

# **WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Capitol Building 6, Suite 600  
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East  
Charleston, West Virginia

## **MINUTES**

March 12, 2025

### **I. Call to Order**

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, President Nancy J. White called the meeting of the West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) to order at 10:00 a.m. on March 12, 2025, in Capitol Building 6, Suite 600, 1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East, Charleston, West Virginia.

The following members were present: President White, Vice President Victor L. Gabriel, Robert W. Dunlevy, L. Paul Hardesty, Cathy L. C. Justice, F. Scott Rotruck (via remote), Debra K. Sullivan, Dr. Christopher A. Stansbury, Gregory F. Wooten, and ex officio member Michele L. Blatt, State Superintendent of Schools, West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE). Sarah Armstrong Tucker, Chancellor, West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education was absent.

### **II. Approval of Agenda**

President White called for a motion to approve the agenda. Mrs. Sullivan moved, and Dr. Stansbury seconded, that the agenda be approved. Upon the call for the question, the motion carried on a voice vote.

### **IV. Delegations**

Mr. William Simmons addressed the Board regarding ways to improve student achievement scores. Ms. Tara Raymo addressed the Board by reading from the Bible. Dr. Mickey Blackwell, Executive Director, West Virginia Principals Association, addressed the Board regarding the Principal's Conference, the girls' basketball tournament, and Title IX programming.

### **IV. Consent Agenda**

President White called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Hardesty moved, and Mr. Wooten seconded, that the Consent Agenda be approved. Upon the call for the question, the motion carried on a voice vote approving the following agenda items:

- Approved the WVBE minutes from February 12, 2025.
- Approved the Employment of Substitute Teachers in Areas of Critical Need and Shortage policies for Putnam and McDowell counties.

- Approved the Employment of Retired Bus Operators as Substitutes in Areas of Critical Need and Shortage policies for Putnam and McDowell counties.
- Approved the affidavits listed in the agenda attachment for the Employment of Substitute Teachers and Bus Drivers in Areas of Critical Need and Shortage for submission to the Consolidated Public Retirement Board.
- Approved Monroe County Board of Education’s request to amend their 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan.
- Approved the Licensure Testing Directory.

**V. Demonstration of View My Assessment Results Portal for Students/Parents.**

Dr. Vaughn Rhudy, Director, Office of Assessment, demonstrated the View My Assessment Results portal designed to allow students and parents to access their West Virginia General Summative Assessment results in grades 3-8 within 24 hours of completing a content area assessment. Mr. Rhudy informed the Board that the testing window for the General Summative Assessment is set for April 7, 2025 - May 23, 2025, with results available this school year.

**VI. Mingo County Schools Special Circumstance Review.**

Ms. Alexandra Criner, Director, Office of Accountability, informed the Board that the office has conducted a Special Circumstance Review of Mingo County Schools related to local board member effectiveness. Ms. Criner explained that the ongoing special circumstance review began on February 17, 2025, and that the team has already interviewed most of the central office staff, all members of the Mingo County Board of Education, and reviewed meeting agendas, minutes, and recordings. Ms. Criner informed the Board that the findings, when taken as a whole, paint a picture of a school system, and children in the school system, caught in a political crossfire requiring decisive action. She then requested that the Board enter into executive session to discuss the specific findings of the special circumstance review and determine the appropriate next steps. After which, Mr. Gabriel moved that the Board enter into executive session under the personnel, privacy, and attorney-client privilege exceptions authorized by W. Va. Code §6-9A-3 for discussion of both items C (Mingo County Special Circumstance Review) and D (WVBE and WVDE Personnel Matters and discussion of school law with legal counsel) on the agenda. Mr. Dunlevy seconded the motion. Upon the call for the question, the Board entered in executive session at 10:49 a.m. on a voice vote.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 12:35 p.m. Superintendent Blatt was asked for a recommendation regarding the Mingo County Schools Special Circumstance Review. Superintendent Blatt recommended the following:

- 1) That the West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) declare that extraordinary circumstances exist in Mingo County Schools that warrant immediate intervention pursuant to W. Va. Code §18-2E-5;
- 2) That nonapproval status be assigned to Mingo County Schools;

3) That the conditions precedent to WVBE intervention in a county school system exist and delaying the intervention would not be in the best interests of the students or the staff of Mingo County Schools;

4) That the Mingo County Board of Education failed to act on a statutory obligation which interrupted the day-to-day operations of the school system;

5) That the authority of the Mingo County Board of Education be limited in areas that compromise the delivery of a thorough and efficient education to its students as designated by the WVBE by rule which may include, but is not limited to, delegating decision-making authority regarding these matters to the State Superintendent or her designee;

6) That the WVBE declare the Office of the County Superintendent of Mingo County Schools be vacated at the end of the business day on June 30, 2025, and that thereafter the State Superintendent appoint a County Superintendent of Mingo County Schools;

7) That the WVBE delegate to the State Superintendent or her designee the authority to fill positions of administrators and principals with individuals determined by the State Superintendent or her designee to be the most qualified for the positions;

8) That the WVBE grant the State Superintendent or her designee the authority to take action necessary to correct the extraordinary circumstances;

9) That the WVBE void the authority of the Mingo County Board of Education as to finances, personnel, federal programs, and any other areas designated by the WVBE by rule and delegate decision-making authority to the State Superintendent or her designee regarding those matters;

10) That the WVBE delegate to the State Superintendent or her designee the authority to conduct hearings on personnel matters, the referral of investigations to other agencies, and the authority to appoint a designee for the limited purpose of conducting hearings while reserving to the State Superintendent the authority to render the resulting decision, if needed;

11) That the WVBE void the authority of Mingo County Board of Education as to the ability to conduct real estate transactions and delegate to the State Superintendent or her designee the authority to act in lieu of the Mingo County Board of Education in a transfer, sale, purchase, or other transaction regarding real estate;

12) That the WVBE delegate to the State Superintendent or her designee the authority to replace administrators and principals in low-performing schools and to transfer them to alternate professional positions within the county at her discretion;

13) That the WVBE delegate to the State Superintendent or her designee the authority to fill positions of administrators and principals with individuals determined by the State Superintendent to be the most qualified for the positions;

14) That the WVBE direct the current and future Mingo County superintendents and the State Superintendent, after consultation with the Mingo County Board of Education, to jointly develop and present to the WVBE at a future meeting a set of standards and/or a strategic plan that must be implemented in order for the Mingo County Board of Education to regain control of the school system; and,

15) That the WVBE direct the current and future Mingo County superintendents to provide written and/or oral progress reports to the WVBE as requested.

After hearing Superintendent Blatt's recommendation, President White called for a motion to accept the recommendations presented by the State Superintendent. Mr. Gabriel moved, and Ms. Sullivan seconded, that the Board accept the recommendations of Superintendent Blatt. Upon the call for the question, the motion carried on a voice vote.

#### **XV. WVBE and WVDE Personnel Matters**

President White called for a motion to approve the WVBE and the WVDE personnel matters included in the agenda attachment. Dr. Stansbury moved, and Mr. Dunlevy seconded, that the WVBE and the WVDE personnel matters included in the agenda attachment be approved. Upon the call for the question, the motion carried on a voice vote.

#### **XVI. WVDE Reports**

Superintendent Blatt provided the Board with updates relating to legislative action, flooding impact on the school system in McDowell and Mingo counties, the State Science Fair, upcoming state assessment testing, and the recognition of teachers with National Board Certification.

#### **XVII. WVBE Member Updates and Requests for Information**

Mrs. Sullivan informed the Board that she attended the girls' basketball tournament and a session on the Governor's Budget hosted by the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy.

#### **XVIII. Future Meetings**

President White announced that the next regular meeting of the WVBE will be held April 9, 2025, in Charleston, West Virginia.

#### **XIX. Adjournment**

President White called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Wooten moved, and Mr. Gabriel seconded, that the meeting be adjourned. Upon the call for the question, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m. on a voice vote.

**Minutes approved by the Board on April 9, 2025**

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**Nancy J. White, President**

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**Victor L. Gabriel, Vice President**

**NOTE:**

All agendas, attachments, materials distributed during the meeting, and audio recordings are available through the WVBE website or office pursuant to Policy 1241, Notice and Conduct of Meetings.

**Minutes were recorded by:**

*Tina Payne, Board Secretary*

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