

WEST VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

MINUTES

June 11, 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 June 11, 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, 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. Mr. Wooten moved, and Mrs. Sullivan seconded, that the agenda be approved. Upon the call for the question, the motion carried on a voice vote.

III. Delegations

Mr. Sean Whelan, West Virginia Governor's Office, encouraged the Board to follow Governor Morrisey's executive order to allow religious exemptions to statutory school vaccination laws. The following expressed support for enforcing current statutory requirements relating to school vaccinations: Ms. Allison Holstein, Rev. Eric Miller, Ms. Peggy Oldaker, and Ms. Mary Ellen Ferrell. Ms. Tara Raymo addressed the Board by reading from the Bible. Ms. Tamaya Browder spoke about Randolph County Schools and the Hope Scholarship Program. Mr. Dale Lee, President, West Virginia Education Association, spoke about the importance of addressing the issues surrounding the Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA) and thanked the Board for passing a resolution supporting the stabilization of PEIA. Mr. Micky Blackwell, Executive Director, West Virginia Principals Association, thanked school personnel for getting the State through another school year.

IV. Recognitions

After an introduction by the State Superintendent, the Board recognized the work of The EdVenture Group and their West Virginia Family Engagement Fellows. The Board also recognized

the Marshall University Behavior and Mental Health Technical Center Partnership.

V. Consent Agenda

President White called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Hardesty moved, and Mr. Dunlevy 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 May 14, 2025.
- Approved Fred Eberle Technical Center’s request to amend their 2020-2030 Comprehensive Educational Facilities Plan (CEFP).
- Approved Wayne County Board of Education's request to amend their 2020-2030 CEFP be approved.
- Approved the 2025 summer school programs as included in Attachment D of the agenda.
- Approved the 2025-2027 West Virginia School Board Association Training Schedule, as recommended by the Training Standards Review Committee (TSRC) and included in Attachment E of the agenda.
- Approved the 2025 Fall Conference Training Agenda and Program for county board members, as recommended by the TSRC and included in Attachment F of the agenda.
- Approved the statewide waiver request of Policy 5202 to allow GYO WV participants that have graduated high school, are 18 years of age, successfully completed an associate degree or 60 college credit hours, currently enrolled in a WVBE-approved educator preparation program leading to licensure, to be permitted to substitute in elementary and middle school classrooms only.
- Approved WVU’s request to add an initial administrative license in Leadership Studies in Education to its educator preparation program as recommended by the West Virginia Educator Preparation Program Review Board.
- Approved the West Virginia Licensure Testing Directory.

VI. Adoption of Policies

1. Mr. Wooten moved, and Mr. Rotruck seconded, that **Policy 2520.5, the West Virginia College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Wellness Education**, be approved and made effective 30 days from final filing. The motion carried on a voice vote.
2. Mr. Dunlevy moved, and Mr. Gabriel seconded, that **Policy 2520.9, the West Virginia College- and Career-Readiness Standards for the Arts**, be approved and made effective 30 days from final filing. The motion carried on a voice vote.
3. Mrs. Sullivan moved, and Mrs. Justice seconded that, **Policy 7211, Conflict Resolution Process for Citizens**, be approved and made effective 30 days from final filing. The motion carried on a voice vote.

VII. County School System Reports

Boone County Schools: Mrs. Alexander Criner, Director of Accountability, provided a Special Circumstance Review Report for Boone County Schools. Mrs. Criner explained that the Office of Accountability's review was conducted in conjunction with the Office of School Finance from May 19-21, 2025, at the direction of the State Superintendent. Preliminary financial testing results included multiple examples of potential non-compliance with Policy 8200 and Policy 8100 relating to purchasing and procurement. The team interviews and documentation review yielded several concerns with the county board members, including potential conflict of interest, outdated policies, potentially using county board of education resources to maintain properties that are not owned by the board, and interference with the day-to-day operation of the school system. The team also found that there was a perception of nepotism in the central office for employees who were acquainted with, or related to, county board members. The team also found issues with providing proactive leadership, a clear understanding of the salary structure, the division of duties, and discipline practices. Mrs. Criner explained that this review has been on hold after the United States Prosecutor's Office requested that they allow that office time to complete its criminal investigation. The team continued the review after being notified that the criminal investigation had been completed.

Randolph County Schools: Mrs. Criner then provided the Board with a Randolph County Schools Report. First, she clarified that this report is a review and not necessarily a Special Circumstance Review. The team began its work after receiving a request from County Superintendent Shawn Dilly to provide support to Randolph County Schools. The team conducted interviews with Randolph County Board of Education members from April 30 - May 1, 2025, to ascertain the rationale for some of the recent board decisions and identify the board members' plan to address some of the operational challenges the county is facing, including declining enrollment, failure to approve a consolidation plan, personnel overages, and a projected budget shortfall.

VIII. First Executive Session

Mr. Gabriel moved that the Board enter into executive session under the personnel, privacy and attorney client privilege exemption, authorized by W. Va. Code §6-9A-3 for discussion of item D (Boone County Schools Special Circumstance Review Report), item E (Randolph County Schools Report), item F (Discussion of Legal Matters), and G (WVBE/WVDE Personnel Matters) on the agenda. Mr. Wooten seconded the motion. President White announced that the Board was entering into executive session at 11:50 am. Upon the call for the question, the motion carried on a voice vote.

The Board returned from executive session at 12:55 p.m. without taking any action. Superintendent Blatt was recognized for a recommendation. Superintendent Blatt recommended that the WVBE declare a state of emergency exists in Randolph County Schools under W. Va. Code §18-2E-5(m)(2) to establish a six-month period. During which, Randolph County Board of Education members and the county superintendent, with targeted assistance from the WVDE, will develop a comprehensive plan to correct identified deficiencies, including a viable proposal for a

balanced budget. The WVBE will receive an update on the progress at its December 2025 meeting and take action based on the report, including, but not limited to, an extension of the state of emergency or immediate intervention in the operation of Randolph County Schools. Mr. Gabriel moved, and Mrs. Sullivan seconded, that the Board declare that a state of emergency exists in Randolph County Schools and to accept and approve the recommendations offered by Superintendent Blatt. The motion carried on a voice vote.

Next, Superintendent Blatt was recognized for a recommendation regarding Boone County Schools. Superintendent Blatt recommended the following action:

- That the WVBE declares that extraordinary circumstances exist in Boone County Schools that warrant immediate intervention pursuant to W. Va. Code 18-2E-5
- That non-approval status be assigned to Boone County Schools
- That the authority of the Boone County Schools Board of Education be limited in areas that compromise the delivery of a thorough and efficient education to its students including voiding the authority of the Boone County Board of Education as to finances, personnel, federal programs, real estate transactions, 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
- That the WVBE declares the Office of the County Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent be vacated at the end of the business day on June 11, 2025, by 4:00 p.m. and that thereafter the State Superintendent appoint a County Superintendent and an Assistant Superintendent for Boone County Schools
- That the WVBE delegates to the State Superintendent or her designee the authority to fill positions of administrators and principals, including those in low-performing schools, and transfer them to alternate positions within the county at her discretion
- That the WVBE grant the State Superintendent or her designee the authority to take action necessary to correct the extraordinary circumstances
- That the WVBE delegate to the State Superintendent or her designee the authority to conduct hearings on personnel matters, the referral of investigation 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
- That the WVBE and the current and future Boone County Schools superintendents and the State Superintendent jointly develop and present to the WVBE at a future meeting a set of standards and/or a strategic plan that must be implemented for the Boone County Board of Education to regain control of the school system

- That the WVBE directs the current and future Boone County superintendents to provide progress reports to the WVBE as requested

Mr. Wooten moved, and Mr. Hardesty seconded, that the Board immediately intervene in Boone County Schools and accept and approve the recommendations offered by Superintendent Blatt. The motion carried on a voice vote.

IX. Legal Matters

Next, Kelli Talbott, General Counsel, was recognized. Ms. Talbott recommended a motion to the Board consistent with their discussions relating to the school vaccination issue. After which, Mr. Wooten moved, and Mr. Dunlevy seconded, that the Board direct the State Superintendent to issue guidance to the county school systems that they follow the current compulsory school vaccination law that does not permit religious exemptions for students.

X. Second and Third Executive Sessions

Mr. Gabriel then moved the Board enter into executive session under the personnel, privacy, and attorney-client privilege exemption, authorized by W. Va. Code §6-9A-3 for discussion of item F (Discussion of Legal Matters), on the agenda. Mrs. Sullivan seconded the motion. President White announced that the Board was entering into executive session at 1:00 pm. Upon the call for the question, the motion carried on a voice vote. The Board then returned from executive session due to an error in the motion to enter into the second executive session. Mr. Gabriel then moved that the Board enter into executive session under the personnel, privacy and attorney-client privilege exemption, authorized by W. Va. Code §6-9A-3 for discussion of item G (WVBE/WVDE Personnel Matters) on the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Sullivan. The Board entered into the third executive session at 1:04 p.m.

The Board returned from executive session without taking any action at 1:43 p.m.

X. WVBE and WVDE Personnel Matters

In compliance with W. Va. Code §18-3-1, the Board evaluated the performance of the state superintendent and publicly announced the results of the evaluation. President White made the following statement on behalf of the Board: *“The Superintendent has demonstrated exemplary leadership marked by strategic vision, operational excellence, and a deep commitment to student success. Under her guidance, many of our schools have made significant strides in academic achievement, equity, and community engagement. She communicates effectively with all stakeholders, manages resources responsibly, and fosters a collaborative, high-performing culture among staff and administrators. Her ability to lead with integrity, respond to challenges proactively, and maintain a student-centered focus continues to elevate our public schools. Overall, her performance has been outstanding and continues to exceed expectations in every aspect.”*

President White then called for a motion to approve the WVBE personnel matters included in the agenda attachment. Mrs. Sullivan moved, and Mr. Gabriel seconded, that the WVBE personnel

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

XII. Appointment to the County Board Member Standards Review Committee.

President White moved that the Board reappoint Mr. Rotruck to a term ending July 1, 2027. Mr. Gabriel seconded. The motion carried on a voice vote.

XIII. WVBE Member Updates and Requests for Information

Dr. Stansbury commented, and several members expressed their condolences, on the tragic passing of former legislator Doug Skaff. Mrs. Sullivan reported that she attended the Golden Horseshoe Ceremony and requested information on the percentage of foster children enrolled in public school. Mr. Rotruck requested information on why students are leaving public education for another option. Mrs. Justice discussed the Communities in Schools Program. Mr. Dunlevy reported that he attended the retirement celebration for WVSSAC executive director, David Price. Mr. Gabriel expressed concerns that the WVDE didn't have enough staff to manage all the county state of emergencies and interventions they have been assigned to oversee. President White said she attended the 2025 Education Alliance Summit and the Educators Rising Meeting.

XV. Future Meetings

President White announced that the next regular meeting of the WVBE will be held on July 9, 2025, at 10:00 am and a special meeting will be held on July 14, 2025, at noon. Both meetings will be held in Charleston, West Virginia.

XV. Adjournment

President White called for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Stansbury moved, and Mr. Dunlevy seconded, that the meeting be adjourned. Upon the call for the question, the meeting was adjourned at 3:11 pm on a voice vote.

Minutes approved by the Board on July 9, 2025

Nancy J. White, President

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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