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SENATE BILL NO. 364

Offered January 20, 2000

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 22.1 a chapter numbered 20.1, consisting of sections numbered 22.1-354.1 through 22.1-354.5, relating to the Western Virginia Public Education Consortium.

Patrons—Trumbo, Howell, Marye and Ticer

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 22.1 a chapter numbered 20.1, consisting of sections numbered 22.1-354.1 through 22.1-354.5, as follows:

CHAPTER 20.1.**WESTERN VIRGINIA PUBLIC EDUCATION CONSORTIUM.**

§ 22.1-354.1. Western Virginia Public Education Consortium created; region defined; governing board.

A. The Western Virginia Public Education Consortium is hereby established and shall be referred to in this chapter as the Consortium. For the purposes of this chapter and the work of the Consortium, "Western Virginia" shall include the Counties of Alleghany, Bland, Botetourt, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski, Roanoke, and Wythe, and the Cities of Covington, Clifton Forge, Radford, Roanoke, and Salem. The governing board of the Consortium shall consist of the school superintendents of the named localities. The region's legislators shall serve as nonvoting, advisory members of the board.

B. Members of the board shall be reimbursed for their actual expenses incurred in the performance of their duties in the work of the Consortium, except that legislative members shall be reimbursed pursuant to § 30-19.15. The board shall elect a chairman and a vice-chairman from among its members.

§ 22.1-354.2. Functions and duties.

The Consortium shall perform the following functions and duties:

1. Coordinate with organizations and agencies providing programs and services to Consortium school divisions to reduce duplication of effort and optimize the use of available resources;

2. Conduct ongoing assessments to identify needs of member school divisions and develop plans and programs responding to those needs;

3. Facilitate the coordination of programs in the Consortium region that affect K-12 public education in vocational and technical education, workforce development, and other linkages between public schools, institutions of higher education, and business and industry;

4. Coordinate technology-related activities between Consortium members in areas of common concern, such as video conferencing and distance learning, including the acquisition and utilization of hardware and software for administrative and instructional purchases;

5. Develop and maintain linkages with schools and school divisions in Northern Virginia to promote enhanced usage of educational technology; and

6. Create the capacity for development within the Consortium of shared services and activities, including purchasing, facility planning, staff development, and special needs programming, and implementation of such shared services and activities as need is determined.

§ 22.1-354.3. Executive director; staff support; location.

From such funds as may be appropriated or received, the board of the Consortium may appoint an executive director, who shall be authorized to employ such staff as necessary to enable the Consortium to perform its duties as set forth in this chapter. The board is authorized to determine the duties of such staff and to fix salaries and compensation from such funds as may be appropriated or received. The Consortium's offices shall be housed at Radford University.

§ 22.1-354.4. Application for and acceptance of gifts and grants.

The Consortium is authorized to apply for, accept, and expend gifts, grants, or donations from public or private sources to enable it to carry out its objectives.

§ 22.1-354.5. Cooperation of other agencies.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall cooperate with the Consortium and, upon request, assist the Consortium in the performance of its duties and responsibilities.

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