

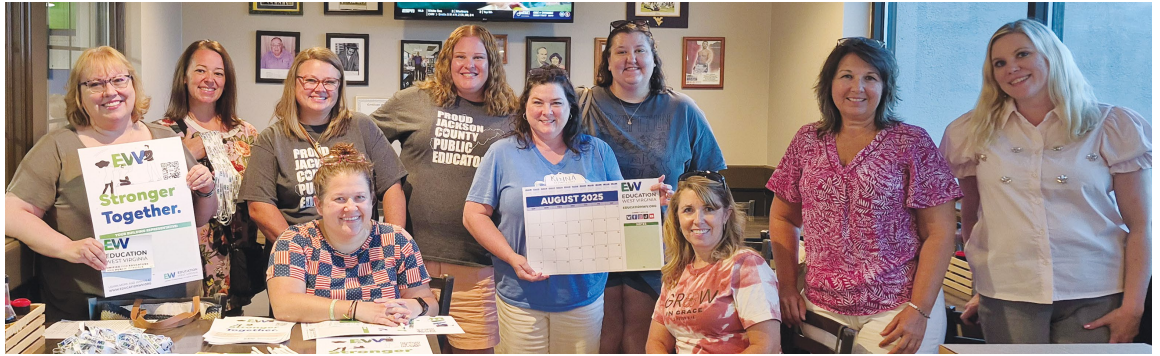
Rising Voice



A monthly union member publication and newsletter

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Education West Virginia FAQs
Union Nets Big Win
Member Advocacy Center

EW EDUCATION WEST VIRGINIA



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Rising Voice

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Communications Specialist
 Staci Wallace

Issue Contributors
 Ben Barkey
 Sarah D'Agostino
 Mike Hennessey
 Heather Hutchens
 Denisha Smith

**MEMBER
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866-568-9832

ON THIS PAGE

TOP: UNION WIN ON PAGE 6; MIDDLE: EDUCATION WEST VIRGINIA CO-PRESIDENTS KRISTIE SKIDMORE AND DALE LEE ON PAGE 4; BOTTOM: EDUCATION WEST VIRGINIA MEMBER ADVOCACY CENTER ON PAGE 7.

ON THE COVER

ACROSS WEST VIRGINIA, LOCALS HAVE PROUDLY INTRODUCED EDUCATION WEST VIRGINIA AT BACK-TO-SCHOOL EVENTS, SPARKING EXCITEMENT FOR THE YEAR AHEAD.

We are Stronger Together

Education West Virginia was formed in the spring of 2025 when the West Virginia Education Association (WVEA) and the American Federation of Teachers–West Virginia (AFT-WV) voted to merge.

It was a historic day on March 29, 2025, as delegates to WVEA’s Delegate Assembly and AFT-WV’s Representative Convention met in Charleston, WV. In separate but simultaneous meetings, both groups overwhelmingly voted to merge and create Education West Virginia. Both NEA President Becky Pringle and AFT President Randi Weingarten were in attendance for the event.

Education West Virginia was created to amplify our power and advocacy, and to create a strong, unified voice for our

state’s educators. By joining together, we fight the extraordinary challenges facing public education as one.

Education West Virginia is dedicated to advocating for education professionals, working to ensure they have the resources, support and conditions necessary for providing a high-quality education for West Virginia’s students. Education West Virginia aims include securing and improving educator benefits, providing top-notch representation and advocacy, shaping positive public education policy and reforms, and elevating the teaching profession to benefit students and recapture the respect our education employees deserve.

Through Education West Virginia, we champion the change

we need to support high-quality public schools in every community. “We are united. It was time for this merger, as it will allow us to expand our efforts and make an even greater impact on the future of education,” said Education West Virginia Co-Presidents Kristie Skidmore and Dale Lee.

Education West Virginia is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association and the AFL-CIO. Through your membership, you belong to these organizations that collaborate to provide a unified voice for public education and educators.

If you know someone who is not a member, urge them to become one by going to www.educationwv.org. 🍌

Frequently Asked Questions regarding the merger

Do I need to re-enroll to maintain my membership? No! All current members of both organizations will automatically become members of Education West Virginia and the payment method that you previously used for paying your dues will be continued into the newly merged organization. You should have received an email that details your method of payment, a deduction schedule, and contact information that we have on file. Contact membership@educationwv.org if you did not receive the email.

Will my dues be deducted in the same manner as they currently are? Yes! Whatever form of payment you currently have on file for your dues payment will be continued regardless of whether it is credit card, bank draft, or check. The one change you will see will be the timing of the withdrawal. Be-

ginning in September, credit card payments will be withdrawn on the 15th of each month for 10 months and bank draft withdrawals will be aligned with your monthly county payroll dates and be withdrawn for 10 months. (September–June)

Does the merger mean that I am a member of both the NEA and AFT? Yes! Members of Education West Virginia automatically are members of both national organizations as well as the WV AFL-CIO. You can take advantage of the member benefits from both organizations as well as networking and training opportunities.

Will I see an increase in my dues? Education West Virginia’s dues are determined by a formula based on average pay. As the average pay increases, dues will increase slightly. The dues will increase slightly next

year due to the average teacher pay (or pay grade D for service personnel) showing an increase.

Is Education West Virginia officially operating now? Since August 1, our operations have been combined, and our staff and locals have been working together. We are up and running as Education West Virginia. This magazine contains the contact information and staff listing of Education West Virginia should you need to get in touch with us.

How do I know who the field rep is for my county? A map is located on page 5 showing the staff regions. In addition, other departments and divisions are listed. Keep in mind the Member Advocacy Center is only a call or email away for quick answers to your questions or concerns. (See page 7 for more information.) 🍌

It's been a bit of a roller coaster of details and deadlines, but we made it! This merger has been one of the most challenging and complex undertakings of my professional career, but the potential payoff for WV educators makes the work worth every second. Throughout the last several months, our members have continually expressed their desire to create a singular unified voice for education employees in West Virginia.

Dale and I, along with our transition and advisory councils, are committed to building something exciting and inspiring that elevates our profession. Education WV is not merely a combining of two organizations; we are taking the lessons learned from each parent organization and seeking to engage members in new ways to be a more proactive, member-driven voice for education and public education in our state. We will be the first merged statewide education union in a non-collective bargaining state, so just like in 2018, we will be blazing a new trail for educators. You can bet the eyes of the rest of the country will be watching to see our union make the most of this unique opportunity to be a bold and active voice for public educators.

The 2025–2026 school year is here with all the excitement and anticipation that each new year brings. When I was in the classroom, I loved the first day of school—meeting new students, meeting new colleagues, and everyone starting fresh. This year, the school year brings another type of excitement as my grandson starts preschool.

The new school year also brings a new organization. On September 1, 2025, Education West Virginia officially kicks off and will be the largest and strongest advocates for public education and educators in our state. Our members and our students will be the winners in this endeavor. As I have traveled across the state, speaking at new teacher events and opening day events, I hear the excitement over the new union. Education West Virginia isn't a building in Charleston and the staff who work for it. Education West Virginia is its members, and you are the driving force behind everything that happens.

You know what needs to happen in your classroom and how things can improve—not the elected leaders in Charleston or Washington, D.C. We

While we are teaching and working in an incredibly difficult landscape, it's only by standing united together that we will persevere. WV education employees have a unique opportunity to build a new model of activism if every member seizes the opportunity to be a strong, engaged member. Education WV is stronger when every member participates in their local or state union!

Dale and I plan to travel across the state during this back-to-school season, visiting schools, attending local union meetings and other events. I'm looking forward to seeing familiar faces, meeting new union brothers and sisters and listening to your concerns and ideas. Most of all, I'm looking forward to our newly merged union family channeling our collective voices and power to fight for our members and public education. Let's do this! ✨



Kristie Skidmore
kskidmore@educationwv.org

need to press the narrative. If those passing the laws for education won't ask your opinion, give it to them anyway. Reach out to your delegates and senators and tell them what you face each day. Challenge them to walk a day in your shoes. Challenge them with the decisions they make and the priorities they choose to fund.

I am excited about the launch of Education West Virginia and the opportunities to come. I urge you to become involved and to take advantage of all the opportunities that Education West Virginia has. Tell others how important it is to have a voice and pride in your profession. We are stronger together, and public education needs us all working together for positive change. Have a great school year and continue making a difference in your students' lives! ✨



Dale Lee
dlee@educationwv.org

Union nets big win in intermediate appellate court

Two members from Logan High School, Erica Lockhart and Briana Crisp, took a stand against the county directive mandating teachers to give up their planning periods for class coverage.

Lockhart and Crisp were told they would be paid for the lost planning time but had no choice as to whether or not they wanted to give up their time. Upon contacting their Field Representative Brandon Tinney, a grievance was filed and ultimately won at the level three hearing in front of an administrative law judge. Despite the administrative law judge's ruling, the Logan County superintendent, Jeff Huffman, appealed the decision to the West Virginia Intermediate Court of Appeals. In a 3–0 unanimous ruling, the Intermediate Court of Appeals ruled in favor of our members, stating:

“Grievants, employed as full-time teachers, protest Respondent LCBOE’s practice of mandating that each Grievant repeatedly sacrifice their planning period and cover classes of absent teachers. Applicable law, West Virginia Code § 18A-4-14, requires that a teacher be provided an uninterrupted planning period on each school instructional day which is the length of the usual class period in the school. Respondent is aware of this proviso and despite the explicit directive, chooses to require teachers at Logan High School to give up their planning period. Grievants explicitly express the desire to retain their daily planning periods. Nevertheless, Respondent, despite other feasible alternatives, chose to compel Grievants to sacrifice planning periods for other assigned activity. Respondent contended that absenteeism by teachers compelled it to procure the planning periods of Grievants. Respondent’s



rebuttal is more pretext than valid justification. Grievants have met their burden of proving, by a preponderance of the evidence, that they were unlawfully deprived of their planning periods. Accordingly, this grievance is GRANTED.”

“I couldn’t be happier with the outcome. All I had to do was speak up and say hey this isn’t right, and I want to fight it. My rep, Brandon Tinney, was quickly on the scene in my county to try to work it out. When the county wouldn’t budge and we filed the grievance then eventually went to court, I felt I had excellent representation both in Brandon and the union-provided attorney Jeff Blaydes. Both Brandon and Jeff, knowing the statewide implications of this case, really went to bat for us during the level three grievance hearing and in the court of appeals. The union’s hard work on this case protects every teacher’s planning from being taken for class coverage,” explained Lockhart. ✨

Professional Growth

Online Graduate Courses Available

Need to pick up some graduate hours? Whether it is for renewal, salary advancement or simply enhancing your knowledge and skills, your Education West Virginia membership can help. Members have a couple of options when it comes to graduate hours. Education West Virginia has a partnership with VESi (Virtual Education Software, inc.) to provide online graduate courses for our members at highly discounted rates. Education West Virginia members have the option to participate in nearly 30 graduate courses in general and exceptional education, reading, early childhood and English language learners.

As a member, you can pay an annual subscription fee of \$250 and are granted access to nine (9) hours of online graduate course credit. Your graduate hours and transcripts will be issued through Lake Superior State University in Michigan. The subscription is good for one year. You must complete your nine hours of credit within that time window, or you will need to pay for another subscription if you wish to finish a course or take additional courses. VESi courses have

been approved by the WV Department of Education for certification renewal and salary advancement. Check out the courses available through VESi by scanning the QR code.



Prefer something closer to home?

Graduate credit can be acquired online through WV State University. Education West Virginia members may participate in a “Strategies for Student Success” graduate course. This course is designed to equip educators with the foundational skills and strategies necessary to achieve academic and personal success in diverse learning environments. Through a structured exploration of goal-setting and instructional design, students will learn to illustrate the complexity involved in implementing objectives, create high-quality, measurable goals, and strategically set objectives that are responsive to the instructional context. Emphasis will be placed on the critical alignment of learning activities, objectives, and assessments to foster meaningful learning and mastery. *If you are interested in this course, contact the Education West Virginia Member Advocacy Center.* 📍

Member Advocacy Center

The Member Advocacy Center at Education West Virginia serves as a vital resource and support hub for members across the state. In addition to our trained and experienced field representatives, the center is designed to provide timely assistance on a wide range of issues. The Member Advocacy Center offers clear, confidential, and informed advice tailored to many issues including employment rights, contract interpretation, certification questions, and workplace concerns.



Our field representatives are often traveling or in schools and unavailable to take calls or quickly respond to member concerns. The Member Advocacy Center serves as an additional resource for members and is staffed each day by two Advocacy

Representatives ready to assist and respond. Members may call or email their questions or concerns to the Member Advocacy Center and should hear back in less than 24 hours.



Whether members are facing disciplinary actions, seeking guidance on professional standards, checking on a directive they have received, or navigating the complexities of education policy, the Member Advocacy Center is available for all our members and represents a powerful benefit that reinforces their professional security and peace of mind. By offering expert support and advocacy, it is one of Education West Virginia’s many benefits that empowers educators to focus on their primary mission—teaching and supporting students—without fear of being alone, finding answers, or resolving difficult challenges. 📍

It pays to be a member with Member Benefits

Educators spend their own money on materials, classroom decorations and supplies. That's why, along with NEA and AFT, Education West Virginia provides members with a broad range of special discounts and benefits that can help you and your family save hundreds of dollars each year. These programs are a part of our commitment to helping our members in both their professional and personal lives. Our member deals and discounts include insurance, entertainment, shopping, travel, and much more. Need more detail or interested in exploring the members benefits associated with your membership? Follow the QR codes for more information. 📱

AFT+ Member Benefits



NEA Member Benefits



AFL-CIO Union+ Benefit



Education West Virginia

Transition & Advisory Councils

TRANSITION COUNCIL

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(Mercer County)

Kristie Skidmore, Co-President
(Randolph County)

Josh Gary, Co-Vice President
(Marshall County)

Wayne Spangler, Co-Vice President
(Monroe County)

Justin Altizer, Co-Treasurer
(Lincoln County)

Amber McCoy, Co-Treasurer
(Wayne County)

Angie Turkelson, Secretary
(Putnam County)

Lucinda Burns, NEA Director
(Kanawha County)

Lynneia Atkinson, Member-at-Large
(Jefferson County)

Kris Bonnell, Member-at-Large
(Doddridge County)

Kim Bonnett, Member-at-Large
(Lewis County)

John Foley, Member-at-Large
(Marion County)

John Quesenberry, Member-at-Large
(Raleigh County)

Amelia Roedersheimer, Member-at-Large
(Wood County)

Tena McElwain, Member-at-Large
(Monongalia County)

Michelle Wolfe, Member-at-Large
(Hardy County)

Doris Tuckwiller-Wood, Retired
Representative (Berkeley County)

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Adena Barnette-Miller
(Jackson County)

Andy Bird
(Putnam County)

Meg Britt
(Kanawha County)

Brittany Dolly
(Clay County)

Gwen Lacy
(McDowell County)

Georgiana Lang
(Berkeley County)

Blake Mangold
(Mineral County)

Tracy McClanahan
(Cabell County)

David McCloud
(Kanawha County)

Greg Merritt
(Wood County)

Amy Neal
(Cabell County)

Carol Roskos
(Monongalia County)

Stacey Strawderman
(Retired)

Michelle Tenney
(Randolph County)

Tim Triveri
(Ohio County)

Membership Categories

Your Education West Virginia membership category matters!

A key part of maintaining your Education West Virginia membership is to make sure you are placed in the correct membership category. This allows you to fully participate in our legal services, member-only benefits, and discount programs. As you move through your career, make sure you contact EWV’s Membership Department and keep your membership status up to date.

Below is a list of our membership categories and requirements. If you believe you are in the wrong membership category or have membership questions, contact Staci Wallace at swallace@educationwv.org or Kelly Sword at ksword@educationwv.org for assistance. 🍀

Certified Professional or Education Support Professional (ESP)

The vast majority of our members are either Certified Professionals (teachers, counselors, specialists, social workers, nurses, administrators, etc.) or Education Support Professionals – ESPs (aides, food services, transportation services, custodial and maintenance, clerical services, etc.)

- Full-time – for those employed for the entire school year.
- Half-time – if you work one-half day for the entire school year.
- Substitute – for those who work less than a full year or work on a daily call out basis.

Aspiring Educators

Aspiring Educators is intended for students in college and university education programs who are not receiving a paycheck to teach. Clinical Teacher of Record participants (formerly Teachers-in-Residence) will need to move to a substitute membership category to receive the needed coverage. Once employed in a full-time capacity, you will need to move into a full-time membership.

Retired

Retired members can be either retired Professionals or ESPs. Your retired membership will afford you access to the same benefits and discounts you enjoyed as an active member. Your retired membership will also provide liability coverage for you if you are a day-to-day sub and working less than 10 days a month. As a retiree, if you substitute 10 or more day a month, take a long-term position or accept a position for the entire year, you will need to switch to a different membership category.

Education West Virginia Deduction Schedule

Education West Virginia’s 2025–2026 membership year is here! EWV has a new deduction schedule for members whose payment methods are EFT (bank draft) or RCC (recurring credit/debit card). Bank draft deductions will be debited twice a month aligned to county pay schedules for 10 months beginning September 1. Credit/debit card deductions will be debited monthly on the 15th of each month for 10 months beginning September 15th.

For all deductions, if the deduction date falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the draft will be debited on the closest business day. 🍀

County	EFT Deduction Dates
Ohio	1st and 16th
Clay, Doddridge, Fayette, Jackson, Marshall, Pendleton, Preston, Raleigh	5th and 20th
Pocahontas	8th and 22nd
Ritchie	9th and 24th
Berkeley, Boone, Brooke, Greenbrier, Hampshire, Hancock, Hardy, Jefferson, Kanawha, Mason, Mineral, Nicholas, Pleasants, Randolph, Wyoming	10th and 25th
Roane, Tucker, Wirt	14th and 28th
Barbour	15th and 28th
Braxton, Cabell, Calhoun, Gilmer, Grant, Harrison, Lewis, Lincoln, Logan, McDowell, Marion, Mercer, Mingo, Monongalia, Monroe, Morgan, Putnam, Summers, Taylor, Upshur, Wayne, Webster, Wetzel, Wood	15th and 30th
Tyler	15th and 31st

Education West Virginia Member Portal

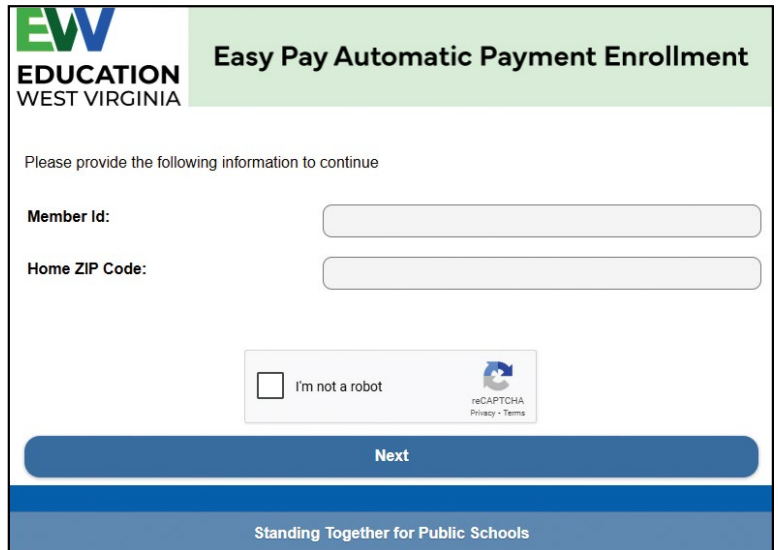
Education West Virginia's Member Portal is now live! The Member Portal provides our members with access to securely update your membership and payment information. To access the EWV Member Portal you will need your Member ID and home zip code. If Education West Virginia does not have your current address on file, you can update your information online.

If you need to update your payment information, continue to follow prompts and select the payment method option you want to use (Bank Draft or Credit Card). You will also be prompted to select the payment schedule based on your selected payment

method. Those options are Bank Draft-Pay Now (one-time payment), Bank Draft with 20 deductions twice a month, Credit Card-Pay Now (one-time payment), or Credit Card with 10 deductions once a month.



Scan the QR code to visit Education West Virginia's Member Portal. 🖱️



The screenshot shows the 'Easy Pay Automatic Payment Enrollment' page. At the top left is the Education West Virginia logo. The page title is 'Easy Pay Automatic Payment Enrollment'. Below the title, it says 'Please provide the following information to continue'. There are two input fields: 'Member Id:' and 'Home ZIP Code:'. Below these fields is a reCAPTCHA widget with the text 'I'm not a robot' and a checkbox. At the bottom of the form is a blue 'Next' button. The footer of the page reads 'Standing Together for Public Schools'.

New Legislation impacting teachers and school employees: What you need to know

Senate Bill 154 : Prohibiting sexual orientation instruction in public schools

This new statute provides that instruction related to sexual orientation and gender identity is prohibited in public schools. However, teachers are not prohibited from answering student questions about these subjects as they relate to any other instructional topic; referring to the sexual orientation or gender identity of historic persons, groups or public figures to provide necessary context in connection with any other instructional topic; and referring to sexual orientation and gender identity in dual enroll-

ment and advanced placement courses when such references are part of the established curriculum.

All school employees are prohibited from knowingly giving false or misleading information to parents regarding their child's gender identity or intention to transition to a gender differing from their biological sex. All school employees **now have a duty to notify their school administrator if any student requests an accommodation relating to a change in the student's gender identity.** (An example is a biological male student asking to be addressed with a female

name and/or related pronouns). School administrators must then report the request to the student's parents. The statute also allows parents to file a complaint with the county about non-compliance with this law, allows school boards to take disciplinary action against employees for non-compliance, and authorizes the State Attorney General to file legal actions to enforce compliance with the bill.

It is important to note that simply having knowledge that a student identifies as gay or transgender does not, by itself, trigger the notification requirement. Rather, it is the

request for an **accommodation** that must be reported to the administrator. Even so, if a parent directly asks a school employee about their child's gender identity, school employees are prohibited from giving false or misleading information to the parent.

Senate Bill 199: Student discipline

This bill makes significant changes to the rules and requirements for excluding all students from classrooms and school buses for misbehavior. Many of the same rules for excluding students from call still apply. However, the actions required after an exclusion are significantly more detailed, especially for younger students.

Significantly, the bill states that **the principal shall support the teacher in the discipline of the students if proper cause and documentation is provided following the schoolwide discipline policy. Teachers may not be reprimanded if their actions are legal and within the structure of the county board's policy for student behavior and punishment.**

After the first time a student is excluded, a "behavioral plan" must be developed before the student may be readmitted to the classroom or bus. This plan must be developed by a school counselor, school social worker, school psychologist, or behavior interventionist. The student cannot return to the classroom or bus until the plan is developed and the principal provides written certification to the teacher. When a stu-

dent is excluded a second time, another behavior plan must be implemented. This plan must be established and implemented by a school social worker, behavior specialist, board certified behavior analyst, school psychologist, or other qualified employee.

When a teacher determines a Pre-K through 6 student is violent, threatening or intimidating: 1) the student undergoes a functional behavioral assessment; 2) a behavior plan is developed by a school counselor, school social worker, school psychologist, or behavior interventionist; 3) the behavior plan is implemented for two weeks; 4) if the student shows inadequate progress, the principal, teacher, and school counselor, school social worker, school psychologist, or behavior interventionist determines whether the plan needs to be changed; 5) the plan is changed and implemented for another two weeks; and 6) if the student again fails to show adequate progress, then the student is to be placed in a behavioral intervention program.

If a county does not have a behavioral intervention program, 1) the student is removed from the classroom immediately after the incident for the remainder of the school day; 2) the student's parents must be notified to pick the student up; 3) if the student's parents cannot or will not pick the student up, a principal, vice principal, or person designated by the principal must ride the bus home with the student; 4) the student is suspended for

1-3 days during which time alternative learning accommodations are made; 5) the student may be evaluated under IDEA; and 6) the student will be educated through alternative learning accommodations. The student cannot return to school until a risk assessment is completed and then returns on a provisional basis for a period of 5 to 10 days. If another incident occurs during the provisional period, the student shall be subject to expulsion.

Note: A virtual school placement may be the agreed upon method of alternative education. Also note, IDEA requirements still apply notwithstanding these new requirements. Finally, whether the student is to be placed in an alternative learning environment for the remainder of the semester or school year shall be at the discretion of the classroom teacher and principal or vice principal. If the principal or vice principal disagrees with the actions of the teacher, the principal or vice principal may provide written documentation of the disagreement, the teacher may provide written documentation on the disagreement, and either the principal/vice principal or the teacher may appeal to the county superintendent.

For a more detailed explanation of this bill's new requirements, including the rights and duties of classroom teachers and counselors, you can read a full explanation by scanning the QR code. The full text of the statute can be read at qrc0.de/bgDURB. 🐾





**EDUCATION
WEST VIRGINIA**

1558 Quarrier Street
Charleston, WV 25311



Rising Voice

A monthly union member
publication and newsletter



Check out the new EWV Store!



Please reach out to customs@raygunsite.com for bulk orders of 24+ shirts.