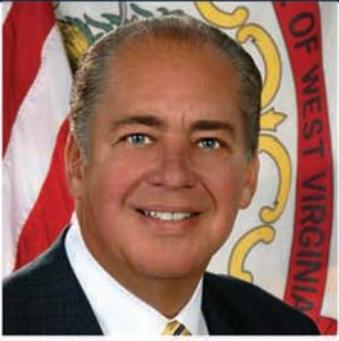




VIEW*S* & VISIONS

A publication of Bowles Rice LLP

Fall 2013



Reading for a Lifetime of Learning

The Honorable Earl Ray Tomblin, Governor
State of West Virginia

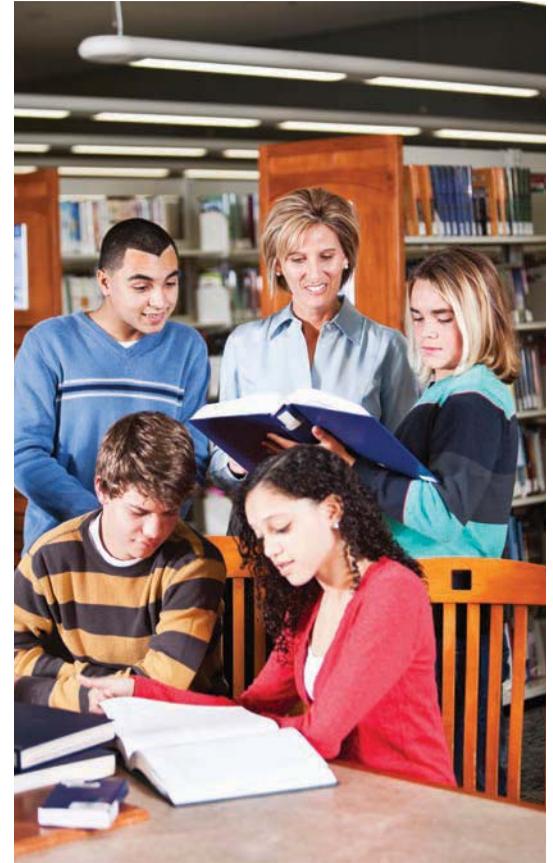
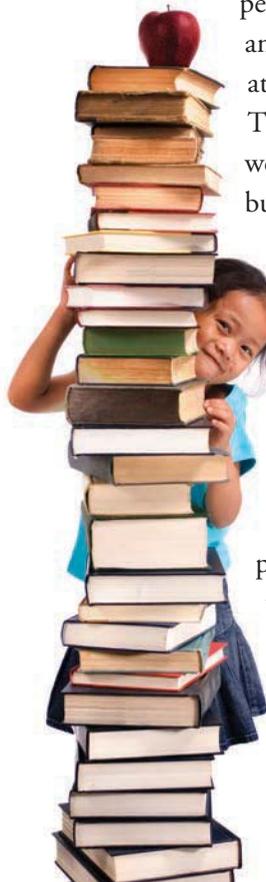
West Virginia Governor Earl Ray Tomblin serves as the 35th governor of the Mountain State. A Logan County native, Governor Tomblin received his undergraduate degree from West Virginia University and an MBA from Marshall University.

A self-employed businessman and former school teacher, Governor Tomblin was elected to the West Virginia House of Delegates in 1974 at the age of 22 and served in the House until he was elected to the West Virginia Senate in 1980. Governor Tomblin was the longest-serving Senate President and was named the state's first Lieutenant Governor in 2000.

If we are to prepare our children to be successful, regardless of the path they choose to take, we must provide them with an education and the skills needed to enable them to compete. It's no secret: our state's future lies in the hands of our youngest West Virginians.

To ensure our children have the opportunity to develop the strong foundation needed for lifelong learning – including being prepared to enter college or the workforce – we are reforming education in our state. We started the reform process earlier this year with Senate Bill 359. This historic legislation strengthens our education infrastructure and focuses on the fundamental issues impacting student performance, high school graduation rates and the post-secondary and technical school attendance rates of West Virginia's children. These efforts can be more successful if we begin with one of the most important building blocks to learning and achievement, and that is reading.

I truly believe it is essential for our children to learn to read, and then love to read, so they may read to learn. As our state's economy grows, we will see an increased demand for more specialized education. To help ensure our students are prepared to compete in our global economy, we are working to bridge educational gaps for them by making sure Pre-K through 12th grade and our post-secondary education system work together, preparing students for their next steps following high school.



The West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) and the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE), along with the state's Higher Education Policy Commission and Community and Technical College System, have made progressive moves to provide

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high-quality, early learning opportunities for our youngest West Virginians. Together, they have collaborated to revise our teacher



education preparation programs at the college level, making sure our future teachers have specialized training in how to teach and invoke the love for reading. Also, the WVBE is exploring how it can assure that all current educators have the skills and resources necessary to offer a comprehensive approach to early learning.

Making sure our children learn to read is critical to the success of all West Virginia's children. By focusing on reading, we provide our students with the skills to excel in other subjects, such as math and science, both of which are essential in our growing economy. Ensuring all children read at grade level by the end of third grade will, as evidenced by decades of

research, require a resilient commitment of all stakeholders: families, educators, administrators, communities, advocates and legislators, as well as local, regional, state and national experts in the field of early childhood education. I believe by helping our children learn to read, so they may then *read to learn*, we are preparing our youngest students for a lifetime of learning and helping to ensure a brighter future for our state. ▽