

**TITLE 126  
INTERPRETIVE RULE  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**SERIES 12  
CLASSIFICATION DOCUMENT FOR SCHOOLS WITH  
ANY GRADES K-12 (2310)**

**§126-12-1. General.**

1.1. Purpose. -- The purpose of this policy is to merge four (4) previous classification documents into one (1). Additionally, this policy is designed to guide schools' self-assessments and to integrate the school classification and county accreditation processes to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of both

1.2. Authority. -- W. Va. Code §18-2-6, §18-5-18, and §18-3-11

1.3. Filing Date. -- April 1, 1987

1.4. Effective Date. -- June 1, 1987

1.5. Repeat of Former Rule. -- None. This amendment consolidates and supercedes former policy Nos. 2310, 2315, 2316 and 2317.

**§126-12-2. Applying for Classification.**

2.1. To establish a classified public or nonpublic school, the authorities in charge must obtain the necessary application materials from the county superintendent's office or the state superintendent's office.

2.2. Upon completing the in-school procedure, the application and required documentation shall be submitted to the county superintendent's office for transmittal to the state board of education.

**§126-12-3. The Six-Step Classification Procedure.**

3.1. Self-assessment. The school shall conduct a comprehensive self-assessment once every four (4) years. In conducting its self-assessment, the school's staff shall review each criterion in this document for the purpose of determining compliance for noncompliance. The year prior to the county accreditation on-site review, the school shall complete the Criteria of

Excellence Assessment Instrument, Charts 2 and 3 as applicable. A list of prioritized needs shall be developed, with input from the school advisory council, based upon discovered needs. Such priorities shall be listed as long term (up to four (4) years) and short term (up to one (1) year). All of the school's staff are expected to participate in the self-assessment, and they are expected to sign the signature page to certify such participation. The self-assessment must be reviewed and updated each year by the school's staff.

3.2. Written plan for improvement. From the self-assessment, which involves a review of each criterion and the Criteria of Excellence and results in a list of prioritized needs, the staff shall develop a written program changes and reallocation of resources as necessary. A timeline shall be a part of the written plan for improvement. The school's staff shall be able to discuss the written plan with the external visiting team

3.3. Review of the self-assessment. An external visiting team consisting of professional educators recommended by the county superintendent and appointed by the county board shall review the self-assessment, and shall certify that the school has prioritized needs and a written improvement plan derived from the self-assessment. The team members reviewing a school must have a normal work assignment consistent with the grade levels within the reviewed school. The minimum size of the team shall be three (3). These three (3) shall be (1) a teacher, (2) a principal, (3) a central office staff member. The team members may be from within the county, but not from the school being visited. Although not required, the team will feel less pressure and perhaps perform more effectively and efficiently if they are selected from outside the county.

3.4. Transmittal of application. After the school's classification document has been signed by the school

staff and the external visiting team, the principal shall retain one (1) signed copy and forward two (2) signed copies with a copy of the priorities and written plan for improvement to the county superintendent. Following a review of the application, the superintendent shall sign the application and recommend to the state department of education a classification rating for the school. When all signatures and recommendations are affixed to the application, one (1) copy of the document shall be retained by the county and the remaining copy forwarded to:

County Accreditation and School  
Classification Office  
West Virginia Department of Education  
Capitol Complex, Building 6, Room B-346  
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Upon receipt of the school's classification document, it will be reviewed by the department of education staff. If concerns are noted the county will be notified.

3.5. Validation of the self-assessment. A validation of the school's self-assessment shall take place once every four (4) years. The validation shall be performed by members of a county accreditation team during the scheduled visit.

3.6. Assignment of approval status. The school's classification will be assigned following a self-assessment validation by members of a county accreditation team. (See the previous step.)

NOTE: Steps 1 through 4 of the classification procedure which take place prior to the year of the county accreditation team visit do not complete the procedure. Steps 5 and 6 which are completed during the year of the county accreditation team visit complete the procedure. School classification is granted following the team visit.

#### §126-12-4. Annual Timeline for the Classification Procedure.

4.1. September. Classification documents are forwarded to the county contact person from the state department. The county contact person shall forward, in turn, three (3) copies to the principal of each school scheduled to complete the classification or reclassification procedure. NOTE: The classification procedures -- 1 through 4 -- for all schools within a county

must be completed prior to the year of the scheduled county accreditation review.

4.2. September through February 15. A school undergoing self-assessment shall involve all staff members in a thorough study to determine the school's status with regard to each criterion in the classification document. Additionally, the school's staff shall assess the needs of the students served and prescribe, in a written improvement plan, any necessary changes to the curricular program and student services to eliminate or reduce weaknesses. A list of prioritized needs shall be developed based upon the discovered needs.

4.3. January through March 15. At any time between January and March 15, after the school's staff has completed the self-assessment, an external team may visit the school. The team's function will be to review the self-assessment of the school's program and services. Additionally, the team will review the school's written plan for improvement which will identify priorities.

4.4. March 16 through April 15. The completed classification document shall be transmitted to the county superintendent for review and signature. Then it shall be transmitted to:

County Accreditation and School  
Classification Office  
West Virginia Department of Education  
Capitol Complex, Building 6, Room B-346  
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

The written plan for improvement should not be sent to the state department. It is for review and critique by the external team for program improvement purposes. A copy will be sent to the county superintendent for consideration in development of the comprehensive county-wide assessment and improvement plan which will include priorities.

4.5. April through June. All classification documents from the schools will be reviewed by the state department. Counties will be contacted if a concern is identified during the review.

4.6. August. A statewide list of newly classified or reclassified schools will be printed with assigned classifications and expiration dates. The original and a copy of all classification certificates will be prepared

and mailed to the county contact persons. The county contact persons will obtain the necessary signatures, transmit original certificates to the schools, and file copies in the county's files for future reference.

NOTE: The above schedule (sub-sections 4.1 - 4.5) is recommended for the year prior to the county accreditation team visit. This schedule will provide time for the state department to review the application, and it will provide time for the school to prepare for the on-site validation which will be conducted by members of a county accreditation team. A school's reclassification (sub-section 4.6) will be made the year of the county accreditation on-site visit.

**§126-12-5. Criteria for Assigning a School Classification Rating.**

5.1. Approved with merit. A merit approval is granted for a four (4) year period when a school's assessment scores are fifty-nine (59) for the starred criteria and fifty-one (51) for the non-starred criteria

5.2. Approved. An approval is granted for a four (4) year period when a school's assessment scores are fifty-nine (59) for the starred criteria and forty-six (46) or greater for the non-starred criteria.

5.3. Conditional approval. A conditional approval is granted for a one (1) year period when a school's assessment scores are fifty-five (55) or greater for the starred criteria and thirty-nine (39) or greater for the non-starred criteria. After one (1) year, the school will be reevaluated to ascertain progress toward compli-

ance with the criteria. If the criteria are met in one (1) year, the school's classification will be changed and granted for the remainder of the four (4) year period. If the criteria are not met in one (1) year, the school's classification will remain conditional.

5.4. Unapproved. An unapproved classification is granted for a one (1) year period when a school's assessment scores are equal to or less than fifty-four (54) for the starred criteria and equal to or less than thirty-eight (38) for the non-starred criteria. After one (1) year, the school will be reevaluated to ascertain progress toward compliance with the criteria. If the criteria are met, the school's classification will be changed to conditional or approved. If the criteria are not met, the school's classification will remain unapproved.

NOTE: An assessment score is determined by finding the sum of the number of criteria with which the school complies (marked YES) and the number of criteria which do not apply to the school (marked DNA).

**§126-12-6. Implementation.**

This policy will be effective in school year 1987-88. However, a cooperative pilot of the document and procedure should begin this school year (1986-87). Beginning with school year 1987-88 all schools will use the classification document for self-assessment the year prior to the county accreditation on-site team visit.