault or battery on athletic officials. The bill passed the House and awaits consideration by the Senate Education Committee.

Eng. [SB 280](#) calls for displaying official US motto in public schools when the materials are donated to the school. The bill passed the Senate and moves to the House Judiciary Committee for consideration.

[HB 2003](#) directs county boards of education to develop a policy regarding cell phones that includes, whether or not the devices are allowed on school property, and if so, the storage protocol for the devices during instructional time. The bill passed the House and is pending consideration by the Senate Education Committee.

[Comm. Sub. for HB 2143](#) requires elementary school teachers to be certified in the science of reading, starting by the 27-28 school year. The bill specifies the endorsement to be required for K-5 public and public charter schools, and shall be free of charge to teachers. Counties will have to provide accommodations if there is any teacher who cannot be in the program. The bill passed the House and is pending consideration by the Senate Education Committee.

[SB 284](#) relates to county board of education member orientation and compensation. The bill passed the Senate and is pending consideration by the House Education Committee.

[SB 92](#) is the Glucagon for Schools Act and allows schools to keep glucagon on site and sets up procedures to assist with diabetes management of students. The bill passed the Senate and is pending consideration by the House Education Committee.

[SB 37](#) allows Teachers Retirement System members (after July 1, 2015) to exchange unused leave for monetary compensation. Employees would be able to sell up to 10 days accrued personal leave back to the county board for 80% of the pay rate. This is a bill that did not pass last year, but AFT-WV supported. The bill is advanced from the Senate Education Committee and is pending consideration by the House Finance Committee.

[SB 158](#) modifies eligibility requirements for serving as member of State Board of Education to state Board members cannot become candidates or run for office or work in campaigns and political activities. The bill passed the Senate and is pending consideration by the House Education Committee.

[SB 474](#) is another bill to prohibit diversity and equity initiatives in K-12 public schools and higher ed institutions as well as codify two defined sexes only and mandated pronoun usage directly aligned to sex at birth. Additionally, the bill contains provisions for a complaint and appeals process for parents and guardians of students. The bill has passed the Senate and is pending consideration by House Judiciary.

Local AFT Officers: Legislative Update Zoom Meetings

AFT-WV will be continuing to conduct Legislative Updates via Zoom for our local officers this year. Local officers should be on the lookout for email and text invites each week.

Stay Informed during the Legislative Session

Take advantage of the many ways to stay informed from AFT-WV!

- Visit the AFT-WV website at www.aftwv.org and “Like” us at [Facebook.com/AFTWV](https://www.facebook.com/AFTWV) . Also, follow your local chapter on social media, if applicable.
- Many AFT local presidents and staff representatives use the Remind app to communicate with their local members. Ask your local president or staff rep if your county uses Remind and get signed up!
- If you are a local AFT officer, watch for invites for Legislative Update Zoom meetings and participate.